



## Annual Full Council meeting

### Minutes

From the meeting at 7pm on Tuesday 7 May 2024

At: St Margaret's Hall, St Margaret's Street, Bradford on Avon

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### Decision making

The **decisions** made by the Full Council at this meeting are at minutes [7](#), [10](#), [12](#), [15](#), [16](#) & [18](#).

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### Present

Councillors:

- Kate Bessant
- Sam Blackwell
- Emma Franklin
- Sarah Gibson
- Alex Kay
- Simon McNeil-Ritchie
- Jennie Parker
- Alison Potter
- Tim Trimble
- Katie Vigar
- Jack Vittles

Town Council Officers:

- Ian Brown - Chief Executive & Town Clerk
- Chris Stringer – Deputy Town Clerk
- Matthew McLaughlin – Communications Officer
- Sarah Hawkins - Accountant

Meeting clerk:

- Sarah Howe – Committee Clerk
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### Apologies

From Councillors unable to attend the meeting:

- Dave Garwood
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7. Agenda item 1 - Election of Council Chairman and Town Mayor

The Chair asked for nominations for the position of Council Chairman and Town Mayor. Councillor Jack Vittles was nominated by Councillor Tim Trimble and seconded by Councillor Katie Vigar, with no further nominations and 6 in favour and 4 abstentions it was **resolved**: that Councillor Vittles was elected as Chairman and Mayor for the ensuing municipal year. Councillor Vittles then took the chair and presided over the rest of the meeting.

8. Agenda item 2 - Chairman's Declaration and Acceptance of Office

The incoming Chairman signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

9. Agenda item 5 - Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made.

10. Agenda item 6 - Election of Vice Chair and Deputy Town Mayor

Councillor Vittles nominated Councillor Sam Blackwell, seconded by Councillor Gibson and with no further nominations and 6 in favour and 4 abstentions it was **resolved**: that Councillor Blackwell was elected Vice-Chairman and Deputy Mayor for the ensuing municipal year. The Chair congratulated the Deputy Mayor on his appointment.

11. Agenda item 7 - Register of Member's Interests

Members were reminded to advise the Town Clerk if they have any changes to their disclosable pecuniary interests.

There was a small discussion around councillor participation in clubs and declaring interest and the Chair asked for it to be minuted that it is very important that councillors are part of clubs and belong to communities within the town. He mentioned in his case, if there are agenda items relating closely to the Cricket Club (to which the Chair belongs), he would be more than happy to hand over the chair to the deputy chair for that item.



12. Agenda item 8 - Minutes from the previous meeting of the full council

It was proposed by Councillor Tim Trimble and seconded by Councillor Jennie Parker and with 7 in favour and 4 abstentions it was **resolved** to accept the minutes of the last extraordinary Full Council meeting held on the 16 April 2024.

13. Agenda item 9 - Matters arising

None.

14. Agenda item 10 – Chair’s Update

(i) The outgoing Chair summarised her Chair’s Update or announcements as supplied with the agenda. She mentioned what a privilege it had been to be Mayor for such a fantastic town and had been involved in some very special occasions such as the Proclamation of the new King and Coronation celebrations. Councillor Vigar went on to particularly thank the following: Councillor Kay and her husband, who is Chair of the French Twinning Association, for a successful recent visit by representatives from Sully-sur-Loire, all those who participated in and helped organise the Community Concert, town council staff particularly in light of the Wiltshire Council asset transfer and finally the outgoing Deputy Town Mayor Emma Franklin.

(ii) The incoming Chair began by thanking Councillor Vigar for all her hard work and determination across an, at times, challenging couple of years as well as busy with plenty of new projects. It was plain to see that she feels passionately about the town and the community and with professionalism has guided the council through many projects and unflaggingly attended many local events. The Chair concluded by saying he was looking forward to the coming year, he loved Bradford on Avon, and despite the challenges, it had also been fun to be part of the town council, getting to know everyone. He also looked forward to collaborating on many projects with community, council staff and councillors.

15. Agenda item 11 – Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

The updated policy documents: Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were considered by the council after a brief introduction by the Town Clerk.

Proposed by Councillor Katie Vigar and seconded by Councillor Tim Trimble and with all in favour it was **resolved**: to approve the amendments to both the Standing Orders and the Financial Regulations Policies.



16. Agenda item 12 – Health and Safety Policy Statement  
Councillor Sarah Gibson proposed, seconded by Councillor Alison Potter, and with all in favour it was **resolved**: to agree the Health and Safety Policy Statement for the Town Council.

The Town Clerk signed the statement.

17. Agenda item 13 – Meetings Schedule for 2024/25

The meetings schedule was noted.

18. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023-24

Prepared by the Accountant:

- (i) Section 1 of the Annual Governance statement 2023/24. This was approved by all members and signed in the meeting by the Chair and the Committee Clerk.
- (ii) Section 2 Accounting Statements 2023/24 were noted and signed by the Chair.

19. Traffic Modelling Study and Engagement

The Chair summarised the position to date: following on from the town wide consultation 3 priorities had emerged. Wiltshire Council had appointed AtkinsRéalis modelling contractors to see how a traffic system could best benefit the town's three priorities. 2 traffic management Options (A&B) were initially modelled and then a further Option C, which Atkins subsequently went on to recommend in their report. The town council has opened a further engagement process with the town and feedback can be submitted until 12 May 2024.

The Chair confirmed that the town council has not made a final decision over whether they are in support of Option C.

The Chair also confirmed that public questions about traffic would be taken during the discussion.

Councillor Trimble then ran through his presentation explaining the Atkins report and findings.



Councillor Trimble also gave a few details from the Future of Transport Consultation such as:

- Lots of requests for 20mph throughout town (Councillor Trimble is already in discussions with Wiltshire Council regarding this)
- Building a new pedestrian river crossing is a very popular suggestion (town council already has a project looking into this)
- 6% of residents in Bradford on Avon already have an electric or hybrid vehicle (which all helps to reduce pollution levels and nationally only 1% of drivers own electric/hybrid cars)

Councillor Trimble also reiterated that the social distancing scheme during Covid times (a variation of Option A) worked fine at the time, but traffic volumes were much reduced compared to normal or future predicted volumes.

Councillor Kay asked Councillor Trimble on the value of traffic models and worrying about travel or bus times through town (discussed in the presentation) was not one of the 3 priorities. Councillor Gibson confirmed however that traffic flow at the sweet spot of around 10-15mph through town would benefit both pollution levels and traffic times.

Councillor McNeil-Ritchie also found the modellers recommendation questionable as the modellers were looking at traffic volumes way in the future (2041), drivers adjust their driving pattern if too much congestion builds up and if 10% more cars are expected on the roads over the next 20 years the buses will be facing congestion along the whole of their routes not just Bradford on Avon. Has the modelling provided value for money?

Councillor Vigar reminded councillors that the town has failed to move forward on traffic improvements before, councillors should think about the report, listen to what the town has to say and bear in mind Wiltshire Council will only move forward with a project which has the town behind it.

Several councillors confirmed they had not arrived at any conclusion and some felt Option C was being pushed and the 3 priorities had not been particularly addressed.

The Chair summed up the discussion by suggesting many or all councillors had similar aims, wanting the best solution for the town and a need for pragmatism with Wiltshire Council as they are the Highway authority. The council might



need to settle for some improvements rather than achieving all the priorities set out in the consultation in order to finally make some much needed or desired progress.

In terms of a way forward: a consensus was reached that the Mayor should write to Wiltshire Council Cabinet Members and Officers asking for more information regarding the modelling, the way forward and with a set of questions such as: examples of routes with successful bus gates and why bus routes have suddenly become a priority, what about the towns 3 priorities?

The Chair confirmed a letter would be drafted circulated amongst members within a couple of weeks and once agreed, published on the website and sent to Wiltshire Council.

## 20. Next meeting

The next Full Council meeting is planned for Tuesday 9 July 2024.

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## End of the meeting

The meeting finished at 8.30 pm.



Appendix A:

There were 19 members of the public present and 4 questions were asked.

(Q1) There was a question around secrecy over the traffic consultation and why the buses and the need for bus gates have suddenly become an important factor.

Both the Chair and Councillor Trimble refuted that there had been any secrecy around the modelling process. Once the report was presented to Wiltshire and the Town Council it was published on the website for residents to peruse. All councillors have been invited to join the traffic consultation working group and councillors are also surprised that bus routes have become a priority late on in the modelling process. Councillor Trimble also confirmed that the town council will be taking on board the public views as a result of the engagement process.

(Q2) There was a question regarding whether Wiltshire Council have said on record that they will not back a traffic management solution for Bradford on Avon which will increase congestion elsewhere.

Councillor Trimble confirmed he was not aware of anything.

(Q3) There was a request to try and do something about over hanging branches going up Mason's Lane. The buses are struggling to cope with the vegetation.

The Chair confirmed the council would alert the correct department at Wiltshire Council.

(Q4) There was a question asking if a cost benefit analysis will be performed on any proposed traffic scheme. The Chair confirmed yes. The resident also stated that overall, over the past couple of years the council had performed well but perhaps the traffic question should just be left alone.