

Bampton Town Council

DRAFT MINUTES

These minutes will be agreed at the meeting due to be held on April 7th 2025
and might be subject to slight amendment

The Minutes of the Meeting of Bampton Town Council held in the LARC building on Monday 3rd March 2025 at 7.00 pm.

Members Present – Cllr S Fouracre (Chair); Cllr R White; Cllr B Boyles; Cllr R Brooker and Cllr N Bull.

In attendance: County Cllr R Chesterton, District Cllr C Adcock, 9 members of the public and Mrs J Larcombe (Interim Clerk).

- 1. Apologies and Acceptance for Absence:** Apologies were accepted from Cllr's L Brock, L Bull and R Grabke. No apologies received from Cllr D Whiteway.
- 2. Declarations Of Interest:** No declarations received.
- 3. Public Discussion.** Referring to the Pickleball proposal he had submitted to the Council a member of the public added the need for the MUGA to be cleaned. As there is no access to water and electricity for a pressure washer Cllr Boyles agreed to ask the Bampton Fire Service if they could assist. Volunteers will need to do the final clearing up. There was also a request for netting to stop the ball going outside the MUGA. It was suggested that a roll of Pheasant wire could be purchased for this purpose. Initial use will be without the wire. The Pickleball Group would also like an agreement for time/s when the use of the MUGA is limited to the group. This will be agreed and signage will be put up to make this clear to all users. A dedicated area in the pump house will be made available for storage of the equipment.

Cllr Chesterton joined the meeting.

In response to a question from the Bampton in Bloom Group it was explained that Four Season Tree Services Ltd had overlooked applying to MDDC for permission to carry out works on the Maple tree beside the Riverside car park. An application will now be submitted. The work can be carried out without interfering with the flower bed.

It was suggested that a defibrillator could be put into a phone box that is no longer in use. Through the 'Minutes Matter' campaign the Community Heartbeat Trust supports the donation of paint to renovate ex-phone boxes with defibrillators. The Interim Clerk will be given details on adopting BT phone boxes. Judi Thomas reported on the volunteer recruitment morning held on 1st March. There was a good atmosphere in the hall and the event was considered to be useful. 11 local groups were represented and 9 of them managed to recruit at least one volunteer. 6 or 7 people volunteered to help with Bampton Fair and the wildlife group also did well. 5 people were added to the Community Volunteer Database. A small grant paid for the refreshments and the Riverside Hall was provided free of charge. would like to capture new people moving into the Bampton area by giving them a welcome pack which includes links to group websites and asks them if they are interested in joining a group or groups. Judi was thanked for organising this event.

A member of the public referred to a copy of an email he had sent to the Interim Clerk earlier in the day. The email contained details of items he felt should have been included on the agenda and thought hadn't been. He had not attended the last meeting but had requested and received a copy of the draft

minutes. He also continued to criticise the Council's decision not to pay to have the vegetation in the leat cleared on a regular basis and raised safety concerns about a volunteer event held to clear vegetation. The Chair answered each point made in the email. Most points were included in the business of the meeting. Other points did not need to be included. The Clerk said she was happy to receive constructive criticism but felt this criticism from the member of the public was destructive. Bampton Town Councillors are volunteers and most work hard for the community. The member of the public's contribution to the community was questioned but he used his age as a reason for not volunteering. A Councillor expressed her upset and frustration at his attitude and behaviour pointing out that instead of giving up her time to be at the meeting she could have spent her time with her husband and children.

4. To consider Pickleball proposal. It was resolved that the Council would purchase the required equipment up to the value of £210 net of VAT and this would be given to the group.

Action: the Interim Clerk to order the requested equipment.

5. Idling engines – to consider any further information. No further information received.

6. Chairman's Report (for information only). Cllr Fouracre reported that about a dozen people attended the pruning event at the Community Orchard where they were supported by a pruning expert. There is now a pile of twigs to dispose of. There are still some trees that require pruning to get the orchard under control.

Somerset Sight's mobile advisory service will be at Tiverton's Tesco car park on March 4th from 1030am to 3.30pm.

Road closed signs were left out after South West Water (SWW) finished work in Bampton on Friday 21st February and were not removed until the afternoon of Monday 24th February. This gave the impression the road was closed when it was not and the whole community suffered. Cllr Chesterton and Cllr Adcock were very helpful and tried to get hold of Melanie Mckenna, DCC Neighbourhood Highways Officer. Mel tried to get the signs taken down but there was nothing highways could do as SWW had permission to close the road until 26th February. The problem is that they use different contractors to put up and remove the signage to those carrying out the work on the road. It was also felt the signs were not put out in a safe manner. A complaint will be made to SWW about both issues.

Action: the interim Clerk to make a complaint to SWW about the signs being left up when the work had been completed and the way the signs had been put up.

7. Reports

7.1. County Councillor. Cllr Chesterton said this would be his last report because the election period will have started by the time of the April meeting. He will not be standing for election in this area and thanked everyone for the way they had worked with him.

DCC has set its budget for 2025-26 and there will be a 4.9% increase. 2.9% is a general increase and 2% is for adult social care. This is inline with most Councils although some did apply for special permission for an increase above the capped amount. Not all were successful. One amendment to the budget was agreed and this was to keep the Locality Grant budget at £8,000 per councillor. All but £67 has been awarded from Cllr Chesterton's Locality Budget. He hoped the money awarded during his time as the County Councillor for the area had been useful. The Chair thanked him for all that he had done for the parish and for the grants awarded from his locality budget which had been much appreciated. Cllr Chesterton hoped the recent highways meeting had been useful and was assured it had been.

7.2. District Councillor. A written report from Cllr Adcock had been circulated by email prior to the meeting. Three planning matters affecting Bampton are all ongoing.

The Speedwatch group has reported 5 vehicles to the Police for exceeding the speed limit. The Police send a warning letter and if the same vehicle is reported again the owner will get a visit from the Police. There will be more information about devolution after March 20th. Devon will be putting forward three or four options. Devon is not a priority area and will be having an election in May. It is likely to be 2028 before the Councils change to unitary.

- 8. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 4th February 2025 as an accurate record of the meeting.** The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chair.
- 9. Report from the Charter Fair Committee meeting on 4th February 2025:** Cllr White reported that the committee has agreed to book Pedal Power vs Parkour as the main act for the Fair. The committee are now looking at booking fire eaters to give displays including when it is dark. The work to plan the 2025 fair continues.
- 10. Christmas Events Committee.** This will be discussed at the April meeting.
- 11. Open Spaces Report:**
 - 11.1. Update on securing the map of Bampton sign on the Stage.** This work has been completed.
 - 11.2. To receive an update on discussions about finger posts as signage within the town.** Another bid for funding for this project is being made.
 - 11.3. To report on repairs to the toilets and consider rationalisation of costs for the toilets.** Recent problems with the flushing system has proved expensive in terms of both parts and excess water usage and has prompted the need for a discussion on the best way to make the costs of running the toilets. In a previous report it was stated that there are too many individual toilets for the size of the town. The pay mechanisms are now broken, and the parts are obsolete. It was suggested the disabled toilet should be done up, baby changing facilities added and a contactless payments system installed. are the main company providing contactless payment systems. The toilet could also be accessed with a radar key. The other toilets could be closed except for when the fair and other large events are being held. A notice would be put up at the other end of the building directing people to the disabled toilet. It would mean there were less toilets to clean and maintain and less worry about excess water usage. Previous discussions resulted in members of the public thinking the toilets were going to be closed. Councillors are not proposing to close the toilets entirely and want to keep at least the disabled toilet open. If it was found necessary other toilets could be converted. Costs for the work will be obtained.
Action: Cllr White to contact Healthmatic about contactless payment systems for toilets.
 - 11.4. Update on responsibility to side back Conifers and Pine away from electrical wires in Station Road car park.** Cllr Boyles reported that she had contacted National Grid and had been told the trees were not causing any problems because the wires are insulated. As they had contractors working in the local area National Grid did arrange for some of the branches to be cut back even though they didn't have to. This saved Bampton Town Council £700.
The hedges around the Recreation Ground have not been cut as the ground conditions were too wet for a tractor. This work will now have to wait until the start of September, the end of the bird nesting season.
 - 11.5. Update on response from MDDC on path/pavement cleaning.** Mid Devon District Council is not committing to carry out the work but will try to help if there is spare capacity. Cllr Brooker was hoping to try and co-ordinate their help with the work of the volunteer group.

11.6. To agree work required following the last MDDC playground inspection report. This will be by the Open Spaces Committee working party when they meet on 19th March.

11.7. To discuss request for repairs to the bus shelter at Petton Cross and a bus stop sign on the opposite side of the road. The Council's handyman will repair the bus shelter with wooden panels. As long as it is not interfering with private property or causing an obstruction, DCC can provide a pole on their budget.

11.8. To discuss request for permission to use the recreation field for regular Junior Park runs if there is sufficient interest and volunteers. It was agreed the recreation field could be used.

11.9. To report the date for the next Open Spaces Committee meeting. A working party meeting is being held on 19th March.

12. To agree a site for the defibrillator purchased earlier in year. The football club has purchased their own defibrillator and do not need the one purchased by the Council. Alternative sites were considered. Shillingford was suggested but there are no sites with a power supply. Cllr Fouracre has been told there are defibrillators that do not have a power supply but still work okay. The phone box in Newton Square was another suggestion. It was agreed to mount the defibrillator on the bus shelter at Shillingford.

Cllr N Bull left the meeting.

13. To review and update the Councils actions and proposals on projects identified in 2023/24 regarding improvements in accessibility in the town to be paid from the Sheila Howells Legacy. This item was deferred to the next meeting to allow Cllr Fouracre to obtain more information. The money has to be used by June. The possibility of marking out a disabled parking space in the car park at Station Road has been discussed with a contractor but they do not have the right stencil.

14. Planning

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

25/00138/Full Erection of summer pavilion Location: Duvale Priory, Bampton. Comment: no objection.

25/00237/Full Conversion of barn to form one dwelling, to include the demolition of an agricultural building Location: Land and Buildings at NGR 296082 122730 Court Grove Farm, Bampton. Comment: no objection.

25/00179/RPPS Removal of public payphone service: Telephone Number 01398 331390. Location: Public Telephone, Newton Square, Bampton. It was noted the phone box is listed and cannot be removed. Comment: Agree with MDDC's comments. No objections.

25/00180/RPPS Removal of public payphone service: Telephone Number 01398 331399. Location: Public Telephone Box Briton Street Bampton. Comment: Agree with MDDC's comments. No objections. This phone box is also listed. This is the phone box that Bampton in Bloom would like the Council to purchase from BT for £1 so that it can be used for a floral display and information about the process to purchase a phone box has been passed to the Interim Clerk. As the phone box is listed the Interim Clerk will contact the planning department at MDDC to find out whether the glass can be removed. Both phone boxes were reported to be locked shut. Phone boxes can be expensive to maintain and as both are listed BT will be required to maintain them.

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

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

1 Sycamore tree within the Conservation Area. Location: Graveyard, Church of St Michael and All Angels, Bampton. Decision: MDDC has no objections.

25/00054/CAT Notification of intention to reduce 1 Acacia tree within the Conservation Area. Location: Castle Grove Nursing Home, Bampton. Decision: MDDC has no objections.

14.3. MDDC Call for Sites: To consider if the Council has any sites to put forward. MDDC is launching a new Call for Sites in 2025 to inform a new Local Plan for Mid Devon. Small and medium sized sites are particularly of interest. For homes, they should be more than 0.15 Hectares (0.37 acres) for 5+ homes. For Economic Development, they should be more than 0.25 Hectares (0.62 acres) or potentially provide 500 m2 of floor space. The new local plan is likely to include new settlement boundaries. Under the new Government housing targets the proposed target for MDDC has been set at 571 homes annually, up from the current target of 346 homes a year. The supply of electricity and water are now at their limit in Bampton. No sites were put forward by Bampton Town Council.

14.4. Any other planning matters. No other planning matters.

1 member of the public left the meeting.

15. Emergency Plan update: As Cllr Bull was unable to attend the meeting this item was deferred to the next meeting.

16. VE Day 2025: To consider how VE Day could be commemorated in Bampton. The Rotary Club has asked what the Council are planning to do to commemorate VE Day. There was a suggestion of combining with the Rotary Club. Beacons are likely to be lit. The Council still has the beacon which was lit to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee but the head has a crown and the year 2022 and it would cost £300 for a new head. Councillors remembered how much work had been involved to use the beacon. It was agreed to co-operate with the Rotary Club and use the red lantern.

17. FINANCE:

17.1. Payments to be approved. It was resolved to approve the following payments:

Mrs J Larcombe - interim clerking and printing	£732.00
MDDC – playground inspections	£954.00

17.2. Payments made since the last meeting. Noted by Councillors.

Janice Caunter – toilet cleaning	£350.00
Viking Office Uk Ltd – supplies for toilets	£73.12
Viking Office UK Ltd – padlock for shutter lock	£38.93
Devon Association of Local Councils – training	£36.00
Len Weller - P3 expenses	£15.00
Ewen Wigley – P3 expenses	£15.00
EDF (Direct Debit 10 th February) electricity	£27.00
EDF (Direct Debit 3 rd March) electricity	£20.95

17.3. Bank reconciliations. To be added to Teams.

17.4. To agree the Internal Auditor for 2024-25. The Interim Clerk reported that she had looked at the Directory of Internal Auditors on the Internal Audit Forum website to try and find suitably qualified internal auditors in the locality to carry out the internal audit for 2024-25. It was agreed to accept a quote of £295.00 from Town and Parish Internal Audit Services.

17.4. To discuss and agree a change of accounts software. The Council is part way through a 5 year

agreement with Edge IT to use their finance package. This software is slow and clunky to use and it is difficult to generate the required reports. The Interim Clerk has looked into alternatives and has spent time trialling Scribe. Other Clerks who are using this software have been very positive about using it and also about the support provided. It was agreed to pay Edge IT £423 to leave the contract for the finance software. Edge IT will continue to provide IT support. In their proposal Scribe has agreed to reduce the initial charge from £449 to £300. The annual cost is £588.00. It was resolved to accept Scribe's proposal.

Action: the Interim Clerk to confirm the termination of the agreement for the finance software with Edge IT and to accept the proposal from Scribe.

17.5. Risk Review 2024-25. A draft document was circulated with the meeting papers. It was decided a working party would review the document.

17.6. Review of the effectiveness of internal controls and internal audit. A draft document was circulated with the meeting papers. It was decided that a working party would review the document.

Action: the Clerk to arrange a working party to review the risk review document and the effectiveness of internal controls and Internal audit.

18. Clerks Report. The Interim Clerk gave a reminder that the Annual Parish Meeting should be held between 1st March and 1st June. It was agreed to hold it on Friday 25th April in the Community Hall if that date is available.

Action: the Interim Clerk to book the Community Hall for the evening of 25th April

19. Date of the next Council meeting. 7th April 2025 at 7.00pm in the LARC building.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.