

# MINUTES

**Meeting:** Melksham Area Board  
**Place:** Semington Village Hall, High St, Semington, BA14 6JR  
**Date:** 4 September 2024  
**Start Time:** 7.00 pm  
**Finish Time:** 8.50 pm

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Please direct any enquiries on these minutes to:

Senior Democratic Services Officer - Ben Fielding; Tel): 01225 718224 or (e-mail) [benjamin.fielding@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:benjamin.fielding@wiltshire.gov.uk)

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## **In Attendance:**

### **Wiltshire Councillors**

Cllr Jonathon Seed, Melksham Without West & Rural (Chairman)  
Cllr Mike Sankey, Melksham East (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr Phil Alford, Melksham Without North and Shurnhold  
Cllr Nick Holder, Bowerhill  
Cllr Jon Hubbard, Melksham South  
Cllr Jack Oatley, Melksham Forest

### **Wiltshire Council Officers**

Caroline LeQuesne, Engagement and Partnership Lead  
Dominic Argar, Assistant Multimedia Officer  
Ben Fielding, Senior Democratic Services Officer

**Total in attendance: 32**

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<u>Minute No..</u>	<u>Summary of Issues Discussed and Decision</u>
77	<p data-bbox="336 383 667 416"><u>Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p data-bbox="336 450 1430 483">Apologies for absence were received from Broughton Gifford Parish Council.</p>
78	<p data-bbox="336 521 459 555"><u>Minutes</u></p> <p data-bbox="336 589 1485 656">The minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2024 were presented for consideration.</p> <p data-bbox="336 701 1485 913">Cllr Hubbard noted that during the previous Area Board meeting a motion had been raised regarding that TROs affecting Melksham residents should be advertised within the Melksham Independent News. An amendment was however made that this motion be brought back to the next meeting of the Area Board due to timing reasons. Consequently, Cllr Hubbard requested an update on this motion.</p> <p data-bbox="336 958 1485 1283">As Cabinet Member for Highways, Street Scene, and Flooding, Cllr Holder stated that he had raised this issue with the Leader of the Council, newly appointed Chief Executive and Director for Place on Monday, with it noted that they had been tasked with reviewing the current process in place with an awareness of the previous issues raised. It was acknowledged that Cllr Hubbard had raised this issue at the October 2023 meeting of Full Council, and that within the written response provided, circulation numbers had been cited, to which work was now being undertaken to ascertain whether such circulation numbers were correct and up to date whilst writing a new policy.</p> <p data-bbox="336 1328 1485 1395">Cllr Hubbard suggested that he might take this issue to the October 2024 meeting of Full Council.</p> <p data-bbox="336 1440 608 1473">After which, it was;</p> <p data-bbox="336 1507 491 1541"><b><u>Resolved:</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="336 1574 1485 1653"><b>To approve and sign as a true and correct record of the minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2024.</b></p>
79	<p data-bbox="336 1682 1066 1715"><u>Chairman's Announcements and Information Items</u></p> <p data-bbox="336 1749 1414 1783">The Chairman made the following announcements as per the agenda pack:</p> <ul data-bbox="384 1827 1485 2018" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update on FACT Transitional Safeguarding Project</li> <li>• Update on the Families and Children's Transformation (FACT) Family Help Project</li> <li>• Overview of Wiltshire Youth Council</li> <li>• Gypsies and Travellers Development Plan Consultation</li> </ul>

80	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>The following dispensations were received regarding Item 11:</p> <p>It was noted that Cllr Alford had received a dispensation from the Standards Committee in relation to an ORI by virtue of being a town councillor. The dispensation allowed them to remain in the room and to take part in the discussion and vote on the item.</p> <p>It was noted that Cllr Hubbard had received a dispensation from the Standards Committee in relation to an ORI by virtue of being a town councillor. The dispensation allowed them to remain in the room and to take part in the discussion and vote on the item.</p> <p>It was noted that Cllr Oatley had received a dispensation from the Standards Committee in relation to an ORI by virtue of being a town councillor. The dispensation allowed them to remain in the room and to take part in the discussion and vote on the item.</p> <p>Cllr Jon Hubbard declared that he was a Trustee of 4Youth Southwest so would therefore abstain from voting on the grant applications put forth by 4Youth Southwest.</p> <p>Cllr Jack Oatley declared that he was a Trustee of 4Youth so would therefore abstain from voting on the grant applications put forth by 4Youth Southwest.</p>
81	<p><u>Wiltshire Police Chief Constable</u></p> <p><i>The update from the Wiltshire Police Chief Constable was received directly after the update provided by the Wiltshire &amp; Swindon Police and Crime Commissioner.</i></p> <p>The Area Board received an update from Catherine Roper, Wiltshire Police Chief Constable. The update included but was not limited to the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regarding recruitment, Wiltshire Police is a place that people work and there had not been this many staff employed since 2014, there was also a great emphasis on retaining staff with skills within the control room.</li> <li>• It was outlined that in the summer of 2022, Wiltshire Police had been placed into “Engage” by the independent auditor after it had not provided a satisfactory service. Since then, in May, the force had recently been taken out of “Engage”, which demonstrated that it was making process with investigations, protecting the vulnerable and responding to crime.</li> <li>• Wiltshire police had since had a further PEEL inspection on 15 August, where significant improvements had been made over the ten graded categories, with no areas graded inadequate with all areas showing an increase.</li> <li>• Whilst some areas were recognised as improving, some were recognised</li> </ul>

	<p>as not being where they should be, therefore the Chief Constable aimed to improve these areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention was drawn to the report and open letters to the PCC, which could be found fortnightly via the following link: <a href="#">News   Wiltshire Police</a></li> </ul> <p>After the update, there was time for the following questions and points to be raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wiltshire Police were thanked for the significant improvement that had been made policing speeding in Bowerhill, with residents also noticing improved social media posts from the Police. Further praise was also placed for the arrest made on a local drug dealer in Bowerhill where residents ad felt reassured.</li> <li>• Previously villages had stated that they did not see the Police often, however, there has been a marked change in this recently with the mobile police station having visited two villages, demonstrating greater visibility.</li> <li>• The importance of sharing these positive experiences was stressed and how this would contribute to bridging the gap of trust and confidence between residents and Wiltshire police.</li> <li>• Wiltshire Police were thanked for their work on the CCTV proposal with it cited that being about to speak to the Neighbourhood Policing Team was invaluable.</li> <li>• It was questioned whether work could be done to promote the positivity of Community Speed Watch projects and to encourage residents to participate. The PCC stated that there was well over one hundred Community Speed Watch Groups when he arrived in post which had now been placed into structured groupings with leaders who communicate data for collation. It was agreed that work could be done to consider how more volunteers could be recruited.</li> <li>• The issue of enforcing speed limits, particularly within 20mph speed limits was discussed.</li> <li>• It was suggested that local youth groups would like to do more with the Neighbourhood Policing Team, with it cited that the Chief Constable’s national portfolio was focused on children and young people. Therefore, it was agreed that a lot more could be done regarding engagement, education, and interventions.</li> </ul>
82	<p><u>Wiltshire &amp; Swindon Police and Crime Commissioner</u></p> <p><i>The update from Wiltshire &amp; Swindon Police and Crime Commissioner was received directly before the update provided by the Wiltshire Police Chief Constable.</i></p> <p>The Area Board received an update from Phillip Wilkinson, Wiltshire &amp; Swindon Police and Crime Commissioner. The update included but was not limited to the following points:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Commissioner provided the Area Board with an overview of his working background as well as that when he arrived into post, Wiltshire Police was not in a positive position and tended to look inwards with committees rather than providing directional support to the frontline.</li> <li>• This had now changed with a new Chief Constable and Chief Officer Group in place as well a defined chain of command with the Chief Constable able to hold staff to account.</li> <li>• The Commissioner outlined that his role is to hold the Chief Constable to account on behalf of residents through a set of objectives which are routinely discussed.</li> <li>• Wiltshire Police is no longer in special measures; however, it is not complacent and recognises that there are still steps to be taken.</li> <li>• The Commissioner outlined that he has the responsibility of creating a new Police and Crime Plan, which could be shaped on the concerns and responsibilities of residents.</li> <li>• Looking back on the previous Police and Crime Plan, improvements had been made across all crime types apart from retail crime, however this would be worked on.</li> <li>• The example of County Lines was cited, including Operation Scorpion, where the 5 Southwest Police Forces collaborated to focus on aspects of County Lines. As a result, all five forces were not within the top 10 in the country, with Wiltshire being ranked the first performing force.</li> <li>• It was outlined that in the Commissioner’s first year, 1,324 speeding sanctions had been placed and that in the Melksham area last year 764 sanctions had been placed, representing a huge improvement.</li> </ul> <p>After the update, there was time for the following questions and points to be raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity was sought regarding recruitment and retention, with this areas having been an issue in the past. It was noted that this situation had now improved, and the force was fully established due to a positive improvement in morale and retention.</li> </ul>
83	<p><u>Wiltshire &amp; Swindon Road Safety Partnership</u></p> <p>The Area Board received an update from Perry Payne, Wiltshire &amp; Swindon Road Safety Partnership. The update included but was not limited to the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was outlined that road safety is not the remit of one organisation, therefore the Wiltshire and Swindon Road Safety Partnership allows organisations to work together.</li> <li>• The organisations of the Partnership were outlined.</li> <li>• The three main workstreams of the Partnership were identified as Engineering, Education and Enforcement.</li> <li>• Currently education has a focus on the #Fatal5, which it was explained</li> </ul>

	<p>are the five main contributors to road traffic collisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The education provisions of Wiltshire Council and Dorset &amp; Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service were outlined.</li> <li>• Gratitude was placed towards the work of Community Speed watch teams, with it stressed that these people were volunteers making a significant contribution.</li> <li>• Community Speed watch data was provided for Melksham from July 2020 to August 2024, with it noted that 379 watches had been conducted with 2,137 letters sent.</li> <li>• Additionally, eleven traffic survey speed assessments had taken place with 7 areas needing Community Speed watch action and 3 requiring speed education.</li> <li>• The enforcement aspect of the Partnership was outlined, including the role of Community Speed Enforcement Officers who between 1 January 2023 and 8 May 2024 had been active in 851 locations, issued 10,667 speed awareness courses, 1,450 fines/points and 144 individuals referred to court.</li> <li>• The work of the Road Policing Unit was outlined.</li> <li>• An emerging trend had been identified of an increase in pedestrians distracted by mobile phones and stepping out into roads.</li> </ul> <p>After the update, there was time for the following questions and points to be raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity was sought regarding the use of SIDs as well as the downloading of data, to which it was stated that there are five different types of SID, which download data to Wiltshire Police, which is automatically analysed to allow for data led enforcement. It was suggested that if Speed Watch teams were to interrogate their own data, they could pass it onto the Neighbourhood Policing Team for action.</li> </ul>
84	<p><u>Artwork Pilot</u></p> <p>The Area Board received a presentation from Caroline LeQuesne, Engagement and Partnerships Lead regarding the process for requesting and deciding whether artwork is legally allowed to be painted on a wall including a request for the Melksham Underpass to be the first pilot in Wiltshire.</p> <p>The presentation covered, but was not limited to, the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference was drawn to a full report which had been included within the agenda pack.</li> <li>• It was acknowledged that graffiti and tagging tends to be unsightly, offensive and of cost to the Council to remove. Locally, artists had been paid in Salisbury and Corsham to produce art on walls which might have been tagged. Furthermore, legal walls were also present in other cities, allowing artists to paint and produce art without being prosecuted.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A legal wall in Chippenham was cited as an example, having decreased the amount of graffiti in parts of the town whilst saving money for circa ten years.</li> <li>• The benefits of legal walls were outlined, including increased youth engagement and pride in place, which linked to one of the Area Board priorities, heritage.</li> <li>• An overview of the proposed process was outlined, with input to be sought from Wiltshire Council services, Parish Councils and Police. Additionally, there would need to be a clear communications plan and that the legal wall would be monitored and subject to a code of conduct. The Town Council was also looking to extend the CCTV network to where the underpass is located.</li> <li>• Reference was drawn to an example code of conduct included with the report appendix.</li> </ul> <p>After the presentation, there was time for the following questions and points to be raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was stated that there had been a challenge to get the underpass sorted for a number of years and that this established practice could be positive and constructive.</li> <li>• Concerns were voiced that though in theory the pilot could be positive, it could lead to an increase of tagging within the town. Assurance had however been provided that there would be a lot of monitoring and if concerns were detected and tagging was taking place elsewhere the project could be terminated.</li> </ul> <p>After which, it was;</p> <p><b><u>Resolved:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>That the underpass in Melksham situated along the A350 at Bath Road to be put forward as an initial pilot to trial the process.</b></li> <li>2. <b>That ongoing monitoring takes place within the trial period and appropriate action, or changes are taken if required.</b></li> </ol>
85	<p><u>Partner Updates</u></p> <p>Updates were received from the following partners:</p> <p><i>The update from Wiltshire Police was received directly after the update provided by the Wiltshire Police Chief Constable.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Wiltshire Police</b></li> </ul> <p>The Area Board noted written updates attached to the agenda. In addition, Inspector Andy Lemon and Sergeant Gemma Rutter provided a verbal update</p>

	<p>which included, but was not limited to the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An overview of crime data was provided for the past 6 months, with it noted that there had been a decrease of 9% including reductions in burglary, violence, drug offences, possession of weapons and reported theft.</li> <li>• The team were not complacent and recognised that there had been an increase of keyless vehicle thefts.</li> <li>• Work had been completed by the team to improve community engagement and visibility, including a drop-in surgery in Melksham Park every 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month and routine drop ins at the Melksham Chatty Café.</li> <li>• Youth engagement has taken place, with staff visiting youth centres on an ad-hoc basis.</li> <li>• E-scooters was highlighted as a priority for the next month, with work conducted with the road policing unit and a video soon to follow on the Wiltshire Police social media page.</li> <li>• Education work was set to take place to engage and educate people on speed watch. Additionally, officers now had set shifts to visit locations with speed guns.</li> <li>• An overview of the team work streams and priorities was provided as per the update within the agenda pack.</li> <li>• The Neighbourhood Policing Team could be contacted via the following email address: <a href="mailto:TrowbridgeAreaNPT@wiltshire.police.uk">TrowbridgeAreaNPT@wiltshire.police.uk</a></li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>BSW Together (Integrated Care System)</b> The Area Board noted a written update attached to the agenda.</li> <li>• <b>Healthwatch Wiltshire</b> The Area Board noted a written update attached to the agenda.</li> <li>• <b>Community First</b> The Area Board noted a written update attached to the agenda.</li> <li>• <b>Youth Update</b> The Area Board received a verbal update from Councillor Jon Hubbard, who introduced Marie Gondlach as the new charity Director for 4 Youth Southwest; who would be the direct point of contact for all matters relating to the charity.</li> </ul>
86	<p><u>Local Highways and Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG)</u></p> <p>Cllr Mike Sankey introduced the minutes and recommendations from the LHFIG meeting held on 15 August 2024. After which, it was;</p> <p><b><u>Resolved:</u></b></p>



	<p>The minutes of the Local Highways and Footway Improvement Group meeting held on 15 August 2024 were agreed as a correct record as well as approving the following spending recommendations within:</p> <p>To add the following Issues to the Priority Schemes List with funding (where indicated):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 09-24-07 Top Lane, Westhill, Whitley &amp; Purlpit – Provision of Whitley ‘please drive carefully’ sign at Gateway and ‘pedestrians in road signs’ x 2. Allocate - £700.00. Melksham without parish council to contribute 50% (£350).</li> <li>• 09-24-09 Great Hinton Village - Request for 20mph limit assessment in Great Hinton.</li> </ul>
87	<p><u>Area Board Funding</u></p> <p>The Chairman informed the Area Board of the opening balances for grant funding.</p> <p>The Area Board considered the following applications for funding:</p> <p><b><u>Community Area Grants:</u></b></p> <p>Saxon Group Riding for the Disabled Association - £378 towards Surface Topper.</p> <p><b><u>Decision</u></b></p> <p><b>Saxon Group Riding for the Disabled Association was awarded £378 towards Surface Topper.</b></p> <p><b>Moved – Cllr Jonathon Seed</b>  <b>Seconded – Cllr Jon Hubbard</b></p> <p><b><u>Reason</u> – The application met the Community Area Grants Criteria 2023/24.</b></p> <p><b><u>Older &amp; Vulnerable Grants:</u></b></p> <p>Wiltshire Music Centre - £1,500 towards Celebrating Age Wiltshire (Melksham).</p> <p><b><u>Decision</u></b></p> <p><b>Wiltshire Music Centre was awarded £1,500 towards Celebrating Age Wiltshire (Melksham).</b></p> <p><b>Moved – Cllr Jack Oatley</b>  <b>Seconded – Cllr Jon Hubbard</b></p>

**Reason** – *The application met the Older & Vulnerable Grants Criteria 2023/24.*

**Young People Grants:**

4Youth Southwest - £5,000 towards Delivery of Seniors Youth Club sessions for young people in Year 9 and above aged 13 to 19.

**Decision**

**4Youth Southwest was awarded £5,000 towards Delivery of Seniors Youth Club sessions for young people in Year 9 and above aged 13 to 19.**

**Moved – Cllr Mike Sankey  
Seconded – Cllr Jonathon Seed**

*Councillors Hubbard and Oatley abstained from voting on this application as per their earlier declarations.*

**Reason** – *The application met the Young People Grants Criteria 2023/24.*

4Youth Southwest - £5,000 towards TeenTalk Young People Counselling.

**Decision**

**4Youth Southwest was awarded £5,000 towards TeenTalk Young People Counselling.**

**Moved – Cllr Mike Sankey  
Seconded – Cllr Nick Holder**

*Councillors Hubbard and Oatley abstained from voting on this application as per their earlier declarations.*

**Reason** – *The application met the Young People Grants Criteria 2023/24.*

Melksham Town Council - £1,080 towards Melksham Youth Council.

**Decision**

**Melksham Town Council was awarded £1,080 towards Melksham Youth Council subject to confirmation that the application had been checked and was within the criteria of the Area Board funding.**

**Moved – Cllr Jack Oatley  
Seconded – Cllr Mike Sankey**

**Reason** – *The application met the Young People Grants Criteria 2023/24.*

88	<u>Urgent Items</u> There were no urgent items.
89	<u>Close</u> The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 6 November 2024.