

Area Boards in Wiltshire

your community,
your say





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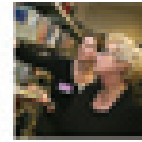
...decisions
about local
issues, made
locally



Introduction

Wiltshire Council wants to ensure that local people are fully involved in the decisions that affect them.

This is where the council's area boards come in – to bring local decision making back into the heart of the community.

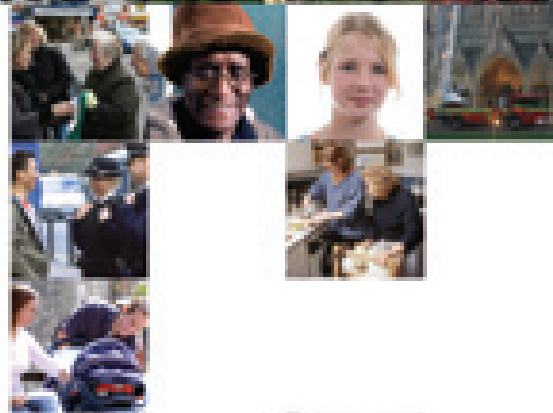


There are now 18 area boards working on your behalf, considering the day-to-day local issues that affect you and your community.

Each of the area boards is made up of the councillors that local people have elected to represent them, together with one member of the council's top decision making committee, the Cabinet.



Residents and key organisations like town and parish councils, the police and the local NHS also play an active part in area boards.



By working in partnership with local communities, the council can achieve so much more than it ever could on its own. We hope this will lead to better services, better communities and a better quality of life for everyone in Wiltshire.



This booklet explains what an area board is, how often it meets and its key decision making role within Wiltshire Council.

It also describes how area boards aim to get the whole of the local community involved in issues that affect every single one of us.



We have also inserted useful information about your local area board - the contact details and photos of the councillors who sit on your area board; contact details of the council staff who oversee the running of your area board; a map of the area and a feedback sheet so that you can let us know of any issues that are of concern in your town or village.

Thank you for showing an interest in your local area board, we hope you decide to get involved. It's your community and your say.



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What is an Area Board?

There are 18 area boards across Wiltshire.

Each area board covers a community area within the county – in most parts of the county this includes a market town and its surrounding villages.

The boards meet every six to eight weeks at various locations within their area to make decisions about issues affecting the community.

Those decisions are taken by your elected Wiltshire councillors who represent the towns and villages in the area. Representatives from town and parish councils and members of the local Community Area Partnership – an independent, voluntary and non-political organisation which brings together public bodies, businesses and voluntary and community groups – also attend board meetings.

Representatives from the police, fire and the NHS also attend to give advice and take part in the discussions.

At each area board meeting, local people can come along and discuss issues with the councillors. The councillors will take your views into account when making final decisions.

Each area board has its own budget that it will use to support projects identified by the community and local groups

Wiltshire Council, the police, fire and the NHS deliver services across the whole county – but it is the job of the area boards to ensure those services are carefully tailored to meet local needs in your area.

Area boards will also provide a way for local people to shape the policies and services of the new Wiltshire Council, the police, NHS and other partners.

A guide to area board meetings

We promise you that area boards are not like most meetings you may have been to before.

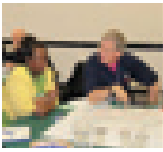
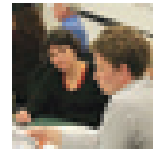
By encouraging local people to take part, the area board is a place where everyone's voice can make a difference. You will be made to feel very welcome.

Councillors and council staff wear name badges and are happy to answer any questions you may have and help you get your point across.

The agenda and minutes

Before every meeting an agenda is published which lists all of the topics to be discussed. The agenda is published five working days before the area board meets. Notes of the meeting – known as 'minutes' – are published about a week after the meeting.

You can view any area board agenda or minutes at www.wiltshire.gov.uk and see if there are any issues that might be of interest or concern to you.



Who's who at an area board meeting?

The Chairman	The chairman is chosen by the Wiltshire councillors for the area. He or she will control the meeting and decide who can speak and for how long. The chairman will also act as an ambassador for the board between meetings, getting involved with local issues and making sure that local people are involved.
The Vice Chairman	A Wiltshire Council councillor who deputises in the chairman's absence and will assist the chairman during and between meetings.
Wiltshire councillors	These are the people you have elected to represent you at Wiltshire Council. They are responsible for the decisions made at the area board.
Cabinet member	Is one of 10 Wiltshire councillors who have been appointed to the council's Cabinet, which makes the main policy decisions for Wiltshire Council.
Town and parish councillor	They are councillors who you elect to represent the town and parish councils in the area.
Community area manager	This council officer provides a link between the area board, local people and organisations in the local community. This local officer works closely with council services, police, fire and the NHS to bring together local people and local services to tackle local issues.
Service director	A senior member of the council's staff who will provide advice and information to the members of the board.
Democratic services officer	This is a council officer who is responsible for arranging and publicising board meetings. They are also responsible for producing the agenda, notes of the meeting and ensuring actions are followed up.
Community Area Partnership	An independent partnership of public bodies, businesses and the voluntary and community sector. The partnership is open to anyone and is strictly non-political. It receives funding from the board, produces a community plan setting out priorities for action, promotes projects and ensures that local people can get involved in activities that benefit the local area.
Partners	Wiltshire Police, Wiltshire Fire and Rescue and Wiltshire NHS and other public sector organisations such as the MOD.
Council officers	Officers employed by the council to provide a wide range of local services – from rubbish collection to arts and from housing to road repairs. These officers will attend meetings to provide technical advice.

Working together

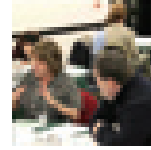
Experience has shown that people get the most out of meetings when they listen and respect the views of others. Of course sometimes there will be disagreements and this is fine provided that it does not spill over into hostility or anger. The chairman will act swiftly if anyone becomes abusive or rude and, in the last resort, may exclude people from the meeting.

Area Boards – how to have your say

We would really like to see as many people as possible getting involved in their local area board and local decisions. There are many ways you can do this:

Having your say

You can come along and have your say at the meeting. The chairman will try to ensure that everyone who wishes to speak will have the opportunity to do so. There may be occasions when time is short or a



lot of people want to say similar things. If that happens the chairman may ask that one person is nominated to speak on behalf of everyone.

Highlighting local issues

If you have a local issue which you would like to bring to the attention of the area boards, there is a very easy way you can do this. You can download a simple form, a community issue sheet, from www.wiltshire.gov.uk, submit your issue online or request a form and guidance from the community area manager.

Normally, these matters should be of public concern, not simply personal issues that affect you.

When an issue is received, the community area manager will research the matter, consult local people and take advice from colleagues and partners such as the police or NHS. This will ensure that all matters are considered in a fair and balanced way and that decisions are soundly based.

If your issue is discussed at the meeting, you will be given an opportunity to present your views and explain what you think the area board should do. The area board will then allow other people and partners to speak before a decision is reached.

The area board will try to take decisions that have broad support. It will always listen to alternative viewpoints and try to accommodate those views where possible.

Sometimes it will not be possible for the area board to take the action that local people would wish. When this happens, the area board will publish its reasons in the notes of the meeting.

Every issue received will be recorded and published on the council's website.

...all matters
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Make a stand

You can submit petitions to the area board on any local issue. To do this, you will need to contact the democratic services officer 10 working days before the date of the meeting. The chairman will accept petitions at the beginning of the meeting and allow the petitioners to speak in support of their proposal.

Speak up

In some cases, once an issue has been discussed, the chairman may ask for a show of hands. This will help councillors understand public opinion before they reach their decision.

It is up to the councillors to make the final decision but by being at the meeting you have had the chance to let them know your views.

Getting involved

Local people can really make a big difference.

If you want to get involved in local projects and help make your community a better place to live, you can get involved with the community area partnership – they are always on the look out for willing volunteers and helpers. You can lend as much or as little time as you like, there is no cost and you can quit at any time.

The more people that choose to get involved the better for the community.

Opportunities for everyone

It is important that everyone in the community has a chance to have a say. We know that sometimes people find it difficult to come along to a meeting or to speak out in front of others – particularly on sensitive matters.

If you have something to say, we want to hear about it and the community area manager will be happy to talk over matters by phone or in person at a place convenient for you.

We can provide interpreters, signers, large print formats, translations, or even someone to speak up for you – so please just ask.

Keep in touch

If you would like to be kept informed about what is happening locally, you can sign up to receive a regular update from the community area manager.

This update will tell you about the work of the board, partners and the community area partnership. It will also tell you about opportunities to get involved with local projects and activities.

Simply let the community area manager have your details or sign-up online at www.wiltshire.gov.uk



Finally

We hope you found this booklet useful and are encouraged to come along to your area board meetings.

Our promise to you is that we will ensure that all area board meetings are conducted in the fairest way possible.

We will keep the meetings as informal as possible but to ensure the meetings are well organised and the agenda is completed, there will have to be some structure and time limits.

But don't worry this is not all about meetings. There will be many new ways for you to get involved. Keep a look out on our website or sign up for information about how you can help to make a difference in Wiltshire.

Your comments and ideas about area board meetings will always be welcome.

Enclosed in this booklet is a feedback form.

We also have the contact details of the council staff you will need to contact if you want to submit questions or petitions to area boards.

Thank you again for your interest and we hope to see you on board.

If you have something to say, we want to hear about it



Area Boards

Find out which area board catchment you live in by looking at this map. A map for your local area board is also enclosed.





Na życzenie udostępniamy informacje na temat usług oferowanych przez władze samorządowe hrabstwa Wiltshire (Wiltshire Council) w innych formatach (takich jak dużym drukiem lub w wersji audio) i w innych językach. Prosimy skontaktować się z władzami samorządowymi pod numerem telefonu 0300 456 0100 lub telefonu tekstowego (01225) 712500 bądź za pośrednictwem poczty elektronicznej na adres: customerservices@wiltshire.gov.uk

如果有需要我們可以使用其他形式（例如：大字體版本或者錄音帶）或其他語言版本向您提供有關威爾特郡政務會各項服務的資訊，敬請與政務會聯繫，電話：0300 456 0100，文本電話：(01225) 712500，或者發電子郵件至：customerservices@wiltshire.gov.uk

يمكن، عند الطلب، الحصول على معلومات حول خدمات مجلس بلدية ويلتشرير وذلك بأشكال (معلومات بخط عريض أو سماعية) ولغات مختلفة. الرجاء الاتصال بمجلس البلدية على الرقم ٠٣٠٠٤٥٦٠١٠٠ أو من خلال الاتصال النصي (تيكست فون) على الرقم ٧١٢٥٠٠ (٠١٢٢٥) أو بالبريد الإلكتروني على العنوان التالي: customerservices@wiltshire.gov.uk