Minutes of the ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL WELLBEING COMMITTEE
of Bridport Town Council held in Mountfield, Bridport on Wednesday 4 November 2026 at 6.00pm.

PRESENT: Cllrs: Kelvin Clayton (Chairman)
Anne Rickard
Dave Rickard
Julian Jones
Steve Williams
Bev Thornton

ALSO PRESENT: Sally Freemantle (Town Clerk), Caroline Pearce (Project Manager and Community Initiatives Officer)

PUBLIC FORUM

One member of the press (online) and two members of the public (1 online) were present.

A member of the public, proposed repurposing the West Bay telephone box as a small business, such as a vending machine stocking locally sourced products, to preserve the heritage asset and improve the area's appearance.

18. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jonathan Bourbon, Ann Langridge and Ian Bark for personal reasons.

RESOLVED: the apologies for absence be approved with the reasons given.

19. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 September 2026 had a minor amendment regarding comments about Maiden Newton (amended to "experienced in a section of the route towards Maiden Newton") but with this were confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

20. PROJECTS UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Project Manager, ENCL: 4179.

The Project Manager provided a project update, reporting that the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan review was progressing well after the examiner's report and modifications were received. The designer is working on the amendments and the review is on track for cabinet approval on December 8th. The monitoring report showed it was being used in 63% of applications. The Project Manager was thanked for her hard work on taking the review to the final stage and ensuring deadlines have been met.

She also updated the Committee on resilience work and a recent emergency scenario exercise which tested out our Emergency Plan. The exercise highlighted we need more clarity on what Dorset Council do in an emergency.

The Project Manager is working with a flood risk engineer officer from Dorset Council on a community flood review to ensure that it covers all areas of concern. Councillors discussed flooding concerns in South Street and Allington, noting that while drainage work has improved the situation, there are still issues with air bricks close to pavements and blocked drains

causing surface runoff. Flood wardens have offered to distribute flood warning leaflets to householders and encourage reporting through the official FORT system, though many residents don't report flooding due to concerns about insurance and property valuation. Bridport Town Council will encourage residents to report flooding incidents through the official system and provide photographic evidence of issues like drains bubbling up in West Bay.

A request for a floodlight in Borough Gardens was discussed, with the electrician advising that wall-mounted lights would be more effective for discouraging antisocial behaviour and dog fouling. The Town Clerk said the team are seeking quotes with installation dependent on cost and emergency vehicle access requirements.

RESOLVED: that the updates be noted.

21. COOPERS WOOD AND FIELD MANAGEMENT PLAN

Consideration was given to a report of the Project Manager, ENCL: 4180.
The Project Manager outlined the plan, the positive partnership with the Allington Hillbillies and hard work by the volunteers. Councillors approved the continuation of the plan and work, praising their effective partnership work and guardianship of the area.

RESOLVED: that the Management Plan be approved.

22. WEST BAY TELEPHONE BOX ADOPTION

Consideration was given to a report by the Town Clerk, ENCL: 4181.

The Committee discussed concerns regarding vandalism, security, and the need for a long-term commitment, but generally supported the principle of the idea. The Committee noted that telephone boxes must be adopted by a local authority and discussed potential challenges including electricity supply and planning permissions. Councillors noted that the Finance and General Purposes Committee requires more information about business viability and long-term responsibility before approving such projects

Noted: the request was noted and the proposer was asked to draw up more detailed plans for the proposal, including potential uses, viability, long-term maintenance commitment, and security measures, and return to a future meeting. He could contact Ward Councillors and Amy Stephenson (Ward Clerk), to gauge support and potential community assistance for the telephone box project.

23. COMMUNICATIONS – FOR INFORMATION ONLY

A Councillor shared a personal project to raise funds through a calendar to install a "friendly bench" to combat loneliness in the town, building on his previous experience installing wheelchair-friendly benches. He proposed placing a bench in a central location, potentially near the church in East Street. The initiative received support from fellow Councillors for its wellbeing benefits, with plans to spread the word to Councillors and the press.

The meeting closed at 6.42pm.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 6 January 2027