

MINUTES

Meeting: Melksham Area Board
Place: Melksham Community Campus Library, Market Place, Melksham,
SN12 6ES
Date: 14 June 2023
Start Time: 7.00 pm
Finish Time: 9.00 pm

Please direct any enquiries on these minutes to:

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In Attendance:

Wiltshire Councillors

Cllr Phil Alford, Cllr Nick Holder, Cllr Jack Oatley, Cllr Mike Sankey (Vice-Chairman)
and Cllr Jonathon Seed (Chairman)

Wiltshire Council Officers

Richard Rogers – Strategic Engagement & Partnership Manager
Caroline LeQuesne – Area Board Delivery Officer
Cameron Osborn – Democratic Services Officer
Benjamin Fielding – Senior Democratic Services Officer

Partners

Wiltshire Police – Inspector Andrew Lemon

Total in attendance: 30

<u>Minute No..</u>	<u>Summary of Issues Discussed and Decision</u>
14	<p><u>Election of the Chairman</u></p> <p>Councillor Phil Alford nominated Councillor Jonathon Seed for the role of Chairman and was seconded by Councillor Jack Oatley.</p> <p><u>Resolved:</u></p> <p>To elect Councillor Jonathon Seed as Chairman for the year 2023/24.</p>
15	<p><u>Election of the Vice-Chairman</u></p> <p>Councillor Oatley nominated Councillor Mike Sankey for the role of Vice-Chairman and was seconded by Councillor Alford.</p> <p><u>Resolved:</u></p> <p>To elect Councillor Mike Sankey as Vice-Chairman for the year 2023/24.</p>
16	<p><u>Chairman's Welcome and Introductions</u></p> <p>The Chairman welcomed those in attendance to the meeting and encouraged public participation. The Area Board members introduced themselves to those present.</p>
17	<p><u>Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received by Councillor Jon Hubbard and Police and Crime Commissioner Philip Wilkinson. Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Nick Holder, who joined the meeting at 7:27 pm during Item 20, Chairman's Announcements.</p>
18	<p><u>Minutes</u></p> <p><u>Resolved:</u></p> <p>To approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting on 8 March 2023 as a true and correct record.</p>
19	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
20	<p><u>Chairman's Announcements</u></p> <p>The Chairman noted and summarised the written updates included in the agenda pack, including updates on the cost-of-living crisis, the work being done</p>

	<p>by Wiltshire Libraries to keep local residents online, and the Independent Visitor Scheme.</p> <p>Councillor Holder provided an update on the Council’s response to the Climate Emergency and representatives from the Bowerhill Scout Group updated the meeting on how they have spent the funding recently awarded by the Area Board. The Bowerhill Scout Group representative spoke positively about the impact of the new mini bus, which has enabled the group to travel further afield than before.</p>
21	<p><u>Partner Updates</u></p> <p>The Chairman invited the Area Board’s partner organisations to provide any updates further to the written updates included in the agenda pack.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wiltshire Police <p>Inspector Andy Lemon informed the Area Board of the progress being made within Wiltshire Police locally, noting the increased success rates relating to prosecutions. He also highlighted the successful arrest relating to a spate of local burglaries, three recent closure orders, the increased execution of warrants, the intensification of county lines policing, and the successful implementation of Operation Septum, a blade amnesty programme that included a knife arch visit to Trowbridge College. He noted that Wiltshire Police was approaching its peak demand period but highlighted a 7.2% reduction this year in violent crime and a reduction in complaints. Inspector Lemon concluded by pointing out that King George V Field in Melksham remained a problem area for policing.</p> <p>The Chairman noted that after raising the lack of police visibility at the last Area Board meeting, he had noticed a significant improvement, resulting in a big difference in police perception. He passed on his thanks for their recent work in Steeple Ashton and for their renewed focus on using social media.</p>
22	<p><u>Wiltshire Police Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner</u></p> <p>The Chairman welcomed Chief Constable Catherine Roper to the Area Board and invited her to provide an update.</p> <p>CC Roper passed on Police and Crime Commissioner Philip Wilkinson’s apologies for absence and updated the Area Board on the work currently being undertaken by Wiltshire Police, including their response to being placed in Special Measures, otherwise known as the Engage process, following a recent assessment by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). She explained that they had been identified as being inadequate in terms of victim support, investigation, and structural framework. As a result, CC Roper pointed to the Plan on a Page document (included in the agenda supplement) and briefly outlined the three main operational priorities to address those shortcomings: safer public spaces, violence, and burglary. She</p>

	<p>also listed steps being taken to improve communication and public trust and engagement, including a recruitment drive covering the Criminal Investigation Department, the control room and upper management posts.</p> <p>The Chief Constable then fielded questions from the floor. Questions were asked of police engagement in Melksham and potential poor service, to which Inspector Lemon agreed to investigate. Other questions included current numbers of police officers, the impact on the overall policing budget of a new police station in Salisbury, and the fairness of the policy that advised officers' involvement in the rural crime team be reviewed should they have ties with trail-hunting. Queries were raised about highway policing, with Councillor Holder drawing particular attention to an area of Bowerhill prone to speeding, about which Inspector Lemon agreed to liaise with Councillor Holder.</p> <p>Finally, Bethani Blake from Victim Support encouraged the police to continue to make use of their services, to which CC Roper strongly agreed.</p>
23	<p><u>Area Board End of Year Report</u></p> <p>The Chairman handed over to the Strategic Engagement and Partnerships Manager (SEPM) Richard Rogers to present the Area Board End of Year Report. The report summarised the work that the Area Board had done over the last year. The SEPM thanked the Area Board and the community for their support.</p> <p>Gary Burns, Chairman of the Melksham Cricket Club, updated the Area Board about the expansion being undertaken at the club. He noted that they now had three adult teams on the books with an expanded youth section and a new ladies' section. He also highlighted the continued improvement to facilities, including a new artificial pitch system. He concluded by expressing his thanks to the Area Board.</p> <p>Councillor Holder then spoke to the work he and the Area Board had been doing on his priority area of reducing isolation and loneliness. Councillor Holder paid tribute to David Walker and the work he had done in supporting the priority area and expressed this thanks to Councillor Hubbard and Theresa Strange for setting up Community Support 2.0, a project being taken forward by Age UK to support isolated and lonely people, particularly older people, describing it as ground-breaking work.</p> <p>Cristopher Stephens enquired about Melksham Tennis Club, describing difficulties with Wiltshire Council support. The Chairman explained that the Tennis Club needed to apply for grants through the regular Area Board channels, and that he recently engaged in a conversation with the relevant Cabinet Member in which it was suggested there was an issue with the booking system for the general public, which was causing difficulties for providing support from the Council.</p>

	<p><u>Resolved:</u></p> <p>1) To adopt the following priorities with the following Councillors appointed as Lead Representatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people – Cllr Jon Hubbard • Community safety and transport – Cllr Mike Sankey • Economy, environment, and deprivation – Cllr Phil Alford • Older people; health and wellbeing – Cllr Jack Oatley • Culture – Cllr Jonathon Seed <p>2) To appoint following Members as Lead Representatives to the following Outside Bodies, Working Groups and Local Highway and Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melksham Health and Wellbeing Group – Cllr Jack Oatley • Melksham Joint Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – Cllr Mike Sankey • CCTV and Community Safety Working Group – Cllr Mike Sankey • Environment and Climate Working Group – Cllr Phil Alford • LHFIG Councillor Representative – Cllr Mike Sankey <p>3) To note the Terms of Reference for the LHFIG as set out in Appendix B.</p>
24	<p><u>Sub-Group Reports</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Highway and Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG) <p>The Area Board then considered the funding recommendations from the LHFIG meeting on 9 May 2023.</p> <p>Councillor Sankey proposed that the Area Board approve the funding recommendations from the LHFIG and was seconded by Councillor Oatley.</p> <p><u>Resolved:</u></p> <p>To approve the funding recommendations from the LHFIG.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Wellbeing Group (HWG) <p>Councillor Holder spoke to the HWG meeting the week prior, explaining that the bulk of the meeting was for the Group to be introduced to the new project officer from Age UK Wiltshire who was to lead on a jointly funded project. Councillor Holder also passed on his thanks to Richard Rogers for co-ordinating the recent event in Melksham’s marketplace on 9 June 2023. Councillor Holder also expressed a desire to understand more about the NHS’s current property strategy, explaining that their Estates Team have recently completed a review of the strategy and that the HWG would soon be asked to attend a meeting with them on that subject.</p>

25	<p><u>Area Board Funding Applications</u></p> <p><u>Community Area Grants:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bowerhill Village Hall Trust - £1,000 towards Bowerhill Village Hall new flooring. <p>Councillor Holder moved to grant Bowerhill Village Hall Trust £1,000 towards new flooring for Bowerhill Village Hall and was seconded by Councillor Sankey.</p> <p><u>Resolved:</u></p> <p>To grant Bowerhill Village Hall Trust £1,000 towards new flooring for Bowerhill Village Hall.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melksham Music and Drama - £1,000 towards radio microphones. <p>Councillor Sankey moved to grant Melksham Music and Drama £1,000 towards radio microphones and was seconded by Councillor Oatley.</p> <p><u>Resolved:</u></p> <p>To grant Melksham Music and Drama £1,000 towards radio microphones.</p>
26	<p><u>Urgent items</u></p> <p>Councillor Graham Ellis from Melksham Town Council raised the issue of the Blue Pool site and requested that local volunteers be granted access to Blue Pool to facilitate the project. The Chairman suggested that the Area Board could not themselves make that decision but would work with Wiltshire Council to facilitate it.</p> <p>Simon Crundell, Melksham Town Mayor, addressed the recent Melksham House press release. The Chairman suggested that if those concerns were submitted to the Area Board, they would act as a conduit for them. Councillor Alford advised the quality of answer would be better if pursued through other departments rather than the Area Board.</p>
27	<p><u>Evaluation and Close</u></p> <p>The Chairman thanked those present for attending and confirmed that the next Area Board meeting would be held at 7:00 pm on Tuesday 12 September 2023.</p>