

Minutes of the meeting of **BRIDPORT TOWN COUNCIL** held at the Town Hall on Tuesday 24 June 2025 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT Cllr Anne Rickard – (Chair and Town Mayor)

Cllr	Nigel Amor	Anna Killick
	Ian Bark	Ann Langridge
	Bridget Bolwell	Patrick Mooney
	Dave Bolwell	Nigel Rawlings
	Jonathan Bourbon	Dave Rickard
	Sarah Carney	Bev Thornton
	Kelvin Clayton	Sarah Williams
	Andrew Holdridge	Steve Williams
	Julian Jones	

ALSO PRESENT Daryl Chambers (Town Surveyor), Lisa Pinch (Finance and Office Manager), Caroline Pearce (Project Manager and Community Initiatives Officer) and Claire Peters-Way (Property Manager), 8 members of the public and 1 member of the press.

OPEN PUBLIC FORUM

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting.

A local resident addressed members in respect of the Broomhills Household Recycling Centre in Bridport. As a resident who visits the recycling centre on a weekly basis it was felt that the current system works well and if a booking system is implemented this would be inconvenient for users.

Another resident questioned how Dorset Council would save money by introducing a booking system, and if extra staff would be employed as a result. Dorset Council has stated that a booking system would help with queues, however it is understood that queues are not a major issue at Broomhills. Problems can occur for users leaving the recycling centre and having to wait for the traffic lights to change. A further resident asked if Dorset Council could guarantee that the hours will not be reduced.

In addition a resident reported that they had removed a sofa that had been left on the beach at West Bay. There were concerns that introducing a booking system would increase fly tipping. It was noted that a number of public waste bins had been removed from some parts of West Bay including the entrance/exit from the beaches. The bins have been replaced with larger bins in different areas causing people to leave their rubbish on the ground where the bin used to be. It was asked if Councillors could assist in the matter.

The Mayor thanked all those attending and participating in the Public Forum.

18. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Rob Casey and David Worthington.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

20. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor (Chairman).

21. STANDING ORDER 4(k)(vi)

There were no questions pursuant to standing order 4(k)(vi).

22. CLERK TRANSITION AND SUSPENSION OF THE GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

The Council noted that the Town Clerk has left the role and that the Deputy Town Clerk has been appointed Acting Clerk with immediate effect until the newly appointed Clerk takes up post on 1st August 2025.

The Council further noted that the Acting Clerk does not currently hold the required sector qualification. As a result, the Council no longer meets the eligibility criteria to exercise the General Power of Competence under the Localism Act 2011 and the Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012.

The General Power of Competence is therefore suspended during this interim period. The Council will consider re-adopting the General Power of Competence at its first meeting after 1st August 2025, once the qualified Clerk is in post.

23. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

(a) PLANNING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 2 June 2025 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor Ian Bark.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 2 June 2025 be received.

Cllr Sarah Carney asked if there were any updates relating to the Tree Preservation Order for land west of St Swithins Road. Members confirmed that no updates have been received and the Town Surveyor reported that he would follow this up with Dorset Council.

(B) FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 9 June 2025 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor Paddy Mooney.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 9 June 2025 be received and adopted, and that the recommendations therein be approved, as set out below: -

(Minute 6) ANNUAL ACCOUNTS – YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2025

RESOLVED: that the Annual Accounts for 2024/25 be approved.

(Minute 10) APPOINTMENTS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COUNCIL

RESOLVED: that the list of representatives on outside bodies be approved as in Appendix 1 to the minutes, subject to any additional amendments at Full Council.

(c) **ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL WELLBEING COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Social Wellbeing Committee held on 4 June 2025 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor Dave Rickard.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Social Wellbeing Committee held on 4 June 2025 be received and adopted.

Cllr Sarah Carney thanked Kelvin Clayton for his work as previous Chairman of the Environment and Social Wellbeing Committee and stressed her disappointment that he was not elected as chair for the forth coming year.

24. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2024/2025

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 4024. The Finance and Office Manager thanked the internal auditor Tim Light, previous Finance and Office Manager Paul Fuszard and the Town Clerk Will Austin for their support in producing the annual accounts and Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). It was recommended that the AGAR be approved for submission, including the following:

- The Annual Accounts;
- The Annual Internal Audit Report;
- Section 1 of the AGAR, the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25;
- Section 2 of the AGAR, the Accounting Statements 2024/25; and
- The Conflict of Interest with BDO LLP form.

The procedure for approval of the above, and for submission of returns for the council was moved and seconded, put to the vote and declared to be carried. It was therefore:

RESOLVED: that

- (i) the Council notes the Annual Internal Auditor Report;
- (ii) the Council approves the Annual Governance Statement;
- (iii) the Council approves the Accounting Statements for 2024/2025;
- (iv) the Council declares that there are no conflicts of interest with BDO LLP; and
- (v) the Annual Return be signed and submitted to the External Auditor.

RESOLVED: That the notice for the exercise of public rights for the inspection of the council's accounts be approved. The period will commence on Wednesday 25th June 2025 and end on Wednesday 6th August 2025, in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

RESOLVED: The Responsible Financial Officer confirmed that the Notice and the approved and signed Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25 will be published on the council's website and noticeboard before the start of the inspection period.

25. DORSET COUNCIL HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRES

Cllr Ian Bark addressed members with his concerns about the introduction of a county wide booking system at Household Waste Recycling Centres. It was acknowledged that the Broomhills site in Bridport is efficient, with no queues to access or exit the site, and staff are helpful. He questioned Dorset Councils decision and reported that this was partly due to finance, with Dorset Council struggling to maintain the services it delivers, and funding from central government decreasing. Unlike Dorset Council, Bridport Town Council is not capped by a precept. Research carried out by DEFRA (January 2023) reported that 43% of Local Authorities have a booking systems in place. Of the fifty-three Local Authorities who implemented a booking system forty-eight of these had a booking system at all of their Household Recycling Centres. Five local authorities adopted a mixed approach.

Reported benefits of a booking system included, but not limited to, better traffic management, reduced pollution, improved access, financial savings, fewer but more effective visits and better identification of trade waste. A number of drawbacks included set up and running costs, technical failure, poor efficiency, increase in telephone calls to make a booking and public/political criticism. Dorset Council have quoted an annual saving of £450-£650K, which will be used to maintain other services.

The potential increase of fly-tipping is also a concern. However, DEFRA have reported that some local authorities with booking systems show that the number of fly-tipping has decreased.

Cllr Bark confirmed that he felt that the booking system would help solve traffic problems in other sites within Dorset, but a blanket policy across all sites is not welcomed. Dorset Council have not consulted with residents and Cllr Bark proposed Bridport Town Council supporting a pilot scheme in certain areas of the county where problems occur. However, Bridport should continue to operate as current until a pilot scheme is completed and a full consultation has been implemented.

The Mayor thanked Cllr Ian Bark and councillors discussed the following:

- The lack of evidence from Dorset Council to justify the proposal.
- Dorset Council paying £435,000 to Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council so Dorset residents can use their recycling centres. With BCP Council residents using Dorset's sites for free.
- The introduction of an online & telephone booking system and the potential problems for older people. Currently many users enjoy the social aspect of going to the Household Recycling Centre.
- The lack of public consultation and democratic process.

- Dorset Council have informed residents that a public consultation is not required.
- It was noted that a number of people who do not reside in Dorset use Dorset's Household Recycling Centre's. It was asked if residents could show their address to prove they are a resident of Dorset.
- The delivery of half an hour slots and the potential problem for people missing their allocated time slot.
- Lack of evidence to show that a booking system is appropriate for Bridport.
- Would a cost saving limit and or reduce the amount of capacity.

Cllr Dave Bolwell reported that he felt disappointed with the way Dorset Council have handled the situation. As a Dorset Council Councillor he and others have questioned the blanket wide approach. Members reported that they were unable to find any records from Dorset Council Cabinet meetings as to when the proposal was agreed.

Members agreed that the proposed booking system is not appropriate for Bridport's Household Recycling Centre and a full public consultation is required.

In response to the motion proposed by Cllr Ian Bark, members agreed to change the original proposed motion. Following the discussion it was put to a vote, 17 councillors agreed and 1 abstained, and

RESOLVED: that the Town Surveyor, Mayor, and Leader of the Council be given the delegated authority to contact Dorset Council with the following motion as proposed 'Bridport Town Council does not support the imposition of a blanket policy across all areas. Specific sites such as the Bridport Household Waste Recycling Centre should continue to operate as now'.

RESOLVED: that in addition a letter will be sent accompanying the proposal.

26. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

RESOLVED: that the subject of the open public forum at the next Full Council meeting shall be the business community.

Cllr Bridget Bolwell reported that she had been contacted by Adam Shelley Headmaster of The Sir John Colfox Academy regarding the Cradle to Career project and the prospect of joining up with local groups and businesses. After a brief discussion it was:

RESOLVED: that Adam Shelley be asked to attend the next Full Council meeting to give an update about the Cradle to Career project.

27. COMMUNICATIONS

Consideration was given to the Town Mayor's engagements, ENCL: 4025. The Chairman reported that she has been invited to York University to speak about Bridport's Rights Respecting status as the first Rights Respecting town.

RESOLVED: that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor be thanked for their work, and the report be noted.

The Town Surveyor reported that a local business (West Dorset Leisure Holidays) have donated Ropey the elephant to the town. Bridport Town Council plan to take it on tour and are encouraging businesses to get in touch.

Cllr Sarah Carney reported on a recent meeting with DAPTC on the 20 June 2025. This included a briefing on engagement of Dorset Council's The Fresh Start Report findings. The report reflected on ways in which town and parishes may take more responsibility within their area from Dorset Council. Bridport Town Council is a good example and have progressed transfer of assets from Dorset Council.

The meeting closed at 8:14pm.

The next meeting of Bridport Town Council will be held on 23 September 2025