



**Bradford on Avon
Town Council**



**LOCAL COUNCIL
AWARD SCHEME
QUALITY GOLD**

Minutes of the
Town Development Committee meeting of
BRADFORD ON AVON TOWN COUNCIL held
on Tuesday 12th July 2022 at 7p.m in St. Margaret's Hall

Present:

Cllr J Vittles (Chairman)
Cllr K Bessant
Cllr D Garwood
Cllr S Gibson
Cllr A Kay
Cllr S McNeill-Ritchie
Cllr J Parker
Cllr A Potter
Cllr T Trimble
Cllr K Vigar
Mrs S Bartlett – Town Clerk

Members of the Public: Doug Robinson, Mike Smith, John Buckley, Jeremy Wire and 43 others.

15. Declarations of interest

Chairman declared that he was a member of the cricket club.

16. Minutes

After a couple of amendments were made, It was proposed by Cllr Trimble and seconded by Cllr Vigar and with all in favour it was **RESOLVED**: To accept the minutes of the last meeting held on the 10th May 2022.

16. Matters arising - none

17. Culver Close Community Pavilion

Feedback on public consultation was discussed.

18. Chairman's Report

Chairman reported that over the past two weeks he had attended very positive meetings about two exciting events taking place in Bradford on Avon this winter. Our Christmas lights switch on and event is progressing well and his thanks goes to council officers who spend a lot of time over the year organising what is one of the highlights of the town calendar. He hopes that advertising for this event will begin soon, and he looks forward to seeing more details as we get closer to the event.

The Town Council is also bringing the town's fireworks display in-house and this will take place on Saturday 5th November 2022. The plan is for the fireworks to be visible from the town centre and across the town too, with activities and food and drink focussed on Victory Field. Promotion of the evening has already begun.

Chairman said that he would also be attending a meeting with Wiltshire Council along with Cllr Gibson about the 'Wiltshire Towns Programme' and he plans to report back on this at the next meeting.

19. Vice-Chairman

It was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Cllr Kay and with no further nominations and with all in favour it was **RESOLVED**: that Cllr Kate Bessant be Vice-Chairman on this committee.

20. Reopening the High Street

Cllr Gibson reported that she had spoken the contractor and was heartened to learn that he knew Bradford on Avon. She had discussed with him the possibility of having an industrial heritage trail for the children with information towers in the car parks. Cllr Gibson said that she would be contacting the museum for their help. Cllr Bessant suggested that Jenny Dack could help with graphics. Cllr Kay agreed to give some ideas to Cllr Gibson. Jeremy Wire asked that the Climate and Ecological Emergency be included. Cllr Vigar said that she would like to see independent shops included. Cllr Bessant said that she was concerned that a few bits of plastic would be flung up and this is an attractive historic town. Cllr Gibson proposed to have a Working Group to agree the final details as the project had to be delivered by August. She said she would be emailing all councillors inviting them to a meeting next week and sharing ideas for this scheme. It was proposed by Cllr Gibson, seconded by Cllr Kay and with all in favour it was **RESOLVED**: to go ahead with the £7,000 scheme for information towers and the swan trail incorporating a heritage trail.

21. Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

Nothing to report.

22. Delegated decisions

Planning recommendations for 18th May, 1st and 15th June and 6th July 2022 were noted.

23. Skatepark

Cllr Bessant reported that the public meeting was well attended. Cllr Vigar reported that a working Group meeting took place on the 7th July 2022 and that possible funding from local businesses would be explored.

24. One Public Estate

No news.

25. Residents' Panel

The results on the Environment and Thursday market were noted. The questions on the local market which is now managed by the town council were noted. Cllr Bessant said that she did not find the flag for this market very appealing. Cllr Vigar explained to a member of the public how the residents panel was set up.

26. War Memorial

Facilities Manger's report was read out and noted. Cllr McNeill-Ritchie said it was the centenary of the war memorial this year, which was why this work needed completing this year.

27. Date of next meeting

The next meeting has been arranged for 13th September 2022.

The meeting closed at 8.32pm

APPENDIX 1

Members of the public who spoke at the Town Development meeting on the 12th July 2022

1. Doug Robinson said Friends of Culver is an informal group of Bradford on Avon residents who are concerned about the proposal to build a sports pavilion on the green space in Culver Field. We think it is important to reiterate at the outset that we are not opposed to the provision of better sporting facilities in the town. We actively support the opportunity for the town to make sport more accessible, we want to encourage participation and many of us have children who play various sports in BoA including cricket. The Cricket Club have circulated an email to their members to encourage attendance at this meeting. We are concerned that the email does not accurately represent the Friends of Culver position. It includes the following: 'This this is an extremely emotive topic in the town with 20-30 local residents (calling themselves the 'Friends of Culver Close') actively opposing this proposed development.' We are fully supportive of improved cricket facilities and sport for all ages. However, we oppose the development in its current format and location because we are concerned about the consultation process, impact on the green space, the traffic and parking issues, and the financial risk for the Town Council. We submitted a list of questions and concerns to the town council prior to the last meeting on 10 May. They have responded but many of the answers were vague or inadequate and did not fully address our concerns. In summary our concerns and questions: • The consultation process in April and to date has been too narrow and recommendations about the location are based on a small number of unknown respondents to the April initial consultation process. We will be asking for more information about the next stage of the consultation including key dates with an adequate notice period. • The Town Council does not have a budget for the cost of this proposed development. There is no financial plan. It has not provided any details about how these unspecified capital costs or ongoing running costs will be funded. The current proposal presents a significant financial risk to the Town Council and therefore the town's residents. We will be asking for more information on build costs and running costs once these have been worked out. • [The only hard financial information is that, per FOI request response received 29 June, The Town Council has committed to spend £36,750 on architects' fees in advance of any planning application (Work Order Numbers 2016 and 2090) £18,500 spent currently • The proposal may contravene planning law, the National Planning Policy Framework and BoA Town Council's own Local Neighbourhood Plan. We will be asking the TC to provide further assurance that the proposal will not fail due to planning law before they commit more public money to this project. • To date the TC has not commissioned any impact assessments for the proposal – environmental, traffic and parking, net biodiversity and green space gain/loss including an arboriculturist survey. We will be asking for details of the outcome of all of these important aspects required for any green field construction project on this scale, once these reports have been commissioned/carried out. He realises not all answers are available • The proposal has also highlighted a wider issue around how the green space of Culver Field and Victory Field are currently used and protected. We will be seeking assurances that concerns about health and safety and breaches of rules regarding temporary parking on green belt land will be addressed along with wider protection through implementation of appropriate bye-laws. He wants byelaws protection in future • The minutes of 10 May Town Council Development Meeting are missing important information/actions that were discussed or agreed (eg confirmation that the TC have gone to pre-application planning and their commitment to share the outcome of that process with FOC) We will be asking for the minutes to be amended. We have some specific questions for the Town Council to address but this is not intended to be an exhaustive list: 1. When does the Town Council propose to share more information about the cost and funding of the proposal? 2. The Minutes of 10th May Town Development Committee meeting are missing important information that was agreed at the meeting: The Committee agreed (following a question) to share the full outcome of the Pre Application submission to Wiltshire Council planning team with Friends of Culver and the public. Has the pre-application planning advice been received? What was the outcome? If not, when is the Council expected to hear? 3. Given the challenges the Council is facing over delivering a more modest project in terms of the skatepark (£300,000), why are the Council proposing a million pound plus pavilion on greenspace - rather than a more sustainable and cost effective redevelopment of the existing pavilion footprint? The Council's decision to push for this very expensive pavilion contrary to green belt policy could jeopardise the much-needed new cricket facilities which we all support 4.

Can the Council provide an update on where they are with the matter of creating bye-laws for Culver Rec? In the last few weeks there have been motorcyclists racing round on the grass damaging the turf (which Mike Smith had to phone the police about) and metal detectorists digging up the pitch. The Town Council did not transfer the Wiltshire Council bye-laws over when the land was transferred so there is currently no protection for this space whether it is cars, motorbikes, detectorists, wild campers, etc We can all do whatever we want in that space, there are no powers of enforcement - and that should be as much a concern for the cricket club as any other user. 5. Given that parking on the grass at Culver and Victory Fields is contrary to green belt policy and is also an increasing health risk to families who use both green spaces, as well as impacting trees and biodiversity, when is the Council going to stop such inappropriate parking, put up gates and locks and liaise with the sports clubs to park on Pound Lane and in the Station car park? Can the Council issue a commitment to stop cars parking on the grass, apart from approved one-off events like the Lions event and the food festival?

6. When is the date of the next public consultation (not the Development meeting)? How will it be advertised? We request plenty of notice (and FoC are willing to help with publicity/leaflet drop). In summary, we are concerned that the current proposal for a two-storey, six changing room pavilion, of unknown cost, on a green field site in Culver Close Recreational Ground is flawed and presents an unacceptable financial and environmental risk for the Council and the town's residents.

Cllr Vigar said that we were not ready for a business plan as we had not agreed a design yet or when it will be built or obtained planning permission. We had completed some public consultation but we had not received feedback on the pre application discussion with Wiltshire Council. Chairman said that a pre planning application was submitted on the 12th April 2022. It was registered on the 25th April 2022 and that to date no written reply had been received. He said that once a reply is received it will be published on the Town Council website. He said that any redesigns will be made and it will be opened back up for further public consultation. This public consultation date will be widely publicised. He said this will be held over a two day period.

Cllr Gibson said that pre planning response was important and that comments from the public consultation will be taken into account too. They don't intend to rush through anything and hope for a carbon zero building.

2. Mike Smith said If you drive on grass the subsoil remains firm, no damage to the grass. When the grass is wet in winter the cricket square is roped off because the danger is parking compaction of the sub soil. They also spike the ground. They are advised by Gordon Gill, Head Groundsman at Bath Cricket Club. Mike said he was Chairman of the cricket league and there were 92 teams in the first 3 divisions. He said if they were not allowed to park on the grass then 50% of them would close down. In the winter, they club together reseeding perennial rye grass costing £3,000 to grow harder wearing grass. He said the Bowls Club have parked there since 1966. Cricket club have safely parked there for 6 years, as there was not adequate parking along Pound Lane on a Saturday afternoon. Station car park is full. He said that other events park there such as the Green Man Festival. He said that at their All Stars event, 200 children turn up at 6pm to play cricket and they try to do it as responsibly as they can. They were most supportive of their 5 to 8 year olds. He said sensible alternatives should be provided for parking. Cllr Trimble said that perhaps the local people could drive to the Canals and Rivers Trust parking at Bailey's Barn. Chairman said it was under utilised and more clear signage was needed to that car park.
3. Doug Robinson said that the Chairman of the Cricket Club has said there is not adequate car parking in the town, that is the current cricket club, not the new pavilion with 6 changing rooms. The grass is very important but they are much more concerned about the impact of the car and a child. 200 kids are parked in that space with cars in and out, as safe as we possibly can.

4. John Buckley here as a member of the public. He is not a member of the cricket club. I have read and heard lots of misinformation surrounding the new community pavilion, which some seem to forget has been designed by and will be owned and managed by the Town Council for the good of the whole community.

Yes, people should have their input to the facility, this was offered at TWO in person public consultations displays where those who bothered to turn up VOTED on their preferred location.

The location chosen offers numerous benefits over the other sites and as I understand it is also better from an engineering perspective.

Talking of engineers, I understand that there has been a lot of objections from engineers amongst the community. (Solar panels are not being the right size etc). Whilst its great that the community are able to lend their 'expertise' and assist the Town Council to ensure the very best facility is provided, I do wonder if these contributions are really gripes dressed up as helpful input. We should remember that engineers engineer, they don't necessarily understand how people use the facilities. That's why we have architects, (good ones, not "two a penny, tin pot ones"). Remember it was engineers that gave us Titanic and the millennium bridge, both fantastic pieces of engineering until people used them.

He hears lots of talk about 'getting back to normal,' or back to 'the way things were'. But we are not going backwards, we are going forwards. To constantly be trying to achieve something that used to be, denies us the opportunity to grow and evolve.

If we only ever look backwards or just keep doing the same thing, we will never improve – if we go backwards we will find Victory Field and Culver Close full of cattle and horses and Barton Close as closed down, run down petrol station.

We could just reminisce BUT that isn't reality. Reality is, that the area is a sports field and in 2022, post pandemic, with the under investment in facilities, this town needs a new community pavilion that unlocks potential of both playing fields, removes the danger of access to the bowls club via the front of the existing pavilion and addresses the 'accident waiting to happen' that is Pound Lane.

This community pavilion has been designed with all of that in mind AND to provide first class, flexible and USEABLE facilities for a wide range of groups (sports clubs, cubs, scouts, guides and brownies AND individuals).

Therefore this is my question to this committee is this

'Which of the fantastic facilities will have to be sacrificed and which groups will then miss out, if the new building is located on the existing footprint?'

He thought it really unfair how the first speaker had 20 minutes and the second one had 10 minutes.

Cllr Kay said that the Town Council was trying to design a building to suit all users football, cricket runners, swimmers, dog walkers, whoever uses that area for sport. They might need the toilet might need a shower, or a drink or something else. It is not what are we going to sacrifice but how are we going to use the spaces that we have to do the best we can in order to free up other spaces, which will be greened. We have a great shortage of land in Bradford on Avon to deliver anything, we need more football fields but we don't have lots of land, we have to use every square inch the best we can. This is our first pass, we are not ruling out any users, you need a first pass before you can have response, before you can have consultation, we wish to make it self-efficient, carbon neutral and least green space lost as we possibly can. It might not look how the plan is on the table right now or it might be, we will have to see how we move forward.

Chairman said it was really positive we all agree and want to improve the sports facilities here in Bradford, we need to remember that as our basis and we will be laying out under agenda item number 6 a road map forward and we can all work on this together, as residents and town councillors and officers as well.