

MINUTES

Meeting: Marlborough Area Board
Place: The Assembly Room, Marlborough Town Hall, Marlborough, SN8
1AA
Date: 3 December 2024
Start Time: 7.00 pm
Finish Time: 8.56 pm

Please direct any enquiries on these minutes to:

Matt Hitch Democratic Services Officer,(Tel): 01225 718059 or (e-mail)
matthew.hitch@wiltshire.gov.uk

Papers available on the Council's website at www.wiltshire.gov.uk

In Attendance:

Wiltshire Councillors

Cllr Jane Davies (Chairman), Cllr James Sheppard (Vice-Chairman) and
Cllr Caroline Thomas

Wiltshire Council Officers

Alexa Davies – Engagement and Partnerships Lead
Dom Argar – Assistant Multimedia Officer
Matt Hitch – Democratic Services Officer

Total in attendance: 23

<u>Minute No..</u>	<u>Summary of Issues Discussed and Decision</u>
60	<p><u>Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrew Jack – Strategic Engagement and Partnerships Manager • Avebury Parish Council • Miss Andria Tidmarsh-Hackett (Legacy Law Foundation)
61	<p><u>Minutes</u></p> <p>On the proposal of the Chairman, seconded by the Vice-Chairman, it was:</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>To approve the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 1 October 2024, as a true and correct record.</p>
62	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>Cllr Caroline Thomas noted that she had received a dispensation from the Standards Committee in relation to an Other Registerable Interest by virtue of being Chair of Trustees of Marlborough Youth Forum. The dispensation allowed Cllr Thomas to remain in the room and to take part in the discussion, but not vote on the item.</p>
63	<p><u>Chairman's Announcements, Information Items and Partner Updates</u></p> <p>The Area Board noted the information items and partner updates set out in the agenda pack; these were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marlborough Health and Wellbeing Group, pg. 13 - 16 • Community First, pg. 17 - 19 • Update from BSW Together (Integrated Care System), pg. 21 - 23 • Wiltshire Police – Spot the Signs Campaign, pg. 25 • Wiltshire Police – Violence Against Women and Girls, pg. 27 - 28 • Wiltshire Road Safety Partnership, pg. 29 - 37 • Wiltshire Council Consultation Portal • Wiltshire Council Information Items (Agenda Supplement 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Electric Vehicle Charging Community Survey, pg. 1 - 2 ➤ Cost of Living Update, pg. 3 - 4 ➤ Local Transport Plan Consultation, pg. 5
64	<p><u>Grant Applications</u></p> <p>The Area Board noted the budgets remaining for allocation at the meeting and</p>

heard from representatives in attendance who gave a brief overview of, and answered questions about, their projects.

Community Area Grant:

Marlborough Rugby Club Requesting £2,200 Towards Goal Posts

Richard Purchase, Vice-Chairman of Marlborough Rugby Club, spoke in support of their project.

On the proposal of the Area Board's Vice-Chairman, seconded by the Chairman, it was resolved to make the:

Decision

To award Marlborough Rugby Club £2,200 towards goal posts.

Reason – The application met the Community Area Grant Criteria 2024/25.

Young People's Grant:

Marlborough Area Youth Forum Requesting £500 Towards Kitchen Equipment

Lisa Farrell from Marlborough Area Youth Forum spoke in support of the project.

On the proposal of the Vice-Chairman, seconded by the Chairman, it was resolved to make the:

Decision

To award Marlborough Area Youth Forum £500 towards kitchen equipment.

Reason – The application met the Young People's Grant Criteria 2024/25.

Cllr Caroline Thomas did not vote on the application, having declared an Other Registerable Interest, that she was Chair of Trustees at Marlborough Youth Forum.

Information links: [Area Board Grants](#) and [Grants Criteria](#)

	<p>The Vice-Chairman gave an overview of the discussions that had taken place at the latest meeting of the Local Highway and Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG) on 17 October 2024.</p> <p>Cllr Caroline Thomas encouraged councils to submit requests for parking improvement schemes. She noted that a recent survey in York Place had found that 98 percent of the parking capacity was taken up.</p> <p>On the proposal of the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Thomas, it was resolved to make the:</p> <p>Decision</p> <p>To progress and/or allocate funding towards the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8-23-2 - Mildenhall Proposed Footway – to agree up to £5,000 for ecological surveys (subject to a 25 percent contribution from Mildenhall Parish Council) • 8-23-1 – Marlborough 20mph review - to progress a TRO of up to £3,000 (with £2,250 from the LHFIG and £750 from Marlborough Town Council) • Marlborough Town Council to fund approximately £15,000 for the following schemes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 8-24-03 - Marlborough Town Boundary A4 Manton ➤ 8-24-04 - A346 Postern Hill ➤ 8-24-05 - A346 Port Hill ➤ 8-24-06 - A345 Granham Hill • 8-24-11 - Savernake Hospital/ Maurice Way – to allocate up to £1,000 to cover additional costs to the £4,000 scheme which was being funded by Savernake. <p>To close the following completed issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8-20-4 - A4 Manton traffic calming – substantive scheme • 8-23-4 - Marlborough, Kennet Place – resident parking
66	<p><u>Key Areas of Concern</u></p> <p>The following members of the panel introduced themselves and were welcomed by the Area Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Philip Wilkinson, OBE, MPhil • Assistant Chief Constable Mark Cooper • Inspector Simon Garrett • Wiltshire and Swindon Road Safety Partnership Manager, Perry Payne

Inspector Garrett introduced himself as the new inspector for the local neighbourhood team. He explained that he had been in his new role for around two months but had been in the police for 24 years. He was keen to build upon the good policing work that was going on in the area and to continue the trajectory of improvement.

The PCC gave a strategic overview of the progress made by Wiltshire Police since he assumed the role in 2021 and provided details about his emerging Police and Crime Plan. Points included:

- The PCC had been challenging and supporting Wiltshire Police to drive improvement.
- Significant progress had been made in tackling all crime types since a disappointing Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) report in 2021, when Wiltshire Police had been placed into special measures.
- Wiltshire was the safest county in England and Wales per head of population.
- Although positive outcome rates had improved in all areas, the PCC emphasised the importance of avoiding complacency and continuing improvement.
- The PCC's new Crime Plan for 2025-29, due to be published in the new year, was more precise than his previous plan, due to his increased confidence about the delivery of the force.
- The PCC felt that his 50-year experience of combatting terrorism gave him a unique perspective about how to challenge criminality in Wiltshire. He emphasised that many crimes in the county were symptoms of nationwide and international factors.
- Wiltshire Police had outstanding strategic planning.
- Improvements in performance were particularly impressive given the financial challenges facing the force. Wiltshire Police were the second worst funded force in England and Wales per capita after Lincolnshire. The funding formula for police forces took into account population density, which impacted negatively on Wiltshire. Wiltshire had a low population density overall, but the figure was distorted by Salisbury Plain, and other areas were more heavily populated.
- Wiltshire Police's response teams had been restructured, allowing each neighbourhood team to be led by an inspector.

When asked for the key to driving improvement, the PCC stressed the importance of providing support to frontline officers as well as aligning authority with responsibility. He reported that he had introduced a performance framework for the Chief Constable and her officers so that he could hold her to account to deliver the objectives in his Crime Plan.

Following the PCC's strategic overview, a series of key topics were discussed in

further detail.

Rural Crime

The PCC emphasised that Wiltshire Police were working with other forces in South West England to tackle rural crime, particularly in sharing intelligence. He also highlighted that theft of high value farm equipment was an important area of focus, as this had become a particular target for organised crime gangs given supply chain issues in Russia.

During the discussion, points included:

- When the PCC started his role Wiltshire had a rural crime team with two officers and a Vauxhall Astra. However, significant investment had gone into the team, ensuring that they were far better staffed and had modern equipment, such as drones.
- Recent arrests had been made following theft of farm equipment in the east of the county.

Business Crime

Assistant Chief Constable Cooper noted that Wiltshire Police's performance framework ensured that theft from businesses was taken very seriously, and a key focus was to make sure that the public knew that the police would respond robustly. He was pleased to report that there had been an overall improvement in recent years in the way that Wiltshire Police tackled retail crime. He explained that Marlborough had a relatively low level of incidents compared to other parts of the county and praised inspector Simon Garrett's neighbourhood police team for their high detection rate of over 50 percent. He highlighted that work was going on to improve confidence to report retail crime including by officers such as Police Constable Jason Steele.

During the discussion, points included:

- A programme of restorative justice was being used to tackle persistent offenders in Marlborough.
- There was a focus on managing offenders and deterring them from committing offences. People that committed retail crime were often doing so to support drug habits, so it was important to work with multiple agencies to help tackle underlying issues. Wiltshire Police were working closely with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to commission services.
- Marlborough's proximity to the M4 meant that it was vulnerable to criminals passing through the area, although there were also locally based offenders.
- Operation Elf had been launched to support retailers in the run up to Christmas.

- Inspector Garrett reported that 12 shops in Marlborough had signed up to the Stop Watch scheme and that they were due to hold a meeting in Waitrose later that week.

Burglary

Inspector Garrett highlighted the impact that burglary could have on the confidence of victims, noting that his grandparents had been burgled when he was 10. He outlined the three types of burglary recorded by the police:

- home
- business and community
- residential burglary of an unconnected outbuilding

He then detailed the steps being taken to tackle the issue. During the discussion, points included:

- Marlborough had a relatively low number of burglaries when compared to other parts of the county.
- In October there had been three burglaries, including two business and one residential outbuilding.
- Wiltshire Police had a dedicated burglary team which worked to establish connections between incidents and monitor trends. They also carried out forensic and financial work.
- The neighbourhood team aimed to visit each victim of burglary after the initial response had been provided, to provide reassurance and signpost people to support agencies when required.
- New technology was being deployed to help investigations, such as SelectaDNA and SmartWater. SelectaDNA could be used to mark property so that it could be tracked back to its owner in the event that it was stolen.
- Wiltshire had the lowest reported burglary rate of any of its eight most comparable police forces between January and September 2024, 1.79 per thousand residents. The average of the similar forces was 2.86 per thousand.
- Officers often wore body cameras to help provide evidence.
- Due to the relatively low number of burglaries in the Marlborough area it was difficult to establish patterns, but they often occurred between 2am and 3am and focussed on rural outbuildings containing high value goods.
- A 17-year-old had recently been arrested in connection with a series of burglaries in the Devizes area.
- Intelligence was shared with neighbouring forces about suspect vehicles travelling between areas.
- Police cars travelling through Marlborough with their lights on were sometimes completing advanced driving training, with around three or four officers competing this training per day across the county.
- Ring doorbell cameras were a worthwhile investment and provided

valuable intelligence. The police were often able to utilise footage from cameras within a wide range of incidents.

- Farmers were encouraged to buy the highest quality CCTV cameras that they could afford to protect their property.
- The time between a suspect being arrested and them appearing in court varied significantly. If there was a well-known burglar with a criminal record, then it was likely that it would be possible to bring them to court more quickly than in cases where less was known about the suspect.

Fraud and Scams

Assistant Chief Constable Cooper explained that he had returned to policing to help drive performance. It was noted that there was a wide variety of support on offer for the victims of fraud and scams.

Antisocial Behaviour

- Assistant Chief Constable Cooper emphasised the importance of avoiding any perception that lower-level crimes would not be dealt with.
- Cllr Thomas highlighted that young people were often keen on new technology, so suggested that the police could bring their kit to Marlborough Youth Forum's Friday evening club.
- Inspector Garrett stated that the police were keen to engage with young people and had carried out community engagements alongside police dogs and drones.
- Wiltshire Police had had a single cadet unit in 2021, based in Chippenham, but now had four units across the county. He noted that Chief Constable Catherine Roper was the police's national lead for youth engagement and took the opportunity to praise the passion of the cadets.

Road Safety and the Fatal Five

Wiltshire and Swindon Road Safety Partnership Manager, Perry Payne, outlined some of the multi-agency work being undertaken to improve safety on Wiltshire's roads. Points included:

- There had been 29 fatal collisions on Wiltshire's roads in 2022 and 21 in 2023.
- It was estimated that the average cost of a fatal road incident on the UK economy was in excess of £2 million. The average cost of a road accident resulting in a minor injury was over £31,000.
- Wiltshire Police played an important role in education, as well as enforcement of, speeding.
- Thanks were given to the volunteers in Wiltshire's Community Speed Watch (CSW) teams. CSW teams helped to inform where the police's enforcement activity took place.

- Wiltshire's three Community Speed Enforcement Officers had been active in 61 locations in the Area Board's area between 1 January 2023 and 22 October 2024. During that time, as a result of their activity, 871 people had been sent on speed awareness courses, 173 fines and points were given out and 23 people had appeared in court.
- Between August and October 2024, Wiltshire's Road Policing Unit had issued 1,344 tickets across the county.
- Trials had shown that artificial intelligence was able to teach cameras to take photos of people in their vehicles when they were not wearing a seatbelt.
- Operation Snap allowed people to submit video clips of incidents to be used as evidence. So far in 2024 this had led to 47 prosecutions, 106 speed awareness courses being offered, and 60 warning letters being sent out.
- Lots of educational work around road safety was taking place in schools and colleges.

During the discussion, points included:

- The Chairman noted that she had observed a significant change in the way that speeding was being tackled since the PCC assumed office in 2021.
- In response to a query about enforcement activity on the A4 between Beckhampton and Marlborough, it was explained that action had recently been taken against an individual that had been drifting their car around a roundabout. Assurances were also provided that the neighbourhood police team conducted enforcement action on local roads.
- The Chairman drew Inspector Garrett's attention to parking issues in West Overton.
- 11 traffic surveys had taken place in the Marlborough area between 2022 and 2024, with four of them qualifying for further action and the establishment of a CSW.
- Cllr Caroline Thomas drew attention to difficulties with speed enforcement on the A346 opposite the Acres Estate and the Common. She explained that a survey had identified that it was an area of excessive speeding, but it was also deemed too dangerous for both a CSW team and the police. It was also not possible to install a Speed Indicator Device in the preferred location as it was with 100 metres of a change in the speed limit. In response, the Road Safety Partnership Manager suggested that it might be possible to move the change in the speed limit, subject to the relevant analysis, approvals and funding.
- The OPCC received £40 from each £120 speeding fine and all of that money was reinvested into further speed enforcement activity in Wiltshire.
- The PCC explained that average speed cameras were very useful, but also extremely expensive, so it would not be financially viable to

purchase any within the current budgetary constraints.

Drugs

Assistant Chief Constable Cooper spoke about the need for early intervention in tackling drug related issues. He also reported the important work being carried out through Operation Scorpion, including the local intelligence gathered by Inspector Garrett's neighbourhood team, to tackle County Lines.

- The Area Board welcomed the work being done to tackle drug related issues.
- Concerns were raised that people as young as 10 sometimes felt that drugs were normal, so it was emphasised that it was important to make young people aware of the dangers.
- It was explained that Wiltshire Police's neighbourhood harm reduction team were very active in tackling the issue.
- Inspector Garrett's neighbourhood team carried out lots of work with schools to highlight the dangers that drugs posed. They also worked closely with the [Connect](#) drug support network.
- The PCC noted that he had a [youth zone](#) on his website and that his office funded a number of agencies that carried out work in the community to tackle drug usage.
- It was highlighted that recreational cocaine use was a significant issue but that there were relatively few reports of such activity in Marlborough.
- Assistant Chief Constable Cooper used to chair the Wiltshire Community Safety Partnership, where multiple agencies came together to coordinate their action against issues such as drug usage.

Antisocial Behaviour (Including Fly Tipping and Graffiti)

- Inspector Garrett explained that antisocial behaviour (ASB) was categorised in three different ways, personal, nuisance and environmental.
- Personal ASB was purposefully directed towards individuals.
- Nuisance ASB was not intentional, but a consequence of a lack of consideration to others. Common examples included noise pollution and inconsiderate driving.
- Environmental ASB tended to be acts which had an impact on the appearance and wellbeing of a community, such as fly tipping, graffiti and littering.
- There were relatively few reports of ASB in Marlborough with six reports in September and three in October 2024.
- The OPCC had been awarded £1 million in government grant funding to provide extra patrols in 10 hotspot areas across the county.
- Wiltshire Police worked alongside several different agencies to tackle ASB, including housing associations and local authorities, through the

	<p>Wiltshire Community Safety Partnership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The law gave the police lots of powers to tackle ASB including Public Space Protection Orders, such as the one that had recently been introduced in Devizes. • Police Community Support Officers, such as Mark Braithwaite, played an important role in tackling ASB by supporting people that might be at risk of offending. • It was highlighted that some members of the public often felt too intimidated to report ASB, but it was possible to report crime anonymously to the police. Organisations such as Crimestoppers also allowed anonymous reporting. • In response to concerns about foreign nationals being trafficked into Marlborough to beg on the streets, Inspector Garrett explained that the police worked hard to build an intelligence picture about individuals. They often spoke to vulnerable people on the street to establish whether they may have been a victim of organised crime. There had been instances of foreign nationals being moved into the town from Swindon.
67	<p><u>Further Questions, Summary and Next Steps</u></p> <p>Attendees then had the opportunity to ask questions that had not been covered earlier during the All Things Policing Event.</p> <p>In response to a question about call handling, Inspector Garrett explained that significant progress had been made in improving call times in recent months. There had been a big increase in recruitment to the call handling centre, which had led to a reduction in the number of people abandoning 101 calls. He stated that, as the newer staff gained experience, this would also help give flexibility to make further improvements.</p> <p>Assistant Chief Constable Cooper noted that Wiltshire had gone from one of the worst performing of the 43 forces in England and Wales, in its response time to 999 calls, in March 2024, to now being mid-table. He highlighted that the improvement plan being implemented not only included increased staffing, but investment in new technology.</p> <p>Once all of the questions had been asked, the Vice-Chairman thanked the PCC and the officers for attending. He observed that Wiltshire had a business like and motivated police force, so they were becoming a force that the county could be proud of.</p>
68	<p><u>Urgent items</u></p> <p>There were no urgent items.</p>
69	<p><u>Close and Future Meeting Dates</u></p> <p>The Chairman explained that the Area Board's next meeting, originally</p>

scheduled for 18 March 2025, had been brought forward to 11 February 2025 to avoid the pre-election period. Future meeting dates were confirmed as:

7:00 – 9:00pm with networking from 6.30pm

- 11 February 2025
- 20 May 2025 (extraordinary meeting to elect a chairman)
- 3 June 2025
- 30 September 2025
- 18 November 2025
- 10 February 2026

Meeting details, agendas and minutes can be viewed [here](#).