Community and Wellbeing committee minutes

Minutes

From the committee meeting at 7pm on Tuesday 27 October 2026

At St Margaret's Hall, St Margaret's Street, Bradford on Avon

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Decision making

The **decisions** made by the committee at this meeting are at minute 23 & 26.

Present

Councillors:

- James Atkinson
- Kate Bessant (Vice-Chair)
- Sam Blackwell
- Kevin Elliott
- Ghika Savva
- George Simmonds
- Katie Vigar (Chair)
- Jack Vittles

Town Council Officers:

- Ian Brown – Chief Executive and Town Clerk
- Sarah Hawkins – Accountant
- George Tomlinson – Community and Engagement Officer

Meeting clerk:

- Sarah Howe

Guest Speaker – Wiltshire Heights Care Home – Charlie Osgood

Apologies

From Councillors unable to attend the meeting: None

Wiltshire Heights care home presentation – Charlie Osgood

Mr Osgood presented councillors with information regarding two regular events which take place at Wiltshire Heights:

- Lunch Club – free lunch every Friday to try and integrate the home with the community and potential clients. The only request is that external guests phone the care home to book a table, so the kitchen knows numbers. (The phone number is on the relevant flyer).
- Music and Memory Club – this meets every 1st and 3rd Wednesday providing an opportunity for residents and guests to enjoy music and a chance to reminisce.

The Chair thanked Mr Osgood for coming and reiterated that both events are free. It was confirmed flyers could be distributed by the town council.

22. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

23. Agenda item 4 - Minutes from the previous meeting of the committee

Proposed by Councillor Bessant
Seconded by Councillor Savva

And with **all in favour** it was **resolved**: that the minutes of the last committee meeting held on 28 July 2026 be accepted as a true record of the meeting.

24. Matters arising

None.

25. Agenda item 6 - Chair's Report

The Chair provided a verbal update.

- The 'Hidden Corners' photo trail (a collection of images depicting unusual spots and architectural details around town) has been completed and leaflets have been circulated in time for the half term break. Both the local photography group and the Preservation Trust have been involved in producing the trail. The Museum, Library, TIC and local shops all hold a supply of leaflets

for the public to pick up. The Chair thanked all involved including councillors and officers as well as the local groups mentioned.

- The Chair visited the local Carers café in September. This group meets on the fourth Thursday of the month at Trimbrell's Yard and provides a warm supportive environment for carers to meet other carers. The Chair would like the Carers café to be mentioned in a forthcoming newsletter to improve publicity.
- The Nation Emergency Briefing film scheduled for the 18th November 2026 in St Margaret's Hall is now fully booked. A panel has been assembled to discuss the film afterwards. The Chair thanked all involved in the organising.
- The Chair would also like to thank local resident Robert Beesley who has successfully applied for several blood loss kits on behalf of various organisations. The kits have been distributed around town. Sites include Dutch Barton Dental and The Plough when open and Tuti's Frome Road, Wiltshire Music Centre, Mount Pleasant Centre and Dible and Roy where kits are available in 24/7 cabinets. There is also a kit with the defibrillator held at the railway station.
- The Chair also reminded all that the fireworks are this Sunday 1st November and the Christmas Lights Switch on is 27th November. The Chair thanked all involved in the organisation including those who have volunteered to help.

26. Agenda item 7 - Grants Panel

The Chair recounted the recommendations taken by the grants panel on the 14 October 2026.

- A request for a catering hut and landscaping at the railway station for a coffee business – as this is a business request the town council are unable to help.
- Funding for the development of a wildlife garden at Christ Church school for year 5 pupils – this request sits better with the Colonel William Llewllyn Parmer Educational Charity and will be passed on to the grants panel there.

Proposed by Councillor Atkinson
Seconded by Councillor Elliott

And with all in favour **resolved:** to approve the recommendations of the Grants panel which met on 14 October 2026.

27. Agenda item 8 - BoA Youth update

The Community and Wellbeing Officer's report, as supplied with the agenda, was considered. The Chair welcomed the new BoA Youth staff members and was delighted to see some volunteers had also been recruited. These volunteers are young people completing part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award. The Chair was also pleased take up of Summer Holiday Club places continues to be popular. Councillor Simmonds highlighted the contrast in activities offered; there is high demand for more pottery painting and also potentially boxing training. The Community Engagement and Projects Officer confirmed that finding a boxing trainer is proving difficult.

28. Agenda item 9 – Wiltshire Council funding opportunities

Three briefing notes from Wiltshire Council supplied with the agenda were discussed.

It was agreed devolution of grants to Area Boards, who know their communities well, is sensible.

The Community Wellbeing Fund will allocate each Area Board £11,000. Potential projects should be offering initiatives such as a reduction in isolation and loneliness, improved mental health and wellbeing, preventative support systems and improved independent living.

Councillors thought ideas developed during the Town of Culture bid could possibly be eligible for grants through the Wellbeing Fund. Councillors will explore this possibility.

The Community Resilience Hubs Fund: each Area Board will be given £75,000 to invest in proposals improving financial resilience for residents (instead of short term crisis support) and connecting residents to wider services including employment, housing and digital inclusion.

Councillor Bessant suggested a meeting is organised to explain the availability of these funds more widely and that this could tie in with the current initiative to support and publicise local voluntary organisations.

The final briefing note introduces an award for Volunteer Group of the Month, again the Chair suggested the details need to be publicised, and Councillor Simmond suggested use of the quarterly newsletter and Snippets.

29. Agenda item 10 – Voluntary Community groups

The Chair referred to the Community Engagement and Projects Officer report as supplied with the agenda. The voluntary community groups which attended the 'BoA Join In' day in June were subsequently surveyed regarding potential support from the town council and two follow up meetings organised. Attendees included groups such as Scouts, Canal and Rivers Trust and Link volunteers. Various ideas to support and publicise the groups were discussed and the report summarised the discussions.

Developing a Facebook Group had very strong support. This could be used for volunteer shout outs and requests to borrow or lend out equipment. Such a group would need an administrator which might be too time consuming for the town council to provide. Councillor Bessant suggested removing the option to comment, so it became more of a message board and less administratively burdensome.

Councillor Bessant also mentioned that St Laurence School signs up all Year 10 pupils for the bronze level of the Duke of Edinburgh Award which means around 200 pupils a year are looking for volunteer work. The town council could be a link between those potential volunteers and the groups looking for help with the provision of an on-line register.

A volunteer bulletin has also been suggested with over 100 subscribers signing up in anticipation. The first edition of the bulletin has yet to be published.

The Chair asked the Community Engagement and Projects Officer what the next steps might be. The Officer advised as follows:

- publish the first bulletin in early January 2027
- determine the criteria detailing who can be included in an on-line register of voluntary groups
- produce a single form for the voluntary groups which collect all and any information which might be useful.

30. Agenda item 11 – Police Update

This agenda item was taken after Agenda item 5 - Matters Arising.

Sergeant Charlie Chilton presented an update to Councillors. The crime data presented covers Bradford on Avon and the surrounding villages. There has been a period of staff restructuring and fewer personnel are now covering Bradford on Avon.

Sergeant Chilton recommended that residents should report all crime via the website or calling 101 so the Police can develop a better understanding of the real picture. This could lead to more regular patrols in trouble spots. Police patrols were organised following a few criminal damage incidents regarding the spraying of graffiti and park bench fires, but a lack of witness accounts or CCTV has caused lines of enquiry to dry up.

The Chair asked if CCTV would be useful in Barton Country Park. The sergeant reiterated it always helps with lines of enquiry; there are both fixed and more 'mobile' cameras available.

Councillor Blackwell thanked Sergeant Chilton and appreciated there is a squeeze on resources. He mentioned regular complaints about people drinking in Westbury Gardens and a police presence in the town centre could help. Sergeant Chilton confirmed the police do know about drinking in Westbury Gardens and attempt to work with agencies to provide support.

31. Next meeting date

The next meeting will be held on 12 January 2026.

End of the meeting

The meeting finished at 7.54 pm

Appendix A: Comments and Questions from the Public and Councillors

There was 1 member of the public present, and no questions were asked.

[Q1] -