

Minutes of the ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL WELLBEING COMMITTEE
of Bridport Town Council held in Mountfield, Bridport on Wednesday 9 September
2026 at 6.30pm.

PRESENT: Cllrs: Kelvin Clayton (Chairman)

Ian Bark	Anne Rickard
Neil Barnes	Dave Rickard
Jonathan Bourbon	Bev Thornton
Ann Langridge	

ALSO PRESENT: Sally Freemantle (Town Clerk), Daryl Chambers (Town Surveyor),
Caroline Pearce (Project Manager and Community Initiatives
Officer), Claire Peters-Way (Property Manager)

PUBLIC FORUM

There were two members of the public present, Sue Wright (Loders Transport Group)
and Sheila Meaney (Bridport Heritage Forum).

It was agreed that the presentations by the members of the public would take place
during discussion of the relevant agenda items.

9. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Julian Jones and Ian Bark (for
lateness).

10. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3 June 2026 were confirmed as
a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

11. LODERS TRANSPORT GROUP

RESOLVED: to suspend Standing Orders to allow the Member of the Public to speak.

Members received a presentation by Sue Wright of Loders Transport Group regarding
the proposed safe non-road route between Loders and Bradpole. The route aims to
reduce car dependency and provide residents with a safe and accessible option for
walking and cycling. She explained that previous attempts to address the problem had
not been successful. Sue Wright referred to Loders Parish Council's environmental
initiatives, which focus on transport, energy and wildlife. As part of these initiatives,
three groups were established in 2022, including the Loders Transport Group.

It was noted that over 70% of car journeys are five miles or less, and the main reason
residents do not walk between Loders and Bradpole is concern for their safety. The
road has a 60mph speed limit, no pavement and several blind bends along the route.
Dorset Council has recognised that the route is not safe for residents travelling to
school and have provided a free school bus as a safe alternative to walking or cycling.

An opposition group has been formed raising concerns regarding the increase in sport cyclists, motorbikes and privacy concerns from users using the proposed route. Footpath (FP37) is being proposed by Loders Parish Council to create a route between Loders and Bradpole. Loders Transport Group states that the footpath is not suitable for wheelchair users, includes a steep incline and crosses oncoming traffic.

Loders Transport Group's proposed route follows the former railway route linking into the cycle path in Bradpole. Sue Wright made reference to similar traffic free paths including from Chideock to Bridport. Discussions have taken place with the three landowners whose properties the proposed path will pass through. Members have also spoken to Dorset Council's Active Travel team and continue to raise awareness through community events. She encouraged members to support active travel initiatives and respond to Dorset Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

The Chair gave his support for the proposal and thanked Sue Wright for her presentation.

Councillor Jonathan Bourbon asked for clarification on the proposed route put forward by the opposition group. Sue Wright explained that the opposition group's main concerns are unfounded with members raising issues with those experienced in Maiden Newton, where the introduction of a tarmac surface has led to an increase in the number of cyclists travelling through the village.

Sue Wright reported that a monthly bike ride is held from Loders to Bridport.

Ian Bark arrived at the meeting at 6.20pm

The Town Surveyor reported that Bridport Town Council have previously supported the proposal.

RESOLVED: that Standing Orders be re-instated.

RESOLVED: that the update be supported.

Sue Wright left the meeting at 6.22pm and did not return.

12. RED DRESS PROJECT

RESOLVED: to suspend Standing Orders to allow the Member of the Public to speak.

Members received a presentation on The Red Dress Project by Sheila Meaney of Bridport Heritage Forum. The Red Dress was created over fourteen years ago by 380 people in fifty-one countries. Sheila explained that The Dress is an internationally acclaimed work of art in embroidery with over a million stitches. The dress incorporates stories told by stitches from rural life and war and is a platform for giving people a voice, skills and opportunities.

The project will include a year of community involvement including community activities and recording history & heritage in different forms of media. The Dress will be on display in the Town Hall for a fortnight next summer. Local schools have been approached to take part in activities. Salway Ash primary school recently took part in a workshop whereby pupils created peg dolls with pupils inspired to try sewing. It is hoped that 180-peg dolls will be created to go on display in windows of the Town

Hall. Other activities are to include paint Bridport day, where pictures will be displayed in Bridport Arts Centre. Events will also be held at Bridport Youth & Community Centre, Bridport Museum, West Bay Discovery Centre and Bridport Library.

The Dress was previously displayed at Killerton House where 26k visitors attended. Bridport Heritage Forum thanked Bridport Town Council for their advice and support with the project and requested additional logistical support. The exhibition is expected to attract thousands of visitors to Bridport.

The Chair thanked Sheila Meaney for her presentation and opened the meeting for questions.

Councillor Bev Thornton noted that the project could be linked to various areas of the school curriculum. Sheila Meaney emphasised the importance of involving local schools, all of which have been approached, and explained that the peg doll sessions could be completed within a single afternoon.

The Town Surveyor reported that officers have been liaising with Bridport Heritage Forum regarding the logistics of the main event. This includes staging of the dress, a booking system, stewards and additional parking.

Sheila Meaney reported that The Dress will be on display from Saturday 31st July 2027 to Sunday 15th August 2027. A preview day for sponsors and invited guest will be held on the Saturday with public viewing from Sunday 1st August 2027.

RESOLVED: that Standing Orders be re-instated.

The Chairman asked members to agree additional support, and it was

RESOLVED: that Bridport Town Council is to provide additional logistical support for the Red Dress Project.

Sheila Meaney left the meeting at 6.42pm and did not return.

13. PROJECT UPDATES

Members considered updates on Town Council projects, ENCL: 4157.

The Project Manager provided an update on resilience work including plans for a desktop exercise in October to be held by DAPTC focusing on emergency response scenarios. Additional beach matting has been purchased, and discussions are being held with Dorset Council's Harbour Team regarding the installation. Members were reminded that the beach wheelchair scheme and its volunteers are under the responsibility of Bridport Town Council.

The Neighbourhood Plan final report is expected in mid-September. It was noted that a number of questions from the Examiner have previously been answered. The next Neighbourhood Plan JCC meeting is expected to be held in October 2026.

The Town Surveyor provided an update on the Brit Valley Project, Allington Hill events including an upcoming Harvest Festival in October, the new water supply at Bradpole allotment site, WI Hall fire alarm and Edible Bridport. Bridport Football Club are raising

money to replace the boundary fence, and the new panels are to facilitate a mural painting. Funding has been secured to install new Christmas lighting in Bucky Doo Square, and additional trees will be installed throughout the town centre. A grant has been submitted to the Tree Council for additional shading trees for play areas. Consideration is being given for additional safety measures at West Bay play area including hatched marking. A request has been received for a junior pitch at Gore Cross. National Grid are to replace the substation at the Millennium Green. The Mound toilets remain closed due to structural safety concerns. A planning application for the necessary repairs has been submitted, and the temporary toilets at Fisherman's Green are likely to remain in place while the Mound toilets remain closed.

RESOLVED: that the updates be noted.

14. WB1 WEST BAY TO BRIDPORT SHUTTLE BUS

Consideration was given to a report by the Project Manager, ENCL: 4157.

The Project Manager reported that a Memorandum of Understanding has been produced in agreement with Dorset Council and Dorset Community Transport to provide the WB1 bus service. It was noted that the grant agreement is with Dorset Council with funding provided by the Bus Service Improvement Plan and there would be a separate operator agreement with Dorset Community Transport.

Councillor Neil Barnes raised a question regarding the wheelchair accessibility of the shuttle bus. The Project Manager explained that it was an aspiration but we could not operate a registered timetable shuttle service with an accessible minibus. With a minibus we could only have run a bookable service. Large buses, such as those run by First Bus on that route, have low floors (via a quickly deployed fold-out ramp) and passengers travelling in their wheelchair only have to reverse up to a back rest and apply a brake in a designated space.

RESOLVED: that the Memorandum of Understanding be approved.

15. SLADES GREEN AND GREENLANE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2026-2031

Members considered the responses and updated Management Plan, ENCL: 4159.

The Property Manager reported that the area had not previously had a management plan and the document is to formalise this. The draft plan had been subject to a public consultation throughout the summer which received eighteen responses. Councillors were asked for any further comments before the Management Plan is submitted to Full Council on 22 September 2026 for approval.

RESOLVED: that the report, including Appendices 1 and 2 be noted.

16. CRADLE TO CAREER

Cllr Anne Rickard raised concerns regarding current education legislation and questioned the potential impact the Cradle to Career project could have. Councillor Ian Bark emphasised the significant amount of time children spend outside of formal education and highlighted the need for a wider support system focused on early childhood development and parental responsibilities. He emphasised the importance of developing partnerships with local businesses to support young people in

progressing into employment, as well as the need for apprenticeship opportunities. He suggested a dedicated bursary scheme for apprentices could be considered similar to the Bridport Literary bursary.

Councillor Bev Thornton felt that there is a high number of disadvantaged children and the project helps to address the lack of support for children and young people. She noted that further information was needed on how the project would operate in Bridport and what support would be available to parents to help develop essential skills before children start school.

The Chair acknowledged that changes with the education systems are required at a national level. He asked what support the Town Council could give to the Cradle to Career project.

Members suggested approaching Adam Shelley for more information about how the Town Council can support the initiative and to better understand the project's details and requirements.

Members discussed the importance of apprenticeship schemes, noting that the Town Council has previously employed apprentices within both the grounds team and office.

RESOLVED: that (i) the Town Clerk is to contact Adam Shelley for an update on the Cradle to Career project and ask what support the Town Council could offer, (ii) the Town Clerk to collate information received from members and report back to Adam Shelley.

17. ASKER MEADOWS

The Town Clerk reported that a request has been received from Asker Meadows Local Nature Reserve Group seeking permission to use Asker Meadows for the Nature Buddies scheme. The scheme enables people to spend time in nature offering one to one support through its buddy system, providing people the opportunity to access green spaces and giving them confidence to engage with the outdoors.

RESOLVED: that permission be given to the Asker Meadows Local Nature Reserve Group volunteers to use Asker Meadows as part of the Nature Buddies scheme.

The meeting closed at 7.26pm.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 4 November 2026