

# Bampton Town Council

## DRAFT MINUTES

These minutes will be agreed at the meeting due to be held on March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2025 and might be subject to slight amendment

### **The Minutes of the Meeting of Bampton Town Council held in the LARC building on Tuesday 4th February 2025 at 7.00 pm.**

**Members Present** – Cllr S Fouracre (Chair); Cllr R White; Cllr B Boyles; Cllr L Brock; Cllr R Brooker; Cllr R Grabke; Cllr L Bull\*; Cllr N Bull\* and Cllr D Whiteway.

**In attendance:** District Cllr C Adcock; 11 members of the public and Mrs J Larcombe (Interim Clerk).

- 1. Apologies and Acceptance for Absence:** Apologies had been received from County Cllr Chesterton. \*Cllr L Bull and Cllr N Bull had both advised the Clerk they would join during the meeting because of other commitments due to the change of day.
- 2. Declarations Of Interest.** Cllr Fouracre declared a personal and prejudicial interest in planning Application 25/00054/CAT.
- 3. Public Discussion.** Catherine Barlow, a member of the Bampton in Bloom Committee reported that the Committee would like to use the redundant phone box in Briton Street for a floral display. A photo of a phone box used in this way was shown to demonstrate what was planned. They have investigated adopting the phone box for £1 but are not on the list of organisations allowed to do so and asked if the Council would be prepared to adopt it. She volunteered to put together all the information required. The Council would be responsible for maintenance but the phone box is in a reasonable condition. Councillors agreed in principle to ask BT if the Council can adopt the phone box. This will be added to the agenda for the next meeting for formal agreement.  
The Chair of Bampton Allotment Association outlined the history of allotment provision in Bampton and the role and work of the Allotment Association. Demand for allotments has dropped since Covid when it was suggested that raised beds could be added on another piece of land. This could now be done on the allotment site. Although nearly all the allotments are occupied rental income is no longer covering the costs of running and maintaining the allotments. Financial details were supplied. Explaining the importance of keeping the allotments affordable for everyone funding of £200 was requested.

Cllr Whiteway joined the meeting at this point.

A member of the public asked when the map of Bampton sign on the stage would be secured. It was explained that the handyman had been ill but was now able to work again and would pick this up. A Bampton in Bloom committee member noted that the clearance of the leat had all been voluntary last year and at times it had looked bad. The committee has discussed contributing towards the cost. Cllr Fouracre explained that Cllr Brooker has been working on how to get the leat to run better. It is planned to have a volunteer event again this year to clean the leat with someone with a Chapter 8 qualification to oversee the event for insurance purposes. It was noted that in the past Brook Street residents had often cleared the leat in front of their properties.

Sue Holden, the recently elected Chair of Bampton in Bloom introduced herself and asked for a point of contact on the Council. Mrs Holden was welcomed and it was explained it would be best to contact the Council through the Clerk. The councillors are all here and willing to listen.

A member of the public asked about the Council making a Pickleball court on the MUGA. The cost for equipment would be about £300. He was asked to put forward a proposal to cover the cost of equipment, storage of equipment, insurance etc for discussion at the next meeting.

A member of the public said she had come to a meeting about a year ago to raise concern about idling vehicles in Brook Street. When she challenges vehicle owners about leaving their engines idling they are unhelpful and ask what it is to her. Cllr Fouracre apologised that nothing had been done when this had been discussed. This is against the law but is difficult to enforce. It was felt that it is local people who are causing the problem and not visitors. She was asked to provide information for the next meeting about how often it was happening and at what times of day so that the PCSO could be spoken to and asked for support. The information will also provide a focus for an awareness campaign.

Cllr N Bull joined the meeting.

A request was made for the Council to cover the cost of purchasing a couple of dumpy bags of sharp sand to top up the pétanque court at the Millenium Green that the Council had paid for. The purchase was agreed subject to the Council ordering and paying for the sand so that the VAT can be reclaimed. The Council is in the process of opening an account with Travis Perkins. The pétanque court is a community facility. It was noted the school staff use it regularly in the summer.

Cllr L Bull joined the meeting.

Andy Midgley, Pests Off, was attending the meeting as an impartial person regarding the allegations of a rat problem in Bampton. Bampton Town Council has not received any reports from individuals that there is a problem. Mr Midgley told the meeting the number of properties in Bampton he had been called to, mainly in Brook Street but also in Newton Square, Castle Street and Frog Street. Rats are coming from the culvert and are travelling along the storm drains. The Council did not feel that Bampton was overrun by rats and that concerns had been escalated by what was alleged to be a publicity campaign by the local MP. Councillors felt it was unfair that instead of making contact with Bampton Town Council in an appropriate manner she had chosen to post something on social media which made the Council look bad. Rats do exist and it was felt that it should be the responsibility of residents to control vermin on their property. Bird feeding is an issue and more education is needed about what attracts rats. Mr Midgley volunteered to write an article for Spotlight. He noted that Dulverton Town Council has waste bins which contain a tray for rat bait. The common denominator between Bampton and Dulverton is the water but he doesn't get called to properties in Dulverton as much as in Bampton.

**4. To discuss a request for financial support for the allotments. Due to vacant plots funding of £200 is needed to ensure the provision of allotments is maintained.** It was noted that the Allotment Association had not asked for the full amount of the shortfall between their income and costs. It was resolved that £200 would be paid to the Allotment Association in April 2025.

**5. Chairman's Report (for information only).** Cllr Fouracre reported the keep left sign on the recently installed island opposite the Spar shop had been knocked off and had been found lying on the ground. It has been put back but not as close to the edge.

A reminder was given to everyone about the Volunteer Morning on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 10:00 to 12:00 at the Riverside Hall.

A session to prune the fruit trees on the Millenium Green is planned for Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> February at midday. It is hoped that an expert pruner will attend to give guidance.

## 6. Reports

**6.1. County Councillor.** Apologies had been received from Cllr Chesterton. His written report had been circulated by email prior to the meeting.

**6.2. District Councillor.** A written report from the District Councillors had been circulated by email prior to the meeting. The report contained reference to rats being seen in Bampton. Councillors were critical of the way that Rachel Gilmour acting in her capacity as MP had used a social media post about her perception of the rat issue in Bampton to reflect badly on Bampton Town Council. Councillors felt the way she had dealt with the reports she had received was unfair to them and to Andy Midgley (Pests Off). As the District Councillor she knows the councillors and interim clerk and the correct way to contact Bampton Town Council is to contact the Interim Clerk in the first instance.

**7. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025 as an accurate record of the meeting.** The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and they were duly signed by the Chair.

**8. Report from the Hall Committee meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> January:** Cllr White reported there had been a constructive meeting at the Fire Station on 14<sup>th</sup> January when the committee had discussed the drawings received from the architect. Information from the meeting is being considered and the next will be for the committee to arrange to meet with the architect.

**9. Report from the Charter Fair Committee meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025:** Cllr White reported on the Fair Committee meeting held prior to this meeting. The stall application form went live this afternoon and 2 bookings have already been received. Stall holders are being asked to pay the fee with their booking this year. During the meeting it was agreed to investigate how more space for stalls could be created in the Church.

## 10. Open Spaces Report:

**10.1. To report the lids on the 2 bins at the Millennium Green have been replaced.** The Chair confirmed the lids have now been replaced.

**10.2. Update on securing the map of Bampton sign on the Stage.** As mentioned during item 3 – Public Discussion, it is hoped this task will soon be completed.

**10.3. To receive an update on discussions about finger posts as signage within the town and formally agree funding of £1,000 towards the project.** There have been 4 meetings to discuss this project. Unfortunately, the window for possible funding has been missed. There has been agreement from DCC Highways for most of the proposed locations. Plans are for the posts to be made from stainless steel with aluminium cast arms. The project cost will be in the region of £20,000. At the last meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> January councillors agreed in principle to allocate £1,000 towards the project but this had not been on the agenda for a decision. It was agreed to allocate £1,000 towards the project. Councillors recognised the good job that Andy McDonald was doing.

**10.4. To report on repairs to the toilets.** The increased water usage for the toilets has been investigated and has been caused by a broken flush mechanism. When this broke previously it was repaired using the cheapest option but this has resulted in it breaking again, resulting in the high water costs. Parts have been ordered to repair using the original option and parts will be replaced in the 3 toilets used most frequently but not the disabled toilet.

**10.5. To report on fallen tree in Millenium Green and repairs to neighbour's fence.** During a recent storm a tree on the Millenium Green came down and in doing so it damaged a neighbouring fence. The Council's handyman has removed the tree and will be replacing the damaged fencing. The owners of the fence are happy with the way that this has dealt with.

**10.6. To discuss the quote to side back Conifers and Pine away from electrical wires in Station Road car park.** A quote for the work has been received from Four Seasons Tree Services. It was questioned whether it is the responsibility of National Grid to do this work. The Clerk will contact National Grid to find out who is responsible. It was agreed to accept the quote if it is found to be BTC's responsibility. The quote from Four Seasons included a price for cutting the hedge around the recreation field. A second quote will be obtained. It was noted that the hedge should be cut by the end of February, before birds start nesting.

**10.7. To discuss obtaining quotes for grounds maintenance for the 2025 season.** Three companies including Countrywide, the current contractor, will be asked to quote. Countrywide will be asked if they would consider a site visit to clarify the work and quality required. It was felt that it would be beneficial to restart the relationship with them should their quote be accepted.

**10.8. Update on sweeper hire and path/pavement cleaning.** The sweeper required is not available for hire. Cllr Adcock has emailed Luke Howard, MDDC Environment and Enforcement, Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Manager, about the ongoing clearance of the footpath from Scott's to the Industrial Estate. He has told them it needs clearance of overgrowing bushes and brambles etc. in late spring and leaf clearance in the autumn as well as fallen branches after storms. This has been provided before but apparently not this year. Residents have cleared it for this year but help to ensure that MDDC provides clearance next year was requested. Residents need to know whether this will happen as it would be frustrating if they came to do it after there had been a working party. The pavement on South Molton Road has not been cleared for a few years and leaves and Beech mast on the pavement is making it slippery. There is a lot of debris from recent storms on South Molton road.

**10.9. To agree a date for the Open Spaces Committee to meet.** The Open Spaces Committee need to meet to discuss the recent play inspection reports. Cllr Bull will circulate a poll for suitable dates.

**11. To receive a report from the meeting with the Neighbourhood Highways Officer and County Councillor to discuss highways issues in the parish.** Cllr Fouracres reported on the meeting with Melanie Mckenna and Cllr Chesterton held on 29<sup>th</sup> January. Cllr White and Cllr Brooker were also present at the meeting. Quite a few points were covered, and Ms Mckenna was aware of all the things the councillors were reporting. DCC does not have the resources to carry out the repairs needed immediately but there is three-year plan. Bampton Town Council are first in line for complaints from about highways problems but there is not much it can do about it. Cllr Bull noted that highways problems are not just in mid Devon. Highways employees are aware that they cannot achieve what they want to achieve.

Recent flooding in Frog Street was discussed and it appears there is a three-year cycle for drain clearance.

The road surface by the Exeter Inn is earmarked for repair this month.

The DCC Road Warden Scheme was discussed during the meeting and Bampton Town Council will try to progress this.

Cllr Boyles expressed her concern about the quality of temporary repairs to potholes and recent repairs to a roadside non-safety wooden fence.

A temporary road closure notification has been received for Castle Street from 14<sup>th</sup> April to 16<sup>th</sup> April for trial pits. From tomorrow, 5<sup>th</sup> February to 7<sup>th</sup> February there will be a temporary road closure from Granite Corner, Exebridge to High Street, Bampton.

There was a reminder about the overhanging hedge at Scotts. If Highways cut back the hedge they have to try and reclaim the cost from the owner of the hedge.

**12. To agree to form a Bampton Christmas Events Committee.** Councillors are aware of the amount of work involved even for the Christmas trees and recognise the need to make the organisation of

Christmas events more sustainable by forming a committee which has community involvement. If the community want Bampton looking nice for Christmas, residents cannot rely on the same few people organising it all, especially so soon after the Charter Fair.

Cllr Boyles volunteered to chair the committee. Cllr Grabke, Cllr L Bull, Cllr N Bull and Cllr White volunteered to be on the committee. The Clerk reminded councillors that all committees members are agreed at the Council's annual meeting in May.

### 13. Planning

**13.1. Planning applications** - Mid Devon District Council has asked for observations from the Town Council on the following planning application:

**25/00053/CAT** Notification of intention to reduce and lift the crowns of 1 Maple and 1 Yew tree by 1.5-2m; reduce the crown of 1 Yew tree by 1.5-2m; trim 1 Yew tree; lift the crown of 1 Holly tree to 5m and remove 1 Sycamore tree within the Conservation Area. Location: Graveyard Church of St Michael and All Angels, Bampton. Comment: no objections.

**25/00054/CAT** Notification of intention to reduce 1 Acacia tree within the Conservation Area. Location: Castle Grove Nursing Home, Bampton.

Cllr Fouracre, Cllr L Bull and Cllr N Bull declared personal and prejudicial interests in this application because of their connections to Castle Grove Nursing Home, and left the room while the application was considered.

Comment: no objection.

**25/00137/CAT** Notification of intention to fell 1 Conifer tree within the Conservation Area. Location: Mellow Mead, Mary Lane, Bampton. Comment: no objections.

**13.2. Planning Decisions:** to note the following decisions made by MDDC

**24/01599/FULL** Erection of summer pavilion for use in connection with holiday let Location: Barn, Duvale Barton, Bampton. Decision: conditional approval granted.

**24/01706/House** Reinstatement of 3 former window openings and installation of replacement windows to South elevation; conversion of second (attic) floor to habitable room. Location: 8 Newton Square, Bampton. Decision: conditional approval.

**13.3. Any other planning matters.** No other planning matters.

**14. Emergency Plan update:** Cllr L Bull reported that she has found the draft plan from 2020 and has shared it with Cllr Brooker and the Clerk. The plan centres around the risk of flooding but the power cuts following a storm in December have highlighted that it needs to cover more than that.

Cllr L Bull, Cllr Brooker and Cllr Fouracre will have further discussions about the plan.

Cllr Brooker attended a meeting hosted by Tiverton Town Council to talk about emergency planning and climate change. They are trying to get people involved.

**15. MDDC Community Risk Register:** Councillors agreed this document did not accurately reflect the risks this parish. There are other risks such as power cuts, lack of transport etc. During a recent storm a tree came down and blocked the Exe Valley Road. There are a lot of trees along the Exe Valley Road and a lot of risk. All of this should be part of an emergency plan.

### 16. FINANCE:

**16.1. Payments to be approved.** It was resolved to authorise the following payments:

Mrs J Larcombe interim clerking and printing	£732.00
Northfield Gardening & Landscaping – P3 work	£510.00

**16.2. Payments made since the last meeting.** The following payments were noted.

Janice Caunter – toilet cleaning	£350.00
Architectural Services – plans for new hall	£1,140.00
Chloe Marie Aston – performing at Bampton Fair	£184.00
(Balance)	
LARCS – venue hire 6 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> January	£66.00
SOS Groundworks – traffic island	£7017.60

**16.3. Bank reconciliations.** Ongoing.

**16.4. To discuss requests for grants from Citizens Advice, Mid Devon Mobility and CHAT.** It was resolved to give each organisation the same amount as in previous years.

**17. Clerks Report.** The Clerk had nothing further to report.

**18. Date of the next Council meeting** – 2nd March 2025 at 7.00pm in the LARC building.