

# Bradford on Avon Town Council



## Business Plan 2021-2025



# Introduction

The Council elected in May 2021, starts its tenure amid the Covid-19 pandemic which has affected the lives of all the residents of Bradford on Avon. The town's response to the pandemic has been nothing but remarkable, supporting one another, coming together as a community and working together.

There are many challenges ahead, and to move forward as a community, we need a Town Council that doesn't simply take decisions but gives everybody the chance to be involved. This principle of listening and engaging is how we will make the best decisions for the town.

We have seen that individuals thrive best in a strong community, that our outdoor spaces are precious and that secure local jobs and thriving businesses are vital for the town.

We also know that must address the long-term crisis in our climate and natural environment and this must inform the decisions that we make.

To achieve our ambitions for Bradford on Avon, the Town Council wants to work closely with the public - residents, communities, businesses, Bradford on Avon Community Area Board (Wiltshire Council) and voluntary organisations.



**Cllr Sarah Gibson**  
**Mayor**



**Cllr Katie Vigar**  
**Deputy Mayor**

## **Business Plan**

This plan builds on the 2019-2021 Business Plan and sets out the Council's vision for the period 2021-2025. The plan ensures that the Town Council has an overarching strategy in place to guide the Council's direction.

The purpose of the business plan is to provide an overview of the Town Council's strategic objectives; it is a statement of the Town Council's vision and objectives, ensuring that the Council can take a consistent approach to:

- the development of strategies
- the design and delivery of services
- the need to improve facilities
- the prioritisation and allocation of resources
- the achievement of value for money

The plan remains a living document, which will need to be regularly monitored, reviewed, and updated, responding to pressures arising from changing circumstances.

## **Bradford on Avon**

Bradford on Avon is a small market town at the southern end of the Cotswolds, with a population of approximately 10,000.

Bradford on Avon is renowned for both its natural beauty and historic buildings. The town crosses the River Avon from the high ground on the north bank into the valley below, surrounded by lush countryside. Widely recognised as one of the most important historic towns in the south-west of England, it has several buildings of national significance and coherent architecture. The town centre sits within a conservation area and gives visitors a wonderful setting for leisure, cultural and tourist activities. Bradford on Avon has delightful shops, restaurants, hotels and bed and breakfasts lining the narrow streets of the town centre.

Bradford on Avon has been highlighted in a comprehensive new ranking of the best places to live in England and Wales, Bradford on Avon, ranked third overall, was also listed as the 19th best place to live in terms of natural beauty<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Jan 2021 - compiled by the buying agents Garrington Property Finders

## Corporate Vision, Aim and Objectives

### Vision

*To create a strong community where everybody has the opportunity to engage with and contribute to a successful town. To underpin the Council's decision-making with a resolve to address the long-term crisis in our climate and natural environment.*

The Town Council will aim to support and develop our community through the following objectives:

- A Thriving Town
  - Successful economically, socially, and environmentally
- A Flourishing Community
  - Where individuals thrive best
- A Greener Place
  - Working towards carbon neutrality and improved biodiversity
- An Engaged Town Council
  - Listening and engaging because that is how the best decisions can be made

Bradford on Avon Town Council will direct its influence, capacity, and resources to promote the best interests of the town for the benefit of the whole community.

## Objective





### A Thriving Town - Successful economically, socially, and environmentally

Bradford on Avon is a special town with historic buildings and independent shops, set in a rural landscape. The Town Council wishes to ensure a town where heritage and environment are valued, creating a successful and thriving community for residents, businesses, and visitors.






It seeks a town where all residents have their say and can take part in making the decisions that affect their lives, where residents have access to a high quality of life both now and in the future.

### Aims

Working with residents and Wiltshire Council we intend to

-  Review the Neighbourhood plan 2013 – 2026 and produce an updated version
-  Investigate the potential for a re-development of the health centre and station car park site.
-  Investigate options for improving pedestrian safety and tackling air pollution
-  Work towards building a new pedestrian bridge from the library to Lamb Yard

Working with the business community we intend to

-  Encourage more economic planning to help the local economy
-  Continue to support initiatives such as 'Shop Local'
-  Provide ongoing support via Explore
-  Review the Tourism Strategy 2019-2024 and produce a new version
-  Promote Bradford on Avon as a tourist destination

## Objective

### A Flourishing Community – where individuals thrive best

To ensure that we have a flourishing community we need to support the community's well-being, building on the resilience shown during the pandemic to combat social isolation, supporting both physical and mental health. We need to create an environment where anybody and everybody has the opportunity to be involved.

The Council will encourage and harness the passion of its residents, and their commitment to the town, by encouraging and supporting volunteers, recognising the added value that volunteers provide, and the community spirit that is generated.

### Aims

The Council will endeavour to

-  Develop projects to address well-being
-  Develop the Youth Services contract offer
-  Support volunteer groups and encourage community participation
-  Engage with residents and encourage participation in decision making, securing better services, and creating a more active and informed community.
-  Provide grant support to third party organisations delivering the Council's objectives
-  Develop sporting facilities, including a new community pavilion and a skateboard park
-  Invest in our outdoor spaces to maximise the opportunity for exercise and recreation for all ages
-  Develop an annual calendar of diverse events for the town
-  Complete service delegation and asset transfer from Wiltshire Council to safeguard the quality of services within the town
-  Work with local campaign groups to secure the golf course site, allotments close to Coronation Avenue and land north of Cemetery Lane as green space
-  Invest in our green spaces, developing sympathetic plans to improve the infrastructure








## Objective

### **A Greener Place – working towards carbon neutrality and improved biodiversity**

We must play our part locally in tackling the global crisis in climate and biodiversity by working towards carbon neutrality and enhancing the biodiversity of our local green spaces

### **Aims**

The Council will

-  Reduce its carbon footprint
-  Communicate the Climate and Ecological emergencies
-  Introduce 're-wilding' initiatives as part of our site management plans
-  Manage our sites ecologically and responsibly
-  Support projects that reduce waste to landfill
-  Promote public transport and investigate improving community bus provision
-  Encourage the development of electric vehicle charging infrastructure










## Objective

### **An Engaged Town Council – listening and engaging because that is how the best decisions can be made**

Developing a culture where people are enabled to have their say and take part in making the decisions that affect their lives. Building an engaged council that works well as a team.

### **Aims**

The Council will

-  Establish a residents panel
-  Improve Consultations
-  Improve the council's communications
-  Live stream full council meetings
-  Foster collaborative working
-  Encourage a 'One council' ethos
-  Develop 'fit for purpose' Council offices

## **The Town Council**

The Council officer team is led by the qualified Town Clerk, who is both the Council's Proper Officer and Responsible Finance Officer and is supported by the Director of Operations. The Council's establishment is currently 16 permanent posts and 3 casual posts, which is also supplemented with local volunteers.

The staffing structure and levels will need to be flexible and reviewed with the advent of any further asset transfer and service delegation from Wiltshire Council.

The Town Clerk has obtained the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) which allows the Council to use the Section 7 General Power of Competence (September 2014). The Council has resolved to use the power. This enables it to deliver an enhanced role and allows it to do things that otherwise it would have been unable to do. The power is to do anything that an individual generally may do, as long as the Council does not break the law. It is intended to be the power of first, not last, resort.

## **A Quality Council**

The Town Council is a professional 'Quality Gold Town Council' committed to providing high standard, cost-effective services to help meet the needs of its residents.

The Quality Gold Award demonstrates that a council operates within recognised best practice and achieves excellence in governance, community leadership and council development. Quality Gold councils provide leadership for their communities, bring people together and have excellent business planning processes, ensuring value for money as well as constantly seeking new innovations and opportunities to improve.

## **Governance**

The Town Council is made up of 12 Councillors who are elected every four years. The next scheduled elections are to be held in May 2025. The Council is chaired by the Town Mayor, who with the Deputy Town Mayor are elected annually at the Annual Town Council meeting.

The Town Council has six main committees:

- Full Council
- Environment and Green Spaces
- Community and Well-being
- Sustainable Travel
- Resources
- Town Development

The Town Council has a permanent sub-committee:

- Delegated Planning

The committee responsibilities are set out in the Council's 'Terms of Reference' document.

The committee chairs are also elected at the Annual Town Council meeting in May.

The Council will ensure that agendas and minutes are published on the website and made available as soon as possible after meetings. The Council posts public notices on the Town Council Notice Boards. Meetings are held at the Town Council offices in St Margaret's Hall and are open to the public, with the full council meeting streamed live.

In all council meetings, time is set aside for members of the public to address the committee.

### **Financial Information**

The Town Council has a budget of £1,174,150 for 2021/22, which is funded by the precept of £885,590 (equates for a Band D household to £216.90 per year), fees & charges. The council looks at innovative ways of raising finance to enable it to deliver its plans, to minimise the impact on the precept.

The Town Council regularly reviews its Treasury and Investment policy to ensure that all capital plans are affordable. The Council adopts a measured approach in earmarking its reserves by rolling capital and revenue funds accrued towards identified future projects and ensure they are budgeted for in the Council's forward capital plan. All borrowing and long-term liabilities are within prudent and sustainable levels and investment decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice.

The Council will adopt a balanced approach to its levels of reserves which will be reviewed annually or more frequently if necessary. The revenue reserves will continue to be maintained to a level that would be set at 3 to 6 months operating costs.

The Council is registered for VAT and is therefore able to recover this element.

### **The Council Functions**

Local Government in Wiltshire operates in a two-tier system: Wiltshire Council Unitary Authority (upper tier) and Bradford on Avon Town Council (lower tier). The Town Council is a progressive town council with aspirations to use its influence, capacity, and resources to ensure that it works for the whole community. The Town Council promotes the best interests of the town for the betterment of the local community.

The Council provides and operates St Margaret's Hall, which is operated as a venue along with the Youth and Community Centre. The Council owns and manages many of the green open spaces in the town: Victory Field, Westbury Gardens, Culver Close, along with woodlands and play areas. The Council is responsible for the public toilets and managing the Town Lock up.

The Council provides a commissioned youth service for the town and provides the Tourist Information Centre in Westbury Gardens, along with the additional capacity in managing the street scene, via the Town Wardens.

The Council is working with Wiltshire Council towards the devolution of further services and assets into its portfolio.

The Council is the sole trustee for the Colonel William Llewellyn Palmer Educational Charity, providing allotments and the Sladesbrook playing field. The Charity is for the benefit of children and young person's up to the age of 25 attending, or who have attended, schools in Bradford on Avon, and for the provision of recreational facilities for the same age group in the town.

The Council is also the trustee for Bearfield playing field and Festival Garden.

The council sets its determination to address the climate and ecological emergencies at the heart of all its services.