



Community and Wellbeing committee minutes

Minutes

From the committee meeting at 7pm on Tuesday 10 February 2026

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

Decision making

The **decisions** made by the committee at this meeting are at minute [27](#).

Present

Councillors:

- James Atkinson
- Kate Bessant
- Sam Blackwell
- Ghika Savva
- George Simmonds *arrived 7.10pm
- Katie Vigar (Chair)

Town Council Officers:

- Ian Brown – Chief Executive and Town Clerk
- George Tomlinson – Community and Wellbeing Officer

Meeting clerk:

- Sarah Howe

Guest Speaker

- Wellie O-Driscoll: Presentation is given at Appendix A at the end of the minutes.
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Apologies

From Councillors unable to attend the meeting:

- Jack Vittles



26. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

27. Minutes from the previous meeting of the committee

Proposed by Councillor Bessant

Seconded by Councillor Atkinson

And with **all in favour** it was **resolved**: that the Minutes of the last committee meeting held on 21 October 2025 be accepted as a true record of the meeting.

28. Matters arising

None.

29. Chair's Report

The Chair referred to her report as supplied with the agenda.

Additionally:

- Kindness Festival – a group in town is planning an event for 14 March. The town council are to help promote through the usual communication channels.
- Phone boxes – these have now been surveyed, necessary materials ordered and when weather improves the boxes can be renovated. The Chair also added that residents local to the boxes will also be canvassed regarding their use.

30. Update From the Police

Unfortunately, the policing team were unable to attend to meeting.

31. Fire Service closure plans

Councillors Blackwell and Bessant met with the Bradford on Avon station's lead fire fighter about two weeks ago. Cllr Blackwell had also had an opportunity to attend a meeting held by the Chief Fire Officer for Dorset and Wiltshire fire service.

Dorset and Wiltshire Fire services merged 20 years ago and since then have withstood a 25% cut in funding/workforce however have received awards for efficiency.



The proposed new cuts will result in a further reduction in the workforce of 14% against a backdrop of a rising population in west Wiltshire and a reported increase in the number of incidents. Councillor Blackwell thanked a resident who had commented in public questions on all the different incidents the firefighters are called to attend. The service in BoA does so much more than just attend fires and road traffic accidents.

The cuts are likely to increase response times for the town by 2 or 3 minutes.

Some issues with availability of the service in BoA have been addressed recently as there had been problems with recruitment and sufficient training of staff.

Councillor Blackwell concluded that the town council needs more clarity on the finances, the value of the town's service locally and the impact of removing it locally and regionally.

It was agreed that due to climate change flooding and wildfire events are likely on the rise whilst with the uplift in house building in the area there will be an increase in traffic levels and household numbers suggesting greater pressure on the service as a whole. It was also mentioned that an increase in households will increase precept revenue which could help support a continuation of the fire service at the current level.

The Chair concluded that the town council should present a good response and encourage the public to contribute to the public consultation announced. At the Full council meeting on the 10 March both the Chief Fire Officer and the Union rep will be invited to speak to the council ahead of a full response.

32. Resident's Panel Autumn 2025

The Community and Engagement Officer referred to her report as supplied with the agenda and asked councillors if they had any questions.

The Chair thanked the Community and Engagement Officer for such a detailed report and commented that there were lots of accessibility details in it to help Councillor Simmonds plans for an accessibility audit of the town. As far as BoA being a Wellbeing town, responses indicated there were still improvements to be made.



33.BoA Youth

The Community and Wellbeing Officer referred to her report assupplied with the agenda and offered to answer any questions.

The Chair thanked the Community and Engagement Officer for her report and was pleased to see so much youth provision despite some staffing challenges.

The Community and Engagement Officer also attended the latest Area Board Youth update meeting. It has been agreed to try and organise a bank of volunteer youth workers who could be shared across the BoA Area Board network's youth services if needs be.

It was asked how the DBS checks would work in this instance. The Community and Engagement Officer stated that anyone registered on the DBS update service (relevant for child workforce) with an enhanced DBS check can be checked by anyone online to confirm status.

The Community and Engagement Officer added youth services are also considering girls only sessions and recruiting some personnel to assist with targeted sports activity sessions.

34.Free menstrual products project

Councillor Simmonds introduced the item to members. Scottish local authorities are obliged to provide free menstrual products in their buildings and Avon District Council introduced something similar last year. Councillor Simmonds understands that the library and St Laurence school do provide free products but there is possibly a social justice case for the town to do more to help fight period poverty.

Councillor Simmonds will look into the options further and report back.

35.Next Provisional meeting date

The next meeting will provisionally be held on 26 May 2026.

End of the meeting

The meeting finished at 8.07pm



Appendix A: Presentation from Wellie O'Discoll from the Crafty Hive

A grant for the Community Snug was agreed at the Community and Wellbeing October committee meeting.

Wellie launched the Crafty Hive as a community interest company in November 2025, a shop selling handmade products and locally donated craft and haberdashery supplies. The sale of donated goods has reached about £2,500 ensuring the community fundraising requirements have been met as part of the 'community interest' test. Workshops and drop-in sessions have also begun, often using volunteers, to assist with sewing, knitting, felting etc tutorials.

The Crafty Hive has secured a property on Silver Street which benefits from having a separate room which can be hired out for free by not-for-profit organisations to use for fund raising projects such as cake or book sales or just have meetings. The grant will be partially used for signage and other opportunities to support and bring people together.

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Appendix B: Comments and Questions from the Public and Councillors

There were 4 members of the public present and 6 questions were asked.

[Q1] – A resident provided a statement regarding the proposed closure of the fire station. A petition has been signed with around 10,000 signatures currently.

The current service in BoA goes out on a range of shouts: assistance for elderly people who have experienced falls, assisting with trapped livestock, fires, road traffic incidents, often on scene as first responders for other emergencies, flooding issues. They are the last emergency service left in town as first responders and the police have already moved away.

The town would be relying on Trowbridge which would have slower response times. The BoA service also supports Trowbridge and other fire services in other local settlements.

The Chair thanked the resident, stating it's lovely to hear a personal perspective and confirmed, following a vote earlier on that day, that there will be a public consultation.

[Q2] – A resident is seeking town council support when applications are made to the area board for grants to buy blood loss kits for the town. The town doesn't currently have any in place with 24-hour access.

The Chair agreed that following some research into recommended numbers of kits for the town's population and some consideration for suitable locations the council would be likely to support area board grant applications.

[Q3-6] – questions from Councillor Kate Bessant.

Food recycling should be introduced by March 2027, will it be any sooner?

Councillor Blackwell (who is also a Wiltshire councillor) stated that Wiltshire Council are tied into some long waste contracts and might be looking for an extension beyond the statutory deadline, but food recycling will be coming in around 2027 and overall, the new target is to be recycling 63% of all household waste.

The Great British Spring Clean takes place from 13-29 March, equipment can be requested from Idverde, are the town council planning to get involved with the litter pick?



The town clerk offered to try and set something up.

Is there a timetable for improvements to the Community Centre?

There is a spreadsheet of works, but no timetable agreed just yet.

Phone boxes – are these ready for use yet?

The town clerk confirmed they have all be surveyed and materials bought.

Waiting for an improvement in the weather to carry out the refurbishments.

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