

# MINUTES

**Meeting:** Corsham Area Board  
**Place:** Selwyn Hall, Valens Terrace, Box, SN13 8NT  
**Date:** 12 October 2023  
**Start Time:** 19:00pm  
**Finish Time:** 21:22pm

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Please direct any enquiries on these minutes to:

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## **In Attendance:**

### **Wiltshire Councillors**

Cllr Ruth Hopkinson  
Cllr Helen Belcher OBE  
Cllr Derek Walters  
Cllr Dr Brian Mathew

### **Wiltshire Council Officers**

Ros Griffiths – Strategic Engagement & Partnership Manager  
Louisa Young – Area Board Delivery Officer  
Max Hirst – Democratic Services Officer  
Dominic Argar – Assistant Multimedia Officer

### **Partners**

Wiltshire Police – Inspector Pete Foster  
Police and Crime Commissioner – Philip Wilkinson OBE  
Chief Constable – Catherine Roper

**Total in attendance: 37**

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<u>Minute No..</u>	<u>Summary of Issues Discussed and Decision</u>
116	<p><u>Chairman's Welcome and Introductions</u></p> <p>The chair welcome everyone to the meeting.</p>
117	<p><u>Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from:</p> <p>Emma Legg</p>
118	<p><u>Minutes</u></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 meeting held on 20 July 2023.</b></p>
119	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
120	<p><u>Chairman's Announcements</u></p> <p>The Chair gave an update on outcomes and actions arising from previous meetings of the Area Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wiltshire Local Plan Review</li> <li>• Wiltshire Life Awards 2024</li> <li>• Polling District and Polling Place Review 2023</li> <li>• Cost of Living Announcement</li> </ul>
121	<p><u>Information Items</u></p> <p>The Board received and noted the following announcements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthwatch Wiltshire</li> <li>• Update from BSW Together (Integrated Care System)</li> </ul>
122	<p><u>Police and Crime Commissioner &amp; Chief Constable</u></p>

Corsham Area Board was pleased to welcome Phillip Wilkinson OBE, the Police and Crime Commissioner to the meeting where he gave a verbal update on progress since his appointment 2 years ago.

The Police and Crime Commissioner described his main role as to challenge Wiltshire Police Force to perform better in order to remove itself from special measures.

- Particular attention was drawn to efforts to improve call centres for 999 calls, with response times dropping from 27 minutes on average to 10 minutes.
- A more effective and efficient Police Force, including an improvement to response times.
- A reduction in violent crimes, specifically sexual crimes which has improved from a 2% conviction rate to currently 14%, with the expectation that this figure will continue to improve. Drug crimes have also been prioritised through Operation Scorpion to focus on specific targets committing drug crimes. Wiltshire Council is now the top Force in county line drug disruption.
- Tackling crimes highlighted by the community, specifically road safety. Community Speedwatch was highlighted as really important to this priority and enforcement statistics had massively improved through ticketing and other enforcement actions. Antisocial behaviour was also highlighted as a community priority.
- Rural Crime. The local Rural Crime Unit had been given better equipment in the form of drones and night vision to better tackle specifically organised crime gangs committing rural crimes against farmers. Operation Ragwort was highlighted as a specific initiative to tackle this.

The board also welcomed the Chief Constable, Catherine Roper, who gave a verbal presentation.

Points to note:

The Chief Constable had been in post 6 months and described the work she had been doing since the force had been graded poorly and placed in special measures in June 2022. The reasons for this were described as:

- Not recognising vulnerable persons and their challenges.
- The response to incidents not being adequate.
- The process from when members of the public first contacted the police to the conclusion of a case was described as having failings all throughout.

The Chief Constable was very conscious that the foundations of Wiltshire Police needed to be rebuilt, and that as trust and confidence in the force had declined the morale within the force had declined as a result.

Rebuilding the fundamentals of Wiltshire Police would lead to being brought out of special measures. This included work already underway on the business-as-usual delivery plan, restructuring the senior management and performance frameworks and refocusing crime-tackling priorities.

The Chief Constable understood public unease at burglary crimes and described this as unacceptable. More investment had been made in neighbourhood teams and with the reorganisation of response teams both would add to further deterrence and response.

Other areas of improvement included:

- Visibility on the roads to deter criminals.
- Recruitment activities, with emphasis given to opportunities for those in a gap year.
- The Evolve programme, allowing those most involved in day-to-day activity to give their views on where improvements can be made.
- Auditing and inspections, ensuring progress had been made through regular reports to the PCC. Every 6 months the Chief Constable and PCC attend Whitehall to face numerous questions and explain how improvements had been made.
- The Control Room. The Chief Constable praised the work that had been done to improve the speed at which calls are answered and actioned but understood that more improvements could and would be made.

The following points and clarifications were made by the Board and the public in attendance:

That the rise in sexual offence prosecutions was a good start and hopefully will continue the upward trend.

It was good to see speeding being taken so seriously, with serious issues being reported in the Corsham area.

It was clarified that the next inspection was expected imminently but more specific inspections took place continuously on all areas of the force since Wiltshire Police remained in Special Measures.

	<p>The Coordinator for Speedwatch in Box received clarification that officers could be provided to assist and authorise tickets for offenders and enforcement was really important to Wiltshire Police.</p> <p>It was clarified that since parking had been decriminalised Wiltshire Council was now responsible for enforcing rules, however where parking was dangerous the police would respond and take action.</p> <p>The Board was pleased that the police presence was increasing around town, and it had been noticed and appreciated.</p> <p>It was clarified that Speed Indicator Devices and the data from them were used to help determine where a police presence was needed to monitor speeding.</p>
123	<p><u>Partner Updates</u></p> <p>The Board received a verbal update from representatives, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wiltshire Police – Inspector Pete Foster</li> <li>• Town &amp; Parish Council Nominated Representatives</li> <li>• Parish and Town Councils</li> </ul> <p>Box Parish Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New recycling waste bins.</li> <li>• The Box Hill Common Community Orchard was already providing a benefit to the community by teaching new skills.</li> <li>• Further work on the Box Hill Common Fruit Orchard area had been completed or undertaken, including another 10kg of seeds, clearing out invasive species and felling diseased trees.</li> <li>• The Rudloe Litter Group had collected and disposed of 144 bags of litter so far this calendar year.</li> <li>• With the Rudloe Community Association, Box Parish Council had lodged an expression of interest in acquiring Rudloe Community Centre from Wiltshire Council.</li> </ul> <p>Written updates were also noted by the Board from:</p> <p>Dorset &amp; Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service Corsham Town Council</p>
124	<p><u>Priority Updates</u></p> <p>The Board gave an update on each of its respective priorities for 2023/24:</p> <p>Youth engagement and positive activity opportunities (Cllr Helen Belcher)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get active event and youth directory.</li> <li>• Next Local Youth Network meeting set for November.</li> <li>• SPARK festival for year 9 students to think about Health and Wellbeing.</li> </ul> <p>Addressing climate change (Cllr Derek Walters)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for Tree Wardens had been revitalised.</li> <li>• More climate themed events and activities were being planned</li> </ul> <p>Promoting wellbeing and reducing social isolation in older and vulnerable people (Cllr Brian Mathew)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and Wellbeing group meeting took place recently in early October.</li> <li>• A Celebrating Age event will take place on 27 October.</li> <li>• Falls Prevention Resources</li> </ul> <p>Supporting the local economy (Cllr Ruth Hopkinson)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Household Support Funding for Corsham Foodbank and Souper Friday</li> <li>• Corsham Library Warm Spaces</li> <li>• Corsham Means Business</li> </ul>
125	<p><u>Corsham Health Centre - Follow Up</u></p> <p>A statement was read out, with a further update promised for the next area board meeting in January:</p> <p><i>“The Chippenham, Corsham and Box PCN are interested in taking some space in Corsham Health Centre in the short to medium term. Discussions are underway with other health providers including the RUH and AWP to see if a solution can be found that maximises the use of the space to make bringing the building back into use financially viable. Graham Wilson is currently on leave, but a further update will follow on his return.”</i></p> <p><i>Simon Yeo, Assistant Director of Estates.</i></p> <p>The update was described as positive by the Board and expectation for a further update at the next Area Board meeting in January was expressed.</p>
126	<p><u>Rudloe Community Association - Community Asset Transfer Request</u></p> <p>This agenda item dealt with an application for the transfer of the management, control and maintenance of Rudloe Community Centre and carpark from Wiltshire Council to the Rudloe Community Association, in accordance with Wiltshire Council’s Asset Transfer Policy. The Association had recently been reactivated for the purpose of returning the centre to community use. The site was designated</p>

	<p>as strategic (Category 1) as it offered opportunity for affordable housing and had a value in excess of £250k.</p> <p>The Area Board was asked to consider an application submitted by Rudloe Community Association for the transfer of the management, control and maintenance, of Rudloe Community Centre and carpark.</p> <p>It was clarified that the Rudloe Community Association were providing an “open-ended commitment” to supporting the Centre. There wasn’t a particular viability benchmark in place in terms of costs and there were diverse funding sources in place to ensure support is provided. There were no specific plans to renovate but capital was in place for work on the building, for example the roof.</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr Ruth Hopkinson and seconded by Cllr Brian Mathew it was:</p> <p><b><u>Resolved</u></b></p> <p><b>To endorse and refer the Community Asset Transfer Request to Cabinet</b></p>
127	<p><b><u>Area Board Grants</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Community Area Grants</u></b></p> <p>Corsham Orcas requested £5000 towards timing blocks for their swimming club.</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr Helen Belcher OBE and seconded by Cllr Brian Mathew</p> <p>It was:</p> <p><b><u>Resolved</u></b>  <b>To award Corsham Orcas £5000 towards timing blocks.</b>  <b><u>Reason</u> – <i>The application met the Community Area Grants Criteria 2023/24.</i></b></p> <p>Box Cricket Club requested £5000 towards women’s changing and showering facilities.</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr Helen Belcher OBE and seconded by Cllr Brian Mathew</p> <p>It was:</p> <p><b><u>Resolved</u></b>  <b>To award Box Cricket Club £5000 towards women’s changing and showering facilities.</b>  <b><u>Reason</u> – <i>The application met the Community Area Grants Criteria 2023/24.</i></b></p> <p><b><u>Older and Vulnerable Adults Grants</u></b></p>

Wiltshire Music Centre requested £1500 for Celebrating Age Wiltshire.

Proposed by Cllr Brian Mathews and seconded by Cllr Derek Walters

It was:

**Resolved**

**To award Wiltshire Music Centre £1500 towards Celebrating Age Wiltshire.  
Reason – *The application met the Older and Vulnerable Adults Grants Criteria 2023/24.***

Heritage Trails Project requested £1246.90 for Trail Walking Leaflets.

Proposed by Cllr Derek Walters and seconded by Cllr Brian Mathews

It was:

**Resolved**

**Heritage Trails Project £1246.90 towards trail walking leaflets.  
Reason – *The application met the Older and Vulnerable Adults Grants Criteria 2023/24.***

Inclusive Intergenerational Dance requested £3200 for a creative lunch.

Proposed by Cllr Brian Mathews and seconded by Cllr Helen Belcher OBE

It was:

**Resolved**

**To award Inclusive Intergenerational Dance £3200 towards their creative lunch.  
Reason – *The application met the Older and Vulnerable Adults Grants Criteria 2023/24.***

**Youth Grants**

Corsham Windband Association requested £3000 for extending their provision to teach woodwind and percussion instruments.

Proposed by Cllr Helen Belcher OBE and seconded by Cllr Brian Mathews

It was:

**Resolved**

	<p>To award Corsham Windband Association £3000 towards teaching woodwind and percussion instruments, assuming that the matched funding after investigation was accepted.  <b><u>Reason</u></b> – <i>The application met the Youth Grants Criteria 2023/24.</i></p> <p>Inclusive Intergenerational Dance requested £1600 for My Space.</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr Brian Mathews and seconded by Cllr Helen Belcher OBE</p> <p>It was:</p> <p><b><u>Resolved</u></b>  <b>To award Inclusive Intergenerational Dance £1600 towards My Space, providing that the required match funding was met.</b>  <b><u>Reason</u></b> – <i>The application met the Youth Grants Criteria 2023/24.</i></p> <p>Army Welfare Services requested £3240 for an Easter residential trip.</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr Brian Mathews and seconded by Cllr Ruth Hopkinson</p> <p>It was:</p> <p><b><u>Resolved</u></b>  <b>To award Army Welfare Services £3240 towards their Easter residential trip.</b>  <b><u>Reason</u></b> – <i>The application met the Older and Vulnerable Adults Grants Criteria 2023/24.</i></p> <p>The following grants were approved through delegated authority:</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr Ruth Hopkinson and seconded by Cllr Helen Belcher OBE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> Neston and Box Scout Group £500</li> <li>• Cotswold Voluntary Wardens Colerne Rights of Way £1000</li> <li>• Stay Safe Initiative Digital Empowerment Programme £725</li> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> Colerne Sea Scout Group Kayaking Equipment £432.50</li> </ul>
128	<p><u>Local Highways and Footways Improvement Group</u></p> <p>Proposed by Cllr Ruth Hopkinson and seconded by Cllr Helen Belcher OBE it was:</p> <p><b><u>Resolved</u></b></p> <p><b>To approve the recommendations from the meeting of the Local Highways and Footways Improvement Group on 19 July 2023.</b></p>

129	<u>Urgent items</u> There were no urgent items
130	<u>Close</u> The next meeting of Corsham Area Board will be the 11 <sup>th</sup> January 2024.