



Full Council meeting

Minutes

From the meeting at 7pm on Tuesday 9 January 2024

At St. Margaret's Hall, Bradford on Avon

Decision making

The **decisions** made by the Full Council at this meeting are at minutes [36](#), [39](#) and [40](#) .

Present

Councillors:

- Sam Blackwell
- Emma Franklin
- David Garwood
- Sarah Gibson
- Alex Kay
- Alison Potter
- Tim Trimble
- Katie Vigar (Chair)
- Jack Vittles

Town Council Officers:

- Ian Brown - Chief Executive & Town Clerk
- Matthew McLaughlin – Communications Officer
- Sarah Hawkins – Accountant
- Chris Hogg – Green Spaces Officer

Meeting clerk:

- Sarah Howe – Committee Clerk
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Apologies

From Councillors unable to attend the meeting:

- Kate Bessant
 - Simon McNeil-Ritchie
 - Jennie Parker
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35. Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made.

36. Minutes from the previous meeting of the full council

Proposed by Councillor Tim Trimble

Seconded by Councillor Sarah Gibson

And with 8 in favour and 1 abstention it was **resolved**: that the minutes of the last full council meeting held on 31 October 2023 be accepted as a true record of the meeting.

37. Matters arising

None.

38. Agenda item 6 – Chair’s update

The Chair read out her statement as supplied with the agenda.

The Chair also provided a verbal update on a couple of pressing matters.

Flooding over the previous weekend: the Chair expressed the council’s sympathy to all those who had been affected by the flooding and thanked all those, members of the public, councillors, Community Emergency Volunteers (CEVs), council officers and town wardens who had assisted with the crisis. The Chair went onto confirm that the flood barriers have never been the property of the town council and it was up to the Environment Agency (EA) to deploy them. A previous incident provided evidence of a safety risk and so the EA had stopped deploying them. As many local businesses had superior barrier arrangements the EA also felt their barriers were only moderately effective. The EA and Wiltshire Council are in a discussion regarding a longer-term solution and plan with the key issue being around funding. The town council has £30,000 set aside to put towards any new flood prevention scheme implemented by Wiltshire Council and the EA.

Traffic Modelling: the Chair confirmed the town council received the completed report from Atkins on Monday 8th January and it can be viewed on the town council’s website. The modelling report will be discussed at the Sustainable Travel meeting on the 23 January 2023. Councillor Trimble has been in touch with Wiltshire Council Cabinet member for Highways to arrange a meeting to discuss next steps regarding a presentation to residents.



Becky Addy Wood: the Chair confirmed that responses to questions and statement updates can be found on a dedicated page on the town council's website.

The Town Vision report which is being prepared by the Deputy Town Clerk will come for approval to the Full Council meeting in March. There have been a number of comments, some of which are quite detailed, which means there are still considerations to be made, and possibly reflected in the town vision, before finalising the report.

39. Agenda item 7 – Budget 2024/25

The Chair asked Councillor Sam Blackwell (Chair of the Resources committee) to introduce the item as Resources Committee set the budget at the meeting held on 12 December 2023. Councillor Blackwell began by referring to the ongoing cost of living crisis and although headline inflation is easing mortgages, rents and food costs are still high. 2024-25 financial year will see extra costs for Bradford on Avon alongside a contraction in the Council Tax base leading to a fall in Council Tax revenue, which the town council cannot challenge and therefore the income from the precept will reduce if no increase is applied. There is also a new policy from Wiltshire Council coming into play that town and parish councils will have to pay for their own by-elections.

Since the asset transfer, street services have come in-house and the council now has a number of town wardens doing a fantastic job keeping streets clean and green spaces well managed. Some of the associated staff costs have been higher than expected, however, we have a skilled and diverse council team.

The council also runs the community fridge, warm spaces initiative, school holiday clubs and increased the number of public events across town. The play area enhancement project is also underway as Wiltshire Council provided very little investment in the town's play areas towards the end of their tenure.

So, the proposed town budget has gone up 12% to £1,431,620 with a 9% increase in the precept. A Band D property will pay £273.16 per year, an increase of £22.36 per year or 43p per week. The proportion coming from the precept has gone down from 81% to 79% of the total budget however with fees, grants and revenue (hiring out of the events spaces etc around town) contributing a larger part.



The Chair asked if there were any questions and a few points of clarification were made. Councillor Gibson praised the town wardens, thanked them for helping out with the recent flooding and remarked how fantastic it was to have a dedicated team to help out in these situations. She commented that the contractors dealing with street cleaning when Wiltshire Council were responsible would not have been so versatile.

The Chair then summarised that a 9% increase in the precept is the best the council can achieve and stated the recommendation to councillors to set the budget for 2024-5 at £1,431,620 and the precept at £273.16 (band D).

Proposed by Councillor Sam Blackwell

Seconded by Councillor Tim Trimble

And with all in favour it was **resolved** to set the budget for 2024-5 at £1,431,620 and the precept at £273.16 (band D), a 9% increase.

40. Agenda item 8 – Confidential business

Proposed by Councillor Emma Franklin

Seconded by Councillor Sarah Gibson

And with all in favour it was **resolved**: to go into confidential business.

42. Next meeting

The next Full Council meeting is planned for Tuesday 5 March 2024.

End of the meeting

The meeting finished at 8.30 pm.



Appendix A: Comments and questions from the public

Becky Addy Wood

There was a statement from a resident in Bradford on Avon

Becky Addy Wood is a great environmental resource which could be used to educate people of all ages and backgrounds as to what is ancient woodland and why it is so important.

I speak as myself:

A long-term citizen of Bradford on Avon, a parent, a teacher, a scientist, a past leader of Woodcraft Folk, a member of various organisations to emphasise the importance of risk assessments when working with groups of people. In order for organisations to take groups of people through Becky Addy Wood responsibly and to educate them when standing on the legal footpath that runs through the wood, there needs to be a risk assessment by a professional arbo-culturalist on the safety of the trees within falling distance on either side of the footpath. This should be an act of care for those people who walk along the footpath and a requirement for insurance cover.

The Chair thanked the resident for her statement and support.

There was a question regarding the poor state of repair of the Youth and Community Centre.

A resident stated that her son and grandson were attending a table tennis session at the centre and the son was obliged to wait in his car as there was such a draught coming through the windows at the centre.

The resident asked if there was any prospect of the draught and heating being fixed.

The Chair confirmed that there is a project underway to improve various aspects of the Youth and Community centre and that draught proofing could be added to the list.

Councillor Kay agreed she has been wishing the community centre was a cosy inviting place for users.



Councillor Gibson reminded members that there is a post graduate student completing a thesis on calculating the carbon footprint of buildings and using the council's estate buildings as part of his study. Eventually this work could help stop problems with heat escaping and where the council should focus its efforts to improve its carbon footprint. Councillor Garwood suggested the community building should be reconsidered as currently the use of space is slightly strange.

There was an emphatic thank you from a resident for all the efforts of the town wardens during the recent flooding. This was echoed by all present.