

Draft Minutes of the Bruton Annual Town Forum
held on Tuesday 12th May 2026 at 7:00 pm

Chair: James Hood, Vice Chair of Bruton Town Council [BTC]

MC: Emma Coulter, Member of BTC

Minute taker: Patrick Pender-Cudlip, Deputy Clerk of BTC

Present: 26 members of the public including Town Councillors.

Cllr. Hood opened the meeting and welcomed all present. He thanked the representatives of local organisations for coming to explain what they had been doing over the past year, and then handed over to Cllr. Coulter.

Cllr. Coulter remarked that for a small town, Bruton has a great deal going on, with a wide range of clubs, societies and other organisations. In addition she noted some of the projects undertaken or supported by the Town Council over the previous twelve months:

- signage and groundworks at Abbey Ponds
- support for the proposed Brubowl skate park
- Naming the public area by the Packhorse bridge (on the right bank of the river Brue) Bishton Green, in memory of the late John Bishton who did so much for Bruton in the course of his long life.
- Installing a digital information screen in the front window of the Community Office
- Making arrangements for the appointment of a Town Ranger, a contractor who would conduct routine and emergency maintenance and repairs in public areas, and help improve and enhance the appearance of the town.

Representatives from many local clubs, societies and other bodies presented short accounts of their activities over the past year, and one or two highlights from these oral accounts are set out below. Several of these organisations also prepared written accounts of their activities, as did other organisations whose representatives could not attend the meeting, and these accounts can be found on the [Town Council website](#). Almost all these organisations are run or supported by volunteers and welcome newcomers, urging anyone who might be interested to get in touch.

Bruton Trust: The Trust is dedicated to the conservation of the town's architectural heritage, reviewing and commenting on planning applications which might have an impact, and it also supports the restoration of Abbey Ponds.

The Growing Space: This Charity provides social and therapeutic support through horticultural activities and working with nature, in cooperation and conjunction with Wincanton Balsam's Centre and a range of other agencies.

Bruton Scouts Group: Around 65-70 Beavers, Cubs and Scouts meet every week to learn crafts and skills, compete and play games. They also arrange occasional hiking and camping expeditions, undertake fundraising, and take part in the annual Remembrance Parade, and they are planning additional community projects for the future.

The CATbus (Community Aided Transport): Seven minibuses carried c. 25,000 passenger (trips) in 2025, a 43% increase in two years, and this year social cars will carry almost 1,000 passengers to medical appointments. Rising costs make fund raising a major priority.

Hauser and Wirth, Somerset: A wide range of facilities and events at Durslade Farm and Stockwell House help local artists and other residents, and attract large numbers of residents and visitors: 24,000 attended the recent Don McCullin Exhibition. The gallery has raised £2,000 for its chosen charity, Good Company Bruton (see below).

The Dove: Thanks to a wide range of news, information, events and other features, the popularity of the magazine, and the generosity of advertisers, space is always at a premium. Back issues are available on the [website](#), and subscriptions (local delivery £15; UK postal delivery £25) contribute to the funding of the magazine.

Brue Valley Rotary Club: Last year the Club raised thousands of pounds for charity while supporting local events like the Tour of Wessex and Sherborne Classics at the Castle. Members also enjoyed visits to a wide range of local enterprises and attractions.

The Memory Café: The Café, which benefits from the support of Good Company Bruton, offers games, quizzes, singing and other activities on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month, from 10.30am to 12.00noon, in The Community Hall.

Good Company Bruton: This Community Interest Company is supported by generous donations from local individuals and organisations, and in turn supports the local community by working with and helping small local groups and organisations, for instance with banking and insurance.

One Planet Bruton: This Community Group, which is supported by Good Company Bruton, promotes sustainability and community resilience through a range of initiatives including Community Freecycle events, Stitch it Don't Ditch it, Seed Swap, Bruton Hoedown, Wilder Allotments, Wilder Gardens and Planting for Pollinators.

Bruton United Football Club: The Club has 140 registered players, in teams from Under-6s to Over-40s, and this year three of its teams won Cup Finals while two were

runners-up. The pitches, goals and other equipment are all being upgraded, thanks to very generous grants from the Football Foundation and local Masonic lodges, and with more coaches and volunteers the Club could go even further.

Bruton Community Hall: The Hall now has wi-fi, it supports and enables a wide range of local community groups, activities and events, and it is also available for private functions.

Bruton Choral Society: The Society has several concerts every year. It teams up with the choirs of St Mary's Bruton, King's School Bruton and Bruton Primary School, as well as the Echoing Air ensemble and, later this year it is welcoming a girls' choir from Hungary.

King's School Bruton: The school is strengthening its ties with the town and seeks to inculcate a sense of community in its pupils by encouraging them to participate in a range of events and activities involving the town and the wider community.

St Mary's Bruton: In addition to Christian worship the Church provides a venue for musical and other events, and it is open to anyone in want of peace and a quiet space.

Brue Larder: Bruton's food bank operates on a basis of trust, without requiring formal referrals or assessments, and supports many local families, thanks to the generosity of local individuals, businesses and Good Company Bruton.

Bruton Museum: The Museum organised a series of exhibitions last year, the highlight of which was the Festival of History and Heritage which was generously supported by Hauser & Wirth, and The Newt Somerset. There are ambitious plans for the future.

Bruton Horticultural Society: The Society organises regular talks, garden visits, a Summer Garden Supper, a Winter Lunch, and an Annual Show with classes for growers and showers of every age.

BrueCREW: The Crew monitors and supports the health of the river through various projects including a programme of River Fly monitoring, a mapping project, and a walk along the course of the river.

Big Brue: This new Autumn Festival (19th – 20th September 2026) at Durslade Farm features a host of renowned actors, artists, academics, broadcasters, campaigners, dancers, designers, environmentalists, film makers, journalists, lawyers, musicians, photographers and writers. They will introduce discussions on major contemporary issues, host interactive performances and activities, and lead musical sessions, with an emphasis on audience participation and local contributions.

Packhorse Fair: Most disappointingly, this year's Packhorse Fair has had to be cancelled, for logistical reasons. Serious erosion of the river-bank and closure of the

adjacent path between Crown Green and Bishton Green has made the site unviable, and it is not known how long it will take to get the bank repaired and the path made safe.

The Gravediggers Club: Members keep the Churchyard in beautiful condition, to the delight of residents and visitors alike, and undertake new planting to attract even more insects and birds.

The Poppy Appeal: In these difficult times the army of volunteer collectors did well to raise £4,200 in 2025 (down from £6,211 in 2024). The Remembrance Sunday Parade – which is supported by the King’s School marching band, many local organisations, and the Town Council – is always moving and impactful.

Friends of Bruton Station: Despite constant efforts we have not still not managed to enable level access to Platform Two, which is deeply frustrating, as is the lack of basic facilities and even a ticket machine. However, proposals for a new station serving Somerton and Langport offers (faint) hope for a direct connection between Bruton and Taunton, and in the meantime the tireless work of volunteers won recognition in the Station in Bloom awards.

Cllr. Coulter wound up the meeting by commending the participants and their organisations for their contribution to Bruton’s rich social and cultural life, and she thanked all the attendees for their encouragement.

The meeting ended at 9.03pm