

Bathampton Parish Council

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Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at 7.30p.m. on Wednesday, 30th., May 2018 in the Village Hall, Bathampton

Introductions:

Good evening ladies and gentlemen and thank you for coming to the Bathampton annual parish meeting – which is a chance for the parish council to update you on the things they have been working on over the last year and also to give everyone who lives here a chance to discuss the issues that concern you. I shall start off by asking the councillors to stand so that you know who everyone is.

Don Smith is our clerk. I am Moira Brennan, Chairman to the PC, Lin King Vice Chairman, George Ardrey, Jan Helps, Jacqueline Bird. Stuart Andrews and David Mayo can't be with us this evening.

We still have two positions vacant, so if anyone would like to join us please speak to one of us later.

You will be hearing from some of the councillors soon and you will have a chance to ask questions at the end of our reports or more informally over a drink after we have heard from some very interesting speakers telling us about how we can improve our health through small (or big) changes to how we move about and how our local children are being helped to do just that by creating safe routes where they can walk or cycle to school. We also have with us representatives from some of the many exercise classes that are available in the village and before we head for the drinks I will ask them to make themselves known so you can find out more about what is available here on our doorstep.

Minutes of the 2017 Annual Parish Meeting.

The Minutes of last year's meeting have been distributed to the councillors and are available on our website. Does anyone have any comments regarding their accuracy. If not may I have a proposer and a seconder for the adoption of the minutes. Proposer: Cllr. J.Helps Seconder:Cllr. Ardrey.

I declare the minutes adopted.

Chairman's report.

Cllr. M.Brennan

Finance

Although our accounts for the year ended 31 March 2018 have not yet been audited I want to give you a brief run down of our income and how we spent it. In the year 2017/18 we had income of £28,503 which is higher than the previous year by around £2,000. The precept raised through council taxes was the same at £23,000. We had a small reduction in our regular income because BANES are reducing the council tax support grant we receive from £1,270 to nil over the 4 years to 2020. As ever this means we have to manage our costs carefully. On the positive side we received £1,500 from our local councillor's allocation for improvements to our play area – most notably our new goalposts and nets. We also received £420 from the community empowerment fund to buy tools and protective clothing for our footpath volunteers. A small further amount was received at our request from the same fund but that was sent directly to the Friends of the Bathampton Meadows Riverside to help maintain the area around the cycle path.

Chairman's report.(Cont'd.)**Finance (Cont'd.)**

Our largest spend of just under £12,000 is on salaries paid to our clerk Don Smith and our Handyman, Alan Saunders. We gave grants totalling £3,100 to various village enterprises including amounts towards the Village Show, maintenance of the churchyard, the Maxi Club and the Cricket Club and the historical society. Included in this was a one off payment to help forward the plans for the new Conker Crossing about which I am sure we will hear more later.

We paid around £1400 on subscriptions, most of which is the insurance premium. We pay for lighting in some parts of the village not supported by BANES at a cost of £762. In the year our largest cost was £6,650 for the new fencing around the play area. We offer thanks to Jan Helps who put in enormous amounts of work obtaining quotes and comparing different options, as well as overseeing the installation and resolving all the issues arising. The final decision was extremely cost effective compared to the alternatives due to avoiding double fencing along the road side. This has the added benefit of increasing the usable play area and creating some shade from the trees. The new galvanised fence is a very low maintenance option which will greatly reduce the amount of work needed compared to the previous wooden option. Apart from the fence we paid £1,167 for the amenities of the village which includes planting and maintaining the play areas, Jubilee Gardens and the allotments. This greatly understates the actual spend as we have yet to be billed for about £1600 for grass cutting and £1000 for the new goalposts. Other costs include the cost of the newsletter, maintaining equipment, payments to our planning adviser etc. Our total expenditure was £ 29,944 representing a deficit for the year of £1,441. This would have been a deficit of around £4,000 if we had paid for the grass cutting and goal posts. Our bank balance at year end was £44,421 down from £45,862 at the end of last year.

Last year at this meeting, you expressed support for us giving a one off grant of £1000 to Bathampton Meadows Alliance to support the work they were doing in coordinating the fight against the planned park and ride. I am delighted to say that that was not needed and I hope that you agree that the allocation of funds to the Conker Crossing was a good alternative. The last few years has, if anything, shown us the importance of having some funds available to put up a defence of the various schemes that threaten our village. In the last few years alone we have seen the Park and Ride debacle, the renewed threats of a link road, the actions of Network Rail (which are still a risk and Lin will tell you more later), opposing any threat to allow change of use for our last remaining small commercial shopping area into residential use, the concerns that a poorly designed Clean Air Zone could clean central Bath's air by shifting the problem and the traffic on to the next available roads which include our own.

That said we are also keen that we use the funds available to improve the facilities of the village. Our play area is dated but much loved and investigations show that even small changes can cost 10's of thousands of pounds. If you have ideas about how we can improve our amenities please speak to one of us after the meeting or consider becoming a councillor and help to make your ideas a reality.

As I do at this time of year, I looked back over the newsletters for the last year, and realised how much we had to celebrate. We started just after the 2017 Annual Parish Meeting with the Harbutts Day celebration. There are some great photographs of the event which you can have a look at over drinks. Next came the announcement that the Park and Ride would not go ahead. My how we cheered !!

Next up The Village Show was the best ever – with lots of things to see and do as it evolves away from a traditional flower show into a more modern and highly enjoyable event. And at the Village Show the Bathampton Historical Society were selling copies of their long awaited book about the fascinating history of Bathampton Down – A hill Divided. The great news is that the first print run sold out completely. Fortunately they have had a new run done and copies are available – via Gill Huggins – who I hope is here tonight. I am keeping my fingers crossed that there will be another Barn Dance this year as last years was so much fun. If you haven't been to one before put it in your diary for this year.

Chairman's report.(Cont'd.)**Finance (Cont'd.)**

Next came the news that The George had a new manager and she cared about the village and what we thought !! Hurrah ! Parking charges were removed and communications opened up. She listened to requests for more drinker friendly areas, welcoming dog walkers and at the wonderful open evening she told us that she understood that the kitchens had not been delivering quality food on a timely basis and she was going to do something about it. I have to say I have visited The George more since the changes that any time in the past but again it would be great to share notes on how things have improved and what more could be done. I think Steve is here from the George so you will get a chance to chat to him later.

About the same time we heard that the two areas at the Triangular Field and Miller Walk, that we had nominated, had been given protection as local green spaces. Once again thanks to Keith Rossiter for leading this very thorough piece of work.

Then the Art group celebrated 50 years of all things artistic happening here in Bathampton. 3 art groups meet in Bathampton each week and are renowned throughout Bath. This coming hot on the heels of the playgroups 50th anniversary last year reminds me of how much we owe to the generation who, in the late 1960's were creating things which have become the cultural and social heart of our village 50 years on. Some of these things are at risk as their users age, we have seen the loss of Carpet Bowls, Try Your Hand and the WI, while others go from strength to strength and renew themselves to meet the needs of new generations. It would be wonderful to think that the new generations of young people setting up homes in Bathampton will start their own groups and contribute to the ones that exist to help them move with the times.

Looking back on the minutes from last year the threat of Park and Ride was real. Thankfully this is currently off the agenda but BANES wording about not putting a park and ride on the Meadows is carefully worded to keep their options open and we know that as councils change promises from the past are often forgotten. Our next priority therefore must be to increase the protection on the meadows. This is not easy. Many conversations are taking place. Basically the Meadows are in the green belt which is the highest level of protection available. Lin will tell us a bit more in the planning section.

The second issue that was causing concern last year was that the threat of a link road across the valley. This has by no means gone away and there is a rumour that money has been allocated to look into the options. In addition, any Clean Air Zone created by Bath that includes Cleveland Bridge will increase the argument for providing an alternative route for the polluting vehicles that Bath wants to exclude, which could include a link road.

We continue to support BANES working with Wiltshire and Dorset councils on upgrading the A350 to make that the main route from the M4 to the South Coast. This route is strongly supported by the Valley Parish Alliance as it would allow the A36 to be detrunked. As I said last year any solid proposals are a long way off with not even a glimmer of funding for any road building but we continue to monitor the situation. On more current and pressing issues then:

The BANES proposals for a cleaner air zone are at very early stages of consultation. They have currently suggested 3 levels of vehicles that might be excluded from any zone. One of those options includes what BANES calls higher emission cars. If this option were selected anyone owning a diesel car more than 3 years old or a petrol car more than 12 years old could find themselves unable to drive to Sainsburys without incurring the congestion fee or Morrisons or the motorway without paying the fee or using the tollbridge. You can imagine the effect of a poorly designed scheme on villagers ability to leave the village but also on the effect of "higher emission cars" from all around choosing the tollbridge over a more expensive alternative. Even if the final scheme does not include cars you can imagine a scenario where any buses, taxis, light goods vehicles and smaller HGVs will consider the toll bridge fee versus the Zone charges and opt to navigate Bathampton's narrow streets as a least worst option. Any charges will have the impact of pushing vehicles out to the next cheapest option and so routes like Bathampton, Combe Down, Camden will become the new route for the most polluting vehicles.

Chairman's report.(Cont'd.)**Finance (Cont'd.)**

It is important that you stand up and make your views known. At the very least BANES need to be clear what measures they are trying to improve in the Clean Air Zone ie is it traffic through flow or NOx or CO2. Once they determine that they need to be clear how they will protect surrounding areas from those measures worsening as a result of the scheme. They need to answer questions such as whether they are happy to accept taxing buses increases fares and encourages people to drive into Bath in their non polluting vehicles hence increasing congestion in return for improved air quality. Speak to your local councillors, write to BANES, visit drop-in events. A badly designed Clean Air Zone will just push Bath's problem into the surrounding areas.

I also want to touch briefly on the Local Government Boundaries Commission review of the BANES wards. Historically Bathampton has been part of a ward known as Bathavon North. The ward had three councillors and also included Batheaston and Bathford. Under the recent review Bathampton will no longer be in Bathavon North but will be in a new 1 councillor ward called Bathavon East along with Claverton, Monkton Combe and Southstoke. We submitted a response to the consultation saying that our local affiliation was to Batheaston and Bathford and not with Southstoke. Unfortunately our concerns were ignored. The Boundary Commission did make some changes as a result of the first consultation and the new consultation is open until 11 June. If you are interested in responding to the new consultation it is on the Local Government Boundaries Commission website.

As ever I am going to make a request for volunteers. I have already mentioned that we are short of two councillors. In addition we are seeking someone to coordinate the distribution of the newsletter four times a year. We have a great team of newsletter deliverers but it would also be nice to have a few people on a back up list for times when holiday or illness keeps our regular deliverers from being able to help out. In keeping with our theme tonight it is a great way to keep fit. The Village Hall also needs a Chairperson – again this is not onerous – requiring chairing of 4 or 5 meetings a year and offering support and guidance to our caretaker. If you are interested in any of these roles please speak to me later.

**Planning & Conservation Report
The George****Cllr. L.King**

This time last year we were in the midst of parking problems because The George had installed Pay and Display meters in their car park. Thanks to hard work from many members of the community and to Debbie Parry (Manager) for listening and understanding the issue, and then taking action to get them removed, we are now able again to use the car park. But we must do this responsibly and Debbie will let us know if there is any problem.

Batheaston/Bathampton Pedestrian and Cyclist Bridge and track

The Cycle track continues to be widely used and a pleasure to all. Grants have been secured to finance work being done. Grass verges are being mown, but leaving plenty of areas unmown for wildlife. Recent work has been to improve the stream area. Two new River Rescue Cabinets have now been installed (there is already one at Bathampton Mill). Many thanks to Peter Fear for his hard work in managing the area and organising the volunteers.

FOFBMR details as ever are on notice boards at either end of the track.

Placemaking Plan / Land between Miller Walk and Simons Close ('Leylandii Field') and adjoining land to Bathampton Lane / Triangular Field

The two plots of land have now been officially designated as 'Local Green Spaces' which will give them protection in future.

Planning & Conservation Report (Cont'd.)**The Meadows**

After BANES decision to abandon (for the time being) their proposals for a Park & Ride on the Meadows we did look into the possibility of urgently putting together a Neighbourhood Plan in order to protect the Meadows, but realised that a NP would not in fact give any more protection than the Green Belt designation. We may do a NP in the future (it will be a big task and volunteers would be needed) but not yet. Meanwhile we continue to press BANES for some way of protecting our amazing Meadows.

Jewsons Yard / Tynning Meadows / Level Crossing

The houses at Tynning Meadows are almost completed and we hope that negotiations will be concluded soon on the new track through Jewson's Yard to take traffic to Bathampton Farm and allow the level crossing to be closed to traffic (but still open for pedestrians). I would like to take this opportunity to thank Charlcombe Homes for making this build as painless as possible for the school and local residents and for their help on several village issues, especially Network Rail.

Network Rail

Network Rail purchased the field at the end of Tynning Road four years ago in order to facilitate the electrification project. They were allowed to do what was needed without having to get Planning Permission. We all know what they did there and the traffic issues they caused. So when the electrification project was halted we and BANES asked NR to reinstate the field to its original state, at which point Network Rail submitted an application to turn the field into an operational railway and maintenance yard. Everyone rallied round and there were over 150 objections. Possibly as a result of this NR withdrew the application. They then stated that they did not need approval as it would be Permitted Development under the Railways Act of 1854.

Charlcombe Homes took legal advice which they shared with us, and which indicated that NR were wrong and that it would not come under Permitted Development. BANES Planning and Enforcement Officer Richard Stott was also satisfied that the works undertaken are not Permitted Development and that a breach of control may have occurred. He therefore issued a Planning Contravention Notice (PCN) on 9th March, and NR had 21 days to respond.

We have not yet heard back from BANES but it is now with the legal team for assessment. Subsequently NR asked for a meeting 'with the community' which took place at the school, where we told them in no uncertain terms what we thought of NR and what had happened so far. They insisted that they do have rights to do whatever they want, and I have heard back just this week that they intend to actually use the site very little. BUT this is no long-term guarantee and we do not necessarily believe them and are not satisfied. We will see what happens next.

Leisure & Amenities Report**Cllr. J.help**

I am responsible for the village leisure and amenities

Allotments

There have been about 5 allotments which have changed hands over the last year and there is one person currently on the waiting list. A small number of owners have been approached regarding the condition of their plots and we are working with them to improve the situation.

Grass cutting

Grass cutting has begun on all areas of the village and I am grateful to those members of the villagers who alert me or Don to any issues arising. The grass cutting contract is proving to be challenging at the moment. Our current contractors have been taken over by a larger company and the contracts manager has had some "operational difficulties", particularly in regard to the allotments. I am monitoring the situation closely and, with the clerk, will be pursuing other companies for next year.

Leisure & Amenities Report(Cont'd.)**Playground**

The new fence seems to be working well after some initial concerns. The gates have been adjusted occasionally to ensure closure. Regular inspections continue to be held and we have reserves to enable us to pay for repairs and maintenance on the play equipment and surrounds. Repairs over the last year have included some new fittings on the zip wire and replacement of the baby swings which is on going.

Thanks to a grant received from Alison Millar, we are pleased to have been able to replace the football goals, which was a specific request by children in the village. We hope that the nets are sufficiently robust and that adults responsible for smaller children will ensure that they are not used as a climbing frame.

We will continue to monitor and make changes to the playground as and when funding becomes available.

Christmas tree

Once again we had a Christmas tree outside the village hall. Thank you to Alan Saunders and Ray Book for their help with providing, installing and decorating the tree.

Planters

The planters around the village continue to be cared for by residents of the village. Thank you to Alex Robertson, Emma McGuinness, and Eric Greaves for their care of the planters and to Ray Book for looking after the memorial at the church. A big thank you also to Ron Taylor for growing the flowers for the planters each year.

A broken gate connecting Hantone Hill and Bathampton Woods has been repaired thanks to the Cotswold wardens

In the coming year we will be reviewing the state of trees and communal green areas in the village.

Highways Report**Cllr. J.Bird**

I will summarise briefly the issues that we have had to address during the year.

Clean Air Zone

The PC responded to BANES consultation on the clean air zone proposals as there was concern that the effect of the restriction would be that any resident of the village wishing to travel north would under the proposals have to pay to access the A46 even if they did not wish to go into Bath. In effect they would be incurring a charge whether they went via the Cleveland Bridge or via Bathampton toll bridge.

There was also concern that travellers seeking to avoid the charge along the Cleveland Bridge would use the toll bridge and the ultimate outcome would result in more cars travelling through our village.

The PCs suggestion was that Cleveland Bridge should be excluded from the clean air zone. However, there is also a school of thought that a charge on HGVs when accessing Cleveland Bridge (to stop them using the Warminster Road and the London Road) would be the better option. Ultimately, it is the PC's intention to avoid congestion on the village roads as well as the Toll Bridge, as often it is the case that there is total chaos on the Toll Bridge whenever there are problems on the Cleveland Bridge.

The PC is keeping a close eye on the proposals and will take necessary steps to minimise adverse impact on our roads.

Highways Report (Cont'd.)**Safer Routes to School Initiative**

As part of the safer routes to school initiative the PC has been liaising with BANES and a dedicated steering group to minimise the risk of harm on our village roads. As a result the speed limit on Mill Lane has been reduced to 30mph. Further, the pavements along Mill Lane have been improved and widened to make it safer for pedestrians and to make the existing crossing from The George to the Churchyard clearer and safer for school children.

Our special speakers from the Conker Crossing team will talk more about the changes which are in the pipeline to make routes to school safer.

Street Lights

The vast majority of the streetlights in the village are owned and maintained by BANES and these have recently been upgraded to LED which we understand is cheaper to run and less intrusive. There are a handful which remain the parish council's responsibility. The PC are looking at costings to upgrade these to LED. However the costs are not insignificant and the preference is for BANES to adopt these few streetlights and maintain them collectively. Discussions are ongoing and as yet BANES has shown reluctance in adopting them.

Pavements and Street Cleaning

We have requested that Highways England and BANES clear the pavements along the Bathampton Lane and the Warminster Road. This has partly been done but the verge along the Warminster Road/St. George's needs special attention. The mud along that patch of the Road is so ingrained in the kerb that BANES have had to arrange manual diggers to clear it out. This has been done to a certain extent although rather half-heartedly as only one of the double yellow lines is currently visible. The matter is ongoing.

Within the village litter is not too bad and thanks, as ever, to those who help keep the verges litter free.

We have also approached Highways England to attend to the overgrown hedge along the northern side of the Warminster Road. But they are saying that it is the responsibility of the landowners. We are drafting a reply to them as we consider that there is an element of risk for landowners to cut the hedge along that side of the Warminster Road as the pavement is narrow and the road is busy with heavy vehicles. The matter is ongoing.

There is a dangerous pavement at the junction of Down Lane and the Warminster Road; we have reported this several times to BANES and Highways England, and action has been promised.

Speed on our roads

There have been police speed cameras along Bathampton Lane which have recorded many speeding motorists.

The Speedwatch team continue to monitor traffic along the Warminster Road and Bathampton Lane. Currently there is a team of about 10 people and more volunteers are always needed if you can spare just one or two hours a month. The parking issue has somewhat been addressed now that parking at the George has been solved. We would like to extend our special thanks to the George for the free car park - this has helped traffic flow throughout the village.

Highways Report (Cont'd.)**The Canal Path**

There is nothing much to report on the canal path.

Conclusion

May I take this opportunity of thanking those who have worked hard and volunteered their time and effort to make our roads safer and cleaner. If you would like to help in any way, please do come and see me at the end of this meeting.

Footpath Report**Cllr. D.Mayo**

In the absence of Cllr. Mayo, the Chairman read his report.

The parish council continues to keep footpaths in check and has performed regular cuts of the paths throughout the year. Our small but growing team of volunteers is getting the work done in less time. Please let Cllr Mayo know if you would like to help out.

Communications Report

The Chairman then said that we lack a Communications Lead at present but if you read the Newsletter you will know that you can follow us on twitter [at @bathamtonpc](#) to get updates on events and issues affecting the village. We also try to retweet items of wider interest such as events in Bath. We also have a Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/bathamton](#), but without a communications lead, we are unable to maintain it.

For official stuff and Minutes from our regular Parish Council meetings you can visit [www.bathamtonparishcouncil.org.uk](#).

Conclusion

Before I draw the meeting to a close I would like to thank the management committee of the village hall for their hard work in keeping this wonderful community asset available for all.

My final task is to remind you of the many other people that support the parish council.

Keith Rossiter for all his work on the local green spaces and also for recent work on looking at options for the village shop..

Julie Reed and a team of volunteers organise and distribute the Newsletter.

Alan Saunders, our handyman

The volunteers who maintain the footpaths and those who are developing and maintaining the new riverside area.

Terry & Gill Gazzard who have taken on the litter picking that Sandy Carter started.

And of course **Don Smith**, our Clerk, keeps us right.

I do have an extra special thank you. Denys Clarke has acted as our highly valued consultant to the planning group for many years. He is also the artist and designer of the wonderful Bathampton map that adorns many homes in the village. Denys has decided that now is the time to step down from his role with the Parish Council. We would just like to offer him a little thank you and acknowledgement of his many years of service. I am pleased to say that Stephen Dalley Smith has agreed to be our new consultant and the planning team are looking forward to working with him.

Last but not least I would like to thank our Councillors and also their partners who put up with all the phone calls, meetings and reading with very good grace.

Questions

1) Susan Shaw (High Street) asked first about the Network Rail site. She was told that we are asking for the gravelled area to be returned to grass. It is an S.S.I and English Nature might be able to bring some pressure to bear on Network Rail.

She also asked about the willow tree at the bottom end of The Normans. She said that the leaves are continually blocking the drains and the owner had promised to get it severely pruned but nothing had happened yet. The Clerk said that he would look out the previous correspondence..

2) Jane Warren (Devonshire Road) said that one of the factors influencing her move to Bathampton had been the presence of a shop. She was disappointed that it had since closed down. She wondered if there was a possibility of it being re-opened as a community shop. She was told that it had been sold and the plans of the new owner were not known. If a Planning Application is put in for a change of use, the Parish Council will object.

3) Julie Reid said that with the improvements in Mill Lane, she was disappointed that no street lighting had been installed. She was told that it was the Parish Council's wish that there should be a dark area separating Batheaston from Bathampton.

The Chairman then welcomed Cheryl Cooke and Terry Wagstaff to talk to us about
Safer Routes to School and the **Conker Crossing**.

Finally, the Chairman introduced Jess Milton from Bath & N.E.S. Council to talk on
The Power of Movement to Improve Health