

Minutes of the meeting of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held at Mountfield, Bridport on Monday 14 September 2026 at 6.30pm.

PRESENT: Cllr: Andy Holdridge (Chairman)

Cllrs: Jonathan Bourbon	Paddy Mooney (Leader ex officio)
Rob Casey	Anne Rickard
Anna Killick	Sarah Williams
Ann Langridge	

Also Present: Cllr Ian Bark.

In attendance: Sally Freemantle (Town Clerk), Lisa Pinch (Finance & Office Manager), and Claire Peters-Way (Property Manager).

PUBLIC FORUM

There were no members of the public present.

25. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs David Worthington and Rob Casey (for lateness).

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at this time. It was noted that this did not preclude Councillors from declaring interests later in the meeting should they become apparent.

27. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 8 June 2026 be confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Cllr Rob Casey arrived at the meeting at 6.31pm.

28. BEST VALUE AND SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Sub Committee held on 8 September 2026 be received and the following recommendations be approved:

(Min: 11) TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS TO SMALLER BODIES 2026/27

Applicant and Purpose of Grant	Award (£)
Bridport Stage Company - started in 2016 (Shakespeare originally) to raise funds for Samaritans via staging plays. All ages and abilities but especially ADHD/ASD physical challenges and mental health issues.	£500.00
Home in Bridport – For three years we've taken around 120 children from three Bridport Primary Schools for a day out to Tamarisk Farm. Each day	£500.00

30 or so children with teachers, volunteers, catering and farmers spend the day exploring everything from cattle and sheep, to weaving, to biodiversity and how to work with sheep dogs.	
The Stepping Out Cancer Rehabilitation Group - provides an exercise and wellbeing programme designed to help members with their recovery, during and after receiving a diagnosis of cancer.	£500.00
Bridport Heritage Forum - The Red Dress project runs from September 2026 – September 2027. The final weeks of the project, sees the internationally acclaimed 'Red Dress' exhibited in the Town Hall. Entry will be free. In the months leading to this exhibition, the Forum is undertaking a diverse series of community events, workshops and experiences.	£500.00
Melplash Agricultural Limited - Discover Farming is the education programme run and managed by the Melplash Agricultural Society with the aim of promoting and improving agriculture and horticulture in West Dorset for the public benefit.	£500.00
Bridport Football Club - to replace the first phase of the boundary wall. The existing wall has deteriorated and needs replacing to improve safety, security, and the appearance of the club and surrounding area. Subject to funding, we aim to complete this first phase within the next 12 weeks.	£780.00 with a request that Bridport Town Council is kept updated
Bridport Young Performers - the core objective is to facilitate the growth of social proficiencies among youths while providing avenues for their personal advancement. By uniting individuals aged 12 to 25, we nurture their aptitude in the performing arts outside the conventional educational setting.	£500.00
Bridport Folk Festival - to bring a long weekend festival to music, dance and spoken word to the town. The festival takes places at the end of July.	£500.00
B Sharp - Bridport Boombox, a weekly out-of-school music project for young people aged 3-13 from Bridport and the surrounding area.	£500.00
Building a Neurodiverse Community - To develop and distribute emergency support bags for individuals who may experience sensory overwhelm, emotional dysregulation, or mental health crises.	£500.00 Note: future applications would require information about other fundraising activities
Fingerprint Dance CIC - a creative dance and live music project for adults and young people with learning disabilities and the wider community in Bridport.	£500.00
Bridport Swift Town - a locally led conservation and community project addressing the severe decline in Swift numbers.	£500.00
Friends of the Lyric Theatre - HERSONG is an annual performance platform for women and girls from across the community championing their creativity and lives through spoken word, theatre, dance, music, photography to co-create work that is raw, real and new. Coinciding with International Women's Day this production will be part of a weekend of	£450.00

celebrating the diversity of women and girls particularly those new to-Bridport from other cultures and who often experience social exclusion and mental health challenges.	
Bridport Food Matters - Edible Bridport have been developing the new site at St. Cecilia's. With the help and support of BTC, volunteers and several funders have built raised veg beds, compost bins, started a pond and installed a shed and Pergola. Over the Autumn 2026 and Spring 2027 we would now like to create more veg beds and need to purchase bulk compost and wood to do so.	£500.00
Bridport Literary Festival - is expanding the children's programme. We have a day of children's events in the Lyric Theatre on the first Festival weekend (KidLit) which we will be funding ourselves, so here we are requesting help with delivering our schools' programme.	£500.00
Bridport Millennium Green Trust - Last year we were able to create safe access onto the Millennium Green lawn with the installation of a gate and fencing. A diseased box hedge had to be removed, leaving an area to the side of the drive approaching Mountfield. This project will complete the work by filling in a gap left from the work last year, planting up this area with shrubs that will tolerate the extreme weather conditions. It is proposed to replicate the floriferous hedge on the path to the side of the lawn and plant with Hypericum.	£450.00
Bridport Youth Dance – Education programme. The B education programme for ages 5 to 18 years with an emerging artists/youth ambassador initiative that supports and mentors young people who are forging future careers in dance and the arts (for ages 18 to 28 years).	£350.00
Bridport Youth Dance – Choreography Geography and The Dance Weavers films are a part of Bridport Youth Dance's dance in the landscape initiative. CG takes dance into local rural and coastal areas and creates unique and memorable site specific performances. Alongside we also create beautiful dance films called The Dance Weavers which explores movement and dance in the land with local BYD young emerging artists and dancers.	£300.00
Bridport Youth Dance – outreach programme. Bridport Youth Dance has established a thriving community outreach initiative taking dance into local primary schools, working with Bridport Parkinson's group and 'Move and Groove' adults dance for ages 55 to 90 years. (Soon to be expanded to 95 years as there are currently two incredible 90 year old ladies in the class).	£500.00
Bridport Museum Trust - This year marks the 25th anniversary of the declaration of the Jurassic Coast as a World Heritage site, and to commemorate this, we will be launching an exhibition to showcase a recently discovered fossil of an Ichthyosaur. Recovered from Burton Bradstock beach by holiday makers, the fossil was transported to Bristol University for further examination where its rarity was confirmed in relation to the location which it was found, the importance of rescuing it, and the great story surrounding the remains of such a large, ancient animal.	£500.00 The ceiling amount for grants to smaller bodies is £500.00 unless circumstances are exceptional.
Bridport Food Bank - seeking assistance with funding fresh fruit and vegetables to assist clients with healthy eating and helping to diminish health inequalities where possible. We currently spend approximately £750 per month on fresh fruit and vegetables, a major cost driver. £500	£500.00

would support approximately 3 weeks supply of fresh fruit and vegetables.	
Total	£10,330

The Town Clerk gave a brief update on applications received from Bridport Youth Dance, Bridport Museum and Bridport Football Club.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the above grants and identified amounts be approved under the General Power of Competence.
- (ii) that it be RECOMMENDED to Full Town Council that an earmarked reserve be created for the remaining £4,670 for grant funding should any application be made during the remainder of the financial year.
- (iii) that it be noted that Bridport Youth Dance made three separate applications for three specific projects, and whilst the application guidelines to not prohibit multiple applications, it was felt that with the exception of the application for the outreach programme, the grant awarded by the Town Council should match the fundraising made by the organisation for each project. Therefore, the Bridport Youth Dance Education Programme and the Bridport Youth Dance Choreography Geography and Dance Weavers films were awarded £350 and £300 respectively.

(Min: 12) TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS TO LARGER BODIES 2026/27

Organisation	Amount
Bridport & District Citizens Advice	£9,000
Harmony	£5,000
Bridport Arts Centre	£6,075
Bridport Leisure Centre	£4,050
Bridport Youth & Community Centre	£24,300
Bridport Museum Trust	£6,075
Literary & Scientific Institute (Bridport Area Development Trust)	£4,050
2020 Skate & Ride	£4,050
Friends of the Lyric Theatre CIC	£4,500
Precision Football Arena	£1,980
Pymore Village Management Company	£486
Allington Hill & Coopers Wood & Field	£486

Cllr Anna Killick questioned the exceptions for the 10% reductions not being applied to some organisations. It was noted that an SLA meeting was held with each organisation with decisions being agreed at Best Value and Scrutiny Sub Committee for confirmation. Members agreed to explore the process at the Budget Working Group.

RESOLVED:

- (ii) to note that the 10% reduction had not been applied to the Citizen's Advice Bureau due to their extensive and valued support in the town, or to The Lyric as it would consequently mean a reduction in hours for administrative staff.

- (iii) that it be suggested that the Pymore Village Management Company apply for future funding from Symondsburry due to the land management extending across the boundary into Symondsburry Parish.
- (iv) that the Literary & Scientific Institute (Bridport Area Development Trust) be requested to inform Bridport Town Council as soon as there is any change in ownership of the Literary & Scientific Institute (LSi);
- (v) that a meeting with Bridport Museum Trust be arranged to discuss future grant funding; and
- (vi) to note that all recipients with the exception of the Citizen's Advice Bureau and Harmony (as Harmony is a new recipient this year) were informed that a 10% reduction on the amount awarded this financial year would be offered in the forthcoming financial year.
- (vii) that the Budget Working Group discuss the process of determine SLA funding.

(Min: 13) INSURANCE RENEWAL

RESOLVED: to approve the insurance renewal premium of £34,601.55 for the policy commencing on 1st September 2026.

The Town Clerk reported that the next meeting of the Best Value and Scrutiny Sub Committee will be held on the 8th December 2026. This was changed from the 1st December 2026.

29. ENVIRONMENT & SOCIAL WELLBEING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Environment and Social Wellbeing Committee held on 9 September 2026 were presented. There were no recommendations arising from the meeting.

Cllr Paddy Mooney reported that Ed Morello MP's constituency office is to discuss potential involvement in the Cradle to Career project.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Social Wellbeing Committee held on 9 September 2026 were presented, received and noted.

30. MARKET AND BUSINESS LIAISON WORKING GROUP MEETING

The notes of the Market & Business Liaison Working Group held on 16 June 2026 were presented. There were no recommendations arising from the meeting.

Cllr Ian Bark reported that the proposed Amendment to the Market and Business Liaison Working Group remit (minute 14) is to be discussed at the next meeting of Bridport & West Bay Business Chamber.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Market & Business Liaison Working Group held on 16 June 2026 be received and noted.

31. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2026/27

Consideration was given to a report of the Finance and Office Manager, ENCL: 4160.

The Finance & Office Manager reported on the breakdown of expenditure within the first quarter noting greater spend in some areas including property costs and IT. It was noted that due to IT equipment ceasing to work, urgent replacement of laptops was required. A review of equipment has now taken place, and a renewal plan will be considered as part of the budget setting process.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

32. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Finance and Officer Manager presented the payments list for the 1st April 2026 to 30th June 2026 ENCL: 4161, in the sum of £423,902.99 which had been authorised for payment since the last meeting.

RESOLVED: that the payment of accounts as presented be noted.

33. BANK RECONCILIATION

Consideration was given to the Bank Reconciliation, ENCL: 4162.

The Finance and Office Manager reported that as a requirement of the Auditor and as good practice, the bank reconciliation is to be signed at meetings of this committee. She thanked Councillor Ann Langridge for signing the previous bank reconciliations.

RESOLVED: that the Bank Reconciliation be approved for signing.

34. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

Consideration was given to a report of the Finance and Office Manager, ENCL: 4163.

The Finance and Office Manager reported that progress is being made to extend the number of signatories required to authorise Town Council bank transactions.

RECOMMEND:

- (i) to Full Council that Councillors [names redacted] remain as signatories, Councillor [name redacted] be removed as signatory and Councillors [names redacted] are agreed as additional signatories.
- (ii) that a timescale of 48hours for approval of payments.
- (iii) that it be agreed to continue with the current method of payment for non-electronic payments.
- (iv) to Town Council the update of the Financial Regulations to reflect the new authorisation process.

35. PAY AWARD

Consideration was given to a report of the Finance and Office Manager, ENCL: 4164.

RESOLVED: that the NJC pay award of 3.3% be noted, and the Responsible Financial Officer is authorised to update payroll and financial forecasts accordingly including backdating the pay award to April 2026.

36. COMMUNICATIONS

Councillor Paddy Mooney referred to additional election expenses if an election is to be called for the Bradpole Ward.

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Surveyor and Property Managers report will be circulated with the minutes of the meeting.

37. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

RESOLVED: to exclude the press and public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that publicity of the remaining agenda items would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s3.

38. MOUNTFIELD TOP FLOOR ACCOMMODATION

Claire Peters-Way left the meeting at 7.18pm.

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk.

RECOMMEND: to Full Town Council that:

- (i) the resolution of June 2026 to market the top floor accommodation at Mountfield, Rax Lane as a commercial let be reversed pursuant to Standing Order 7(a);
- (ii) the top floor accommodation at Mountfield, Rax Lane be let as a residential accommodation on an Assured Periodic Tenancy, subject to the Town Clerk being authorised to finalise the necessary legal, compliance and tenancy arrangements.

Claire Peters-Way returned to the meeting at 7.20pm

39. DEBT MANAGEMENT

Consideration was given to a report of the Finance and Office Manager, ENCL: 4166.

RESOLVED: it was agreed that the outstanding debt be carried forward and is to be pursued by the small claims court.

40. ELECTRIC PALACE

Members considered the minutes and recommendations from the Electric Palace Working Group and noted a confidential report of the Finance and Office Manager, ENCL: 4167.

The Town Clerk reported that whilst many reports have been received, there are final reports still outstanding. It is therefore likely that an extraordinary meeting will need to be held to make the decision to proceed. An updated report by the Finance and Office Manager may also be required.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

41. STAFFING MATTERS

Lisa Pinch and Claire Peters-Way left the meeting at 7.44pm and did not return.

The Committee considered the confidential reports by the Town Clerk.

RESOLVED: (i) that the actions identified within the reports be noted and approved; and (ii) that the proposal for a new fixed term post be referred to Full Town Council.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 9 November 2026