

Bathampton Parish Council

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Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at 7.30p.m. on Monday, 15th., May 2017 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.

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

We still have one position 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 Fiona Powell and Emma Adams from the Bathampton Meadows Alliance.

Minutes of the 2016 Annual Parish Meeting.

Minutes of the 2016 Annual Parish 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..... I declare the minutes adopted.

Chairman's report.

Cllr. M.Brennan

Finance

Although our accounts for the year ended 31 March 2017 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 2016/17 we had income of £26,469 which is lower than the previous year by around £1400. The precept raised through council taxes was the same at £23,000. In the previous year we received a grant of £1000 for the installation of an accessible swing. The remaining £400 reduction in income arose because BANES are reducing the council tax support grant we receive from £1,270 to nil over the 4 years to 2020. This means we will have to look at how we manage our costs carefully.

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 £2,100 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. 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 £552. We paid £ 3,468 for the amenities of the village – the largest part of which by far is grass cutting and £1,200 for the new accessible swing.

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

Other costs include the cost of the newsletter, maintaining equipment, payments to our planning adviser etc. Our total expenditure was £ 23,673 representing a surplus for the year of £2,796. Our bank balance at year end was £ 45,862. Some of this will be spent in the next few weeks on a new fence around the play area. We would also like to make a grant of £1000 to Bathampton Meadows Alliance to support the work they are doing in coordinating the fight against the planned park and ride. We will hear more later about the campaign but the next stage will be to challenge the planning application and we will need to be well advised. There will be an opportunity to discuss this later – and in particular we are keen to hear parishioners views on whether you are supportive of us giving funds to the Alliance.

After paying for the fence we expect to have about £40,000 of cash over and above our annual operating costs. As a village we have substantial uncertainty regarding the potential Park and Ride and the threat that the proposed link road could turn out to be a flyover over the village. Even if these threats do not require us to finance legal costs or similar, our play area is dated and investigations show that even small changes can cost 10's of thousands of pounds.

I am not going to say much about the Park and Ride as we will hear about that later – but looking back at my notes from this meeting last year – we were hopeful that if BANES was still determined to proceed with an East of Bath Park and Ride they might select a site which was less damaging to the local environment. Now we know this is not true and they are determined to push ahead with a large Park and Ride on the Meadows. It is also clear that Site F, which was the least popular site during the BANES consultation exercise, is looking more and more likely.

The second issue that is also causing concern is that the threat of a link road across the valley is still being discussed. Both of the local MPs are in favour of a road for very different reasons. There is much discussion of a link road but no concrete plan. We know from past attempts that moving the road by only a few hundred metres has a major impact on how it will be used. We are therefore very concerned that the local Bath MP continues to make statements about the impact that the road will have on Bath traffic when no one knows the impact until a scheme is actually proposed. As a village, people currently have different views – if you live on the High Street and find the traffic levels unbearable then a road somewhere down the valley and out of sight might be attractive – but if the modelling shows that people won't drive out of Bath to avoid Cleveland Bridge and the road is then re proposed as a Dry Arch link to the Batheaston bypass which will fly over the village you may feel differently.

We note that a link road does not appear in Highways England's latest route strategy for the South West, although they do refer to issues with congestion on the A46 and stability issues on the A36 and A46. It is clear that BANES are also 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. It is then likely that any link road would become an issue for the West of England Mayor and BANES. This is concerning as BANES do not operate the rigorous governance processes that we would expect if Highways England was involved in approving a financial case. In any case any solid proposals are a long way off with not even a glimmer of funding for planning stages let alone any road building.

The other issue of course is where the road would be. Initial rumours were of a road crossing from Warleigh to Claverton but Councillor Tony Clark assures us there is no "black line on a map" so the threat that the proposed road could be a flyover over Bathampton is very real. I know there will be mixed views on whether people hate or support the idea of a link road and I invite you to take a chance in the open session to clarify any issues and to tell us your views over a glass of wine.

Planning & Conservation Report

Cllr. L.King

Land between Miller Walk and Simons Close / 'Leylandii Field'

The application for 4 self-build houses on the 'leylandii field' was refused and then went to appeal where it was dismissed. Mrs Vivien then made a statutory challenge against this but in November the Cardiff Crown Court ruled against this.

The proposal to upgrade the 'access track' was also refused and appealed against, but the appeal was dismissed in January. Meanwhile, the track was vandalised and an illegal gravel track laid on land belonging jointly to the residents of Miller Walk. BANES investigated and made an enforcement order to return the track and footpath to their prior state, which was done by the Miller Walk residents.

We understand that the CPS is currently reviewing its decision not to proceed against Mrs Vivien for further acts regarding the access track after it was returned to its original state after being 'vandalised'.

The decision on the BANES Placemaking Plan, which attempts to ensure that the field and track form part of the 'open green space' visible from Bathampton Lane, should be made very soon now.

The plan also includes the 'triangular field'.

Down House

An application was made to build a new house in the garden of Down House. Planning Permission was refused and appealed but the appeal was dismissed.

Woodside, Warminster Road

An application has been made to build two new houses either side of the existing house, together with garages and parking areas. No decision has been made at time of writing.

Five Valleys, Warminster Road

The application to demolish the existing house and replace with a new 5-bed house has been permitted, subject to arboricultural & ecological conditions.

University Car Park

This was refused in May 2015. The university appealed against the refusal but the appeal has now been dismissed.

Rail Electrification/Sub-station

Network Rail are still proposing to pull together all the various documents, plans and methodologies required to enable them to submit a new planning application to move the proposed substation site away from the school. It is still intended that this will happen, but due to the decision not to electrify the railway between Bristol and Bath, the planning application to move the proposed substation site away from the school is less urgent and will not be made yet.

Jewson's Yard (The Old Timber Yard) 15 New Houses (including 5 affordable houses)

Work continues, albeit slowly, on this project. The developers Charlcombe Homes put together a detailed plan for construction and deliveries, which meant restrictions on parking.

Planning & Conservation Report (Cont'd.)

Batheaston/Bathampton Pedestrian and Cyclist Bridge and track.

We now have a formal constitution for the volunteer group, called 'Friends of Bathampton Meadows Riverside'. The management plan identifies 11 distinct areas and will enable us to plan out the projects for the coming years. Several one-off and regular donations have been received, meaning that regular grass-cutting is covered and providing funds for those future projects.

Peter Fear is doing a sterling job on the day-to-day management of the track and the surrounding area for Bathampton and Batheaston. The volunteer group worked hard to clear the ground where the benches and tables and notice boards have since been installed. The small wooden bridge across the ditch is in place. A path leads over the footbridge, under the Toll Bridge and into the car park of Bathampton Mill.

Signage on the roads has been installed by BANES,

Updates and details are on notice boards at either end of the track.

The area figures prominently in BANES new Waterscape Plan. This is a proposal to make better use of areas adjoining Bath's river and canal. As far as we are concerned it means joining up with other bodies and hopefully better access to funding. At the moment it is only a proposal, which BANES are consulting on, and they want our views. I don't know how many people are aware of this, but I would urge anyone interested to look at it and feed back to BANES. I have various leaflets available at the back of the room for you to look at or take away.

April Newsletter – The George – Lin King

After having been quiet since it was raised last year, The George announced in February that they were going to install Pay & Display meters in the car park, which they duly did. The only ticket is for 3 hours and costs £2, refundable if drinks are bought at the bar. Many groups within the village were affected, and a meeting was held to determine what we were going to do. Some issues were quickly resolved; the residents of Canal Terrace have been given permits to continue to park in the car park, and Greene King have said that the parking inspector will not check the car park during agreed times for dropping off and picking-up of schoolchildren. Two groups of people are more severely affected, the volunteers who help in the church and staff and visitors at the school; permits are being sought for them but at the time of writing GK are asking £1 per day for the permits, and the annual cost of 6 permits for the church and 20 for the school is unaffordable. GK say they are keen to help so we have explained this and we are hoping for a better offer. We have been unable to arrange a solution for any other people using the car park.

The High Street and other roads in Bathampton are now being used for parking. As a result of this it has become obvious that unless GK change their mind, we do have a parking problem in the village. We are therefore working with BANES and other interested parties to see if we can find another suitable place in Bathampton, longer-term, for parking cars. This will need to consider not only who should use any car park, but potential abuse.

Leisure & Amenities Report

Cllr. J.helps

I am responsible for the village leisure and amenities

Allotments

Turnover of allotments has been relatively high this year and we have one person on the waiting list.

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.

Playground

A new fence is to be installed around the playground and will incorporate the trees and bins, thus giving a little more space and shade. The type chosen was because of its low maintenance and longevity.

Regular inspections are held and we have reserves to enable us to pay for repairs and maintenance on the play equipment and surrounds.

The playground working group currently consists of three members. This year we have completed consultations with playground designers and have compiled a list of priorities, taking into account the results of our survey. Our list has now gone to children in the school to get their views. We certainly now have a clearer picture of the likely costs of different equipment and installation. It now requires funding to make any of this a reality. So we are now seeking someone or a group of people who would like to take on the challenge of being fundraisers.

Once again we had a Christmas tree outside the village hall. Thank you to Alan Saunders, Ray Book and the playgroup 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.

Highways Report

Cllr. J.Bird

1. Speed on our roads

The Parish Council is aware of the speed issues throughout the village and we continue to put pressure on the various authorities regarding speed. Success is variable, but we are optimistic that sensible measures will eventually be introduced and enforced. We are in regular contact with BANES and Avon & Somerset Police for assistance. With few incidents on our roads, and given funding shortages, it is difficult to bring-in immediate changes.

However, I am pleased to report that some steps, albeit small, are being taken in raising awareness of our problems.

At present there is a 60 mph speed limit along Mill Lane which is a nonsense - we are hopeful that proposed monitoring by BANES of the speed limit along this road will lead to a speed reduction in line with that throughout the rest of the village.

The High Street remains an issue with it being narrow and congested, especially that we now have more cars parking along that road and Bathampton Lane. I recently noticed cars parked along the canal bridge when driving past which was very dangerous! I understand BANES were informed of this and some action was taken to penalise those parked cars.

Highways Report (Cont'd.)

1. Speed on our roads(Cont'd.)

I am pleased to report that speed monitoring has been implemented on our village roads by a group of volunteers taking an active part in running the Community Speedwatch Scheme. The Scheme has been running since October 2016 in liaison with Avon & Somerset police. You may have noticed a comprehensive article in the May 2017 issue of the Local Look, if you have not read it, may I encourage you to do so. More volunteers are always welcome if you can spare just one or two hours a month.

You will recall that Warminster Road is the responsibility of Highways England, and it is difficult to get them to support or cooperate with us on any of our suggestions. The other roads are the responsibility of BANES and I am pleased to say that two representatives from BANES recently met with the coordinator of the CSW Scheme, Sarah Tovey, to look at some further solutions to speed monitoring.

There is talk of speed monitoring equipment being installed along Warminster Road. We have also been told by BANES that they may install a Vehicle Activated Sign on Bathampton Lane to remind cars of the speed along that road, which carries a 20 mph limit.

We will continue to press BANES, together with the CSW coordinators, to make drivers aware of the speed limits on our roads and to encourage more considerate driving.

2. The Canal Path

As you will be aware, the resurfacing project has now completed and, after a few issues with speedy cyclists, matters seemed to have settled. We do hope that all walkers, joggers, cyclists, as well as those living alongside the canal path are happy with the way it is being used. I understand that the Canal and River Trust have introduced signage to encourage sensible use of the path and I would urge cyclists to take heed of walkers, children, dogs and joggers.

3. Road Surfaces

Some parts of our road surfaces seem to be in a poor state after the winter months, however, we have no indication as to when, or if, BANES will remedy this.

4. Street Cleansing

This too appears to have become an issue. We are assured that our streets and footpaths are cleaned regularly, there is some room for improvement we feel and it remains an item on our agenda.

5. Bus Services

As many of you will be aware, the bus services throughout the village have changed. We are aware that these changes and the cost has inconvenienced some people, especially students travelling to school. The PC has raised this as a concern, however, we feel powerless as BANES have been uncommitted on the issue. We would suggest that if you have strong views on this, to please contact BANES. *(The contract will run for 3 or 4 years so it is pretty set in stone but we should still encourage them to complain to BANES.)*

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

The main item to report from Footpaths is the working parties that keep the surface vegetation under control as part of our Parish Agency agreement. There are 16km. of footpaths in the parish, but we concentrate on four paths:

- From the end of Holcombe Lane to the swing bridge
 - From the swing bridge to the A36
 - The triangular field
 - From Candy's Bridge to Grosvenor Bridge that runs between the railway and tow path

We are about to undertake the second cut of the year and the volunteers do the work on Thursday and Saturday evenings.

Communications Report

Cllr. L. McMurray

The website is considered to be for all formal documents and announcements of forthcoming events. It will therefore have the Minutes of Parish Council meetings (once approved), Agendas of meetings and any notices from B.& N.E.S.Council.

A profile has also been created for the Parish Council on Twitter, and a page on Facebook. These are considered to be less formal and both support the website. However they provide an important method for engaging and interacting with the local (and wider) community.

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. The committee will be holding their Annual Meeting in the small hall on Thursday, 25th., May at 7.30pm and all are welcome.

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

Keith Rossiter for an enormous amount of work on the Placemaking Plan.

Denys Clarke, our highly valued consultant to the planning group.

Julie Reed and a team of volunteers who 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.

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

I would also like to thank **Sandy Carter**, who for years, has kept our village tidy with regular Friday litter picking. Sandy is leaving the village and will be sadly missed but I am delighted to say that she is passing over her Hi-Vis jacket and litter picking kit to two new volunteers. An enormous thank you to Terry & Gill Gazzard who have agreed to take on the mantle!!

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) **Mr. John Roberts** said that he was concerned at the high cost of the fencing (£6000) for the childrens' play area. He was told that we had obtained three quotes and we had chosen what we considered was the most cost effective.

- 2) **Mr. John Roberts** mentioned car parking in Bathampton now that “The George” has installed Pay & Display meters.. Cllr. King said that we are looking for sites to open for car parking. One is the narrow field alongside Tyining Road. This is owned by B.& N.E.S.Council and could alleviate the parking problem for the school staff. The other is the field beyond “The George” car park. This, however, is owned by the pub chain and is unlikely to give free parking.
- 3) **Mr. Keith Rossiter** asked why should we be trying to open a new car park in Bathampton when we are opposed to the Park & Ride?.
- 4) **Mr. Keith Rossiter** said that the cycle path route across the meadows was excellent and was being well-used.
- 5) **Mr.Peter Robinson** said that there were now more cars parking at Bathampton Mill as a result of “The George” charges.

The Chairman then welcomed Fiona Powell and Emma Adams from the Bathampton Meadows Alliance and invited them to speak to us concerning opposition to the Park & Ride East of Bath.