



Full Council meeting

Minutes

From the meeting at 7pm on Tuesday 7 July 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 21, 25 & 26.

Present

Councillors:

- James Atkinson
- Kate Bessant
- Sam Blackwell (Chair)
- Kevin Elliott (Vice-Chair)
- Andy Gordon
- Alex Kay
- Ben Reed
- Ghika Savva
- George Simmonds
- Chris Spence
- Katie Vigar
- Jack Vittles

Town Council Officers:

- Ian Brown - Chief Executive & Town Clerk
- Chris Hogg – Green Spaces Officer
- Sarah Hawkins – Accountant
- Matthew Maclaughlin – Communications Officer
- Lucia Sheppard – Projects Officer

Meeting clerk:

- Sarah Howe – Committee Clerk
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Apologies

From Councillors unable to attend the meeting: None



20. Declarations of Interest.

None.

21. Agenda item 4 – Minutes from the previous meeting of the Full Council
Proposed by Councillor Blackwell

Seconded by Councillor Gordon

And with all in favour **resolved:** to accept the minutes of the meeting held on the 12 May 2026 as a true record.

22. Agenda item 5 – Matters arising

None.

23. Agenda item 6 - To note the minutes of the meetings of the committee meetings since the last Full Council meeting.

The minutes were noted.

24. Agenda item 7 – Chair's Update

Councillor Blackwell provided a verbal update.

- The Chair attended the postponed annual duck race, a healthy sum was raised for future town council events. River levels were rather low so the finish line was moved.
- The Chair opened the BoA Live Music Festival on the last weekend in May. Venues across the town were involved and the Chair thanked all the volunteers, officers, town wardens, councillors and organisers for such an enjoyable event.
- The Chair took part in a video link up with the Mayor of Tubas in the West Bank along with representatives from the BoA Friends of Palestine group. Tubas is dealing with lots of challenges at the present time however the Tubas Mayor talked positively about community projects which are underway such as a children's play area.
- The Chair opened the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust 75th Birthday celebrations. The renovation of the canal by campaigners and volunteers to bring back a lovely blue/green corridor is an extraordinary achievement. The Chair enjoyed a boat ride along with children taking part in a picture competition. The Chair thanked all involved.
- The Deputy Mayor attended the 50th anniversary of Dorothy House's opening. The event was attended by the Princess Royal.



25. Agenda item 8 – Proposed development on Beehive Field, Trowbridge Road

The Chair introduced the item by confirming that Bradford on Avon Town Council are only a statutory consultee in this matter. Wiltshire Council planning authority is the decision maker.

This item on the agenda is for councillors to form the town council response to the Beehive field application as the consultee. Place Studio independent planning consultant has had meeting with councillors to discuss the matter and various concerns. Place Studio has now forwarded a draft report to help councillors shape their response.

The conclusion from the report is that the town council should object to the development on various grounds:

- Outside the defined settlement boundary
- Development in the Green Belt
- Failure to demonstrate development is not inappropriate in the Green Belt
- Questions around sustainability of the location regarding biodiversity, transport, water management including risk of flooding.

The Golden Rules would apply to this development:

- At least 50% affordable housing
- Improvements to local infrastructure as set out by local authorities (improvements the town council would insist upon that the town benefit from).
- The provision or new or improvements to green spaces accessible to the public.

The Chair asked for comments from councillors; Councillor Kay reminded the council that an ecological and climate emergency has been declared by the council, so this development located in the Green Belt flies in the face of that decision and standpoint.

Councillor Simmonds added it is very frustrating that there is no Local Plan in the context of a national government massively expanding the house building programme. He believes the report is good, but all sources must be laser focused on the development proposal being in the Green Belt. Arguments



should be restricted to planning arguments so as not to dilute what is already a lengthy document.

Councillor Gordon also added that as the delegated planning collator/lead he has always taken a hard line on any development proposals within the Green Belt and believes the report is consistent with this approach.

There was some discussion regarding the ecological impact of the development on nearby bat roosts, hunting grounds and breeding sites. It was believed the developers assessment in these regards was inaccurate. It was decided that this should not be included in the formal response but form part of individual responses as desired.

The report has two parts, councillors considered various suggested amendments within each part and then voted.

Part 1: Proposed by Councillor Gordon

Seconded by Councillor Elliott

And with all in favour **resolved:** to accept Part 1 of the Place Studio report objecting in principle to the proposed development at the Beehive Field Trowbridge Road.

Amendments to Part 1 of the report are highlighted at Appendix B.

Part 2: Proposed by Councillor Reed

Seconded by Councillor Vigar

And with all in favour **resolved:** to accept and develop Part 2 of the Place Studio report setting out 'without prejudice' conditions for the proposed development at the Beehive Field, Trowbridge Road.

Amendments to Part 2 of the report are highlights at Appendix B.

26. Agenda item 9 – Shoulder of Mutton – temporary licence for occupation
The town council has signed a 3-year licence to lease the land at Shoulder of Mutton for allotment space. This has come to an end and must be renewed. The Town Clerk is seeking permission to sign the renewal.

Proposed by Councillor Blackwell

Seconded by Councillor Elliott



And with all in favour **resolved:** to approve the latest licence from Wiltshire Council regarding the lease of land at Shoulder of Mutton for use by the town council as allotment space.

27. Next meeting

The next Full Council meeting is planned for Tuesday 1 September 2026.

End of the meeting

The meeting finished at 8.35 pm.



Appendix A:

The were 21 members of the public present and 4 questions were asked and comments presented.

(Q1) A resident has observed that the children's play area at Barton Farm has broken glass from drinks bottles mixed in with the play bark on a Sunday morning following revelry the night before. Is there anything that can be done to stop the introduction of glass bottles to the play areas or ensure any clear up is comprehensive.

The Chair and other councillors came up with a range of suggestions to highlight this issue and try and reach those involved. The Chair confirmed officers will look into resolving this problem as a matter of urgency.

(Q2) A resident asked if the council would like to start a town brass band.

The Chair thanked the resident for her suggestion.

(Q3) A resident made a statement objecting to the Beehive Field, Trowbridge Road proposed development. He is part of the local group to protect rural England. Since the government has brought in a general policy to build new homes development proposals have increased. The Green Belt around Bradford on Avon is very narrow and so the proposed development, if it goes ahead, will essentially be a suburb of Trowbridge. Traffic in BoA is already at gridlock so there should be a moratorium on building until the traffic situation is resolved. BoA should only be building houses on infill sites. The beehive field is a prehistoric site dating back to 15,000 years B.C. and is believed to be of national significance.

The Chair thanked the resident.

An additional resident provided some visual aids regarding the site as an area of archaeological interest. He confirmed the findings have been sent to the Inspector of Monuments for historic England.

The Chair thanked the resident for the information and Councillor Kay stated there is much to understand before the site is built on.

(Q4) A resident asked if there is to be a development why not encourage the football club to give up its current site and move the football club to the Beehive field.



The Chair suggested anything is possible but Councillor Kay added as far as tonight's agenda goes the football club are not part of the proposed development.



Appendix B:

Application PL/2026/02943 (Response from Bradford on Avon Town Council)

Land off Trowbridge Road, Bradford on Avon

PART 1

The Principle of Development of 224 Dwellings, 72 Bed Care Home and Site Access (the matters for determination)

The Town Council OBJECT to the proposed development of the site for the following reasons;

1 Proposal Location is not Allocated and Outside of Defined Settlement Boundary

The proposed site is for major development of unallocated land outside the limits of development defined by Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) in the open countryside. The proposed development is contrary to;

WSC Policies;

- CS1 Settlement Strategy for Wiltshire
- CS2 Delivery Strategy
- CS7 Spatial Strategy for BoA Community Area

Bradford on Avon Neighbourhood Plan (BoANP)

- Policy H1 (Support for infill (only) development)

2 Development in the Green Belt

2.1 Inappropriate Development in the Green Belt in Principle

The site is wholly within the Western Wiltshire Green Belt.

In principle the proposal is inappropriate development in the green belt and should be refused, in conformity with NPPF Para 153.

153. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure



that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its

openness⁵⁵. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt

and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of

inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Furthermore, Wiltshire Core Strategy (Landscape Policy 51 (background text)) states that *'Applications for development within the Green Belt will be determined in accordance with national planning policy.'*

Whilst Wiltshire Council has a current significant shortfall in allocated and developable land for housing, sufficient to engage National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) Para 11(d), presumption in favour of sustainable development 'tilted balance', this does not apply on land within the green belt.

'...where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

1) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance (which includes the green belt) provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed;'

The Town Council consider the site to be open countryside that makes an important contribution to the purposes of the green belt and the harm to these caused by the proposed development would significantly outweigh the benefits of the proposal directly and set a precedent that could undermine the wider green belt.



2.2 Failure to Demonstrate Development is Not Inappropriate in the Green Belt

It is recognised the NPPF provides opportunities for development within the green belt to be considered 'not inappropriate' and be granted consent. The Town Council consider the circumstances, site and proposal do not meet criteria to be considered 'not Inappropriate' development in the green belt. The reasons for this are set out below with reference to NPPF (Para 155).

'The development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where all the following apply:

(a) The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;

The site is not previously developed or despoiled land. It is also not considered to make a weak contribution to any one of the three criteria (relating to purpose a, b and d of the five purposes of the green belt) necessary for it to be reasonably considered Grey Belt land as set out in NPPF Paragraph 155 and associated National Planning Practice Guidance.

- ***Purpose (a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;***

BoA is by size and definition a 'large urban area'. The town has a population of +10,000. It is defined by Wiltshire Council Core Strategy as a Market Town and a strategic settlement. The proposed development represents inappropriate, un-planned and harmful 'sprawl' of a 'large urban area' into the green belt.

- ***Purpose (b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;***

The development site forms a significant 32-hectare parcel that is part of a relatively narrow (c2km) undeveloped open countryside green belt buffer between BoA and Trowbridge. Whilst partially screened by woodland to the east, it enables wide and open views across the River Avon and adjoining green belt land and is likewise visible from various open countryside viewpoints relating to public footpaths (ProW).

The site makes an important contribution to preventing the merging of towns in a particularly narrow and valuable part of the Green Belt. Development



would significantly and harmfully erode this open land separation contrary to purpose (b) of the green belt.

Woodland is not development and is not considered to constitute a development edge that contains the site.

- **Purpose (d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns**

BoA is a distinct and historic town within its rural setting. The site makes an important contribution to the distinctiveness and rural setting of the town its separation from Trowbridge.

The site's rural character also provides the setting of the Grade 2 listed Widbrook Bridge which is part of the historic character for the town.

The development would harm the distinctive identity of BoA as an historic town and the immediate setting of a designated heritage asset.

Wider Impact

'.....would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan'

It is considered this proposal could fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt within the WCS area.

Individually the proposal significantly erodes a 2km green belt buffer between towns and seeks to establish that undeveloped natural rural features are screens and justified containment.

This approach risks creating a precedent that could employ similar inappropriate criteria to undermine the overall purposes of the Green Belt to prevent encroachment into the countryside, valuable rural gaps being harmfully eroded and large urban areas sprawling and merging.



Housing Need

(b). There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;

It is recognised that due to changes in the Government's mandatory housing requirement calculation method and the withdrawal of the Local Plan, there is a current shortfall in developable housing land across Wiltshire.

However, it should be noted that Wiltshire Local Plan 'Planning for Bradford on Avon' provides evidence to inform a sustainable approach to future growth at BoA that responds to previous high levels of growth and the town's heritage and sensitive environment.

'Bradford on Avon is a small market town heavily constrained in environmental terms by the position of the greenbelt that surrounds the town. There have been several large-scale developments in housing and employment growth at the town, as planned for in the Wiltshire Core Strategy. The priority for the town is delivering a moderate scale of growth, to help sustain and enhance current levels of services and facilities and promote better levels of containment, whilst maintaining the historic and landscape values of the town.'

It should also be noted (see Sustainability below) that the site is within the Bath and BoA Bat SAC, adding weight to the site's protection.

In the context of BoA's previous growth, there is not therefore a demonstrable severe unmet need for housing and its heritage and environmental designations require that sustainable development must include their protection.

Sustainable Location

(c). The development would be in a sustainable location,



The site is not considered to be a sustainable location for this proposal.

- **Biodiversity;**

The site is within the Bath and BoA at Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Core Area. NPPF Para 194 states this should be applied in relation to a SAC in relation to Para 195.

NPPF Para 195 applies.

‘The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site.... , unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.’

The Town Council considers that the proposed residential development of this site is highly likely to have a significant effect on the SAC.

The Town Council notes that the site is located in proximity to internationally, nationally and locally designated sites for nature conservation. Whilst the applicant has submitted an Ecological Impact Assessment with proposed mitigations this is not considered to have addressed the requirements of the NPPF until it is assessed by Wiltshire Council’s ecologist, until this is adequately addressed, The Town Council consider the application has not provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate the scale of effect and appropriate (if feasible) mitigation with regard to NPPF Para 195 , WCS Policy 50, BoANP Policy GS2 (Development affecting known wildlife sites) and ‘Wiltshire Bats SAC Planning Guidance’.

Unless this is achieved to the satisfaction of WC, the Town Council consider the proposed site and development of the site environmentally unsustainable.



- **Transport;**

In the context of this proposal use and scale, the Town Council does not believe the site can be made a sustainable location to address NPPF Para 110 and it will result in significant adverse air quality and congestion issues within the town. This is contrary to NPPF Sustainable transport Paras 115 and 116 and WCS Policies 61 (Transport and Development).

It is a recorded fact that traffic congestion and air quality are particular and acute issues for BoA. WC 'Planning for BoA' notes, *'There are problems with high traffic volumes and congestion in the town centre and an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)...'*

Pending further detailed considerations of air quality impact and transport impacts reports by Wiltshire Council, The Town Council considers the proposed development of 224 dwellings and the traffic movements associated with the proposed 72 bed care home will risk adding a volume of vehicle movements across the town that will unacceptably exacerbate AQMA issues and congestion across the network of historic town centre streets and adversely impacting health, safety and the local economy. Subject to further detailed assessment it considers the application has not demonstrated how it would meet the criteria of WCS Policy 55 (Air Quality) and potentially not addressing requirements of Policy 62 (Impacts on the Transport Network).

The application seeks to resolve the only access onto Trowbridge Road for the entire development, which will include (as yet unspecified parking associated with public use of open spaces and football field.

Pending further assessment of detailed access proposals by Wiltshire Council, The Town Council expresses severe concern this access will not provide safe and sustainable multi-modal access in the context of Trowbridge Road and the expected volume of movements.

The Town Council does not accept the site to be well-connected to local facilities sufficient to realistically encourage sufficiently high levels of walking and cycling to avoid or materially reduce unacceptable increases in traffic impacts. Distances stated to a number of facilities are inaccurate, tilting the impression of the site's sustainability. Walking distances to town centre



facilities are not convenient or attractive. Cycling facilities along Trowbridge Road do not exist.

Within the site, all internal connections and permeability necessary to encourage walking and cycling are illustrative only. Without prejudice to the in-principle objection, The Town Council is concerned these must be secured as elements of access proposals for determination.

- **Water Management**

BoA is severely and particularly vulnerable to the impacts of flooding with large areas of the town centre area within high-risk flood zones 2 and 3. The Environment Agency forecast this issue is highly likely to worsen as a result of climate change. Whilst the site is largely outside of the current high risk fluvial flood zones, it is in close proximity to the River Avon and up-stream of the town centre. The Town Council share the concern and objection expressed by the Drainage Authority in its consultation response (1 June) and expresses its strong concern that a development of the proposed scale on this site will further exacerbate the instances and impacts of flooding within the town centre and elsewhere, including down-stream from the site, contrary to NPPF Para 181 and WCS Policy. There is a lack of evidence to demonstrate that this will be avoided.

- **Agricultural Land**

- The Town Council notes that no Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) assessment has been submitted in support of the application, despite the proposal including the development of agricultural land currently used for arable production. In order to assess the potential impact on Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land, the Town Council requests that the applicant submit a detailed Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey, undertaken in accordance with the MAFF ALC Guidelines, to determine whether any part of the site comprises Grade 1, Grade 2 or Subgrade 3a land. **Heritage and Archaeology**

Based on local knowledge regarding the presence of Roman and Palaeolithic remains in the area, the Town Council is concerned that archaeological surveys provided by the applicant do not adequately identify or assess the richness and archaeological and heritage value of the site.



For the primary reasons above, The Town Council do not consider the application has demonstrated the site to be capable of being made sustainable in relation to this proposal.

The Golden Rules

d. Where applicable the development proposed meets the ‘Golden Rules’ requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157 below.

The development application seeks to establish the principle of development and access. This includes provision of 50% affordable housing. The Town Council acknowledge this level of provision meets NPPF ‘Golden Rules’ .

It also acknowledges that the proposed illustrative master plan shows the majority of the eastern proposal site is proposed to remain in open space uses at a level of provision that can be in conformity with ‘Golden Rules’

It is essential that areas of green infrastructure shown on illustrative plans are both shaped in consultation with the Town Council and that they are all freely made available to the public.

Should it be considered that the proposed principle of development is acceptable, The Town Council will provide further consideration to the community infrastructure provision that the development should reasonably support in the context of meeting ‘Golden Rules’;

3 Very Special Circumstances to Justify Inappropriate Development in the Green Belt

The Town Council recognise NPPF Para 153 provides scope for development that is considered inappropriate in the green belt where it can be demonstrated Very Special Circumstances exist that clearly outweigh harm.

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openness⁵⁵. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt



and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The Town Council does not consider that the application has demonstrated that Very Special Circumstances exist that would cumulatively clearly outweigh the harms of 'inappropriate development in the green belt' as set out in NPPF Para 153.

The applicant points to the current shortfall in housing land supply in Wiltshire and BoA and the inevitability that green belt land release will be required to address needs. It asserts the proposal to be justified on this basis and the promoted attributes of the site and proposal.

Town Council has recognised the weight afforded to the current shortfall in housing land across the county but addressed the distinctiveness of BoA housing need and environmental capacity above.

Wiltshire Council has committed to producing a new Local Plan within the 30-month programme required by Government. It has not established that release of Green Belt land is required to meet the Wiltshire Housing Requirement.

Wiltshire Council has not undertaken a Green Belt Review. There is no evidence that this site is the most sustainable and least valuable part of the Western Wiltshire Green Belt, when assessed in the context of other areas of the wider green belt.

Any releases of green belt land to enable necessary development should be undertaken through the proper plan-making process and the resultant adoption of WLP by Spring/Summer 2029.

For reasons set out above in relation to matters (a-d) relating to section 2 above, it is evident that this site performs a very important role as undeveloped open land in meeting the wider purposes of the green belt as well as the distinctiveness and landscape setting of the historic town, it has a key role in the Bath and BoA Bat SAC and is not considered a sustainable



location for the proposed amount of development due to transport and flood risk issues.

On balance The Town Council does not consider the applicant has demonstrated Very Special Circumstances that clearly outweigh these harms in relation to this site and proposed scheme. Taking these into account, The Town Council consider the proposal to be inappropriate development of Green Belt should be refused consent.

PART 2

3 Illustrative Plans

The Town Council provides the following comments relating to submitted illustrate material. These are without prejudice to its OBJECTION to the principle of development and does not infer conditional support.

3.1 Master Plan and Land-use Parameters

The Town Council wish to ensure structural and foundation components of the proposed development (where acceptable) that deliver Golden Rules and (only if adequately demonstrated) secure 'not inappropriate' and sustainable development are included within a set of Parameters Plans and Schedules. These are currently broadly illustrated only in the submitted Design and Access Statement and Illustrative Master Plan.

An appropriate set of Parameters material should, if acceptable, be itemised as approved plans and listed as conditional upon any following reserved matters applications.

It is suggested these may cover matters already articulated in the proposed DAS design strategy, covering at least;

- Land-use, density and layout
- Landscape, Green and blue infrastructure and Biodiversity
- Transport
- Access and Permeability
- Community Infrastructure



This approach is considered appropriate and proportionate to safeguard delivery of Golden Rules and required principles of high-quality design in conformity with Wiltshire Design Guide.

This approach has been utilised previously on similar consented schemes including resolving parameters for the outline scheme for 210 dwellings and 70 bed care home at Land South of Western Way, Melksham (PL/22/08504).

3.2 Housing Mix

The Town Council notes consultation comments from WC Housing Enabling Team (28 May 2026). Whilst in broad agreement with the matters raised, it has commissioned a local Housing Needs Assessment (AECOM 2024) to inform the review of BoANP. This indicates that the proposed development mix should be refined towards reducing the supply of single bed units in favour of two bed dwellings.

Whilst recognising the proposal has committed to 50% Affordable Housing, the applicant has stressed the severe shortfall of Affordable Housing at BoA as a contributory factor in Very Special Circumstances. In other speculative proposals where such a shortfall has been identified the applicant has committed to a higher proportion. The Town Council would welcome such a direct response from this applicant to increase the Affordable Housing proportion above 50%.

The Town Council would support increased provision of accessible homes to address the locally identified need for such dwellings for older and disabled people.