



Town Development committee minutes

Minutes

From the committee meeting at 7pm on Tuesday 16 May 2023

At St. Margaret's Hall, Bradford on Avon

Decision making

The **decisions** made by the committee at this meeting are at minutes [1](#) & [8](#).

Present

Councillors:

- Kate Bessant (Vice- Chair of the committee)
- Sam Blackwell (stand in)
- Jennie Parker
- Katie Vigar
- Jack Vittles
- Tim Trimble
- Simon McNeil-Ritchie
- Alex Kay

Town Council Officers:

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

Meeting clerk:

- Sarah Howe – Committee Clerk
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Apologies

From Councillors unable to attend the meeting:

- Dave Garwood
 - Sarah Gibson
 - Alison Potter (Chair of the committee)
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1. Agenda item 2 - Election of Vice Chair

The Outgoing Chair Councillor Jack Vittles took nominations for Vice-Chair of the Town Development committee. Councillor Katie Vigar nominated Councillor Kate Bessant which was seconded by Councillor Alex Kay. As there were no further nominations the Chair moved to the vote and with all in favour; **Resolved:** Councillor Bessant was elected Vice-Chair of the Town Development Committee for the current year. As Councillor Potter had given her apologies, Councillor Bessant then took the Chair for the meeting.

2. Declarations of interest

Councillor Vittles declared his interest in the Cricket Club.

3. Minutes from the previous meeting of the committee

Proposed by Councillor Tim Trimble.

Seconded by Councillor Jack Vittles.

And with 5 in favour and 2 abstentions it was **resolved:** that the Minutes of the last committee meeting held on 28 March 2023 be accepted as a true record of the meeting.

4. Matters arising

None.

5. Agenda item 7 – Business Survey

A presentation was given on the results of a recent Business Survey by local company Cognisant which had been offered to local businesses between September 2022 and February 2023. The town council was asked to host the survey as a pilot study initially covering the impact of Covid but this was developed further with questions also covering Brexit and the cost-of-living crisis. The Town Clerk summarised the results from 40 businesses for the benefit of the committee and public present. Most businesses are feeling reasonably confident about their future in the medium term (2-5 years) however the cost-of-living crisis is the factor causing the most concern with rising costs impacting operations. Staff recruitment, retention and with the correct skill set are also a worry. However, businesses cited preferring to operate in Bradford on Avon due to the quality of life the town offers despite the disadvantages of a difficult transport network and costs, competition from larger towns and cities and lack of footfall.



The next steps are for a larger sample of businesses to be surveyed further, with sector focus and additional sectors approached such as those home working. The Chamber of Commerce is currently defunct although the BoA Business Breakfast networking group are still meeting with the next meeting scheduled for 26 May 2023. The Town Clerk proposed setting up a Business Forum during week beginning 10 June 2023 to listen to what the town council might do to help businesses further and assist with the reinvigoration of the Chamber of Commerce. Councillor McNeil-Ritchie offered to source some recruitment companies to come along to the Business Forum to address staff/skillset concerns.

6. Agenda item 8 – Chair’s report

Councillor Jack Vittles presented his update as outgoing chair of the committee. The Chair thanked Councillors Vittles for all his hard work over the past few years as chair.

7. Agenda item 9 – Delegated decisions from the Town Council’s Planning meetings.

The Minutes and decisions from Planning meetings held on the 22 March, 5 and 19 April and 3 May 2023 were noted by the committee. It was agreed that the minutes from the delegated planning meetings would be circulated to councillors routinely and more widely and decision lists attached to the Town Development agendas.

8. Agenda item 10 – Culver Close Pavilion

The Chair introduced the item and answered questions from the public which appear in the Appendix at the end of the Minutes. After a short discussion where it was confirmed the next steps are to reconvene the working group, and that the public consultation for the next stage would be advertised well ahead of time, the recommendation presented by the Town Clerk was nominated by Councillor McNeil- Ritchie and seconded by Councillor Vigar and with all those in favour, **resolved:** to continue with the Culver Close pavilion project and to redevelop the current pavilion site instead of a proposed new site.



9. Agenda item 11 – Bradford on Avon Neighbourhood Plan

The Deputy Town Clerk introduced his update which was noted by the members. Councillor Kay asked about the time schedule for the Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Vigar indicated that the various topics of interest have had some initial consultation and consideration and now need to be collated and written into a document which is in progress so more is going on behind the scenes than may be apparent.

10. Agenda item 12 – Wiltshire Towns Programme

The Town Clerk provided a verbal update that the town had been in receipt of grants totally £17,000 for 2022/23 and has been allocated a further £20,000 for 2023/24. The previously awarded grants have been spent on projects such as the industrial trail to encourage visitors to the town and to walk around the town. The Town Clerk is looking to set up a working group to bid for the funding for 2023/24. Councillors Vigar, Trimble and Bessant all volunteered.

11. Agenda item 13 - Visit Wiltshire funding changes

Councillor Katie Vigar provided a verbal update on a situation developing that Visit Wiltshire will receive no more funding by 2024/25 from Wiltshire Council (WC). There is an associated issue as the new structure for funding tourism, Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEP), will only consider funding if you can illustrate that you are supported by your Local Authority such as WC in Visit Wiltshire's case. These issues are causing concern for local towns and the Chair of Visit Wiltshire has circulated correspondence from Corsham town council to WC raising their concerns and is asking other local towns including Bradford on Avon to do the same. Councillor Vigar is proposing to draft a letter if all members agree. Councillor McNeil-Ritchie asked why WC is cutting its funding. Councillor Vigar stated she could ask the question but didn't know at this stage however the Town Clerk is meeting the Chair of Visit Wiltshire on 17 May 2023 who may know more. It was agreed to circulate the letter from Corsham Council to all members and any associated notes and agree via email to Councillor Vigar's request as speed is of the essence.

12. Agenda item 14 - One Public Estate (standing item)

Councillor McNeil-Ritchie asked about the value of standing items if there is no update. The Chair noted his comment.



13. Agenda item 15 – Town Council Events

The Town Clerk provided a brief update on outstanding events for 2023. The Live Music Event is in 3 weeks and further meetings are taking place this week. The Fireworks event will now be in collaboration with the Lions Club of Bradford on Avon and are meeting on the 19 May and the next Christmas lights meeting is scheduled for a date in June. The Town Clerk also stated that all councillors are welcome to attend any of the Events working group meetings if they would like further details on planning and progress.

14. Next meeting

The next committee meeting is arranged for Tuesday 11 July 2023.

End of the meeting

The meeting finished at 7.53 pm



Appendix A: Comments and questions from the public

There were various comments and questions from the public at the meeting.

Question on Agenda item 11 – The update on the Neighbourhood Plan (NP).
Quoting the NP update ‘We’re working on a vision for BoA. Although this will be a separate document to an updated NP, it will be similarly strategic in it’s outlook and ambitions – and we plan to include it and reference it in the NP’.

Will the Vision have the same legal status as the NP and why not included in the NP?

The Chair confirmed that the town council’s ambitions for the Vision are bigger than what is permissible in the NP. There are strict legal structures as to what can appear in the NP. So the Vision is broader but inevitably elements of the Vision will go to make up the NP.

Councillor Vigar added that different councillors had take on a variety of topics such as schools or traffic and information has been gathered as a result of consultations or meetings with stakeholders. Documents are now being drawn up. A vision or strategic plan can be useful when applying for funding for projects as meeting a strategic objective can assist the funding process.

Question on Agenda item 10. – Culver Close Pavilion

It’s heartening that the town council (TC) is now considering the current pavilion site for the new pavilion as the community does need better facilities. Will the TC provide a better specification for works going forward? Can the TC provide an explanation for why £40,000 has been spent so far? Where will the parking provision be as there should be no additional parking in Culver Close on the existing pavilion site.

The Chair confirmed that it was never the council’s intention to force through any specific proposal and were exploring ideas however it would have been great if the original design proposal was being progressed to keep costs as low as possible. The £40,000 does include survey and public consultation costs not just architect design fees. There was never a proposal to create parking on the existing pavilion site. This last point was echoed by Councillor Vigar who went on to say that the time scales have been delayed due to the slow pace of the pre-planning advice coming through. The original scheme was an ambitious project designed to consolidate all the existing buildings (pavilion and storage



facilities) into a single facility and ideally not on the existing pavilion site due to the proximity of the cottage next door and Wessex Water pipes underground. As the TC now plans to redevelop the existing pavilion it will be smaller and some of the storage issues will not be addressed.

The project so far has now explored all options and sites on the field so now we know what is possible in the wider context with regard to the landscape and Tithe Barn etc. and going forward the options from the pre-planning advice were varied; to stick with the proposed new site but build a smaller pavilion, move to a location prone to flooding or rebuild the existing facility. But in 5-10 years' time if it is asked why a large new pavilion wasn't built at this time, there will be answers.

Agenda item 10 – Culver Close Pavilion

There was a question regarding why a new pavilion is needed at all in a much beloved green space. Councillor Vittles stated that it was a Town Council led project to benefit the town with new sports facilities not just a new pavilion for the Cricket club.