

First Draft May 2024

Background

Bridport Town Council works for the benefit of Bridport & West Bay. All references to the town should be taken to include West Bay unless qualified.

Bridport Town Council is the most local tier of government in Dorset, separate from but working alongside Dorset Council, the Unitary Authority. We are a town council with a long and illustrious history of working within a considered, democratic, framework which is prudent, transparent and respectful of the local community.

The role of the Town Council is to ensure Bridport is a thriving community and a healthy, vibrant and attractive place in which to work, live and visit. The Town Council does this by working collaboratively, not only as an ambitious and committed team of councillors and officers, but also with a range of external strategic partners.

The Town Council is committed to providing excellence in the services and facilities which it delivers, aiming to be responsive, innovative, visible, accessible and straightforward in our approach.

Governance

We have 20 Councillors, who are normally elected every four years, representing 5 Wards; Bridport Central, Bridport West & Allington, Bradpole, Bothenhampton & Walditch and West Bay. The Council appoints three main committees and one sub-committee, which are decision making bodies. Full Council and committee meetings are open to the public with a public forum at the start of each meeting, when the public can raise issues and ask questions. These meetings are usually held at Mountfield (for committees) and the Town Hall (for Full Council).

During May each year at the Annual Council Meeting, a Mayor is elected. The Mayor is the town's First Citizen and its ambassador at public, civic and ceremonial events. At the same meeting the Council elects a Leader, Deputy Mayor, decides on the committee memberships and appoints councillors as representatives to other bodies.

The decision making committees and sub-committee are:

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Environment & Social Wellbeing Committee

Planning Committee

Best Value Sub-Committee

What We Do

Councillors and staff strive to ensure that all Council operations are delivered in the most effective and efficient manner and comply with regulation and best practice. This 5 year plan focuses on projects or major pieces of work requiring significant resource allocation. Readers should note that in the background, the day-to-day operations of the council continue to include:

- Efficient operation and governance of the Council's business – council meetings, elections, policies, finance and budgeting, staff recruitment and management, administration, customer service, etc.
- Legal compliance.
- Communication and engagement with our communities – hosting the Town Council websites and social media feeds, responding to requests for information, consultations, promoting events, etc.
- Management of the Council's assets – land, buildings, plant and equipment.

Operationally the main services areas we are involved in are:

- **Allotments** – we provide and manage 220 allotment plots across Bridport.
- **Capital Projects** – we deliver and support projects for community benefit. **Recent examples include:**
- **Community Representation and Leadership** – although the smallest of the councils that provide services in Bridport, our position as a statutory public body gives us a strong voice in representing the community to other local and national public sector bodies. We also take a lead on issues of importance to the community, including Bridport as a 'Rights Respecting' town.
- **Cemetery** – The Town Council manages Bridport Cemetery, which is such an important and highly regarded asset for the town.
- **Civic and Ceremonial** – the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor are elected from Bridport's Town Councillors, and they attend a wide range of events and functions as the town's representatives.

- **Community Bus** – we launched a round-Bridport bus service in 2018 to enable residents to access the town centre and other parts of the town following withdrawal of support for similar services by the then County Council.
- **Environmental** – we look after all public highway verges and various other green and open spaces in Bridport (including Asker Meadows, and Bucky Doo Square), manage sites and a range of footpaths, and hold events to promote environmental, health and wellbeing issues. Our grounds maintenance work includes: verge management on behalf of Dorset Council, parishes surrounding Bridport and other local organisations. Our environmental work includes community leadership in areas such as climate change.
- **Events** – The Town Council is represented at the Food Festival, Melplash Show, Charter Fair and the Community Fair, as well as providing logistical support for a host of local events each year. These include the Jurassic Fields, Christmas Cheer and Hat Festivals. We also organise the Remembrance Parade in November.
- **Grants** – the Town Council awards over £50,000 a year in grant support to community organisations.
- **Hire/Lease of Facilities** – we have conference, meeting and events venues at Mountfield, WI Hall, the Salt House and the Town Hall, which are available for private hire. We also offer long leases at Council-owned properties for office, commercial and community uses.
- **Markets** – We manage Bridport Market, West Bay Summer Market, and West Bay Car Boot Sale.
- **Partnership Working** – we work with a range of local organisations to make the most of resources in the Bridport area. These include parish councils and charitable and voluntary organisations. We are a member of, and provide administrative support to, the Bridport Local Area Partnership, which brings together over 200 local groups and individuals to benefit the community in areas such as health and wellbeing and homelessness.
- **Planning** – the Town Council is a statutory consultee on planning applications, and a partner with other local councils in developing the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan.
- **Play Areas** – The Town Council maintains a number of play areas, including the fully accessible West Bay Play Area.
- **Sitting Out Licences and A-Boards** – we manage these on behalf of Dorset Council.
- **Tourist Information Centre (TIC)** – Dorset's Visitor Information Service of the Year in 2018. As well as its tourism information services, the TIC also now manages the Town Hall, Bucky Doo Square, the Bridport and West Bay web site and the production of the Town Guide. It provides a Box Office Service to a range of local organisations and events including the Electric Palace and the BridLit Festival.

27 members of staff deliver these services on behalf of councillors.

Why a 5 year Plan for Bridport Town Council?

The Town Council agreed to produce a 5 year plan in order to:

- Promote transparency – being clear what the Town Council priorities are and what actions will be delivered over the plan period 2024 to 2029,
- Set the functions of the Town Council in a strategic context – area/county/national/international,
- Provide a basis for securing funding – whether through the local precept, revenue generation or funding bids,
- Co-ordinate the Town Council's work with others, and generate productive collaboration with partners,
- Provide the basis for oversight by councillors and others, and ensure best value.

Town Council Mission Statement

To ensure Bridport remains a thriving community and a healthy, attractive and resilient place in which to work, live and visit. A Rights-Respecting Town and strategic centre for the West Dorset area with a vibrant retail, arts and cultural offer, set within a special and distinctive environment recognised as Dorset National Landscape.

Listening to our community

A community consultation exercise was undertaken at the Charter Fair and at the Melplash Show in 2024 encouraging residents to consider the strategic themes guiding the Town Council's work and put forward project ideas.

The top three priorities as voted for by those who responded were:

Strategic priority	Votes
Projects for the environment	116
Projects for the community	100
Projects for the Town	97

We believe in listening to and engaging with our community. We will continue to improve our level of engagement, communication and consultation, providing the best opportunities for local people to give their views about the future direction of the town and the services we provide.

- This 5 Year plan will be open for community comment for 8 weeks. All responses received will be presented along with any proposed amendments in a consultation report to be published on the Town Council website and considered by the Finance & General Purposes Committee for incorporation into a final version of this plan.
- All major projects led by the Town Council will include a community engagement phase, drawing in representatives residents and voluntary groups impacted by any project to ensure local awareness is raised and local know-how mobilised.

Values for our residents

We will continue to be an effective council by:

- Engaging with our communities
- Delivering quality and value for money services
- Helping the vulnerable members of our community
- Being open and accountable
- Delivering improvements across the town

Monitoring & Review of this Plan

The Town Council will deliver the projects/actions identified in this plan. Inevitably new and unplanned demands will be made on the Town Council during the plan period. The list of projects will be monitored at each meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee and the Plan will be reviewed in full each year. The requirement to respond to new demands will need to be balanced with available resources and approval of new projects will inevitably require the displacement of agreed actions unless resources are increased.

Strategic Priorities of Bridport Town Council

For the Town	For the Community	For the Environment	For a Well Run Council
Responding to the Climate & Ecological Emergency and need for transformative actions.			
Delivering the ambitions of the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan	Supporting vulnerable and less advantaged people in our community	Ensuring that the town's green spaces are managed sustainably and deliver ecosystem services for all	Using innovation, technology and new ways of working to improve value for money and efficiency in Council services
Supporting a vibrant Town Centre including managing and developing Bridport's market offer	Supporting education, employment and leisure opportunities for young people	Safeguarding heritage assets for future generations to enjoy	Being a Rights Respecting Council
Keeping Bridport thriving - Promoting Bridport as 'Dorset's Eventful Town'	Securing the development of cultural and recreational facilities available in the town	Safeguarding the special landscape qualities of the Dorset National Landscape	Actively engage citizens in the running of the Town
Helping build a sustainable local economy	Managing buildings and land for community benefit		

During the lifetime of the 5 year plan (2024-2029), the Town Council will ensure that:

1. It works with other councils, organisations and agencies, to ensure that actions to address the Climate & Ecological Emergency are prioritised and effectively resourced.
2. Its decision making and activities are rights respecting, fully inclusive and that all opportunities are taken to increase community engagement, particularly with young people.
3. Bridport Investment Plan is fully utilised to secure funding for infrastructure improvements and support business transition to a low carbon/ circular economy. Also, drives the development of the Town Centre by addressing traffic and people movement issues and reimagining signage and interpretation.
4. Publicly owned assets are safeguarded and that assets and services transferred to the Town Council are efficiently managed to provide demonstrable community benefit and support for the local economy.
5. Development proposals for key sites across the town effectively engage local people in decision making, provide demonstrable community benefit and support the local economy. During this plan period sites are likely to include: re development of Bridport Bus Station, Flood Lane/Fisherman's Arms Care Development, St Michael's and Foundry Lea developments.

Cross Cutting Priority

Bridport Town Council responded quickly in 2019 to the emerging consensus that climate change had become a crisis that required emergency action. BTC declared a climate emergency in May 2019 and followed this up with a detailed Action Plan in October 2019 together with a dedicated budget for the climate emergency of £100,000.

Following a public review of the Climate Emergency Action Plan in 2023 BTC produce a more focused action plan with greater emphasis given to supporting our community to adapt to the inevitable impacts of a changing climate. To achieve this shift Councillors approved a revised **Climate and [Ecological Emergency Action Plan 2023-2025](#)** under the following headings:

- Emissions reduction;
- Resilient, socially inclusive and healthy communities;
- Ecological emergency and
- Transitioning to a circular economy.

Priority Responding to the Climate & Ecological Emergency

Action	Funding sources	Measure Deliver by date	Responsible
Deliver the Town Council's Climate & Ecological Emergency Action Plan (revised 2023)	BTC External funding	Action plan delivered Review 2025	All Staff E&SW Committee External partners



BRIDPORT TOWN PLAN 2024-2029

ENCL: 3907

For the Town

Bridport manages to retain strong connections to its rich historic roots in trading and rope making. A historic market town that has emerged in the twenty first century as a noted centre for cultural and artistic activity and events. Our community is creative and resourceful and supporting local wealth building initiatives will ensure that the economic future of the town is sustainable, resilient and serves everyone.

For the Town - Action Plan 2024-2029			
Priority 1 - Delivering the ambitions of the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan			
Action	Funding sources	Measure of success Deliver by date	Responsible Officer/ Committee
Initiate and resource a light review of BANP 2020-2036.	BTC Symondsbury PC	Review completed Revised BANP Published May 2025	Projects Manager Planning
Support JCC & SG meetings.	BTC Symondsbury PC	4 meetings a year	Town Clerk Planning
Undertake annual monitoring review of the effectiveness of BANP in planning decisions.	BTC Symondsbury PC	Annual Monitoring Report May 2024	Projects Manager Planning
Priority 2 - Town Centre, Market Development & Management			
Manage and promote market days.	Market Income	Number of Stalls % increase in market fees	Town Surveyor TIC Manager
Produce a Bridport Market Directory.		Directory published Spring 2025	Town Surveyor TIC Manager
Barrack Street pedestrianisation including market area extension.		Proposal to Dorset Council Highways	Town Surveyor TIC Manager
Lobby Dorset Council to review financial impacts of car parking fees on footfall and business		Car park fee review undertaken	Town Clerk
Bus Station re-development.	Dorset Council	Scheme progressing to Planning Application Social housing element included	Town Surveyor

BRIDPORT TOWN PLAN 2024-2029

ENCL: 3907

Action	Funding sources	Measure of success Deliver by date	Responsible Officer/ Committee
Commission and publish Town Centre Health Check reports – including Market Reviews.	BTC	Surveys undertaken summer 2025 Report published Nov 2025	Projects Manager Town Centre WG
Town Centre 20 mph zone with establishment of 3 distinct gateway treatments.	Dorset Council BTC	20 mph zone approved by DC Gateway designed and installed March 2025	Town Clerk
Priority 3 – Keeping Bridport thriving - Promoting Bridport as Dorset's 'Eventful' Town			
Manage and deliver TIC operations.	BTC	Footfall numbers % increase in Income	TIC Manager
Produce and circulate a Town Guide.	BTC	Town Guide produced 2025	TIC Manager
Submit funding bids and co-ordinate Bridport Town of Culture programme July – Dec 2024.	BTC ADC/DC Grants	Submit ToC bid + 5 Arts Bids Appoint ToC Producer Support events programme 2024	Projects Manager
Provide resources and technical support to selected events in the Town – road closures, marshalling, equipment etc.	BTC	Number of events supported Calculate value of support provided	Town Surveyor TIC Manager
Priority 4 – Helping build a sustainable local economy			
Bridport Investment Plan – refreshed and promoted.	BTC	2025	Projects Manager
Submit bids for and co-ordinate piloting of the Bridport Futures Learning Hub to support new business start ups and succession planning for independent businesses.	BTC	UK Shared Prosperity bid submitted Co-ordinator appointed 4 'economic residencies' let Evaluation April 2025	Projects Manager
Convene St Michaels Working Group to support a high quality re development that delivers community needs.	BTC	Number of Working Group meetings	Town Clerk



For the Community

Bridport has developed a rich and distinct cultural offer. Maintaining and developing the community facilities is central to the future health of the town. The town's changing demography requires consideration to ensure that the support and services better respond to the needs of vulnerable residents as well as ensuring that young people can look forward to a worthwhile and rewarding future in the town.

Community Needs Action Plan 2024-2029			
Priority 5 - Supporting vulnerable and less advantaged people in our community			
Action	Funding sources	Measure Deliver by date	Responsible
Promote the building of affordable housing to meet defined local need – 1 and 2 bed units for social rent. Work with Community Land Trusts to find and develop housing opportunities. For example Boldwood House refurbishment as accommodation for under 30s.	Grants	Boldwood House Proposal submitted to Magna Board Simmer 2024	Projects Manager
Support community volunteers with resources and training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy Champions to provide advice and support around energy use, Push for greater drawdown of Healthy Homes Dorset advice and grant aid into Bridport. 		Number of groups and volunteers supported	Projects Manager
Support BLAP as a sounding board for liaison with surrounding parishes and to campaign for resources to address issues of rural deprivation	BTC	Number of Parishes attending BLAP meetings Number of projects developed by BLAP	Town Clerk
Continue to champion and support community transport needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number 7 bus subsidy and promotion, WATAG. 	BTC	Services supported	Town Clerk
Priority 6 - Supporting education, employment and leisure opportunities for young people			
Submit bids for and co-ordinate piloting of the Bridport Futures Learning Hub to promote skills training and apprenticeship for Bridport's Young Adults.	BTC	UK Shared Prosperity bid submitted Co-ordinator appointed Evaluation April 2025	Projects Manager

BRIDPORT TOWN PLAN 2024-2029

ENCL: 3907

Action	Funding sources	Measure Deliver by date	Responsible
Plottingham Field re-development – to include outdoor skate park, play area and walk/cycle route to Foundry Lea.	Dorset Council BTC Grants		Town Surveyor
Priority 7 - Managing buildings and land for community benefit			
Continue to pursue asset transfer opportunities and provide meeting and workspace for Community Groups to support their activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WI Hall refurbishment, • Explore option of a gallery space in the Grove, • Development of Old Dairy Site? • Sunny Days Building? • Explore housing and community use options for Boldwood House. 	BTC External funding Magna Housing BACH	Number of Groups supported Volunteer workdays delivered Options report to Magna Housing Feb 2024	Town Surveyor Projects Manager TIC Manager
Undertake energy conservation works on BTC Assets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mountfield Phase 2. 	BTC Low Carbon Dorset Grant	Works completed BTC GHG emissions reduced	Town Surveyor
Support outside organisations with management of land and assets for community benefit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Football Club Car Park – re surfacing, landscaping and flood relief scheme promoted as the Park and Stride option. • New Zealand Bridge repairs. 	BTC Grants		Town Surveyor
Priority 8 - Securing the ongoing development of cultural and recreational facilities available in the town			
Court Orchard Play Area – community re development project.	BTC Community Group	Completion of improvement works 2024	Town Surveyor Project Manager
3 or 4G artificial football pitch development – secure site and funding.	BTC FA grant	Site and funding secured	Town Surveyor

BRIDPORT TOWN PLAN 2024-2029

ENCL: 3907

Action	Funding sources	Measure Deliver by date	Responsible
Provide additional Allotment areas in the new enlarged Bridport Area.	BTC		Town Surveyor
Transfer of Skilling Oval from Magna to BTC.	BTC Magna Housing	Site transfer completed	Town Surveyor
New Site for Bridport Indoor Bowls Club.		New site negotiated.	Town Surveyor



For the Environment

Bridport benefits from the unique and attractive landscape setting of the town, recognised through designation as a National Landscape. The Brit and Asker River corridors and distinctive hilltop skyline offers provide green spaces important for community health and wellbeing. The Town Council, alongside many other partners, needs to take urgent action to respond to the climate and extinction emergencies facing the living world.

Environment Action Plan 2024-2029			
Priority 9 - Ensuring green space are managed sustainably and deliver ecosystem services for all			
Action	Funding	Measure Deliver by Date	Responsible
Provide advice and resources to community groups and support volunteers with resources and training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flood Wardens, • River Brit Catchment monitoring, • Tree Group, • Allington Hillbillies, • Energy Champions, • Gardening Club – Planters, • Millennium Green Coneygar Hill. • 	BTC	Number of Groups supported Environmental projects delivered	Town Surveyor Projects Manager
Keep management plans for BTC green spaces under review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asker Meadows Local Nature Reserve 2024, • Verge management contracts • CGR areas. 	BTC DC	Asker Meadows Management Plan reviewed March 2025	Town Surveyor Projects Manager Open Spaces WG
Work with Environment Agency and Wessex Water to improve water quality of rivers and West Bay		Improvements in water quality	Projects Manager
Secure coherent management and access to the River Brit riverside corridor.	BTC Haywards Magna	Single management plan agreed	Town Surveyor

BRIDPORT TOWN PLAN 2024-2029

ENCL: 3907

Action	Funding	Measure Deliver by Date	Responsible
Programme of works for open spaces for 2024/5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree planting along river Brit, • New Zealand pond creation, • Tree and scrub management Asker Meadows, Bothenhampton NR and Jellyfields, • Meadow Management; Burton Road wildflowers, • Coronation Meadow and • Allington Hill. 			Town Surveyor Projects Manager
Invest in electric vehicles & tools for outdoor works team. Invest in an industrial compost maker to deal with arisings from land management work.	BTC Grant		Town Surveyor
Bridport Emergency Plan under review.	BTC	Plan updated	Town Clerk
Priority 10 - Safeguarding heritage assets for future generations to enjoy			
Implement Streetscape and Heritage Study recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch two new Heritage Trails with guides and downloadable podcasts, • Undertake enhancement works driven by Town Centre Street De Cluttering project, • West Bay street furniture audit and action plan. 	BTC DC SDF Grant UK shared Prosperity	Heritage podcasts go live, Enhancement plan and funding secured West Bay Audit completed September 2024	Town Clerk Town Surveyor Projects Manager
Manage the George Biles Lottery Project	Lottery Grant	Digitised record of artworks Public exhibition summer 2024	Projects Manager



For a Well-Run Council (Best Value)

The operation of the town council will continue to achieve high standards of performance and accountability. Moving toward becoming a digital by default council is important whilst being mindful to provide for those in the community not able to access digital output.

Priority 11 - Using innovation, technology and new ways of working to improve value for money and efficiency in Council services			
Action	Funding sources	Measure Deliver by date	Responsible
Review of Town Council social media channel(s) including investment in improved website.	BTC	Social media policy in place as part of community engagement strategy. April 2025	Town Clerk
Continue transition to a digital council with all relevant services being available online, whilst maintaining ready access to traditional channels.	BTC	Two digital solutions implemented to supplement traditional channels. April 2025	Town Clerk
Review all BTC leases and update accordingly.	BTC		Town Surveyor
Review of staffing required to manage assets and services. Review Lengthsmens scheme in light of CGR	BTC	Staffing review complete Summer 2024	Town Surveyor
Deliver and embed changes arising from Community Governance Review	Existing revenue budgets	Objectives set out in transition plan April 2025	Town Clerk
Induction and training for councillors	Existing revenue budgets	Induction Day delivered Additional training in Planning, Finance, Charing, etc. delivered September 2024	Town Clerk
Agree a corporate and ward level community engagement strategy, including youth engagement. Ward based experimentation of different approaches to ensuring that our communities are informed and engaged in council business.	Existing revenue budgets	Strategy document agreed	Projects Manager

BRIDPORT TOWN PLAN 2024-2029

ENCL: 3907

Review of BTC banking arrangements, including ethical banking	Existing revenue budgets	New ethical banking in place Signatories updated October 2024	Finance & Office Manager
Action	Funding sources	Measure Deliver by date	Responsible
Telecommunications – upgrade phone system due to analogue ‘switch-off’, and upgrade to fibre to the premises (FTTP) when available	Existing revenue budgets/reserve funds	Fully VOIP phone system implemented – January 2024 FTTP installed April 2024 subject to availability	Town Clerk
Support Bridport Communities Trust – including setting up bank account and Charity Commission registration	Existing revenue budgets	Bank account in place Trust registered December 2024	Finance & Office Manager Project Manager
Review of Service Level Agreement-supported funding arrangements	Existing revenue budgets	Existing SLAs reviewed and new added arising from CGR October 2024	Town Clerk