Full Council meeting

Minutes

From the meeting at 7pm on Tuesday 10 November 2026

At: St Margaret's Hall, Bradford on Avon

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## Decision making

The **decisions** made by the Full Council at this meeting are at minutes 40, 44, 45, 47 & 48.

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## Present

Councillors:

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

Town Council Officers:

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

Meeting clerk:

- Sarah Howe – Committee Clerk

Apologies:

From Town Councillors unable to attend the meeting:

- Ghika Savva
- Jack Vittles

Guest Speaker – Rebecca J Brown – Heritage Open Days

Details at Appendix B.

39.Agenda item 3 - Declarations of interest

None.

40. Agenda item 4 – Minutes from the previous meeting of the Full Council

Proposed by Councillor Sam Blackwell
Seconded by Councillor Andy Gordon

And with all in favour, it was **resolved**: to accept the minutes of the meeting held on the 1 September 2026 as a true record of that meeting.

41. Agenda item 5 – Matters arising

The committee clerk confirmed that Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) has been contacted and the wording for the motion to propose confidential business in meetings has been checked. There is no fixed clause to use and in the town council's case the wording is appropriate. However, the wording has been adjusted slightly for maximum clarity.

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

The minutes from the following committee meetings were noted:

- Resources committee 8 September 2026
- Sustainable Development & Travel 22 September 2026
- Environment and Green Spaces 13 October 2026
- Community and Wellbeing 27 October 2026

43. Agenda item 7 – Chair's update

The Chair presented his update.

- He began by mentioning it was very sad to hear the news regarding Christine Giles who has died recently. Christine owned Christine's Sustainable Supermarket. The Chair indicated he would like to honour her legacy in some way; so, in due course, he will write to her family to ask them for suggestions as to how she should be remembered.
- The Chair attended the Monday/Thursday club AGM. He had an enjoyable visit including refreshments.
- During October the Chair attended the West Wiltshire Business Forum. The event brings together the 5 towns in the West Wiltshire area and as

a result perhaps further co-operation should be sought more regularly in future.

- The Autumn Fête and Dog Show took place in September, organised by the Lions supported by the Town Council. Over £600 was passed to the town council from the profits for play area refurbishment at St Aldhelms. The Chair thanked all the officers involved for all their hard work and the Lions for their donation.
- The Chair attended the Westbury Annual Civic Service, hosted by Town Mayor Councillor Carole King. He was impressed to see such a wide range of community organisations represented celebrating their contribution to local life.
- 15 October the Chair attended the opening of the new Tourist Information Centre at St Margaret's Hall alongside the Deputy Mayor. Relocating the service there will improve efficiency and the new space is refreshed and welcoming, placing St Margaret's Hall firmly back at the heart of community activity.
- 1 November – The Chair attended the annual Lions Charter Lunch. He appreciated the invitation the Lions extended and for the opportunity to hear more about the support they have provided to our community and beyond over the past year.
- The Fireworks Display also took place on the 1 November, was very successful and very well attended. Many thanks to officers involved particularly the events officers, councillors on the working group and all the community volunteers.

44. Agenda item 8 – Friendship Agreement with Yahotyn, Kyiv region

The Chair began by introducing Yuliana Nesteruk and Yuliia Semenova who came to the meeting to give a presentation along with other members of the Ukrainian community.

The town council has been very proud to do all it can to support the Ukrianian community since the outbreak of war in the Ukraine in 2022.

Yuliana and Yuliia talked about Ukraine in general terms although at the current time daily life is very difficult with lives lost every day. They also talked about Yahotyn where Bradford on Avon Town Council is hoping to initiate a

friendship link and went on to thank residents of Bradford on Avon and the UK for all their help and support and the councillors for their attention.

They invited Bradford on Avon Town Council to establish a relationship with Yahotyn of practical co-operation covering:

- Local Government – sharing experience and best practice
- Culture – Events, traditions and cultural exchange
- Community – friendship and people to people connections
- Education – connections between schools and young people.

A message was also read out from the local Mayor describing how lovely the region is around Yahotyn and offering hospitality to everyone once safe enough to visit.

The Chair thanked Yuliana and Yuliia for talking with such passion describing them as 'great ambassadors representing bravery and strength'. He went on to propose that the initiative start with a symbolic memorandum of understanding, friendship being a great place to start, and other initiatives can build from there. Various councillors voiced their support for the idea mentioning various events have already taken place since the community arrived in Bradford on Avon and, like the Tubas in Palestine friendship link, zoom meetings can be employed to keep in touch.

Proposed by Councillor Blackwell
Seconded by Councillor Kay

And with all in favour **resolved**: to agree in principle the idea of forming a friendship link with Yahotyn, Kyiv in the Ukraine and to draft a memorandum of understanding.

### 45.Agenda item 9 – Councillor Remuneration

The Town Clerk introduced the item and summarised his report as supplied with the agenda.

Following on from a paper drafted by an independent panel at Wiltshire Council introducing councillor remuneration, town councillors previously agreed to explore the introduction of the allowance in Bradford on Avon. A working group was set up and a remuneration scheme developed. This draft scheme was also published with the agenda. It would see the introduction of a £1,320 per annum allowance assuming councillors meet the minimum requirement of attending 11 meetings a year. There is no obligation to take the

allowance but any claims would be made retrospectively at the end of each financial year. Funding for the scheme would need to be added to the next budget and would add 1% to the precept. The Town Clerk thanked the councillors who sat on the working group for all their efforts. This was reiterated by the Chair.

There was a wide debate both for and against the introduction of the scheme.

Councillors acknowledged the not insignificant time commitment being elected councillor imposes and the benefit of an allowance supporting those with caring commitments, full-time jobs, and low-income candidates in standing for election. However, several councillors also mentioned they appreciated the volunteer status they hold currently in both serving and leading the residents and the volunteer community respectively.

It was also felt that if there is a lack of diversity on the town council this should be addressed in any case and perhaps the expenses scheme could help with caring commitments.

The first vote was an in-principle decision on whether to introduce the scheme.

Proposed by Councillor Gordon
Seconded by Councillor Reed

It was **resolved,** with **4 in favour, 5 against and 1 abstention**, not to introduce the councillor remuneration scheme at this time.

No further voting on subsequent proposals given in the report was therefore necessary.

## 46.Agenda item 10 - Building Condition Surveys

The Town Clerk introduced the item on behalf of the Deputy Town Clerk. A report was published with the agenda.

A request for tenders has gone out and all submissions are requested by the 6 December 2026.

It was asked if the tenders are for a single supplier to survey all the town council's buildings. The Town Clerk confirmed that was the case and that a priority list of building works was also expected. It was also asked if the survey was only dealing with the structural integrity of the buildings. The Town Clerk

confirm that was the case. Any net zero improvements would have to come later after the St Margaret's Hall carbon neutral programme is completed.

### 47. Agenda item 11 – Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor Blackwell
Seconded by Councillor Vigar

And with all in favour **resolved**: to enter into confidential business.

### 48. Agenda item 12 – Further Asset Transfer

Any relevant details will be made available in due course.

### 49. Next meeting

The next Full Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 5 January 2027.

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End of the meeting
The meeting finished at 9.01pm.

Appendix A:

The were 20 members of public present and 4 questions were asked and comments made.

(Q1) A question regarding who owns the river embankments in the town.

It was confirmed the town council are one of several riparian owners and the Chair offered to provide a list of the sections the town council manages.

(Q2) Businesses in the centre of town are happy to fund a new defibrillator for the centre of town north of the river. Could it be sited in the phone box on Market Street?

The Chair confirmed there had been many requests for siting various things in that particular phone box, but he was happy to consider options.

(Q3) A resident asked if the updated planning application for the Beehive Field on the Trowbridge Road had been considered by the town council. Was the town council's position unchanged.

The Chair confirmed that the town council's position remains unchanged. It objects on the grounds that the development is on Green Belt land.

(Q4) 3 residents came to discuss inappropriate and unpleasant comments on social media community group pages linked to Bradford on Avon. Some comments have caused a lot of distress to some residents. Could the town council do anything about it or write to any bodies in authority?

The Chair acknowledged that such behaviour was horrible and is prepared to write to the police and Meta.

Appendix B: Heritage Open Day presentation – Rebecca J Brown

Ms Brown introduced herself. She has recently moved to Bradford on Avon from Winchester where she set up a festival style event celebrating the Heritage Open Days initiative.

Nationally, the National Trust have helped to set up the Heritage Open Days programme but essentially work in the background providing insurance. At a local level the onus is individual towns to set up their own festivals/events via local community partnerships.

Ms Brown has already explored options for expanding the Heritage Open Day event in Bradford on Avon next year and has received interest from many organisations which have not previously been involved.

The event will take place over the 10-19 September 2027, all events will be free, as well as opening unusual buildings, it is hoped to have historical talks, walks, tours, food and drink to get the whole community involved.

Ms Brown is prepared to co-ordinate the festival having already done so in Winchester, organise risk assessments and register as many organisations as possible that wish to take part by March/April 2027. This time frame allows the participants to appear in the national register.

Ms Brown is hoping for town council support and practical help from councillors and officers: assistance with contacts, publicity, grant funding and perhaps persuade the council to host an event.

The Chair thanked Ms Brown and confirmed the town council are keen to support this upscaled version of the Heritage Open Days.

Councillor Vigar also added that the Town of Culture bid came up with ideas to celebrate the town's history so some of these ideas could be used as part of the festival.