

Minutes of the meeting of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held at Mountfield, Bridport on Monday 9 June 2025 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT: Cllr: Paddy Mooney (Chairman from item 2)

Cllrs: Nigel Amor	Nigel Rawlings
Rob Casey	Dave Rickard
Anna Killick	Sarah Williams
Ann Langridge	

Also in attendance: Cllr Ian Bark (Leader ex officio), Cllr Jonathan Bourbon, Cllr Bev Thornton, Lisa Pinch (Finance & Office Manager), Claire Peters-Way (Property Manager), Caroline Pearce (Project Manager and Community Initiatives Officer) and Daryl Chambers (Town Surveyor), 5 members of the public and 1 member of the press.

PUBLIC FORUM

A local resident addressed members in respect of the Old Railway Line. He circulated a paper to members outlining the history of the site with accompanying maps. He had engaged in correspondence with the Town Council on the subject and welcomed the introduction of the draft management plan and a public consultation. Members of the public were consulted a number of years ago, and grassland was not maintained as previously promised. He advised that the surface of the pathway was only 2.5m wide and there should be a 1m verge either side of the path. It was felt that the Town Council needs to identify areas to be maintained and use the correct cutting techniques. The resident questioned whether instead of selling pieces of land the Town Council could investigate easements or licences. Visibility is poor for cyclists coming down the slope and further maintenance & a safety audit was suggested. The area around the slow signs needs to be cut back further. The chain link fence erected several years ago would ease wildlife access if removed. He had further concerns that Bridport Town Council were not clear on the areas that were under their ownership nor were the Council aware of unauthorised use of land before the transfer.

The outgoing committee Chair, Cllr Paddy Mooney, thanked those present for their input and asked councillors if there were any questions.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Nominations were sought for Chairman by the Town Surveyor and it was proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED: that Cllr Paddy Mooney be elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year 2025/26.

Cllr Paddy Mooney assumed the chair.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Andrew Holdridge.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Rob Casey declared an interest in Minute 7, as a Badger Row property neighbour.

4. **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

Cllr Sarah Williams was nominated and seconded. Following a vote, it was

RESOLVED: that Cllr Sarah Williams be elected Vice Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year 2025/26.

5. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 10 March 2025 be confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman reported that he and the Town Clerk met with Jurassic Amateur Boxing Club and agreed a grant of £2,500. The Chairman felt confident that they would not request any further funding but if the grant is not sufficient, an additional meeting may be required.

Cllr Nigel Rawlings asked for an update in regard to locking of the gates at Borough Gardens. The Town Surveyor reported that he and the Property Manager had met with Magna Housing Ltd, who along with the Fire Service expressed concerns about the proposal to lock the gates at night. It was felt that locking the gates would move the problem elsewhere in the town and engagement with young people is needed.

6. **BEST VALUE AND SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Sub Committee held on 3 June 2025 be received and adopted and the following recommendations be approved:

- | | |
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| Minute 6 | Policies |
| RESOLVED: | that the draft Equality & Diversity Policy, Dignity at Work Policy, Safeguarding Policy, and Data Protection Policy be approved as tabled, subject to clarification of the definition of harassment used in the first two of these documents. |
| Minute 7 | Internal Audit and Annual Accounts 2024/25 |
| RESOLVED: | that the report of the independent internal auditor be approved. |
| Minute 7 | Internal Audit and Annual Accounts 2024/25 |
| RECOMMEND: | that the annual accounts for 2024-25 be approved. |
| Minute 8 | Annual Report |
| RESOLVED: | that the Annual Report be approved for publication, subject to the correction of the minor typographical errors highlighted at the meeting. |

Cllr Dave Rickard questioned the way in which central government can impose policies for example higher National Insurance contributions, after Town and Parish Councils have set their annual budgets. He asked if this could be raised through DAPTC.

7. ENVIRONMENT & SOCIAL WELLBEING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4 June 2025 be received and adopted and the following recommendations be approved:

Minute 6 (ii) **Town Surveyor's Report**

RESOLVED: that (i) land at Badger Row be acquired in accordance with the Allotments Act 1908, and (ii) the proposed uses be approved.

Minute 6 (iii)

RESOLVED that the asset transfer of Jellyfields, and Bothenhampton Nature Reserve, be pursued as previously agreed, under delegation to the Town Surveyor and Property Manager.

Minute 6 (iv)

RESOLVED that the draft agreement between Bridport Town Council and Bridport Millennium Green Trust be approved.

Minute 6 (v)

RESOLVED that further background investigation be carried out in respect of the issues raised by the Environment & Social Wellbeing Committee in respect of a draft agreement with Friends of the River Flyfishers, and a further report be provided before any agreement is approved.

Minute 6 (vi)

RESOLVED that the draft management plan for the Burton Road to West Bay Trailway be approved for consultation, subject to incorporation of the matters raised in discussion at the Environment & Social Wellbeing Committee.

The Town Surveyor reported that the draft management plan included six areas including to the top of Burton Road and down to the play area. Following the Environment and Social Wellbeing Committee the consultation postcard had been updated. Two new noticeboards have been installed at the top of the railway track on Burton Road and at Meadowlands. A consultation poster will be advertised with the draft Management Plan available to view at the Town Council office and on the Town Council website. A letter is to be sent to residents. The consultation period will end on the 31st August and the consultation postcard will be available at the Town Council stand at Bridport Food Festival and Melpash Show, as well as the Town Council office and Bridport Tourist Information Centre.

8. MARKET & BUSINESS LIAISON WORKING GROUP

The notes of the meeting held on 8 April 2025 were received and noted. There were no recommendations for consideration.

9. LAND ADJACENT TO THE BRIDLEWAY, BURTON ROAD TO WEST BAY

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 4018. The Chair outlined the options available as stated in point 3.2 of the report. It was proposed that the Town Council is to treat the trailway as an 'public open space'. Any legal matters are to be considered in the closed session. Cllr Ian Bark reiterated that if the Town Council are to treat the land as an 'open space' the view of the Town Council is that it has not proceeded with any unlawful

action. The Town Surveyor acknowledged that the Town Council had not consulted with residents enough.

RESOLVED: that the report was considered and it was agreed that the land be treated as an open space. This does not have direct legal ramifications.

10. APPOINTMENTS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COUNCIL

The Chairman presented the draft list of appointments for 2025/26. He asked if members were happy to report back any updates from meetings which they attend. This would help members understand the role of the organisation and, where applicable, information can be used to help finalise SLA agreements. It was noted that the upcoming SLA meetings are to be held in August.

Cllr Ann Langridge reported that West Bay Community Forum has since folded, and West Bay Discovery Centre is now run by Bridport Town Council.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to report back to Environment and Social Wellbeing Committee.

RECOMMENDED: that West Bay Community Forum and West Bay Discovery Centre is removed from the list of representatives on outside bodies, as in Appendix 1 to the minutes.

11. SERVICES ADMINISTERED BY THE TOWN SURVEYOR AND PROPERTY MANAGER

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Surveyor and Property Manager, ENCL: 4020, in respect of the following projects:

Asker Meadows Foot Bridge

Dorset Council is to carry out maintenance to the foot bridge over River Asker from New Zealand Farm Close.

No decision required, as this item was for information only.

Charging opportunities at Bridport FC Car Park

As previously reported Bridport Family Hub (part of Dorset Council) have requested the option for monthly permits for staff parking at the Bridport Football Club.

RESOLVED: that the Town Surveyor be delegated to continue discussions with Bridport Family Hub to introduce a monthly parking permit.

Dorset Council Registrar Lease

A new 9-year lease has been agreed with Dorset Council for use one ground floor room (office), Committee Room (two days a week) and one parking space.

No decision required, as this item was for information only.

12. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Town Surveyor presented List 6 of the 2024/25 accounts, ENCL: 4021, in the sum of £176,416.89, which had been authorised for payment since the last meeting.

The Finance and Office Manager presented List 1 of the 2025/26 accounts, in the sum of £298,098.91 which had been authorised for payment since the last meeting. This having been tabled for members' information was approved by the Chairman.

RESOLVED: that the payments presented be approved and signed by the Chairman.

13. COMMUNICATIONS

None were received.

14. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

RESOLVED: that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded, and they are instructed to withdraw.

15. LAND ADJACENT TO THE BRIDLEWAY, BURTON ROAD TO WEST BAY

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 4022. The Chairman briefly summarised the options as stated in 4.1 of the report. It was noted that if the land is to be treated as an open space this would constitute in the Town Council advertising the sales for two weeks in a local newspaper. It was noted that some sections of the trailway have been subject to a 'land grab'. Members discussed the feasibility of a licence to occupy, and this would be carried out case by case. A Facebook page had been created by residents.

Following the discussion it was put to a vote, 7 councillors agreed and Cllr Anna Killick abstained.

RESOLVED: that the Town Surveyor be given the delegated authority to liaise with Bridport Town Council's solicitor in respect of drawing up a licence agreement and obtaining any legal advice.

RESOLVED: that current sale negotiation is to proceed on the basis of a licence to occupy the land only rather than a sale of land. The potential second sale and any future sales will not to proceed during the consultation on the management plan.

RESOLVED: that the Town Surveyor be given the delegated authority to approach the residents group with a view to open up dialog to address their concerns and ideas for the Management Plan.

16. REVIEW OF FINANCE SOFTWARE

The Finance and Officer Manager presented a report updating members on the proposed changes to the finance software used. It is not felt that the current system adequately meets our needs. A new system will help to facilitate a full and detailed budget, produce the Agar and expand with the councils' needs over time. Data would be back dated to the 1st April 2025 and funding is to be used from existing budgets.

She thanked Paul Fuszard for his longstanding work as the previous Finance and Office Manager.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that the procurement and implementation of the Rialtas (Omega) software be delegated to the Responsible Finance Officer.

17. CAR PARK ENFORCEMENT

The Town Surveyor updated members on the council's Plottingham and Bridport Football Club car park including existing parking machine arrangements and tickets.

RESOLVED: that the Town Surveyor be given delegated authority to proceed with working with Dorset Council on a parking enforcement scheme for the Town Council's car parks.

The meeting closed at 8:26pm.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 8 September 2025

Appendix 1

Organisation	No. of Reps	Nigel Amor	Ian Bark	Bridget Bolwell	Dave Bolwell	Jonathan Bourbon	Andrew Holdridge	Ann Langridge	Paddy Mooney	Nigel Rawlings	Anne Rickard	Dave Rickard	Bev Thornton	Sarah Williams	Steve Williams	David Worthington	Rob Casey	Kelvin Clayton	Julian Jones	Anna Killick	Sarah Carney	Total
2020 Skate & Ride	1																✓					1
Allington Hill & Cooper's Wood & Field	2					✓							✓									2
Asker Nature Reserve Project	1															✓						1
Bridport & District Football Partnership	1																✓					1
Bridport & West Bay Business Chamber	1		✓																			1
Bridport Area Development Trust	1					✓																1
Bridport Arts Centre Mgmt Committee	1 + R								✓					R								1+R
Bridport Charities Trustees	Mayor + 3	✓	✓								✓										✓	4
Bridport Citizen's Advice	1															✓						0
Bridport Community Orchard Group	1									✓												1
Bridport Harbour Advisory Group	1					✓																1
Bridport Hat Festival	1														✓							1
Bridport Heritage Forum	1													✓								1
Bridport Leisure Centre	1 + R																	✓		R		1+R
Bridport Local Area Partnership (BLAP)	2 + 2 reserve		✓				R					R									✓	2+2R
Bridport Local Food Group	1							✓														1
Bridport Millennium Green Trust	1							✓														1
Bridport Museum Trust	1			✓																		1
Bridport Young Persons Action Trust	1																			✓		1
Bridport Youth and Community Centre	1 + R						✓													R		1+R
Bridport Twinning Association	Mayor + 1										✓				✓							2
Burrough Harmony Trust	1 + R			R									✓									1+R
Christmas Cheer Committee	1										✓											1
DAPTC	2																			✓	✓	2
Dorset Climate Action Network	1																			✓		1
Dorset Coast Forum	1											✓										1
Lyric Theatre	1 + R												R				✓					1+R
Magna Housing	3								✓											✓	✓	3
National Highways	1						✓															
Precision Football Arena	1																✓					1
Pymore Village Management Company	1								✓													
Rural Services Network	1																				✓	1
St Michaels WG	2									✓		✓										1
WATAG	2									✓											✓	2