



# the NEWS

Bradford on Avon Town Council  
Spring 2025



## Next steps for new town footbridge

**W**iltshire Council has backed the town council's plans for a new pedestrian bridge in the town centre to improve safety and accessibility.

The town council agreed unanimously at a recent Full Council meeting that a new bridge could help address pedestrian safety concerns, which is a key goal of the Future of Transport project.

In February, an initial meeting was held with Wiltshire Council officers to explore how to move the project forward, and Wiltshire Council offered to support a funding bid and provide technical support if we decide to proceed. This was following the submission of a Strategic Outline Case from the town council after a 2023/4 Sustrans consultation showed an expected good return on the investment.

The proposed footbridge would create a better walking and cycling route on the south side of the river, linking the



■ A new pedestrian bridge would link the library car park with Kingston Square and Kingston Road

library car park with Kingston Square and Kingston Road. It could also help reduce pedestrian traffic on Town Bridge, making it safer for everyone.

In the 2022 Future of Transport consultation, 70% of respondents said a new pedestrian bridge would

encourage them to walk or cycle more.

Please visit our website, to keep up to date with the project:  
[bradfordonavontowncouncil.gov.uk/your-community/travel-and-transport/safer-river-crossing/](https://bradfordonavontowncouncil.gov.uk/your-community/travel-and-transport/safer-river-crossing/)

## What's happening at St Margaret's Hall?

The trial to begin drying out the space under the floor in St Margaret's Hall, following the flooding in November, has seen some encouraging early results, with a reduction in the moisture levels.

This means we're going to continue drying the hall in this way – forcing warm air down into the void, where it circulates, before coming out of a series of holes cut into the floor.

In mid-February bigger holes were cut into the floor, showing that there is still water sitting in the space under the floor. We may have answers on this by the time you're reading this article.

We'll try and keep residents updated where possible about St Margaret's Hall as we know more. Thank you for your continued patience and understanding.

### Council meetings find new home

While St Margaret's Hall is closed, our Full Council and committee meetings have moved to the youth centre, off Frome Road.

Meetings are still happening on Tuesday nights – but are starting half an hour later, at 7.30pm. This is because our regular Tuesday night youth club doesn't finish until 7pm.

You can find out more about individual meetings by reading the meeting agendas and meeting reports on our new website.

■ Dehumidifiers are in place at St Margaret's Hall, working round the clock to force warm air into the space below the floor



Keep up to date by visiting our new website at [bradfordonavontowncouncil.gov.uk](https://bradfordonavontowncouncil.gov.uk)



Calling all Bradford on Avon dog lovers! Join us on Saturday 19 April, from 1pm to 5pm, at Poulton Park for a Fun Dog Show & Spring Fete. Enjoy a day of dog-friendly fun, fete games and stalls – all in support of Poulton Play Area improvements. By the time you're reading this, voting will be open, or just about to open, on BOA's Top Dog competition, where you can show love to your favourites. Find out more on the Explore BOA website: [bradfordonavon.co.uk/boas-top-dog-competition/](http://bradfordonavon.co.uk/boas-top-dog-competition/)



### Music, music, music

From Friday 30 May to Sunday 1 June, the town will come alive with incredible performances from unmissable acts. This year's BOA Live Music Festival kicks off with a headline set from the Bowie Experience at the Bradford Town football grounds on Trowbridge Road. Fan-favourites Retro Electro will take to the Westbury Garden stage on Saturday with free music around the town at Lamb Yard, The Castle Inn, The Three Horseshoes, Canal Tavern and Timbrell's Yard - and brilliant ticketed events at Wiltshire Music Centre. Expect live music all weekend, spanning rock, country, folk and indie. Find out more about the event at [bradfordonavon.co.uk](http://bradfordonavon.co.uk)



## Wiltshire Council tasked with designing new traffic scheme

Bradford on Avon Town Council continues to press for progress on a new traffic scheme after Wiltshire Council said any one-way system must allow buses to travel up Silver Street – against the one-way system for cars and other vehicles.

At the September 2024 Full Council meeting, the town council unanimously approved a motion requesting Wiltshire Council to design a scheme under an experimental traffic order, with the potential for it to become permanent following assessment.

This decision was the culmination of multiple rounds of consultation, as Wiltshire Council required 'an overall level of local support'.

The town council's priorities included:

- 20mph speed limits throughout the town
- wider pavements, particularly at the bottom of Silver Street and the top of Market Street
- one-way traffic east to west on Silver Street (uphill)
- one-way traffic uphill on Market Street or two-way traffic with priority for uphill traffic, subject to advice from highways engineers
- consultative mitigation measures put in place from the start in any areas negatively impacted
- consultation with emergency services, local bus services and local schools on the impacts of any scheme.

After agreeing on priorities, the town



council met with Wiltshire Council, the highways authority responsible for developing and designing the scheme. In late 2024, Wiltshire Council issued

a briefing note stating that a bus **contraflow** system would be a non-negotiable part of any one-way scheme on Silver Street.

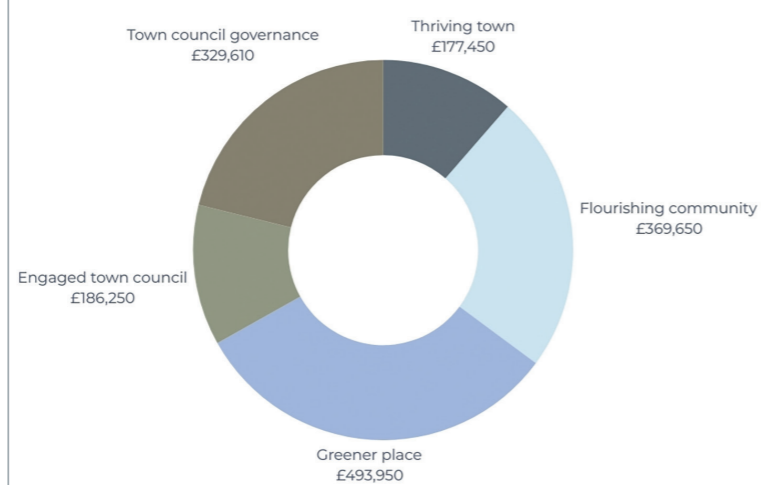
They also mentioned that a feasibility study would be required to assess the viability of the bus **contraflow** system, and without it, the one-way scheme would not be implemented.

Town Mayor, Councillor Jack Vittles, has written to Wiltshire Council requesting that they carry out the feasibility study and provide an update to the town council as soon as possible.

A **contraflow** system is a traffic management strategy that permits vehicles to travel in the opposite direction to the usual flow of traffic.

## 2025/26 budget strikes balance between services and spending

### TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET 2025/26



In January the town council approved a precept rise of 47p per week for the average Band D property for the year ahead.

The precept, which funds most town council activities, represents around 11% of your overall Council Tax bill and helps fund services such as:

- litter collection
- street cleaning
- grass cutting
- parks and green spaces
- youth and summer holiday clubs
- play area improvements
- public toilets
- community events.

In real terms, this means the average Band D property is paying £5.72 per week for these services.

Your contributions help sustain vital

community projects and services.

Our estimated budget for 2025/26 is £1,556,910 which is drawn from 3 sources: interest and reserves, fees and charges, and the precept. As a parish council, we don't receive any government grants or money from business rates paid by local enterprises. Instead, most of our funding is drawn from the precept.

However, we are always looking at how we can develop our services, increase our income and keep expenditure as low as possible.

The main areas of spending, as you can see, left, are:

- thriving town
- flourishing community
- greener place
- engaged town council
- town council governance.

## Talk of the town: news in brief

Did you know that Bradford on Avon Walkers are Welcome organises 2 walks each month – on the second Sunday and last Tuesday? The group meets at 9.25am in Westbury Garden (outside the Tourist Information Centre). They've also announced that this year's Walking Festival will be held from Saturday 6 September to Sunday 7 September.

At the end of last year, we successfully bid for £10,000 of funding for our Neighbourhood Plan review. We're working with Place Studio's team on the review – and this funding is paying for Place Studio's support as the review moves forward. We were also successful in our bid for an independent assessment of the sites put forward for consideration during our call for sites for potential development.

Keep an eye on our website and social media for more Neighbourhood Plan updates.

Tennis season is nearly here, and it's been fantastic to see players making the most of the courts – even through winter. With warmer weather on the way, now's the perfect time to get involved. Grab your membership and enjoy a game in the heart of town: [clubspark.lta.org.uk/culver-close-tennis-courts](http://clubspark.lta.org.uk/culver-close-tennis-courts)

Save the date for the Wild Waters Festival, running from 31 May to 15 June. Organised by local councils and nature groups, the festival celebrates the river while raising awareness of climate change and biodiversity loss. Find out more at [wildwatersfestival.com](http://wildwatersfestival.com)

The ever-popular Bradford on Avon Flower

& Produce Show will take place on Sunday 7 September, from 2pm to 4pm. The organisers hope the show will be staged as usual in St Margaret's Hall, but are looking at alternative venues just in case the hall is still out of action. Check our website for updates – and look out for the show schedules/entry forms, which will be available soon from the TIC and town council offices.

The Secret Gardens of Bradford on Avon will be opening their gates to visitors again this summer – on Sunday 25 May and Sunday 29 June, from 2pm to 6pm. Projects that benefited from last year's event include the raised beds by the swimming pool and on the riverside near Timbrell's Yard.

## A chance to serve your community



There are 2,118 parish council seats across Wiltshire, and on Thursday 1 May, all these seats – along with 98 Wiltshire Council (unitary council) seats – will be up for election.

All the seats on Bradford on Avon Town Council are up for election on 1 May, and there are plenty of reasons to want to become a town councillor – not least to be part of pushing the community forward.

If you have questions about the town council – such as what we do and what you can achieve as a town councillor – email [office@bradfordonavontowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:office@bradfordonavontowncouncil.gov.uk) or call 01225 864240 to arrange a chat with the Chief Executive & Town Clerk.

Nominations open on Wednesday 12 March at 10am and close on Wednesday 2 April at 4pm – don't miss the deadline if you want your name on the ballot!

If you're thinking about putting yourself forward, visit Wiltshire Council's website to learn more about the process: [wiltshire.gov.uk/local-elections](http://wiltshire.gov.uk/local-elections)

### Important dates to keep in mind

Councillor nominations close: 2 April (4pm)  
 Deadline to register to vote: 11 April (midnight)  
 Deadline to apply for a postal vote, change an existing postal vote or proxy vote: 14 April (5pm)  
 Deadline to apply for a new proxy vote: 23 April (5pm)  
 Polling day: 1 May (7am to 10pm)

### How's our newsletter?

What do you think of the newsletter?

The town council's four-year term ends this spring, with a new group of councillors set to be elected on 1 May 2025.

As we look ahead, we'd love your feedback on how we can improve the newsletter – whether it's the content, style or printing.

Share your thoughts by emailing our Communications Officer, Matthew McLaughlin, at [matthew@bradfordonavontowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:matthew@bradfordonavontowncouncil.gov.uk)

# Fresh start for Becky Addy Wood as court case ends

The town council is to appoint an expert arborist and ecologist to produce a new management plan for Becky Addy Wood. The plan will address the damage that occurred during the recent legal dispute when the council was prevented from working in the woodland. The plan will also ensure the woodland is managed for nature and the safety of those enjoying it.

The disagreement over Becky Addy Wood was about the council's management of ash dieback disease in the woodland. Following lengthy discussions the dispute, after 2 years, culminated with High Court proceedings, and an injunction stopped the town council managing the woodland responsibly while the case was considered. As the town council has been vindicated by the court, and with the injunction now lifted, we can start to repair the damage that has occurred over the years of enforced inaction.

During this time many ash trees affected by ash dieback disease have fallen throughout the woodland. This includes trees coming down across the public footpath and trees that are unstable and hanging near the path. We will also be assessing the ecological impact, such as where trees with bat roosts have snapped. We are looking forward to planting new trees to make the woodland more resilient.

The town council is pleased that the High Court case about Becky Addy Wood, brought against the council, is now finished. The case was brought by the claimants, Lisa Otter-Barry and Christopher Humphries, who could have withdrawn at any time, unlike the town council which, as defendant, could not. Two rounds of mediation and a number of settlement offers were unsuccessful in bringing the dispute to an earlier close.

The court case concerned whether the claimants and the members of the Friends of Becky Addy Wood (FROBAW)



■ New trees will be planted to make the woodland more resilient

had a trust arrangement and therefore could take ownership of the woodland. This argument was dismissed.

The court case also considered the ability of the town council to make its own decision without the consent of the claimants, or more broadly, FROBAW, and the behaviour of the town council in coming to the decision that it has reached. The judge concluded the town council had consulted properly, acted in good faith and could make the decisions as it had done.

Following the judgement in September that the council had won, there was another hearing in January to settle other matters. In both September and January, the judge stated that the town council acted in good faith throughout its ownership of the woodland.

At the January hearing, the court ordered that Lisa Otter-Barry and Christopher Humphries must contribute towards the town council's legal costs. The first payment, as instructed by the court, of £101,000 was paid to the town council on 5 February 2025, a second payment of £64,000 was paid on 26 February - with the final settlement to be agreed.

The judge also ruled that he would not grant the claimants the opportunity to

appeal against his judgement. A further period where the claimants could ask the Court of Appeal if it would consider the case has now passed, so the case has come to an end.

One week after the claimants brought the case in February 2023, the town council offered to settle by engaging independent jointly appointed experts to assess the woodland. The experts would assess the woodland for its ecology and the safety of the trees. Though ordered by the court in May 2023, the claimants never agreed to instructions being sent to joint experts.

We have now set up a Becky Addy Wood Liaison Committee, attended by representatives from the town council and FROBAW.

At the first meeting, we reaffirmed our commitment to appointing independent experts to make a new woodland management plan. And we're pleased FROBAW has now agreed.

We hope regular meetings of this liaison committee will foster an open and constructive relationship. This liaison committee will be the forum for consultation on the management of the woodland, with its recommendations presented at our Environmental & Green Spaces Committee.



■ Experience the magic of the BOA Green Man Festival this May! This vibrant, family-friendly event brings the town to life with traditional dance groups, live music, artisan traders and folklore – and the best part is, it's completely free! Join the festivities on Saturday 10 May from 9.30am to 6pm, with events happening across town.

Keep up to date with local news by visiting [bradfordonavon.towncouncil.gov.uk](http://bradfordonavon.towncouncil.gov.uk)

Printed in Wiltshire on sustainably sourced paper

