BRUTON
TOWN COUNCIL

# Minutes of the MEETING of the TOWN COUNCIL on Tuesday 28 July 2026 at 7.30pm to be held in the Community Hall.

**Councillors present: Councillors S Anderton, Baker, Bateman, Coulter, Crawford, Dunn (arrived at 7.40pm), Hood, and Jones.**

**In the Chair: Cllr Coulter.**

**Officers present: Town Clerk.**

**Somerset Councillors: Cllrs Lucy Trimnell and Tom Power.**

**Members of the public: 0**

**Public session was not required.**

**Meeting started at: 7.30pm.**

**MINUTES**

## 26/44: Apologies for Absence (LGA 1972 s85(1)).

Apologies were received from Cllrs K Anderton, Taylor, Wright.

**It was RESOLVED [8-0-0][for-against-abstain] to receive and approve the apologies and reasons given.**

Cllr Buckland was not in attendance, and has not attended either a committee nor a full council meeting since 3 February 2026.

## 26/45: Declarations of Interest.

Members to declare any interests, including disclosable pecuniary interests (DPI) they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Town Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any written requests from members for dispensations that accord with the Localism Act 2011 s33 (b-e) (This does not preclude any later declaration).

Cllr Coulter declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 26/55 Bruton School for Girls.

Cllrs Baker and Jones declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 26/56 as trustees of the Jubilee Park Pavilion and Youth Club Trust.,

## 26/46: Minutes of the previous meeting (LGA 1972 sch 12 para 41 (1)).

To receive, approve, and sign the minutes of the last Town Council meeting held on 30 June 2026.

**It was RESOLVED [8-0-0][for-against-abstain] to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2026 as a true and accurate record of that meeting.**

Cllr Coulter signed the minutes.

**26/47: Reports from Somerset Councillors:**

**a.** Lucy Trimnell gave a short oral report.

- There is nothing to add to the report that has been circulated to councillors previously.
- There is a new Finance Officer at Somerset Council, and the first task is to review the financial position.
- The Local Plan consultation has been extended to 9 August 2026.
- A Council tax consultation is due out imminently, with feedback required about council tax dispensation and how that is structured. The proposals within the consultation will have a £4milion cost implication, and details of how the council is going to mitigate this.

**b.** Tom Power had nothing further to add.

**26/48: Reports -** to receive reports from**:**

**a.** Members representing the Council on outside bodies.

- Cllr Hood reported that Good Company has recently organised a successful community first aid course, and would like to organise more, at £250 per session. It would be beneficial if local businesses have first aid qualified staff. This might result in a request to the town council for grant funding to support the sessions.
- Cllr Jones confirmed that the date of the Local Community Network AGM is Tuesday 18th Aug at Bruton community Hall.
- Cllr Jones confirmed that BrueCREW are considering riparian corridor restoration on various stretches of the river Brue. This may result in grant funding being secured for Coombe Brook

**b.** Town Councillors.

- Cllr Crawford confirmed that the arrangements for the updated Step into Bruton leaflet are going well. The Book Exchange in the phone box at Uphills continues. A local resident maintains the phone box, and more paint may be required.
- Cllr Anderton confirmed that the application for Bruton to be a Small Town of Culture was not successful.

**c.** Chair.

- Cllr Coulter mentioned that James Buckland is coming to his six months of non-attendance, and will not be able to continue as a councillor. Thank you to James for what he has done in his time as a councillor. The clerk confirmed that the casual vacancy will be advertised after 3 August 2026.

**26/49: Clerk's Report.**

To receive a short report from the Town Clerk to update on ongoing matters.

The clerk overviewed the report which is available on the town council website. Other items mentioned were:

- The information stones were due to be painted today, and delivery is being considered for next week.
- A request for the defibrillator cabinets to be unlocked has been received and will be an agenda item on Town Committee.
- The External Auditor has contacted the clerk with some further questions about the submission of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). The clerk is in the process of collating the additional information for return by the deadline of 31 July 2026.
- Cllr Hood mentioned the upgrade works due on Bruton Dam need to be published. The clerk to re-publish the information on the town council website page and social media.

**26/50: Minutes and Recommendations from Committees and from those Working Groups that report to the Full Council:**

**a.** Planning & Consultation Committee – to receive the minutes from the meeting held on 8 July 2026 if available, and to note or approve any recommendations and decisions as required.

Cllr Fradley confirmed nothing to be discussed at full council, and that the minutes are available on the town council website.

**b.** Town Committee – to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2026 and approve any recommendations or decisions as required.

i. T26/34 Town Ranger. To agree the recommendation from Town Committee for the contract to be awarded to Contractor A.

This item to be moved to the end of the agenda and discussed during the confidential session.

ii. T26/39: Memorials Policy, to adopt the recommended policy.

**It was RESOLVED [8-0-1] to adopt the policy as circulated with the minor amendments agreed at Town Committee.**

iii. T26/40: What's on and Bruton Walks websites. To consider the funding of the upgrade of both websites from the 26/27 budget or otherwise.

Councillors appreciated that volunteers run the websites very effectively. It was proposed to build any upgrade costs into the 2027/2028 budget, and to review the websites with the volunteers involved.

**It was RESOLVED [9-0-0] to include website upgrade costs in the 2027/2028 budget.**

**c.** Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group – to receive an update from the meeting held on 7 July 2026.

The meeting notes have been circulated and published on the town council website. There is a talk scheduled on Thursday 7.30 in Community Hall, the subject is coping in extreme heat. There will be a similar talk about hypothermia later in the year. There was some feedback about the meeting that took place recently in the churchyard, which focussed on maintaining the level of tidiness and also making space for nature.

**d.** BruBowl Working Group – to receive an update from the last meeting.

No update was available.

**26/51: Working Groups.**

To appoint an additional members to Working Groups as required.

Anna Kent has requested to be appointed as a member of the Brubowl Working Group.

**It was RESOLVED [9-0-0] appoint Anna Kent as a member of the Brubowl Working Group with immediate effect.**

**26/52: Strategic Planning. To receive updates and consider the next steps for the following:**

**a.** County Fields. To receive a short update of any actions. To consider establishing a 'County Fields Working Group', to progress the lease and managing the area.

After some discussion, it was proposed to establish a County Fields Working Group. The first meeting is due to take place on 25 August 2026. The clerk is due to meet with Somerset Council on 30 July 2026 to discuss the Heads of Terms of the lease further. It was noted that the maintenance of the trees and any nutrient mitigation ceases when the current planning consent expires.

**It was RESOLVED [9-0-0] to establish a County Fields Working Group, with initial membership being Cllrs Anderton, Hood and Jones, and the Town Clerk, and to adopt the Terms of Reference as circulated, unchanged.**

**b.** Bruton Town Plan.

No update available as yet.

**26/53: Application for grant funding.**

An application has been received from Big Brue Festival, to provide some family workshops, the details of which have been circulated. To discuss and consider the funding application.

The application for funding was discussed at length by councillors, with some aspects clarified by the clerk , who had sought further information directly from the applicant.

Although it was recognised that this is an excellent festival in principle, the town council are not able to support an event with grant funding that has an entrance fee and is not directly aimed at Bruton residents.

**It was RESOLVED [9-0-0] not to approve the grant request for this application.**

**26/54: Countryside Stewardship Scheme**

To consider the recommendation from the Abbey Ponds Working Group regarding submitting an application for the Countryside Stewardship Scheme which would cover (but not limited to) the Dovecote Field and Abbey Ponds areas.

Cllr Jones overviewed the recommendation from Abbey Ponds Working Group regarding applying for Countryside Stewardship (CSS). The Higher Tier of CSS has recently reopened. The Forest of Selwood Trust has a project officer who can support town council officers with registering both Abbey Ponds and the Dovecote fields, with a view to submitting an application.

**It was RESOLVED [9-0-0] to go ahead with the Countryside Stewardship application, as recommended by the Abbey Ponds Working Group.**

Cllr Coulter left the meeting at 8.18pm, and Cllr S Anderton chaired the next agenda item.

**26/55: Bruton School for Girls (BSG).**

To receive any updates, and to consider any next steps, if required.

It is apparent from discussions with trustees that there are new trustees who have been appointed by mechanisms unknown. There is a push for the sale of the BSG site. The land is in two parts, one part of which has a covenant. There is a question of how the proceeds of this sale will be allocated both to the Trust and the Charity. It is understood that the allocation will be determined using the square footage of the site, rather than assets and condition of the land. This means the allocation of the proceeds to the BSG Charity would be much smaller than expected. It appears to be inconsistent as the waste ground is not of the same value as the buildings on the site.

Cllr Jones pointed out that there are currently a lot of 'unknowns'. The BSG Charity trustees remain the same, the bursar of Kings School, the former headmaster, the former junior warden and another governor (who is a solicitor). The chair of Pitcombe PC met with the bursar of Kings School and the new Chair of the Trustees of BSG Trust. There is no update on the Charity Commission website regarding the change of trustees and the 'update of articles of the charity'. Cllr Jones met with lawyers who have been advising a local resident (during the previous consultation). A private individual will fund the writing a letter to the trustees asking questions about the process of the appointment of the new trustees, and requesting sight of signed copies of appointment documents, and updated articles of the charity.

The private individual is concerned about previous dismissive attitudes towards concerns within the community.

Councillors considered that the only fair way to apportion the sale proceeds to the BSG Charity and the Trust from the sale of the site would be to have an independent valuation of the proceeds and the allocation of costs, to be applied to each charity. There should also be an audit of the process used and the outcome of the allocation of funds. The purpose of the Charity is to take care of the youth in Bruton, and needs to have the best outcome possible.

Cllr Hood thinks communication should go to the charity commission to voice these concerns.

The chair of Pitcombe Parish Council wants to keep the 'Sunny Hill for Good' CIC away from discussions of this nature; to keep the positive element separate.

Cllr Anderton clarified that Bruton Town Council share the same concerns, and this needs to be taken further. The Town Council needs to write to the Charity Commission to voice these concerns, but ensure that the letter is framed in line with the legal letter that is about to be sent from the private individual.

It is proposed that Bruton Town Council write to the Charity Commission to express similar concerns as have been expressed within the community.

It was noted that the Astroturf has been declared an Asset of Community Value.

The Charity Commission have agreed that the site can be sold IF independent trustees have been appointed. There is no evidence as to how these trustees have been appointed, hence the need to understand how, and to have sight of relevant documentation detailing the process of how trustees were appointed. Currently there is one existing trustee and three new trustees.

**It was RESOLVED [8-0-0] that Cllr Jones works with Officers to format a letter to be sent to the Charity Commission, urgently, reflecting the points made above.**

Cllr Coulter returned to the meeting 8.35pm, and reconvened as chair.

**26/56: Jubilee Park Pavilion and Youth Club Trust (JPPYCT).**

To receive any update about the pavilion and the trust (if available), and to consider any next steps.

Cllr Baker gave a short oral update. The Charity Commission is being contacted to update the details on the website. The accounts for the charity are going to be closed and transferred to a bank account offered by Cllr Baker.

There are no details about the new management committee, and Cllr Baker is to meet with the Youth Club representatives to discuss further.

The football club are managing the ongoing maintenance.

Cllr Jones stated that he needs a copy of the trust document.

After some discussion, it was determined that a meeting of trustees and the management committee is required as soon as possible. The clerk suggested the interim period that the trustees meet, and agree that trustees need to be also members of the management committee for an interim period.

**26/57: Assertion 10 Policies.**

To review and adopt the policies as listed below which are required to comply with the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Assertion 10, Data handling and storage.

**a.** Document Retention Policy.

**It was RESOLVED [9-0-0] to adopt the policy as presented**.

**26/58: Draft Statement of Local Priorities for Planning.**

To consider and adopt a Draft Statement of Local Priorities for Planning, as circulated.

Cllr Hood overviewed the Statement document, and why it was required. The document is a statement of Local Priorities for Bruton. There are all decisions that have been made previously, meaning there is no change of policy. This document needs to go onto the website and be available to all. The clerk is to arrange a link to be added to future agenda for the planning and consultation response committee.

Cllr Jones mentioned that the Local Plan consultation deadline has been extended until 9th August 2026.

**It was RESOLVED [9-0-0] to adopt the Statement of Local Priorities for Planning as circulated, unchanged.**

**26/59: Bank Reconciliations.**

- **a.** To approve the bank reconciliations for the current and deposit accounts and credit card for the period 1 June 2026 to 30 June 2026.

**It was RESOLVED [9-0-0] to approve the bank reconciliation for the period 1 to 30 June 2026 as published.**

**26/60: Accounts for Payment.**

- **a.** To approve payments for July 2026.

**It was RESOLVED [9-0-0] to approve the payments list for July 2026 as published.**

- **b.** Schedule of payments for August 2026. To delegate to the clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair to agree those payments for the August 2026, that are to meet contractual obligations and that are within budget limits or those payments that are for services and orders agreed by Full Council or Committees at previous meetings. The list of payments made will be presented to Full Council at the September Full Council meeting for information.

**It was RESOLVED [9-0-0] to delegate to the clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair to agree the payments for August 2026, as detailed above.**

- **c.** To note that a transfer of £25,000 from the CCLA account has been made to the town council current account to cover July payments. A further transfer of £25,000 will be required for the August payments.

  **Noted**.

**26/61:Spend to budget to 30 June 2026**

To review and note the spend to budget to 30 June 2026 as presented.

**Noted**.

**26/62: Date of the next meeting of the Full Council:** The next full council meeting is Tuesday 29 September 2026, 7.30pm at the Community Hall.

Agenda items to the clerk by 18 September 2026.

**26/63: Exclusion of Press and Public.**

**To consider the exclusion of press and public for the remainder of the meeting under the Public Bodies Admissions to Meetings Act 1960, Section 1 (2), on**

**the grounds that discussion of agenda item 26/64 is commercial in confidence.**

There were no members of the public present at this stage of the meeting, therefore a resolution for this agenda item was not required.

**26/50bi. Town ranger**

The contract was discussed at Town Committee the previous week.

**It was proposed and RESOLVED [8-1-0] to ratify the decision from Town Committee to appoint contractor A.**

**26/64: Youth Provision Contract Extension.**

To discuss the extension to the current contract to March 2027, deferred from the June Full Council meeting. To receive a short update from a meeting with other member councils regarding the youth provision.

**It was RESOLVED [9-0-0] that the contract is formally extended to 31st March 2027 (from 31st December 2026) with no additional cost implication to the town council.**

Meeting closed 9pm

**END OF MINUTES.**