

# Bradford on Avon FOCUS



Winter  
2026

News from your town and Wiltshire councillors,  
Brian Mathew MP and the Liberal Democrat team

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## Food waste recycling on the way

At a Cabinet meeting in December, Liberal Democrat Wiltshire councillors voted for proposals to transform how the Council manages waste in the county, increasing the overall recycling rates from 40% to the target of 63%.

At the heart of these new measures is the introduction of weekly kerbside food waste recycling from next year. Residents will be issued with kitchen and kerbside caddies for food waste collections, while blue bins will continue to be used for all dry recycling with the addition of flexible plastic recycling also in place from next year.

Wiltshire Councillor, Sam Blackwell said, *"I am delighted by the proposals to deliver a far more environmentally responsible approach to managing Wiltshire's waste. It's a big step towards the aim of reaching zero waste to landfill by 2030."*

## Safer Streets

The Liberal Democrat led Bradford on Avon Town Council continues to urge Wiltshire Council (the highways authority) to make progress on new traffic measures.

Wiltshire Council will only allow one-way traffic downhill on Silver Street if buses can continue to exit the town centre by going up Silver Street. This is non-negotiable. We have to work with it to achieve our aim of improving the impact of traffic in the town. Wiltshire Council is now conducting a feasibility study to investigate how a bus contraflow system would work. If successful, it will enable one-way for all traffic, except buses, with pavement widening measures to improve safety for pedestrians.

To address residents' concerns for pedestrians on Market Street, Wiltshire Council is asking its Bradford on Avon Area Board's local highway and footway improvement group (LHFIG) to look at how to improve pedestrian safety here. Mitigations to minimise the impact of extra traffic in other areas of the town will also be progressed through the LHFIG. Air quality monitoring equipment in the town is to be upgraded.

Councillor Sam Blackwell, who chairs the town council's Sustainable Travel Committee and is a member of LHFIG said, *"Town councillors understand and share the frustration of residents at the time it has taken to progress the priorities set out for a town-wide traffic management scheme in September 2024. We now have agreement with Wiltshire Council on addressing one of the key sticking points of our desired scheme and a commitment from them to support our wider plans to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety in the town."*

Additionally, as reported in the last edition of FOCUS, the two councils continue to work in partnership on plans for a new pedestrian bridge over the River Avon from the library car park to Bridge Yard. Active Travel England is funding an outline business case to look at practicalities such as design, precise positioning and costings. This business case is needed to apply for funding to build the bridge.



Councillor Ghika Savva (pictured with Sam Blackwell) commented, *"I was motivated to stand as a councillor to help address safety for people walking around our town. It is something that people raise with me a lot. I am very keen to be involved in these projects to improve pedestrian safety and confidence."*



## Update from your MP

Our hospitality venues are under huge strain. I have seen this for myself on dozens of visits around the constituency to cafes, pubs and restaurants. Our corner of Wiltshire relies heavily on this sector and they are being let down by this government.

With my Liberal Democrat colleagues I pushed for an emergency 5p cut in VAT for the hospitality sector to give these vital businesses a lifeline. As a party we have plans to redesign business rates to make it fairer to our hospitality venues and to make sure our high streets don't disappear.

It's vital they thrive not only for our communities but also for our wider economy. It's worth remembering that a closed business pays no taxes.

I will keep speaking out on behalf of our local businesses; in Westminster as well as taking the time to meet with them locally. To this end, I'm delighted that I have launched my Melksham and Devizes business network to provide more support to this vital community.

## Make Bradford accessible

Councillor George Simmonds says, *"Thank you to everyone who shared their experiences of moving around Bradford following the item in the last FOCUS. The feedback so far has been incredibly valuable. Residents with disabilities have highlighted just how tough our town can be to navigate, from narrow pavements and uneven surfaces to steep hills that make wheelchair use impossible, and road crossings that don't always feel safe. These are real barriers to everyday independence and deserve close attention. Over the coming months, I will be seeking more information from residents before considering long-term solutions."*



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# Promoting Wellbeing



**Liberal Democrats promote policies and projects that contribute to our wellbeing as a town. These include:**

-  **The consultative Residents' Panel**
-  **A strong programme of events that are free of charge or low cost**
-  **Support for volunteering**
-  **Expanding the youth service**
-  **Enhancing our green spaces for example tree planting and re-wilding**

## Community Snug

Key to a 'wellbeing town' is support for projects that benefit the individual and the community. One example is the Men's Shed, initiated by former councillor, Jennie Parker and thriving thanks to the efforts of many volunteers.

Recently, the town council has supported the Community Snug – part of Crafty Hive - which opened in late 2025 on Silver Street. The Community Snug provides a space for community craft activities such as fabric upcycling, re-use of old clothes and 'make and mend' projects. The Snug brings people – of all ages and skills - together to work on projects which fundraise, and create, for good causes and community events.

Councillor Katie Vigar who chairs the town council's Community and Wellbeing Committee said, "Projects such as these which benefit individuals and the community help our town thrive. The town council was pleased to provide a grant and publicity through the town council newsletter." The Bradford on Avon Area Board also provided a grant to buy sewing machines and supplies.

**To get involved, access or donate resources or find out more contact: [madeinbradfordonavon@gmail.com](mailto:madeinbradfordonavon@gmail.com)**



Organiser, Wellie O'Driscoll at the Community Snug

## News in brief

 **Town council agrees budget** - the town council has agreed its budget for 2026/27, setting out the funding needed to keep local services running and move forward in a number of key areas. Councillor George Simmonds, Chair of Resources Committee explains: "With rising costs, no government grants and buildings and green spaces to maintain, we've chosen to strike a balance between protecting people's pockets and delivering on long-promised projects like the new public toilet and changing facility on Victory Field. A precept increase of 9% (around 51p per week for a Band D household) will help us achieve this. With the budget now settled, the town council is ready for another year of progress and community here in Bradford on Avon."

 **Councillor Chris Spence is investigating the potential for a community wifi service** to help improve online access in the town centre.



 **Action on empty homes** - Wiltshire Liberal Democrat councillors have strengthened council tax premiums on empty homes, which will include a new 300% additional charge on homes empty for more than 10 years. There are some key exemptions, including for owners in long-term residential care, but the measures should encourage owners to bring more unused properties back into occupation. Conservative and Reform councillors blocked plans to introduce a 100% council tax premium on second homes – already charged by around 75% of English local authorities – that would have tackled local housing shortages and helped increase revenue to fund essential services.

## Improving park facilities

In 2024, the town council was granted planning permission for a new toilet and amenity building on Victory Field and a new pavilion on Culver Close.

The plan is to build the toilet and amenity building first on the site of the shipping containers. Robust public toilets will replace the current single unsuitable domestic-style public toilet in Culver Close pavilion. A Changing Places facility with extensive disabled facilities will be included. There will also be a storage area for green space maintenance equipment.

The new pavilion cannot extend beyond the footprint of the existing building and needs better changing room provision, which is why the separate toilet building is needed.

As this is a large capital project, the town council is seeking a public works loan to cover the approximate £675,000 cost. This figure may be reduced once a full quote and schedule of works has been produced. As this is a Conservation Area and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, planning rules require specific, more expensive, materials like natural stone and clay roof tiles.

Revamping the public facilities around Barton Farm Country Park is key. At a time when many councils are turning their backs on public toilets, the Liberal Democrat run town council is determined to provide modern public toilets for residents, as well as for visitors who are vital to the economy of Bradford on Avon.



New building will replace shipping containers

## Get in touch



To join us, ask a question, help deliver our leaflets or attend our social and political events email: [hello@boalibdems.org.uk](mailto:hello@boalibdems.org.uk)

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