

MINUTES

Meeting: Pewsey Area Board
Place: Bedwyn Village Hall, Frog Lane, Gt Bedwyn, SN8 3PB
Date: 18 September 2023
Start Time: 7.05 pm
Finish Time: 8.55 pm

Please direct any enquiries on these minutes to:

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In Attendance:

Wiltshire Councillors

Cllr Jerry Kunkler (Chairman), Cllr Paul Oatway QPM (Vice-Chairman) and Cllr Stuart Wheeler

Wiltshire Council Officers

Richard Rogers – Strategic Engagement & Partnership Manager
Caroline LeQuesne – Area Board Delivery Officer
Cameron Osborn – Democratic Services Officer
Nic Thomas – Director of Planning (allocated to the Area Board)

Partners

Wiltshire Police – Inspector Ben Huggins and Superintendent Conway Duncan
Pewsey Community Area Partnership
North Newnton Parish Council – Andrew Crane
Rushall Parish Council – Colin Gale
Woodborough Parish Council – John Brewin

Total in attendance: 24

<u>Minute No..</u>	<u>Summary of Issues Discussed and Decision</u>
83	<p><u>Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>Apologies were received by Mr Curly Haskell and Mr Peter Deck.</p>
84	<p><u>Minutes</u></p> <p><u>Resolved:</u></p> <p>To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2023 as a true and correct record.</p>
85	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
86	<p><u>Chairman's Updates</u></p> <p>The Chairman updated the Area Board as to the status of the Wiltshire Local Plan Review consultation and referred to the video linked in the agenda pack on the Council's activity and progress on the Climate Emergency.</p>
87	<p><u>Information Items</u></p> <p>The Chairman noted information items included in the agenda pack from the following organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community First • Healthwatch Wiltshire • Updates from BSW Together (Integrated Care System) • Wiltshire Life Awards 2024 <p><u>Resolved:</u></p> <p>To note the above information items.</p>
88	<p><u>Area Board Priority Updates</u></p> <p>The Lead Representatives for each of the local Area Board priorities updated the Area Board on their recent activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving Opportunities for Young People: Lead Member – Councillor Kunkler <p>The Chairman noted that Pewsey Leisure Centre was due to be used from October as a youth café at night, with a pool table purchased and five CRB-checked volunteers in place.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing Climate Change and Protecting the Environment: Lead Member – Councillor Kunkler <p>The Chairman introduced Jeremy and Sylvia Wyatt of Great Green Bedwyn, who spoke on the recent publication of a checklist to support parish councils with promoting sustainability. They also noted their Green Open Homes initiative, where residents of sustainable houses open their homes to others who might be interested in installing similar measures in their own homes.</p> <p>The Area Board discussed other environmental measures at length, touching upon double glazing in listed buildings, EV charging points and the capacity of the local grid to support them, the challenges to the house-building programme posed by low water levels and the different ways to utilise solar power.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valuing and Supporting our Vulnerable and Older People: Lead Member – Councillor Wheeler <p>Councillor Wheeler noted that a meeting on 27 July had been constructive, with tremendous work being done by the local villages. He stated that the establishment of a memory café was a positive step, and also remarked on the high quality of the local footpath work, mentioning that there was not a single stile on footpath route.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving Public Transport and Encouraging Walking and Cycling: Lead Member – Councillor Oatway <p>Councillor Oatway commented on the success of the new bus routes but raised reports of taxis block-booking the buses. Several attendees then voiced their own difficulties in booking the bus on certain routes.</p>
89	<p><u>Partner and Community Updates</u></p> <p>The Area Board received updates from the following partner organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pewsey Community Area Partnership <p>The Pewsey Community Area Partnership updated the Area Board on their recent activity, touching on a recent transport stakeholder conference and the status of the proposal to remove ticket offices, specifically raising concerns about the absence of staff at Pewsey Train Station’s ticket office. Regarding tourism in the local area, the Partnership noted the quality of walking routes, and updated the Area Board on the Partnership’s endeavours to secure grant funding from organisations like Great Western Railway (GWR). They also noted their work on local draft plan sessions, design statement briefings, helping with recruitment for the youth café, and a recent successful grant application to work on crisis prevention.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Councils Rushall Parish Council announced that they had recently been declared the Best Kept Village Winner of Winners for the third time. Great Bedwyn raised concerns about planning notices not being visible on properties with applications, explaining that they had taken to notifying neighbours themselves instead sometimes. They also queried how a local householder had been given permission to run an Airbnb at end of a residential cul-de-sac 365 days a year against the wishes of all the other residents, giving rise to a general feeling that tourism was being given precedence over residency. Woodborough raised the issue of a lack of verge and hedge-cutting, noting that the perceived width of some of the roads has narrowed considerably. It was explained that Highways have reduced verge and hedge cutting to once a year for environmental reasons, but that it was dangerous on the C261 in particular. Upavon echoed the sentiment, stating that it was an issue in their parish as well. North Newton noted that the electricity board needed to look at a tree overhanging a powerline on Council land on SL9 6LU. • Wiltshire Police Inspector Ben Huggins and recently appointed Superintendent Conway Duncan were in attendance to talk through the latest reports from Wiltshire Police. Taking the Area Board through the presentation available in the agenda pack, Inspector Huggins highlighted PC Nicki Crabbe’s role as dedicated Pewsey PC. He also noted that the highest proportion of offences remained violent offences in private spaces, with a spike in opportunistic thefts from vehicles and outbuildings, especially in Housing Association properties. Inspector Huggins also mentioned a recent high-profile stabbing in the Pewsey Co-Op, and reassured the Area Board that it was an isolated incident, and that the perpetrator was remanded in custody. Inspector Huggins highlighted the work of the Speed Enforcement Officer team and introduced Conway Duncan as the new Superintendent having recently moved down from Birmingham, explaining how he was a major proponent of neighbourhood policing. Councillor Oatway commended the presentation from Inspector Huggins but requested that the data, particularly regarding speeding offences, was overly selective and narrow given the size of the Pewsey area, and that the work of the Rural Crime team would be worth including in future information packs. Inspector Huggins also fed back that he felt progress was being made in Engage measures, with the new Chief Constable Catherine Roper bringing a fresh approach to Wiltshire Police as a whole. Inspector Huggins also fielded questions on dog violence, specifically dog-on-dog attacks, noting that oftentimes the Dog Warden at Wiltshire Council was actually more empowered to act than the Police in such instances.
90	<p><u>Area Board Funding</u></p> <p>The Area Board considered the following applications for grant funding:</p>

Area Board Initiatives:

Ref/Link	Grant Details	Amount Requested
ABG1318	Pewsey Area Board - Pewsey Village Youth Work	£5,000

Richard Rogers spoke to the application, explaining that the initiative in question was not a new one and had been running for a few years. He stated that the focus of the initiative was on the provision of activities, including supporting the youth café, assisting Burbage and Upavon with their youth offer, offering expert training for volunteers, and identifying existing groups to help develop for more inclusive provision. The Chairman moved that the funding be granted and was seconded by Councillor Oatway.

Resolved:

To grant £5,000 towards the Pewsey Village Youth Work Area Board Initiative.

Community Area Grants:

Ref/Link	Grant Details	Amount Requested
ABG1256	Pewsey Vale Tourism Partnership – Bike Repair Stand Pilot	£907

Susie Brew spoke to the application, explaining that these bike repair stands were popular in other areas, and the application was for a pilot to see if it would be suitable for this area before a wider roll-out. She explained that the stands were bolted in to the ground and allowed bicycles to stand up for easy repairs. She noted that the intended design was for a reasonably priced option despite a wide range of prices available, and that there would be minimal maintenance required. Richard Rogers noted that the two installed in Melksham town centre had been well received and that the vandal-proof design seemed effective. Councillor Oatway enquired about how many would be intended should the pilot be successful. Susie Brew responded that around six would allow for good coverage. The Chairman moved that funding be granted and was seconded by Councillor Oatway.

Resolved:

To grant Pewsey Vale Tourism Department £907 towards a Bike Repair Stand Pilot.

91	<p><u>Local Highways and Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG)</u></p> <p>Colin Gale outlined the funding recommendations arising from the LHFIG meeting on 26 July 2023. The Chairman moved that the Area Board approve the funding recommendations and was seconded by Councillor Oatway.</p> <p><u>Resolved:</u></p> <p>To approve the funding recommendations from the Local Highway and Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG).</p> <p>Colin Gale also brought the issue of the Freight Management Strategy to the attention of the Area Board. He noted the high level of freight passing through Pewsey and the neighbouring villages, and the Wiltshire Freight Management Policy Review that was put on hold until a national policy review had been concluded. He voiced his concern following a conversation with the Council's Monitoring Officer in which it was stated that the Wiltshire Freight Management Strategy was considered to be live in spite of this and was factored into the ongoing Local Plan Review. As such, Colin Gale requested that freight management becomes an issue for the Pewsey LHFIG again. Richard Rogers noted that the next Area Board meeting was to be dedicated to highways and transport and so advised that this be raised again then.</p>
92	<p><u>Urgent items</u></p> <p>There were no urgent items.</p>
93	<p><u>Future Meeting Dates and Close</u></p> <p>The Area Board noted the upcoming meeting dates on 27 November 2023 and 4 March 2024. The Chairman thanked those present for attending and closed the meeting.</p>