



the NEWS

Bradford on Avon Town Council

Summer 2026



BOA fire station saved from proposed closure

Bradford on Avon's fire station has been saved from closure – after campaigning from firefighters, the town council, residents and the local MP.

In February, Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service launched a consultation on proposals to close eight fire stations across Dorset and Wiltshire.

In response, the town council wrote to the chair of the fire authority expressing our opposition to the plans.

Throughout the consultation process, we engaged with the fire service both through formal consultation responses and direct discussions to ensure our objections were clearly understood.

In a statement, the Chief Fire Officer said he appreciated the consultation responses – and that he was pleased following discussions with central government on future council tax flexibility.

Mayor of Bradford on Avon, Councillor Sam Blackwell said: "On behalf of the town and our neighbouring villages, I am delighted to hear that the Chief Fire Officer has changed his recommendation.

"During the consultation, the town council put forward its view that the station is part of the town's critical infrastructure and the crew play an essential role in keeping our residents safe.

"With the number of climate-related incidents



■ (l-r) Councillor Jack Vittles, Mayor of Bradford on Avon, Councillor Sam Blackwell and Chief Executive & Town Clerk, Ian Brown

rising, maintaining a local emergency response capability is vital for the wellbeing of our town as well as providing resilience for the wider area.

"I want to pay tribute to the determined

and evidenced-based campaign against closure led by our town's firefighters and supported by hundreds of residents.

"I am extremely pleased that our voices have been heard."

New bridge project gets £441k funding allocation

The Wiltshire Council team working on the next stage of the proposed pedestrian and cycle bridge is making good progress. The draft Outline Business Case, which will help determine how the project moves forward, is expected to be completed by the autumn.

We are still working closely with Wiltshire Council on this project – and we're looking forward to

reading the Outline Business Case.

As was reported in May, Wiltshire Council secured £50,000 of funding from Active Travel England to support the development of the business case for a new shared pedestrian and cycle bridge over the River Avon.

The business case will then be used as the basis to secure

further funding to pay for the project to be completed.

The proposal is for a new pedestrian and cycle bridge across the River Avon, linking Bridge Street on the south side of the town with Bridge Yard on the north side.

The bridge would provide a safer and more convenient route for walkers, wheelchair users and cyclists, helping them

avoid the busy Town Bridge while creating an additional link between the north and south sides of the town centre.

Looking ahead, Wiltshire Council has included a provisional £441,500 of active travel funding in its draft spending plans over the next four years, if the project continues to move forward and receives the necessary approvals.

Keep up to date on what we're doing at bradfordonavontowncouncil.gov.uk

New town Mayor & Deputy elected

We're pleased to introduce the new Mayor & Deputy Mayor for the year ahead.

At the Annual Full Council meeting on Tuesday 12 May Councillor Sam Blackwell was elected as Mayor and Councillor Kevin Elliott as Deputy Mayor.

They are taking over the roles from Councillor Jack Vittles, who was Mayor for two years, and Councillor Kate Bessant who served as Deputy Mayor for 2025/26.

Looking forward to the year ahead, the new Mayor, Councillor Blackwell said: "I'm very grateful for the trust my fellow councillors have placed in me by electing me to serve as Mayor for the coming year.

"We look forward to a busy year ahead – pushing forward key projects as well as supporting wonderful local organisations and residents to make Bradford on Avon an even better place to live, work and visit."

Kevin echoed the Mayor's sentiments adding that he was looking forward to working with Sam and his fellow councillors.

Planning an event in Bradford on Avon? If you'd like the Mayor or Deputy Mayor to attend, please get in touch with our office and we'll be happy to check their availability.



■ (l-r) Deputy Mayor, Councillor Kevin Elliott and Mayor, Councillor Sam Blackwell

New committee

This year, we voted to refresh our committee structure, creating the Sustainable Development & Travel committee to replace the Sustainable Travel and Town Development committees.

The new committee brings together many of the responsibilities of its predecessors, including working with the Local Highways and Footpath Improvement Group, reviewing planning applications as part of our role as a statutory consultee and helping to shape the future development and transport priorities.



■ Newly refurbished St Margaret's Hall in May 2026

Hall set to reopen this summer

By the time you're reading this, St Margaret's Hall should be open again.

And if it's not quite ready yet, that's because we're putting the finishing touches in place, including all the important building checks.



You can keep up to date with what's happening in the hall by checking our What's on guide on the Explore BOA website.

And if you'd like to book the hall, please contact us or look on the town council website for more information about the venue – and for our booking form.

The hall was closed in November 2024 when it flooded – causing major damage throughout the ground floor.

Reinstating the hall included new floors, new toilets and a new kitchen.

And soon, the Bradford on Avon Tourist Information Centre will be leaving its current home in Westbury Garden to move into St Margaret's Hall – where our front office once was.

Some of you might have been lucky enough to get an early peek at the hall as part of our Join In! event in early June – which you can read about on page three!

Talk of the town: news in brief

■ Are you thinking about wild or open water swimming in Bradford on Avon this summer? We've compiled safety advice from various organisations and authorities about river swimming with links to water quality guidance to help you stay safe on our website. It's one of the six main tiles on our homepage and will stay up until the end of summer.

■ After last year's successes in the South West in Bloom competition, we're looking forward to welcoming this year's judge to the town over the summer. The judging tour will include looking at the summer displays that have gone up around the town – adding colour to places like St Margaret's Hall and The Shambles.

■ If you need to call into our Kingston House office in person, please note that our opening hours for visitors are now

10am to 4pm, Monday to Friday. We've made this change while we're recruiting for a new member of staff to join our office team. Our phoneline is open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Thursday – and from 9am to 4.30pm on Friday.

■ We're delighted to announce that we're working with Marcelle's Tennis Academy to deliver a variety of tennis activities at our Culver Close courts. Stephen Marcelle and his team will be offering coaching for both children and adults, including walking tennis. Book now at clubspark.lta.org.uk/culver-close-tennis-courts/Coaching

■ BOA's Lions Club is running the Dog Show & Autumn Fete this year – with support from the town council. The event is taking place at Poulton Park on Saturday 12 September. Stay tuned for more news.



Second BOA Join In! day a success

The second BOA Join In! event was a great success, attracting more than 300 residents keen to learn more about the opportunities available in our local community.

The event provided a chance to discover new hobbies, meet local organisations, explore volunteering opportunities and find out more about the wide range of activities taking place across the town. Despite the wet weather, it was encouraging to see so many people come along and make new connections.

Thank you to all the groups and organisations that took part. Their dedication and hard work help make Bradford on Avon a more vibrant, welcoming and connected community.



How nature-friendly is your garden?



We know the world is facing a climate and ecological emergency.

The loss of biodiversity and wildlife in recent decades has been significant, but together we can make a positive difference.

Gardens and outdoor spaces, no matter their size, play an important role in supporting local wildlife.

They can provide food, water and shelter for birds, insects and other animals, helping nature thrive in and around our town.

We want to help people understand the important role gardens and outdoor spaces play in supporting wildlife and how linking these spaces together can help nature thrive.

The changes you make in your garden or outdoor space can make a real difference.

By completing the questions, you'll help us build a picture of the green

spaces across the town and the wildlife habitats they provide.

Your responses will help inform a Green & Dark Corridors Policy as part of an updated Neighbourhood Plan – and will also help us explore a future Rewild Gardens project, inspired by the successful Freshford Nature Chain.

You can complete the survey at forms.gle/7Wzgiv26nbKU1zHi8 or you can scan the QR code.

■ photo courtesy of Chris Wardell



Help for guides

Earlier this year, we teamed up with the local Girl Guides on a couple of biodiversity projects at Bearfield.

As well as helping to care for Bearfield Orchard, the Guides created a mud scrape to support local house martins as they build their nests.

We're delighted that the project helped the Guides earn their biodiversity badge.

Weekend for the books as BOA Live returns for fifth year



Thank you to everyone who joined us for the fifth edition of the Live Music Festival. Over the last weekend of May, venues across the town came alive with fantastic local and national talent, creating a vibrant atmosphere and a memorable weekend of live music.

The weekend got off to a great start with launch events from our partners at Wiltshire Music Centre and The Castle Inn.

Saturday then brought over 25 hours of free live music at Westbury Garden, Lamb Yard, Timbrell's Yard and The Castle Inn. Highlights included a fantastic Saturday night performance from Bruce Juice,

followed on Sunday by our first-ever open mic, featuring a mix of local artists performing both covers and original songs.

The weekend ended on a high with performances from Wiltshire Jazz Factory and headliners The Britpop Boys, who had the crowd singing along to classic hits from Blur, Oasis, Pulp and more.

A special thank you to our sponsors – Steve Vick International, Kingstons Estate Agents and Citroen Peugeot Specialists – and to our strategic partners, Wiltshire Music Centre, H2 Creative and The Castle Inn.

Spotted a problem in the town? Give us a call on 01225 864240

Get in touch with us at office@bradfordonavontowncouncil.gov.uk

Meet the town's Nature Volunteers

New faces are welcome to join the Nature Volunteers who meet once a month to work in Barton Farm.

The park extends from the Tithe Barn area along the River Avon towards Avoncliff and includes North Meadow – the land between the boat club and railway line.

Led by our Green Spaces Officer, activities vary from month to month and include creating wildflower areas, pruning and deadheading, planting and protecting trees, removing invasive Himalayan balsam and helping at the tree nursery.

Kate Nicholls, a volunteer with the group for the past 20 years, says it's a rewarding way to learn countryside skills and become part of the community. "I've learned an awful lot about plants, care of trees, why weeds are good," she told us.

"It's so nice when people say we're doing a good job and we can share what we're doing and why.

"We want to inspire people to learn a bit

more about the countryside bordering our town and to feel they are part of it.

"We love to have new people join and they don't need to know anything. They will learn just as we have done. One of the lovely things about the group is meeting with like-minded local people."



Caroline Watson who took her two children to the group when they were young said: "The children loved it – a morning spent in the undergrowth, wielding loppers and saws, eating far too much chocolate cake and not minding how grubby we became.

"Lifelong skills were learnt during those Saturday mornings and they also created very many happy memories."

If you're interested in joining our Nature Volunteers, head over to our website and complete the sign up form: bradfordonavontowncouncil.gov.uk/your-community/volunteer/nature-volunteers/

■ the Nature Volunteers meet on the second Saturday of every month – and under-18s must be accompanied by an adult at all times.

Our committee meetings

Soon, we'll be hosting Full Council and committee meetings in St Margaret's Hall. However, at the time of writing, there is still some work to be completed at the venue.

Until the hall is officially handed back to the town council, all meetings will continue to take place in the United Church Hall.

If you are unsure where a meeting is being held, please visit our website for details of meeting locations, agendas and minutes.

Alternatively, you can contact our office team, who will be happy to provide further information.

Summer holiday club

The BOA Holiday Club is back this August with an exciting programme of activities for children aged 7 to 16.

With activities ranging from pottery and drama to tennis, breakdancing, circus skills and outdoor adventures, there is something to suit a wide range of interests.

Children can also enjoy multi-sports, dance and magic workshops while developing new skills and making friends.

With the support of Area Board funding, we'll once again be able to offer some fully funded spaces to children whose families are experiencing financial hardship.

Book online at buytickets.at/bradfordonavontowncouncil



■ Scan the QR code for more info

Our upcoming 2026 BOA events

Throughout the year we organise lots of community events.

It's our ambition is to continue to organise, host and support well-organised events in Bradford on Avon that are free or low cost.

And this is something clearly appreciated by residents and the wider BOA community as event attendance seemingly grows year-on-year.

So far this year we've already had the Pancake Race, Duck Race, BOA Join In!

and BOA Live Music Festival.

But that's not all and there's plenty of fun left for the rest of the year, including:

■ BOA Skate Jam – Poulton Park – Saturday 18 July

■ Flower & Produce Show – St Margaret's Hall – Saturday 5 September

■ Fireworks Display – Poulton Park – Sunday 1 November

■ Christmas Lights Switch-On – Westbury Garden – Friday 27 November



■ (l-r) Councillor Alex Kay, Chair of the French Twinning group in BOA, Simon Kay, Brian Mathew MP, Sully-sur-Loire Deputy Mayor, Marie Peronnet, Chair of the Twinning group, Isabelle Burnel and former Mayor, Councillor Jack Vittles celebrating a visit from our twinned town, Sully-sur-Loire.

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