



Full Council meeting

Minutes

From the meeting at 7pm on Tuesday 6 January 2026

At: United Church Bradford on Avon, 10 St Margaret's Street, Bradford on Avon

Decision making

The **decisions** made by the Full Council at this meeting are at minutes [57](#) & [61](#).

Present

Councillors:

- James Atkinson
- Kate Bessant (Vice Chair & Deputy Mayor)
- Sam Blackwell
- Andy Gordon
- Ben Reed
- Ghika Savva
- George Simmonds
- Chris Spence
- Katie Vigar
- Jack Vittles (Chair & Mayor)

Town Council Officers:

- Ian Brown - Chief Executive & Town Clerk
- Chris Stringer – Deputy Town Clerk
- Sarah Hawkins - Accountant

Meeting clerk:

- Sarah Howe – Committee Clerk
-

Apologies

From Councillors unable to attend the meeting:

- Kevin Elliott
- Alex Kay

Bradford on Avon (BOA) Flood Prevention Group came to speak to councillors and their presentation can be found at Appendix B.



56. Agenda item 3 - Declarations of interest

Councillor Vittles declared his interest as a member of the Cricket Club.

57. Agenda item 4 – Minutes of 4 November 2025

Proposed by Councillor Savva

Seconded by Councillor Blackwell

and with all in favour **resolved:** to accept the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on the 4 November 2025.

58. Agenda item 5 - Matters Arising

None

59. Agenda item 6 – Minutes of previous meetings

The minutes of the following meetings were noted: Environment and Green Spaces 25 November 2025, Resources 2 December 2025 and Sustainable Travel 9 December 2025.

60. Agenda item 7 – Chair's Update

The Chair provided a verbal update.

The Chair in his capacity as Mayor:

November 16th – awarded the trophies for Bradford on Avon (BOA) Bowls Club at their annual dinner.

November 28th – it had been an honour to turn on the town Christmas lights. It was a lovely evening, which thousands of people attended, and the Chair had received lots of very positive feedback. Encouragingly, many of the shops, pubs and restaurants also had a busy evening. The Chair thanked all those involved in the evening - town council officers, Burbidge Electrical, all those involved with the Giving Tree and everyone who performed or volunteered and helped in the organising.

December 11th – The Chair had the pleasure of attending the Wiltshire Lieutenant's Carol Service in Devizes and representing BOA, which was very festive and it was good to chat to other mayors to compare notes and ideas.



December 14th – The Chair enjoyed speaking at the Carol Service in Holy Trinity at the culmination of the Christmas Tree Festival. The theme was ‘Our BOA community at Christmas’ and it was great to chat to so many residents and to see all the lovely Christmas trees decorated by various organisations, charities and clubs in BOA.

The Chair also flagged the flood dashboard which we now have for BOA - <https://www.floodalleviation.uk/hosted/bradford-on-avon/dashboard/>

The Town Council flooding working group will be meeting soon to continue the work on what can be done to alleviate the situation in BOA

The Chair also mentioned the consultation currently open on the funding for a new amenity and public toilet building on Victory Field as part of the Culver Close pavilion complex. It is running until the end of the January.

61. Agenda item 8 – Budget and Council Tax 2026-27

The Chair asked the Councillor Simmonds as Chair of the Resource committee to introduce the item.

The Budget was discussed at the 2 December 2025 Resources committee meeting. Various budget options were considered and the committee settled for the lowest increase at 9% covering 5% for inflation and 4% for the loan for the new amenity building in Victory Field. Inflation costs include staffing costs and topping up reserves which had been depleted due to a recent court case. It was also made clear that: the amount of reserved funds saved needs to increase gradually as overall town council costs rise and the total amount needed for the loan is a cautious figure at this stage and the hope is the final costs will be lower.

The Chair asked for comments and questions for councillors. Councillor Blackwell observed that some of the town councils costs for services such as waste disposal have risen to an ‘astronomical level’, Councillor Vigar added that no-one puts up the precept lightly, but that a lack of any house building programme in the town means there is no revenue from additional council tax or Section 106 or CIL (community infrastructure levy) money. The town clerk mentioned that the town council are trying to reduce the reliance on the precept and generate more income.

The Chair then moved to the Resources committee recommendation as follows:



1. To set the budget for 2026/27 at £1,673,463
2. To set the 2026/27 budget precept at £1,353,026, which would require an increase in the precept for Bradford on Avon of 9%. For a Band D property, the rate would be £324.54 or 51p per week [£26.80 per year].

Proposed by Councillor Savva

Seconded by Councillor Spence

And with all in favour **resolved:** to approve the recommendation set out above by the Resources committee 2 December 2025 for the Budget 2026/27.

62. Agenda item 9 – St Margaret’s Hall Update

The Deputy town clerk was invited to introduce the topic, and he referred to his report supplied with the agenda and mentioned that the building contractors, who are Bristol based, will be starting works towards the end of January 2026. He clarified that the insurance will be paying for the reinstatement works on a like for like basis, however some elements will be refitted with some flood resilience measures such as electrical sockets halfway up the walls instead the usual position closer to the ground. The Chair confirmed a meeting with councillors will be arranged to discuss fixtures and fittings in case any additional elements could be added whilst the contractors are on site.

63. Next meeting

The next Full Council meeting is planned for Tuesday 10 March 2026.

End of the meeting

The meeting finished at 8.20pm.



Appendix A:

There were 10 members of the public present and 9 questions were asked and comments presented.

A resident asked 2 questions:

(Q1) From the Agenda of the 4 November 2025: the confidential business section relied on the Public Bodies (Admissions to meetings) Act 1960. The resident felt that due to some technicalities the information currently classed as confidential should be made known to the public or the public should not have been excluded, particularly regarding councillor remuneration.

The Chair asked the resident to email in with his query, and the town council (TC) would have a look.

(Q2) The resident asked for an explanation as to the use of the headings in the budget report. He also observed that council governance was accounting for more than 1/5th of the total budget. Why was that so high. The precept has gone up by 9% when inflation is only 3%.

The Town Clerk confirmed the headings reflect those used in the Business Plan. Again, the resident was asked to email in with the final part of his question and the TC would investigate.

(Q3) A resident stated that for requests for councillors to take on the role of a trustee, as recently with The Bradford on Avon Sports Club, there were few risks, associated with such a commitment, spelt out to the councillors ahead of the vote. The resident felt more due diligence in these situations was necessary and provided some relevant paperwork for the councillors to have a look at.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the town council has public liability insurance to cover risks of this nature. The Chair confirmed that officers would look into this however.

(Q4) A resident queried whether a new toilet block is needed on Victory Field, would it just be for the Cricket Club, why is it separated from the rest of the pavilion and why is it costing so much?

The Chair confirmed that a quantity surveyor and an architect has looked into the costs and the Chair agreed it is shocking how much things cost. There is



hope the costs will come in lower than predicted however public toilets are expensive to build. The toilets and storage facility are to provide much needed public toilets in the area replacing a single dilapidated one and also much needed storage space for the town wardens ground works kit.

Councillor Bessant confirmed that the Cricket Club is very popular with youngsters both male and female and there are no female changing facilities at the current pavilion. Having consulted with Planning at Wiltshire Council the pavilion must remain on its current footprint so there is no room for all the facilities the building must provide on one site. So public toilets, disabled changing and the town warden's storage facility are in the additional amenity building on Victory Field.

(Q5) A resident asked a few questions:

- (i) Why are the noted minutes not part of the agenda pack.
It was confirmed the minutes are already published on the website under the relevant meetings.
- (ii) What has gone wrong with the Culver Close pavilion, why split up the toilets from the rest. Answer: nothing and see above.
- (iii) Is the Chair on the committee of the Cricket Club? It was confirmed the Chair operates as the comms officer for the cricket club but declares his interest at meetings where pertinent. Other councillors confirmed that the Chair has no pecuniary interests in this matter so does not need to declare his interest and many councillors have double hatted roles in the community.
- (iv) Was there a more detailed budget spreadsheet the public could view. It was made clear that various options had been considered but it was not useful to publish unchosen options. It was confirmed that the TC could look into the legalities of publishing what was discussed, however.
- (v) Would it be cheaper to reapply for planning permission rather than build the amenity building to maintain the planning into perpetuity? The Chair disagreed. It was prudent to get on with it. Councillor Bessant agreed it was less about securing planning and more about providing an amenity/working public toilets etc.

The resident also made a statement about how prudent it was to build a new building such as a sports facility with a climate emergency at hand.



Appendix B: Presentation from Bradford on Avon Flood Prevention Group

Members of the group, set up in the wake of the town flooding event in November 2024, came to talk to councillors, thanking councillors for allowing them to speak.

They stated their aims and objectives.

Their aim is to 'identifying an acceptable scheme which will prevent the harm and damage caused by severe flooding in the town in a sustainable manner which will be economically beneficial.'

Objectives include: maintain access across the river for the communities, businesses and pedestrians, increase resilience to flooding in the local environment, BoA to be taken into account within the Bristol Avon Flood management plan and to engage with various stakeholders, authorities, interested parties and members of the community in achieving the primary Aim.

The group is at the research stage considering other flood prevention groups and the approaches they have taken seeking an effective long-term solution.

They are also seeking approval from the TC for their efforts.

The Chair declared he had met with the group previously and thanked them for their efforts and coming along to the meeting. He reiterated that the TC are working with various stakeholders including the Environment Agency and Wiltshire Council and believes the TC could work in tandem with residential groups. Councillor Gordon added that Natural England has formed a catchment sensitive farming group which are already doing works to improve drainage upstream of BOA and encouraging farmers to apply for grant funding. Councillor Bessant added that residential groups have a power that established bodies do not have in an attempt to find solutions.