

# MINUTES

**Meeting:** Trowbridge Area Board  
**Place:** Conference Suite - County Hall, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN  
**Date:** 5 October 2023  
**Start Time:** 6.30 pm  
**Finish Time:** 8.55 pm

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Please direct any enquiries on these minutes to: Senior Democratic Services Officer - Ben Fielding Tel): 01225 718656 or (e-mail) [benjamin.fielding@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:benjamin.fielding@wiltshire.gov.uk)

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## **In Attendance:**

### **Wiltshire Councillors**

Cllr Antonio Piazza (Chairman), Drynham  
Cllr Horace Prickett, Southwick  
Cllr Mel Jacob, Trowbridge Paxcroft  
Cllr Edward Kirk, Adcroft  
Cllr Stewart Palmen, Central  
Cllr Jo Trigg (Vice-Chairman), Lambrok  
Cllr David Vigar, Grove

### **Wiltshire Council Officers**

Liam Cripps, Strategic Engagement Partnerships Manager  
Caroline LeQuesne, Area Board Delivery Officer  
Ben Fielding, Senior Democratic Services Officer

### **Town and Parish Councils**

North Bradley Parish Council

### **Partners**

Inspector Andy Lemon, Wiltshire Police

**Total in attendance: 21**

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<u>Minute No..</u>	<u>Summary of Issues Discussed and Decision</u>
42	<p><u>Apologies</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ernie Clark, Cllr Daniel Cave, David Redfern and Colin Kay.</p>
43	<p><u>Minutes</u></p> <p>The minutes of the meetings held on 6 July 2023 and 18 July 2023 were presented for consideration and it was;</p> <p><b><u>Resolved:</u></b></p> <p><b>To approve and sign as a true and correct record of the minutes of the meetings held on 6 July 2023 and 18 July 2023.</b></p>
44	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of disclosable interests.</p>
45	<p><u>Chairman's Announcements</u></p> <p>The Chairman of the Area Board made the following announcements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The agenda had been altered to bring the Community Area Funding item forward, having listened to officers and considered the experience of applicants.</li> <li>• The Chairman was considering using different venues for meetings of the Area Board in the future to reach out to villages, with suggestions and offers to host welcome.</li> <li>• Liam Cripps (Strategic Engagement Partnerships Manager) recently visited the Community Fridge with another visit set to take place.</li> <li>• The item covering an update from the Wiltshire Police Chief Constable would be taken later down the agenda after Item 8, Partner and Community Updates in order to ensure her attendance.</li> </ul>
46	<p><u>Area Board Funding</u></p> <p>The Area Board considered the following applications for funding:</p> <p><b><u>Community Area Grants:</u></b></p> <p>Wiltshire Wildlife Trust - £5,000 towards Disabled Facilities at Green Lane Wood Nature Reserve.</p> <p><b><u>Decision</u></b></p>

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust was awarded £5,000 towards Disabled Facilities at Green Lane Wood Nature Reserve.

Moved – Cllr Jo Trigg  
Seconded – Cllr David Vigar

**Reason** – *The application met the Community Area Grants Criteria 2023/24.*

West Wilts Radio - £1,875 towards WWR DAB Project.

**Decision**

West Wilts Radio was awarded £1,875 towards WWR DAB Project.

Moved – Cllr Mel Jacob  
Seconded – Cllr Stewart Palmen

**Reason** – *The application met the Community Area Grants Criteria 2023/24.*

**Older & Vulnerable Grants:**

Wiltshire Music Centre - £1,500 towards Celebrating Age Wiltshire.

**Decision**

Wiltshire Music Centre was awarded £1,500 towards Celebrating Age Wiltshire.

Moved – Cllr Jo Trigg  
Seconded – Cllr David Vigar

**Reason** – *The application met the Community Area Grants Criteria 2023/24.*

**Youth Grants:**

Wiltshire Youth for Christ - £2,600 towards Youth pop up project in Studley Green Trowbridge.

**Decision**

Wiltshire Youth for Christ was awarded £2,600 towards Youth pop up project in Studley Green Trowbridge.

Moved – Cllr Antonio Piazza  
Seconded – Cllr Stewart Palmen

**Reason** – *The application met the Community Area Grants Criteria 2023/24.*

### Wiltshire Police Chief Constable

*As per the Chairman's Announcement, this item was taken after Item 8, Partner and Community Updates as the Wiltshire Police Chief Constable would be joining the meeting later than intended.*

The Area Board received an update from Wiltshire Police Chief Constable, Catherine Roper. The update covered the following matters:

- The responsibility of the Chief Constable was to deliver against the PCC plan, with Wiltshire Police placed into special measures "engage" in summer 2022.
- As part of being placed into "engage", it was highlighted that Wiltshire Police had an insufficient strategic framework, they weren't investigating to an effective standard and were not providing effective support for victims.
- As part of the work to rectify these issues, business as usual (BAU) work was separated from the response to "engage", as though the Police were busy, they had not driven things in the right way, with a need to get the fundamentals right and improve public trust, visibility, and transparency.

#### Business as Usual

- As part of BAU work, the Chief Constable considered the Police and Crime Plan provided by the PCC and reorganised priorities in place with monthly performance meetings to hold officers to account.
- To improve transparency the Chief also produced an open letter to the PCC to provide an update of what work has been completed.
- There was a push on police visibility across the county, with two mobile police stations funded and an increased recruitment drive, including transferees from other forces.

#### Response to Engage

- Work has been completed to improve the processes in place as well as a review of the operating model to ensure that there is a focus on frontline workers, with employee feedback driving change.
- An improved audit and inspection routine was now in place for the police to test against improvements and respond to feedback; with call centres identified as an area that the force wanted to improve.
- The Chief Constable attends a performance oversight group in London every 6 months, where she presents to the HMI and Home Office.

After the verbal updates, there was time for the following questions and points to be made:

- Praise was placed towards the neighbourhood policing team in Trowbridge for their professionalism.
- A question received online raised concern towards an increasing number of cash businesses locally and whether the force considered this to be a laundering operation for drugs money. It was clarified that the force need to be intelligence led and that there might be many reasons for why a business might be cash rich. Should the police have intelligence, then they would act upon it and visit premises.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern was raised that once the 101 service is improved, demand might increase with crime figures also rising due to increased reporting; to which it was noted that there was not a concern about resource management and that the only concern was ensuring that residents have confidence to report as this could lead to more intelligence being collected.</li> <li>• A point was raised about how it might be possible to gain more intelligence from residents, to which it was stated that one of the best ways would be for the police to spend greater time in communities building relationships. This in turn would also act as a deterrent.</li> <li>• It was questioned whether the past is impacting on recruitment, to which it was clarified that Wiltshire Police currently has 1187 officers which is more than ever before with a further desire to strengthen the force and broaden the blend of staff through direct entry routes and the enticement of experienced transferees.</li> <li>• A point was raised regarding online crime, with clarity that Wiltshire has a small team dedicated to online crime, which acts towards a national process where recommendations come from a central place. Additionally, there is a focus on prevention and deterrence, with the example of economic crime week cited.</li> <li>• Clarity was provided that there is not an average time to be taken out of Engage, with the view held by the Chief Constable that Wiltshire Police should only leave Engage once the foundations of fundamental delivery had been carefully rebuilt with a strong base to build upon.</li> <li>• It was questioned what the role of the police was, to which the Chief Constable stated that this was to keep Wiltshire safe.</li> <li>• Clarity was provided regarding citizens arrests and public intervention.</li> </ul>
48	<p><u>Information Items</u></p> <p>The Chairman of the Area Board drew attention to the following information items, which were contained in the agenda pack:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community First</li> <li>• Healthwatch Wiltshire</li> <li>• Update from BSW Together (Integrated Care System)</li> <li>• Wiltshire Local Plan Review</li> <li>• Wiltshire Life Awards 2024</li> <li>• Cost of Living Update</li> </ul>
49	<p><u>Partner and Community Updates</u></p> <p>Updates were received from the following partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Wiltshire Police</b></li> </ul> <p>The Area Board noted a written updates attached to the agenda and supplement. In addition, Inspector Andy Lemon provided a verbal update which covered the following points:</p>

- Inspector Lemon was responsible for the neighbourhood policing team as well as the response team, with two additional officers set to join in November.
- Work had been conducted for a criminal behaviour order for a female in Lamplighters Walk following 12 months of antisocial behaviour at home.
- Project Zero, a road policing operation took place recently as well as on 11 August in Trowbridge where 68 offences ranging from excess speed to not wearing a seatbelt were recorded.
- Last week was rural crime action week with the police having gone out to farmers in the local area.
- Next week is set to be business awareness week, as part of a national response of policing towards policing and theft, with a further operation set to take place at Christmas.
- The force was looking to work towards priorities set by the Chief Constable.
- The number of burglary dwellings had decreased by 44 victims as well as a reduction in violent offences by 1217 victims this year.
- As a hub, Trowbridge have been identified as being the best in terms of Further Action Taken and putting people in front of court.
- The local force recently took part in a local cricket match.

After the verbal update, there was time for the following questions and points to be made:

- The neighbourhood policing team were praised for their work.
- A concern was raised about people feeling unsafe walking through Trowbridge Park at night, to which it was stated that the best action to be taken to help people feel safer would be greater police visibility.
- Concern were raised regarding shoplifting within the area, with anecdotes cited about how business owners had cited cases of violence to escalate police concern and increase response time. It was noted that shoplifting was covered by the 101 and online service with the response to shoplifting currently under review. It was noted that all calls were assessed in terms of threat and harm and that traders should not falsely suggest there has been violence involved in shoplifting. Additionally, the response teams are being redesigned as well as having new shift patterns to allow for greater visibility.
- Further concern was raised regarding shoplifting that other if other areas of crime were prioritised over shoplifting then the police might not have enough staff to cope; to which it was acknowledged that though the police do have finite resources, it was hoped that a redesign of the force would allow for improvements and better planning for a deterrent space; with reference to business improvement districts in London.
- Praise was given to the police for providing a Councillor with a swift reply to concerns raised via email.

- **Child Friendly Trowbridge**

The Area Board received the following verbal update from Cllr Jo Trigg on behalf

	<p>of Child Friendly Trowbridge. The update noted that Colin Kay had stepped down as Chairman and had been replaced by Jane Bullock. Additionally, that the next meeting would take place on 16 October 2016.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Trowbridge Future</b> The Area Board received the following verbal update from Cllr Jo Trigg on behalf of Trowbridge Future. The update noted that Trowbridge Future had recently signed a lease for a new larger premises on Mill St, which would offer space for more youth provision.</li> <li>• <b>Town and Parish Council Nominated Representative</b> The Area Board received the following verbal update from Cllr Roger Evans on behalf of North Bradley Parish Council. The update covered the following matters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was endorsed that other Parish Councils should attend Trowbridge Area Board meetings.</li> <li>• North Bradley Parish Council is still meeting monthly with various planning applications being considered in different areas.</li> <li>• Work is currently being undertaken to review the 2021 Neighbourhood Plan as part of the Community Governance Review would lead to boundary changes with Trowbridge Town, with a letter of intent set to enable working together.</li> <li>• Cllr Bernard Clarkson was set to resign after working as part of the Parish Council for 30 years.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The Area Board voted on and agreed to write to Cllr Bernard Clarkson to recognise and place gratitude towards his service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dorset &amp; Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service</b> The Area Board noted a written update attached to the agenda supplement.</li> </ul>
50	<p><u>Area Board Priorities Update</u></p> <p>The Area Board agreed that due to the meeting overrunning, they would discuss the Local Priorities outside of the meeting with the forward work plan set to be shared by the Strategic Engagement Partnerships Manager and Area Board Delivery Officer.</p> <p>The Area Board received a presentation from Clive Jackson from the Trowbridge Debt Advice Service. The presentation covered the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The service was set up in 2017 and was manned by trained volunteers ran in association with a national debt charity with the goal of offering free face to face money advice, support, and guidance to people.</li> <li>• Since October 2017 the service had seen 415 clients with debts amounting to £2.7million.</li> <li>• Currently the service had 141 active clients with several more waiting for appointments.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was outlined that since lockdown and the cost-of-living crisis, the client demographic had changed significantly.</li> <li>• The service over the past 3 months had averaged 4 new clients a week with 150 hours a week worked on average by volunteers.</li> <li>• The service was looking to recruit more advisors and volunteers which would enable it to be open for another day during the week.</li> </ul> <p>After the presentation, there was time for the following questions and points to be made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role and actions of housing associations was discussed.</li> <li>• It was clarified that the service signposts clients to mental health organisations.</li> <li>• The service was also available to those not in debt but seeking money saving advice.</li> </ul>
51	<p><u>Local Highways and Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG)</u></p> <p>The Chairman introduced the minutes and recommendations from the LHFIG meeting held on 14 September 2023. It was also noted that positive work had taken place in Newtown, Leapgate and Cock Hill.</p> <p>After which, it was;</p> <p><b><u>Resolved:</u></b></p> <p><b>The minutes of the Local Highways and Footway Improvement Group meeting held on 14 September 2023 were agreed as a correct record as well as approving the spending recommendations within.</b></p>
52	<p><u>Close and Future Dates</u></p> <p>The date of the next meeting would be 18 January 2024, which would be a Highways engagement event. It was also noted that there were plans in place for an engagement event to take place with the Chamber of Commerce. It was further reiterated that the Area Board would like to use different venues for their meetings in the future.</p>