

Bradford on Avon Community Area Status Report

Spring/Summer 2021

Background and context

The overarching aim of this document is for Bradford on Avon Area Board and its partners to obtain a better awareness of the issues within the Bradford on Avon Community Area. This in turn will inform our understanding of how to support local responses from communities, businesses and organisations and link this to the work of Wiltshire Council, its partners and agencies, so that collaboratively we can tackle these issues including those arising from COVID-19.

The Bradford on Avon community area has seen an incredible response to the COVID19 pandemic with volunteers leading the response and strategic partners working collaboratively to support our communities. Every person within the area had access to support from one of the community groups that were set up, some of which have gone on to offer additional services for the community. This builds upon a foundation of strong partnership working between the community and supporting organisations.

As we now look ahead, this short document provides a summary of information that can be utilised to help inform the local community response. It brings together the differing data and information sources from across the community area that will help us to understand the state of our community and some of the impact of COVID-19.

Over time this document will be regularly updated in response to changes, new information and actions undertaken. Whilst the impact of COVID-19 in some areas is considerable, it is recognised that many of the issues identified in this report were existing ones.

Whilst it is natural to focus on the negative impacts of COVID-19, it is important to recognise and build on any positives that have occurred. These include the closer working between organisations, increased community cohesion, new volunteers and the wider use of the internet / social media to enhance communication between agencies and users.

The Bradford on Avon community area comprises the town of Bradford on Avon as well as the parishes of Holt, Staverton, South Wraxall, Winsley, Monkton Farleigh, Westwood and Winsley. From May 2021 Atworth also falls within the Area Board boundary.

A key requirement is to ensure that all within the community area have the same opportunity to engage with this work and the consultation that has begun will continue to ensure that this report will be as inclusive as possible.

Community data and information

Local data is being collected from a range of sources to provide an overview of the current situation within our community. This is being combined with the outcomes of discussions on the impact of COVID-19 to inform the key issues emerging along with decisions on where resources should be focussed.

- [JSNA local data sets](#) – (collected in winter 2019)
- JSNA 2020 – Demography and overarching indicators
- [Children and young people mental health needs Assessment](#)
- [Gypsy, traveller and boater populations health needs assessment Wiltshire](#)
- [Office for National Statistics](#)
- COVID19 support group survey – (June 2020)

- Wiltshire CAJSNA 2020 'Your Local Priorities' Community Survey Results for Bradford on Avon (BoA). Total number of respondents for Bradford on Avon 765.

Top priorities identified:

1. Climate change and renewable energies 48.4%
2. Waste and recycling 31.6%
3. Air Quality 30.1%
4. Wildlife and biodiversity 29.8%
5. Public Transport 23%

- BoA Area Board and working group discussion November 2020, Jan 2021 and March 2021
- Meeting of COVID19 support group leads in Nov 2020
- JSNA Population, Indices of Deprivation, Life expectancy, Mortality (Oct 2020)

Context for this report

It is important to read this report with the following in mind:

- The process of identifying and agreeing the key concerns is not an exact science and both statistical and anecdotal evidence can be misleading. No two people will completely agree on what should be included so the author has looked for trends, commonality and correlation when deciding what to include. This report should therefore be viewed as an informed indicator to the state of the BoA Community Area.
- The BoA Community area is an excellent place to live and work. It is recognised that a tremendous amount of good work has taken place over the past few years due to the dedication and hard work of so many within our community.
- The JSNA data indicates that the BoA community area is consistently performing amongst the top places in Wiltshire. However, the remit of this report does not include capturing these examples and the focus is upon those issues identified by the community as being the most important to focus on.
- Some of the areas highlighted from the JSNA data where the BoA Community area seems to not be doing so well, needs to be looked at in the context of when and how it was collected. The variance between JSNA data in all community areas may sometimes be very small and not of any great significance. Wiltshire is also a great county to live in and sometimes we are comparing good with excellent
- Further investigation will be required with some of the data as they may not tell the whole story. E.g. who particularly is being affected? Are there differences between local communities and minority groups? Is the issue located in a particular geographical area? Equally in some cases the most recent data available is a few years old and the situation may have altered.
- It needs to be recognised that due to COVID-19, some of the issues highlighted are not just a local problem but of concern nationwide. Debt and financial challenges are examples of this.
- Limited conversations have taken place with some sectors so further consultation, data and intelligence gathering is required to inform the setting and monitoring of local priorities.

Understanding the emerging themes and the impact of COVID-19

This section is a summary of the data and feedback that has so far been received to aid our understanding of where improvement may be required. The picture will evolve over time especially when the full impact of COVID-19 is realized. This document is therefore organic and there will be further opportunities for those who have not yet engaged to do so. What is clear is that some people will feel the impact more than others and they will need additional support.

Education, children and young people

- The public health measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID -19 and protect the most vulnerable, whilst they have been a priority, have had a significant impact on young people that is likely to be intense and long lasting. Feedback from the UK Youth Movement 2020 predicts that the impact on young people includes:
 1. Increased mental health or wellbeing concerns
 2. Increased loneliness and isolation
 3. Lack of safe space – including not being able to access youth club/services and lack of safe space at home
 4. Challenging family relationships
 5. Lack of trusted relationships or someone to turn to
 6. Increased social media or online pressure
 7. Higher risk for engaging in gangs, substance misuse, carrying weapons or other harmful practices.
 8. Higher risk for sexual exploitation or grooming
- Young people in the Bradford on Avon community area have faced additional pressures through disruption to education and school routine and uncertainty about the future. Restrictions on opportunities to socialise and attend regular activities has caused additional isolation, loneliness and stress.
- Operational challenges have put a strain on our schools and the education community. The feedback received is that despite these challenges schools are managing well, attendance is good and measures put in place are working.
- St Laurence Year 11s and 13s have endured a turbulent year with disruption to exams and changes to assessment processes, however students have shown great resilience and positivity.
- Early feedback from the school in 2020 highlighted additional pressures on young people's mental health. Several projects have been initiated to support students with emotional wellbeing, these include Relate counselling services, a Town Council funded Creative Arts project and BoA Youth 1-1 referrals.
- All schools in the BoA community area have a good or outstanding rating from Ofsted.
- JSNA (2018/19) data shows that 65% of children in BoA Community Area achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of primary school. This is similar to the Wiltshire average of 64%.
- 13% of pupils in BoA Community Area have either an Education, Health and Care Plan or Special Educational Needs. This is equal to the Wiltshire average.
- 100% of schools in the BoA Community Area are engaged with the Healthy Schools programme. This is notably higher than the Wiltshire average of 56% however further work is required to ensure continued involvement and re-assessment.
- Further consultation with schools is required to understand the legacy of COVID-19 on education and the work underway to ensure learning gaps created by school closures are filled.

Youth activities

- BoA Youth adapted its universal youth provision 2021/21 in response to the pandemic delivering a hybrid of risk assessed virtual sessions and face to face activities alongside government guidelines. The virtual offer included game sessions and a forum for young people to be able to connect socially. Over the summer of 2020 when restrictions were relaxed youth workers also organised outdoor sports activities.
- Open access has continued where possible, with most young people comfortable with wearing masks and social distancing. Between 10-15 people have participated in each activity for both age groups (under 13 and 13 plus)
- BoA youth have organised a survey jointly with St Laurence School to gain feedback from young people about what they are struggling with in different aspects of their lives and includes questions

relating to the pandemic. This needs assessment will provide an insight into what support is needed and how BoA can use its services to help in those areas.

- The Area Board brought the local youth sector together in March and November 2020 (virtually) to discuss the local youth activities offer and impact of COVID-19.
- Councillors discussed shared concerns regarding the impact of COVID-19 on our teenagers and young adults. Both statistically and anecdotally, those aged 16 to 24 are known to have suffered greatly over the past year; socially, emotionally, and financially. It is estimated that over 60% of the COVID related drop in employment during 2020/21 is attributable to this age-group.
- A 'Young Futures' project has been initiated with Area Board support to mitigate the impact of COVID 19 on this age group. The Area Board has committed to fostering a support network, both online and face to face for young people in our Community area (16-24) to enable them to share COVID related experiences, and to respond accordingly. Mental Health First Aid Training will be provided. This will be developed in tandem with a project that will seek support of local businesses within the creative economy (art, music, tv, radio, design, marketing, film, photography, advertising, marketing) given the huge part they play in local culture and in young peoples' lives.
- Mighty Girls has received funding from local organisations to continue with a programme of activities in 2021 that aims to increase the wellbeing, confidence and sense of community among girls and women, promoting healthy emotional, physical and mental well-being.
- Holt youth group has continued with a mix of online and open access provision throughout the pandemic, the club is now undergoing changes due to key personnel stepping down, this is being carried out with the support of local Youth organisations and potential partnership opportunities with other youth providers in the area are being explored.
- Young people in the area are also actively involved in the skate park project with designs for the project confirmed and a fundraising appeal underway.

Children's Centre activities

- Spurgeons Children's Charity operate children's centre activities in the West of Wiltshire. They adapted their services throughout the pandemic so that all service delivery was online. For some families receiving support in this way removed issues around travel, childcare and accessibility. Spurgeons has reflected on this and as restrictions ease are currently offering a blended approach with some services available both face to face and online.
- The number of families in the West of Wiltshire receiving support or a service in quarter 1 of 2021 had markedly increased from quarter 3 and 4 in 2020, with highest levels of engagement in outreach, book start, early years support, baby steps and five to thrive.
- Further discussion is required with key partners to understand the impact of COVID on local families and to help foster a collaborative approach to promoting children's centre activities and opportunities to families across the BOA area, particularly those in more remote areas who are unable to travel to larger centres for face to face contact but who would benefit from online support networks.

JSNA and community data

- JSNA data from 2018/19 shows that rates of hospital admissions due to accidental injury in 0-14-year olds were notably higher in Bradford on Avon (107 per 10,000 0-14-year olds) than reported across Wiltshire (90 per 10,000 0-14-year olds).
- The data also indicates that rates of hospital admissions due to self-harm in young people aged 10-24 years were higher in BoA (78 per 10,000) than that reported across Wiltshire (67 per 10,000).
- Between January 2018 and December 2019 15 per 1000 under 19-year olds from Wiltshire were accepted into Children and Adolescent mental health services. The BOA community area saw a slightly lower rate of 13 per 1000 accepted referrals.
- Between April 2020 and March 2021 there were 133 referrals into the Mutli-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) from the BOA community area. The top five presenting issues were parental mental health and impact on child, issues relating to separation/divorce, child mental health, issues relating to children with SEND (behaviour/anxiety) and overdose and self-harm.

All children and young people involved in a family are included in the 'number of referrals' recorded, as the MASH team must then ascertain if there is any concern over the other children/young people in the household.

- JSNA data 2018/19 shows that 18% of 10-11 year olds in the BoA community area are obese or overweight. This is lower than the Wiltshire average (28%) yet still equates to almost 1 in 5 children in Year 6.
- Alcohol and drugs misuse negatively impacts on both physical and mental health and can have far reaching effects on young people and their families. Between 2016/17 - 2018/19 the rate of young people in the BoA Community Area accessing treatment for substance misuse stood at 26 per 10,000 under 18 year olds, this is higher than the Wiltshire average (22 per 10,000 under 18 year olds) for the same time period.
- 6.9% of 0-19-year olds are thought to be living in poverty. This is lower than across Wiltshire (9.4%) however COVID-19 is likely to have impacted on this.
- Over the past 12 months BoA Foodbank has established relationships with and supported all schools in the community area and in 2021 have so far distributed 200 holiday food parcels to low income families identified by local schools.
- As at January 2021 there were 4 foster carers in the BoA Area and 3 fostered children. A recruitment campaign is underway to increase the number of foster carers across Wiltshire.

Economy and Employment

Impact on local economy

- Businesses have been required to COVID 'proof' themselves and adapt to new ways of working. In some cases that means transformation to home working, moving business online, altering their offer or business environment.
- Some businesses, particularly smaller ones, are looking for support in areas such as business transition and marketing.
- Further consultation with businesses across the community area is required to understand the impact from the pandemic. A business survey has been discussed at Area Board level.
- Feedback from some local retail businesses has showed that the loss of business was hurting but through innovation, creativity, loyal and protective customer bases, most have survived quite well. However, some businesses have fallen through the government support gap and have struggled including self-employed and new businesses.
- The impact of COVID-19 on retail and hospitality in the area is uncertain as yet, but there are likely to be casualties which will impact on the economy and potentially cause financial vulnerability. For many pubs it has not been financially viable to open for much of 2020 – 21. Some evidence for this is already appearing in the increased number of people contacting the Citizens Advice Bureau from the area.
- The impact of COVID-19 to remote businesses is often underestimated as it is assumed that they are already set up for home working. However, issues around clients including uncertainty, cancellation of orders and inability to pay for services have all had a substantial impact.
- Bradford on Avon community area has a rate of 52 apprenticeships per 10,000 people aged 16+. This is lower than the Wiltshire rate of 139 per 10,000
- Data from Wiltshire Citizens Advice Bureau shows that the number of contacts from residents in the BoA area nearly doubled between Q1 and Q4 of year 2020/2021 with the biggest number of enquiries relating to Universal Credit, Benefits and Tax Credits, Debt and Employment.

Economy and employment - response and recovery

- BoA Business has been prevented by COVID-19 from organising the networking events that have been central to the ethos of the organisation. The intention is to revive BoA Business in 2021, this will help to create an effective network to support and develop local businesses, give business a voice on key issues impacting the town and surrounding villages, encourage businesses to share knowledge and contribute positively to the economic recovery and social sustainability of the town.

- There are also some positives that have resulted from the pandemic. Many businesses have helped others in sharing their knowledge and expertise. Some businesses have transitioned well adapting their offers to suit the new markets and their business needs and many small businesses, especially online, have been created. Businesses have grown in confidence to approach one another and work together.
- BoA Town Council provided assistance to local businesses through its websites, social media and newsletters as well as via the Shop Local scheme. The Town Council also contacted some of Bradford on Avon's own online gurus and collated advice for anyone wanting to upgrade their existing business or website, boost their online presence and to help those starting from scratch.
- There were many creative and innovative responses to lockdown including the lockdown window exhibition showcasing local artists and giving walkers a purpose to move around town and visit new places. The BoA Hidden Doors trail encouraged visitors to use local businesses and discover sites of interest.
- Many local businesses feel that recovering momentum will not be easy but that it is encouraging to see increased footfall in recent months with shops and markets re-opening.
- Community events such as 'BoA unlocked' - a town council project with the Natural Theatre company offering interactive experiences, will promote emotional well-being and encourage engagement and visitors to the town.
- In total Wiltshire Council has allocated 34,168 business grant awards totalling £165M since April 2020. Further details on the numbers of businesses within the BoA community area receiving grants will be shared with the Area Board.
- It has been suggested that to maintain a viable community, we need to continue to make it possible for all activities and contributors to establish and thrive. The reasons that people choose to live in the Community Area must be supported to maintain the diversity and services that residents and businesses rely on. Hence greater understanding of the inter-dependency of service providers and consumers is to be encouraged.

Health, Wellbeing and adult care

Feedback from community groups

- There are many activities and clubs for older people within the area such as U3A, Seniors Forum, dementia groups, carers café's and Arts together. Some activities were able to operate remotely on zoom and members were kept in contact through newsletters and emails.
- Over 400 Bradford on Avon U3A and Seniors Forum members received regular communication throughout the pandemic coordinated through the Older People's Champion.
- Leg Club has continued to run during all lockdowns in a COVID-secure way.
- The Living Well service (BoA Health centre/Age UK) has continued remotely.
- Despite the excellent community support in place for practical tasks, loneliness and isolation has increased during the pandemic particularly for those unable to participate in online activity.
- Discussions with the BoA Health and Wellbeing group members has highlighted:
 - Increased demands for befriending and listening ear services
 - Fuel and technology poverty
 - Additional support needed coming out of lockdown to support emotional wellbeing and to help older and vulnerable residents reconnect with community life.
- The BoA Link scheme has continued throughout the pandemic with reduced numbers of volunteers, understanding guidance has been a challenge however the scheme is coping with demand and vaccine requests and does not see financial stability as a long term challenge to return to pre COVID 19 service levels.
- Over the past year West Wiltshire link schemes completed 1961 tasks (333 food shopping, 263 medicine collection and 1365 check in and chat), the long-term challenge to return to pre COVID service is volunteer recruitment.
- COVID -19 has had a devastating impact on people living with dementia, not only those in residential care but also those living at home. All the activities and groups in the town were suspended and are

only now just starting up. It has increased isolation, especially for carers, who often relied on these activities for a few hours respite a week.

- The BoA Dementia Action Alliance (DAA) work with local community groups and businesses to make Bradford on Avon more welcoming and accessible for people living with dementia. The group is one of the recipients of the first round of funding of the government's £4 million Local Connections Fund designed to tackle loneliness in local communities during the pandemic. A grant was received to produce a booklet providing support for people living with dementia, to help both the person with the diagnosis and their families and friends, to continue to take an active part in their community.
- Dementia diagnosis is likely to have been impacted by the pandemic, further discussion is needed with GP, health partners and the DAA.

Feedback from local organisations

- The Wellbeing Hub has been contacted by 390 residents from the BoA area for support and advice since its inception in March 2020. The Wellbeing Hub proactively contacted 1098 residents in the area who were identified by the NHS as being Critically Vulnerable or Critically Extremely Vulnerable via letter and followed up by either a phone call or visit. During the first lockdown 51 food parcels were issued to residents.
- There are 359 Bradford on Avon carer records on the Carer Support Wiltshire data base. In the period April 2020 to March 2021 there were 57 referrals for new carers, 39 contacts made relating to welfare checks, 11 for befriending, 14 for counselling and 39 for a volunteer wellbeing call. Additionally, 8 carers from the BoA postal district attended a virtual café/group or other activity.
- A monthly BoA coffee and chat café is due to re-start in the Summer, face to face support work will be offered from June and virtual cafés are expected to continue.
- JSNA data (2018/19) tells us that across Wiltshire only 13.4% of adult carers aged 65+ feel that they have as much social contact as they would like.
- Age UK Wiltshire reported the following summary of activity for 2020-2021 for the BoA community area:
 - 2 of 134 residents applied for and received a Surviving Winter Grant
 - 4 residents registered for the Meals+ service (of approximately 500 throughout Wiltshire and Swindon), requesting on average one meal each per week.
 - 3 residents accessed the Click & Connect service
 - 55 BoA residents of 2869 were supported through the Information & Advice service: 44% benefit related; 15% loneliness/isolation and 7% aids/equipment.
 - 12 BoA residents, of 177 total clients receive a weekly social telephone call from an AUKW telephone befriending volunteer.
 - In addition, 3 further residents received a weekly reassurance call during the peak of the pandemic April-August 2020.
- The primary aim of the Age UK Wiltshire Living Well service in the BoA area is to offer help and assistance to patients 75+ with non-clinical needs, exploring and identifying through a Guided Conversation, all aspects of their lives regarding: housing, social connections, finances, personal care, domestic arrangements and health, what those needs are.
- Despite the pandemic and a withdrawal of most if not all social activity opportunities a very similar number of residents have been supported (comparing year on year) although the focus was reassurance rather than social engagement. There were 953 contacts with clients in 2019/20, this increased to 1335 in 2020/21 with the biggest increase relating to wellbeing support.
- The Living Well project worker reports that the challenges of the months ahead are likely to be loss of confidence and/or a reduction in mobility in the older client group and an uncertainty around social activity groups being able to re-open (due to financial constraints, loss of personnel etc).

BoA Health Coach

- From the start of the pandemic the BoA Health Coach has supported 41 new clients and maintained contact with previous clients who were vulnerable. The main reasons for support have been

smoking, weight loss and emotional wellbeing. These referrals came from GP community connector (Age UK) and self-referral. These numbers are slightly down on previous years as it was not possible to carry out the normal brief interventions at the library.

- Bradford on Avon does not have a Local Area Co-ordinator.

Bradford on Avon swimming pool

- BoA swimming pool has been closed or had restricted activities for much of 2020 and the early part of 2021. Prior to the pandemic the Swimming pool operated with an average usage of 12,000 visits per month. At November 2020 the average was 4,000 per month, this increased to 6000 in May 2021 due to factors such as hotter weather, vaccinations and restrictions reducing.
- Swimming membership figures have already recovered, however the numbers participating in swimming lessons has halved, it has not been possible to offer as many swimming lessons due to operational changes in place to ensure activities can be carried out safely, such as cleaning gaps between sessions. It is hoped the swimming programme will expand again in the coming months, there is a healthy waiting list to enable this to happen.

Sports Development

- The purpose of the sports development and physical activity service at Wiltshire Council is to increase sports and physical activity levels amongst all Wiltshire residents, but specifically those that face the greatest barriers to participation.
- Before the pandemic Sport England's *Active Lives* survey (May 2019/20), which presents information on three levels of activity for adults aged 16+, showed Wiltshire's participation figures at **64.3% Active** (at least 150 minutes a week); **14% Fairly active** (an average of 30-149 minutes a week) and **21.7% Inactive** (less than 30 minutes a week).
- Since March 2020 Sport England have been reporting on the negative impact of the pandemic, finding that regular adult physical activity had fallen, resulting in fewer people enjoying the wellbeing benefits associated with being active.
- Sport and physical activity can play a positive role in supporting recovery, especially amongst audiences that have been disproportionately affected. Sport and physical activity and programmes in the Bradford on Avon community to support and address priorities include:
 - **Increase physical activity levels in lower socio-economic groups** – Get Wiltshire Walking, Walking for the Mind.
 - **Increase physical activity levels of people with a disability and those with long-term health conditions** – Active Health referral programme - for individuals referred by a medical professional. Services include aqua classes, falls prevention, exercise after stroke, long-term neurological conditions, and cardiac rehab classes.
 - **Increase levels of physical activity across the Wiltshire population through the delivery of a universal county offer** - Club, coach and volunteer development and Running Wiltshire, a programme of 'Beginners Running Courses' and school gate runs delivered throughout the year to assist individuals looking to take up running.

JSNA and community data

- The JSNA data suggests that 2018/19 rates of hospital admissions due to self - harm in the BoA community area (at 31 per 10,000) were higher than that reported across Wiltshire (27 per 10,000 persons)
- JSNA data from 2018/19 also indicates that the proportion of persons aged 18 years and over in the BoA community area diagnosed with depression (11%) was slightly higher than that reported across Wiltshire (10%).
- The rate of alcohol related hospital admissions in the BoA community area is 2116 per 100,000 persons. This is higher than the rate for Wiltshire of 1827 per 100,000.

- During the Pandemic, those adults suffering from some form of depression or mental health issue has doubled nationally so it is likely to have increased within the community area. Younger people, women, poorer families, and those already living with a disability are proportionately more at risk.
- Further consultation with health and social care partners is needed to understand these indicators post pandemic.
- JSNA data also tells us that in the BoA community area 9.3% of homes are in fuel poverty, which is equal to the average across Wiltshire. Discussions with local organisations such as The Hub and Wiltshire Health Coaches has highlighted that fuel poverty is an issue in the area. This is likely to have increased due to COVID -19 and impacts particularly on the travelling community.

Community Resilience and minority groups

Voluntary Community Sector

- COVID-19 -response groups quickly mobilised in BoA town and in all parishes across the community area in response to the pandemic. Groups such as Town Council Community Emergency Volunteers, Helpline Holt, Liferaft in Limpley Stoke and parish council led support groups delivered food, prescriptions and helped with many other tasks as well as providing emotional support.
- Support and guidance were provided to volunteer groups through the Communities team at Wiltshire Council and local councils.
- A strong theme that has emerged from local conversations is that a fresh approach to volunteering may be required. Volunteers are vital for a resilient community, but they need to be valued, achievements celebrated, and opportunities offered that are appropriate to modern life.
- Most of the villages have a community hall and the indication is that they will all re-open once they are able to.
- The Area Board has set up a COVID-19 Resilience Fund to assist groups from across the community area with any capital expenditure required to restart activities.
- The Explore BoA website and Our Community Matters platform along with parish websites will play a key role in promoting clubs and activities as they begin to re-open helping residents to take up activities and socially connect with one another.
- There are around 2000 charities registered in Wiltshire. Wiltshire's VCS provides vital services, core to our communities' resilience and sustainability, our health, wellbeing and economy.
- As of December 2020 Wiltshire, VCS Impact Survey shows that:
 - 32% of those VCS who continued to offer a service saw a 32% increase in demand with the biggest demand being around Befriending support / supporting peoples mental health and wellbeing.
 - 45 % of services remained partially open; 31% fully open and 20% still temporarily closed and 4% permanently closed
 - 75% have stated they have changed the way they are delivering their core services
 - 73% stated they are operating at a reduced level of service delivery
 - 44% of the VCS said they will need more volunteers to meet the increased demands for their services

The Hub

- The BoA foodbank operating from the Hub has continued to provide a service to residents and local schools throughout the pandemic. The Hub food bank distributed 638 food parcels in 2019 and 1319 in 2020. So far 544 have been distributed in 2021 including school holiday parcels.
- Since opening 6 years ago the Hub has become integrated into the Bradford on Avon community. Although the Hub closed for all services except the foodbank on 23rd March 2020, they continued to receive donations of food from individuals, organisations, churches and businesses.
- Woolley Grange Farm and crop drop donated their organic surplus to enable the Hub to offer fresh items alongside the non-perishable food. To further help those in need the Hub was able to partner with The Swan Hotel and offer a hot meal to those struggling on low incomes or because of challenges relating to the pandemic.

- Recognising the school holidays as a pressure point for some families the Hub has offered holiday food parcel to families in receipt of free school meals.
- Although Bradford on Avon sees relatively few homeless there have been a number of rough sleepers over the past year; some have been helped and supported by local residents, businesses, and the Wiltshire Council rough sleeper's team, the Hub has also offered support.
- Hope Debt Advice continues to support their clients via email and the phone. There are 10 trained advisors available for appointments to call clients with debt issues Clients can also make appointments for budgeting help where they struggle to manage their finances.
- Drop-in welfare support and other basic internet and form filling enquiries will resume as soon as the Hub can be fully open.
- The hub maintains strong links with the liveaboard boater community and was able to support boaters with weekly food parcels.

Liveaboard boaters

- During the first and successive lockdowns Julian House sought to facilitate a community-led practical support response for all liveaboard boaters. Taking into consideration the scale and vulnerability, there were several considerations to factor into the plan including, but not limited to:
 - The pre-existing health inequalities which exist for liveaboard boaters (particularly the increased incidence of respiratory illness and mental health) posing a threat as a result of COVID-19
 - No fixed abode for online shopping deliveries
 - Rural and isolated geography of some boats
 - Limited phone signal and widespread poor internet signal
 - Inability to physically 'stay home' for the most vulnerable as sanitation, refuse and water requires access to facilities at shared stations along the canal
 - Limited power supply living off-grid
 - High proportion of self-employed community members facing financial hardship
- The K&A Covid-19 Plan was devised by the Julian House team and included a two-tiered voluntary structure of Community Coordinators and Helpers.
- Coordinators were tasked to have a verbal conversation with every occupied boat. Verbal conversations limited the risk of reliance on technology, provided an opportunity to assess each person's need, build trust and share the card signalling system. Coordinators continue to regularly patrol their zones, a system which has been largely welcomed by the community.
- In addition to practical support Julian House teamed up with the Waterways Chaplains to offer weekly benefit surgeries and engaged with the local fuel boats to tackle fuel poverty through a 'Pay it Forward scheme' – a way for boaters to help someone else when placing their order for coal/wood or gas so fuel boats could deliver to those who needed a helping hand.
- A floating vaccine centre offering a drop in clinic space has been set up to give boaters their Covid-19 jabs. 261 live-aboard boaters are hoped to be fully vaccinated by June 2021.

Digital inclusion

- The Pandemic has acted as a catalyst to remote working, meetings and service delivery. This trend seems likely to continue after restrictions are lifted.
- The benefits are enormous as it negates some of the need to travel and opens opportunities to those who had difficulty accessing them previously. However, this shift also excludes a percentage of our community and importantly these are often the people that need support the most. Assistance is therefore required to help those who can't afford the equipment as well as those who do not know how to or are fearful of using it.
- Libraries have offered digital access when sites have been open, digital support has also been offered through various schemes such as Age UK Wiltshire Click and Connect service and Wiltshire Digital Drive.

Bradford on Avon library

- The order and collect service at Bradford on Avon library (Jan to April 2021) was very popular with an average of 44 orders collected each week, this service was a lifeline for many, particularly older residents, and those with young children.
- The Home Library Service continued during lockdown with books regularly delivered to 6 elderly household customers.
- There was a daily rhyme time on various library Facebook pages. BoA Library's Facebook page has had an average of 98 views per rhyme time session.
- A new Shared Reading Group was launched in March 2020 with a fair amount of interest, this was created as part of The Reading Agency's 'Talk, Read, Share' initiative to combat loneliness and promote wellbeing through the proven power of reading during the pandemic and recovery.

Wiltshire Music Centre

- In September 2020, Wiltshire Music Centre used a bounce-back loan to invest in a state-of-the-art broadcast suite to enable the community to stay connected to audiences through livestream events throughout the pandemic.
- Zone Club went virtual with an average of 20 young adults tuning in each month.
- A [Virtual My Science Fair](#) was livestreamed (319 YouTube views) and in September 2020, to celebrate reopening of WMC, a socially distanced outdoor Community Concert was arranged, with performances from regular ensembles and local artists, attended by over 300 families.
- A virtual campaign was delivered to mark the Bradford Roots festival in January 2021 #MyBradfordRoots engaged local artists and audiences in a virtual sharing of favourite festival memories and new music on social media, including two Facebook Live events.
- Wiltshire Music Connect supported a livestream interactive performance for secondary schools, and a primary school folk concert – both giving young people access to live music performance.
- The [Wiltshire Youth Choir](#) was launched. So far 38 young people from 19 schools in Wiltshire have taken part in online courses and workshops
- As part of the Celebrating Age Wiltshire project, WMC recorded monthly concerts from the auditorium, sent to our network of older people's organisations, individuals and care homes. These are freely accessible on YouTube
- In February WMC brought together 12 people connected to WMC in different ways for an open discussion about the centre including how it is perceived and how it can more fully engage and support the community. Feedback was varied and valuable and will help the centre to support and address community needs through its programme.

Town Master-planning

- In June 2020 Wiltshire Council secured £85,000 in funding from the government's One Public Estate programme to explore the redevelopment potential for the site currently home to the town's health centre, police and fire station.
- The funding will be used to conduct feasibility and environmental studies to see whether the site could be redeveloped to benefit the town, including a new health centre; combined facilities for fire, police and community emergency volunteers, a new museum, tourist information centre; council offices and social housing. The funding will help to test different ideas for the site and help establish what it could become in the future.

A summary of the key issues and action plans will be presented to a future Area Board meeting

How local actions can be supported

The local response within the BOA Community Area is one of co-production recognising that to rebuild our communities, it is important that we work together, sharing information and resources where appropriate.

The Area Board covers the whole community area and is responsible for this document. It links local delivery to Wiltshire Council, the Police, Public Health and other partners. It is an accountable body with influence and powers. It has its own funding to help support local initiatives. The Area Board will use this document to support local recovery and also encompass issues that were existing prior to COVID-19.

Wiltshire Council's thematic approach to the county's recovery is structured around the same 4 themes identified within this report.

- I. **Economy and employment**
- II. **Health, well-being and adult care**
- III. **Community Resilience**
- IV. **Young people, education and children**

Other themes such as **Transport, Community Safety, Housing** and the **Environment** will be covered in the Area Board action/work plan that will be shared at future meetings.

The Area Board, working with existing and new sub - groups, leads from town and parish councils, community groups and organisations, will carry out further investigation on the community issues, themes and priorities identified above, bringing together work currently happening and identifying gaps.

Recommendations and next steps

- (1) That the Area Board approves and adopts the Community Status report
- (2) That the Area Board produces a rolling action plan including up to 5 priority actions at any one time to demonstrate where it will contribute to addressing the identified issues.
- (3) That the Area Board will prioritise its resources including funding upon those issues identified in the status report.
- (4) That the Area Board requests the Community Engagement Manager to work with key partners, agencies and community groups to encourage them to consider where they are best placed to take actions around the priorities identified.
- (5) That regular updates are submitted to the Area Board on progress made in relation to its own action plan.
- (6) That the Area Board expresses its thanks to those who gave their time to help bring this report together.