

MINUTES

Meeting: Melksham Area Board
Place: Melksham United Church, High Street, Wiltshire, SN12 6JU
Date: 6 November 2024
Start Time: 7.00 pm
Finish Time: 8.26 pm

Please direct any enquiries on these minutes to:

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In Attendance:

Wiltshire Councillors

Cllr Jonathon Seed, Melksham Without West & Rural (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

Richard Rogers, Strategic Engagement & Partnerships Manager (SEPM)
Caroline LeQuesne, Engagement and Partnership Lead
Dominic Argar, Assistant Multimedia Officer
Ben Fielding, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Total in attendance: 24

<u>Minute No..</u>	<u>Summary of Issues Discussed and Decision</u>
90	<p><u>Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mike Sankey and Inspector Andy Lemon.</p>
91	<p><u>Minutes</u></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2024 were presented for consideration. It was noted that there had been a typo within the minutes with the “Melksham Independent News” incorrectly referred to as the “Melksham Evening News”.</p> <p>After which, it was;</p> <p><u>Resolved:</u></p> <p>To approve and sign as a true and correct record of the minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2024 following the amendment.</p>
92	<p><u>Chairman's Announcements and Information Items</u></p> <p>The Chairman made the following announcements as per the agenda pack and website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of Living Update • Community First Update • BSW Together Update • Spurgeon’s Update
93	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>Cllr Jon Hubbard declared that he was a Trustee of The Riverside Centre so would therefore abstain from voting on the grant application put forth by The Riverside Centre.</p>
94	<p><u>Partner and Community Updates</u></p> <p>Updates were received from the following partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wiltshire Police <p>The Area Board noted written update attached to the agenda. In addition, Sergeant Gemma Rutter provided a verbal update which included, but was not limited to the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gratitude was placed for the positive feedback that had been received at the last meeting of the Area Board.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was outlined that the statistics for the town were steady, though there had been a slight spike in vehicle crimes. • The following priorities were outlined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Safer Nighttime Economy – By supporting attendance at Pub watch and working alongside the licensing team. ○ Retail Crime – Work is set to continue with local businesses to increase safety within town. It was outlined that a meeting had been organised for retailers within the town, however this had been poorly attended therefore alternative plans to increase retailer engagement would be considered. ○ Youth Work – A Youth Event was set to take place on Friday 29 November 2024 at the Assembly Rooms from 6pm-8pm with local clubs set to attend such as the Swimming Club, Police Cadets and local gyms. • It was outlined that three operations had recently taken place, including Op Scorpion (targeting criminal transport links), Safer Business Awareness Week and Rural Crime Awareness Week. • It was outlined that across Wiltshire a sophisticated crime group had swept through the county and had broken into vans and stolen equipment. A live investigation was currently taking place with the force working to deal with this group. It was stressed that tools should be removed from vans at the end of the day. • Focus for the police would shortly change to focus on the Christmas period. <p>After the update, there was time for the following questions and points to be raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail was provided that recently due to the rota, the Melksham Neighbourhood Policing Team had not had use of the mobile police station however this would be back in villages in the future.
95	<p><u>Canon Square Project</u></p> <p>The Area Board received a presentation from Charlie Thomson, Rector of Melksham Church. The presentation included, but was not limited to the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was outlined that Canon Square was a beautiful part of Melksham with listed buildings, however Number 11 Canon Square had been boarded up and neglected, with the current condition shown in pictures included within the agenda. • The congregation at the adjacent St Michael’s Church had grown since the pandemic and now needed additional space, therefore when 11 Canon Square was listed for sale, the Church Council cashed in its remaining historic investments to cover the purchase price and fundraising had taken place since.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision for the building was to convert the bottom floor to a suite of attractive meeting spaces, with the middle and top floors acting as two single bedroom flats which would return to the market as affordable accommodation. • The benefits of the project were outlined with positive impacts suggested for the Church, community and for conservation. <p>After the presentation, there was time for the following questions and points to be raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further clarity was provided that the middle and top floor of the building would be affordable accommodation flats with the income generated being reinvested into the refurbishment of the property, particularly the roof. • A point was raised regarding how the properties would be managed, to which it was stated that precise details had not been finalised however a Church representative was likely to be involved. • It was clarified that the grant application put forth by the project was within Wiltshire Council policy and that the project would be for heritage and community use and that though there would be religious activity this would not be exclusive.
96	<p><u>Supporting the Vulnerable Through Winter</u></p> <p>The Area Board received a presentation from Sarah Cardy, Wiltshire Age UK. The presentation included, but was not limited to the following points:</p> <p>Support for the Elderly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail was provided regarding Melksham Community Support and how work was taking place to connect individuals and identify support, with the example provided of how The Riverside Centre recognised a need for cookery courses. • Detail was provided regarding the Information and Advice Service, which amongst other functions, helped individuals to complete benefit applications. • The Wellbeing Service was available to provide short term support to enable elderly people to regain their confidence, for example through telephone befriending. • The service of wellbeing checks with hot meals was outlined, with it noted that trained drivers would provide a two-course hot meal during a check in as a paid service. • Reference was drawn to the Fitness and Friendship Club which takes place at Bowerhill, with a further club potentially to be set up towards the Whitley area. • Detail of Carers Together Wiltshire was provided as well as the partners involved, the carers assessment process and the provision of Carers ID

	<p>cards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The contact details for Carers Together Wiltshire were included within the agenda pack for the meeting. <p>Winter Fuel Payments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail was provided regarding the help available to cover heating costs over the winter months, including the eligibility criteria and information regarding the potential payment amounts available. Clarity was provided regarding how to claim Pension Credit both online and by phone call. Contact details for Age UK Wiltshire were included within the agenda pack for the meeting.
97	<p><u>Area Board Priority Updates</u></p> <p>The Area Board received updates from Lead Councillors for the following local Area Board priorities:</p> <p>To improve opportunities for all children and young people (Cllr Hubbard)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attention was drawn to the Youth Event organised by Wiltshire Police, set to take place on Friday 29 November 2024 in the Assembly Rooms between 6pm-8pm. <p>To support older and vulnerable people (Cllr Oatley)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was outlined that the most recent Health and Wellbeing meeting had taken place on 17 October 2024 and had been attended by 15-20 people who had contributed to debates and setting up actions. The Health and Wellbeing Group agreed to have a focus on mental health and supporting adults with a sub-group set up to focus on men's mental health. It was hoped that an Andy's Man Club could be set up, however it was identified that this would be difficult, however a group named "Man Down" which took place in Trowbridge was identified and the creator had since worked with the Health and Wellbeing Group to set up a "Man Down" group in Melksham, which had met on 5 November in Bowerhill with 19 people ranging from ages 21 to 82 attending. The health and Group was running some basic mental health first aid courses for people who were volunteering or employers working with community groups. Further activities relating to mental health included that HELP Counselling had been running face to face sessions in the Melksham Area, The Riverside Centre Men's Shed celebrated its 10th anniversary and there had also been successful work taking place with creative conversations. Detail was provided regarding the Housing Support Fund, with it noted that the Communities Team at Wiltshire Council had £250K which could be allocated to support foodbanks, community larders and prevention work.

	<p>To protect and enhance our heritage and environment (Cllr Seed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The heritage app was now up and running in Melksham after a lot of work. • The Legal Wall discussed at the last meeting of the Area Board was now open.
98	<p><u>Area Board Funding</u></p> <p>The Area Board considered the following applications for funding:</p> <p><u>Community Area Grants:</u></p> <p>Keevil Community Amenities Trust - £2,083 towards Keevil Banfield Recreation Ground in Ground Trampoline.</p> <p><u>Decision</u></p> <p>Keevil Community Amenities Trust was awarded £2,083 towards Keevil Banfield Recreation Ground in Ground Trampoline.</p> <p>Moved – Cllr Jack Oatley Seconded – Cllr Jonathon Seed</p> <p><i><u>Reason</u> – The application met the Community Area Grants Criteria 2023/24.</i></p> <p>The Parochial Church Council of the Melksham Parish of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Melksham Salisbury – £5,000 towards the purchase and refurbishment of 11 Canon Square for parish and community benefit.</p> <p><u>Decision</u></p> <p>The Parochial Church Council of the Melksham Parish of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Melksham Salisbury was awarded £5,000 towards the purchase and refurbishment of 11 Canon Square for parish and community benefit.</p> <p>Moved – Cllr Jon Hubbard Seconded – Cllr Phil Alford</p> <p><i><u>Reason</u> – The application met the Community Area Grants Criteria 2023/24.</i></p> <p>Riverside Centre - £5,000 towards Melksham Riverside Centre toilets.</p> <p><u>Decision</u></p> <p>Riverside Centre was awarded £5,000 towards Melksham Riverside Centre toilets.</p>

	<p>Moved – Cllr Nick Holder Seconded – Cllr Jack Oatley</p> <p><i>Cllr Jon Hubbard did not vote on this grant application as per his earlier declaration.</i></p> <p><u>Reason</u> – The application met the Community Area Grants Criteria 2023/24.</p> <p><u>Older & Vulnerable Grants:</u></p> <p>HELP Counselling Services - £265.73 towards Counselling Boxes for our new rooms in Melksham.</p> <p><u>Decision</u></p> <p>HELP Counselling Services was awarded £266.73 towards Counselling Boxes for our new rooms in Melksham.</p> <p>Moved – Cllr Jon Hubbard Seconded – Cllr Jack Oatley</p> <p><u>Reason</u> – The application met the Older & Vulnerable Criteria 2023/24.</p>
99	<p><u>Local Highways and Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG)</u></p> <p>It was noted that the next meeting of the Local Highways and Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG) will take place on 7 November 2024; therefore, there were no recommendations to be approved at the Area Board meeting. Additionally, if necessary, the Area Board would convene a meeting specifically to approve any recommendations that might come out of the 7 November 2024 LHFIG meeting.</p> <p>Additionally, as Cllr Mike Sankey, Chairman of the Local Highways and Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG) had tendered his apologies for the meeting set to take place on 7 November 2024, Cllr Jonathon Seed was elected to preside as Chairman for this meeting only.</p>
100	<p><u>Urgent items</u></p> <p>There were no urgent items.</p>
101	<p><u>Close & Future Dates</u></p> <p>The date of the next meeting was currently set to be 26 February 2025; however, plans were in place for this meeting date to be changed with it likely that there would be an Older People’s Event set to take place in early March with a separate business only Area Board meeting.</p>