

Shipley Towns Fund Board Meeting Minutes

7th September 2026, 10.00am – 12.00pm
Kirkgate Centre, Shipley, 39A Kirkgate, BD18 3EH

Attendees:

Name	Organisation	Role
1. Gill Thornton	Better Start Bradford	Chair
2. Cllr Andrew Judson	Bradford Council	Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration & Planning
3. Adam Beddall (ABed)	Turner & Townsend	Board Member
4. Alec Porter (AP)	Shipley Resident	Board Member
5. Anna Dixon MP	Member of Parliament	Board Member
6. Cllr Anna Watson	Shipley Town Council	Board Member
7. Helen Horsman	The Cellar Trust	Board Member
8. James Skirrow	Carter Towler	Board Member
9. John Flaherty	Shipley College	Board Member
10. John Henkel (JHe)	Old School Building Company Ltd	Board Member
11. Martin Silverwood	Shipley College	Board Member
12. Adam Brannen (ABra)	Bradford Council	Attendee
13. Alexander Procter (APr)	Bradford Council	Attendee
14. Jane Hargreaves (JHa)	Bradford Council	Attendee
15. Joe Ashton (Observer)	Shipley Town Council	Attendee
16. Ravinder Panesar	Bradford Council	Attendee
17. Simon Woodhurst	Bradford Council	Attendee
18. Tim Rhodes	Carter Towler	Invited Attendee

Apologies:

Name	Organisation
1. Adam Sutcliffe	Entrepreneur
2. Nicola Murray	Kynd, Co-chair South Square
3. Stephanie Hiscott	Bradford Council
4. Scot Flight	Cox and Flight Financial Solutions

ID	Notes/Actions/ Decisions	Decision	Action Owner	Due Date
1	Welcome and apologies GT welcomed everyone to the Board Meeting. Round of introductions and apologies listed in the minutes. The Board approved MS onto the Board, who is the new CEO and Principal of Shipley College, following the resignation of Diana Bird, who has left her role at the College.			

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2-5	2. Meeting Format & Conduction GT outlined the meeting format and board conduct, with the Chair inviting comments, questions and discussions as each agenda item is presented. 3. Declaration of Interests Updates were noted and reflected in the latest Declaration of Interest Register. 4. Correspondence Log No items. 5. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising Minutes of the last meeting were approved by the Board with no matters arising.			
6	Highlight Report Project A Development Investment Fund Crag Road Scheme An update was provided on the Crag Road scheme, including a progress update, budget implications, risks, issues, priorities and recommendations required by the Board on whether to proceed or reprioritise the funding allocation. A confidential Land Market Value Paper was shared with Members in August 2026 providing information on the demand for the envisaged end uses to be enabled through the scheme. AD raised concerns regarding the commercial demand of the proposals, primarily due to the number of vacant units in the town centre and the original plan to create residential and not industrial units. AW concurred that the scheme did not fit in with the priorities of the original Town Investment Plan, with the need to address the failing retail offer within the town centre. AP indicated that the scheme would not be visible to residents and not necessarily create new employment opportunities for the community. AJ agreed with the views of the Board, indicating that the people of Shipley would not see the benefits of the scheme. HH was concerned that the scheme would be developed for the benefit of a private landowner, with a potential option for the Council to purchase the land for development. AB indicated that this approach would result in the risks and liabilities resting with the Council, increasing the complexity and deliverability of the scheme. ABed indicated that there was West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) funding which could be explored further to unlock the site for future development. This would allow for existing Towns Fund allocations for this scheme to be repurposed.			

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	JHe indicated that if a decision was made to cancel the scheme, it would leave a large proportion of the spend as uncommitted, increasing the risk of government clawback should it not be spent within the timescales. The Board held a vote with options to recommend either proceed or cancel the Crag Road Scheme as part of the DIF project. The Board voted unanimously in favour of not proceeding and cancelling the scheme. ABra acknowledged the frustrations and delays in getting to this point. Clock Tower Scheme Following a Board visit to the Clock Tower, further information and discussions took place on the proposals. This included a review of the original 'Do Minimum Option', which proposed a project that focused on repair of the clock mechanism and provision of safe access to ensure its continued maintenance and operation. Following on from the Board recommendation to cancel the Crag Road Scheme, the Board agreed that there was the potential to allocate further funding to this scheme, which could include work to improve the associated buildings, particularly the basement area. AW indicated that the Town Council is working with the asset owner in the process of developing a Business Case for improvement and use of the basement, which needed to be refined further. This could present a case for the Town Council to take on the liabilities of the space and manage it following any renovations. It was discussed whether Towns Fund funding could be utilised for development of the Business Case, with RP indicating that a proposal was needed to first understand the scope of the overall scheme. ABra indicated that the asset owner needed to bring forward a proposal that would need to be considered before being taken forward. Information required would need to satisfy the due diligence to be undertaken that included a value for money assessment, subsidy control compliance, and outputs alongside the risks associated with the delivery of a wider scheme. There was also the need to assess any contribution from the asset owner to support the proposals. Several board members stressed the need to quickly determine the new scope of the project. GT proposed that an extraordinary meeting of the board be held within 6-8 weeks, fully informed by the information given at the internal programme board to discuss the Clock Tower and Underground Market project in greater detail. This would also need to take into account the priorities of the Board for reallocating the funding beyond the Clock Tower Scheme through the agreed contingency planning process.	Meeting to review proposals Board Meeting to arrange	AW / SW / TR RP	ASAP Oct-26

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	Project B – Town Centre & Infrastructure Improvements An update was provided as per the published Board Papers. RP confirmed that work on Stead Street was ongoing, with Westgate Public Realm to follow on completion. An update on the public toilets was also shared about its opening date which was delayed until appropriate safety measures were in place. Following on from the hoop barrier installation in July, further snagging works are outstanding, alongside the need for operational and maintenance arrangements to be put in place by the Town Council before an opening date can be agreed. A snagging meeting is scheduled for 17th September where any outstanding issues will be addressed. Project C – Community, Art, Heritage & Future Technology Hub RP provided an update on the project including the significant progress made on the Grant Funding Agreement and Land Transfer, which is expected to be finalised shortly. JF indicated that a contractor had been appointed, with an indicative timescale agreed to start on site. A Letter of Intent was being drawn up ahead of signing the main contract. Alongside this, the legal and financial agreements would also need to be signed off, including a further request for £547k grant uplift for the Board to agree. AJ indicated his support for the project but raised concerns about the cost increases, ensuring further requests for funding did not continue to be made to the Board. JF confirmed that the financial risk to the College was the same, with the increase related to the delays in progressing the project and the impact of inflation. RP confirmed that once the legal agreements were signed, protections were in place to ensure the College and the Council's financial obligations and risk allocation were clear. This included potential clawback provisions, grant funding amounts and output requirements. AD enquired about the government funding that was available to educational establishments as part of the devolution settlements. JF confirmed that discussions had taken place with WYCA on the Post-16 Sufficiency Fund but would not know until the autumn whether their application would be approved. The Board voted unanimously to recommend reallocation of funds from the Shipley DIF to the College of £547k to meet the College's additional funding requirements. Project D – Capital Assistance to Business Growth Applications for the Capital Assistance to Business Growth Scheme were suspended with all the funding committed. RP indicated that	Project Adjustment Request to sign-off	GT	Sept-26

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	work was being accelerated to ensure the claims were being submitted from businesses so that payments could be made. There have been delays in businesses submitting claims, but this was being progressed by the Strategic Programmes Team. Project E – Shipley Library Enterprise Hub RP provided an update on this project including the additional workshops and support that is being provided since the new Libraries Officer came to post. AD questioned the low reporting of outputs and the need to link the library into the wider business support eco-system. RP indicated that outputs were being submitted by the library and these were being reviewed. AD indicated her wish to meet the Libraries Officer to discuss this further. Project F – Health & Wellbeing Centre HH indicated that there was a lack of funds to develop supported accommodation, a therapy service and meeting space with a proposal to undertake capital works being developed. Project G – Wrose Quarry Wetlands An update was provided which included the visit in June by the Chair to the site. GT was pleased to see the site and the work that was undertaken through the Towns Fund investment. She praised the paths and scrapes alongside the additional wildlife it now attracts. She did note the difficulty that some may face in accessing the site, including disabled, children and people with visual impairments. Project H – Shipley Sustainable Community Hub JHe provided a brief update confirming that snagging works were ongoing and once completed, a Project Closure Report would be provided. RP indicated that outputs were in the process of being collated and reviewed.	Introduction to Andrea Hardaker / AD Proposal to send to Council for review	RP HH / RP	Sept-26 Sept-26
7	Contingency Planning RP indicated that a financial update would be provided at the next Board Meeting covering the reporting period of April to September 2026 in line with the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG) requirements. The Contingency Planning process was also discussed as many Board Members were absent from the last meeting in June. Following on from the recommendation to cancel the Crag Road Scheme, this would be discussed at the Council's Internal Programme Board for consideration of taking forward an accountable body decision, to be informed by proposed reallocation of the funds based on the priorities of the Board.			
8	Forward Planner The board recommended that the December meeting be moved into January 2027.			

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9	AOB GT informed the board of the resignation of Simon Cunningham as Co-chair and as a board member. The board offered their thanks for his time and discussed the possibility of recruiting a new member from the wider community.			
10	Date and time of the next meeting: Oct-26 [TBC]			