

Bathampton Parish Council

Newsletter February 2021

Chairman's notes

It is very good news that many of our over 70's and vulnerable people have either received their vaccine or have a date to attend the Pavilion. None the less we are still in lockdown and we all rely on being able to get out safely to take exercise around the village. I want to say a massive thank you to the people who look after the public rights of way in the village that either cross or border their land. We all appreciate the efforts you are making to make these public spaces safe when we need them the most. Even if you don't "own" a public right of way I know a lot of you help to keep the various paths clear with deft use of secateurs etc when you encounter overhanging brambles on your walks. Keep up the good work !!

I am also putting in a request if your home fronts on to a pavement to make sure that it is free of slippery leaf mould and overhanging hedges. If you keep your own stretch safe (and maybe help out any neighbours who are less able to clear the thoroughfare) it would be much appreciated. This helps people to pass safely, with appropriate distancing on all the village pavements.

In our last newsletter we mentioned the problems at the Canal and River Trust (CRT) bin area – which had become a public health hazard. I am pleased to say CRT have cleaned the area up and plan to improve signage and BANES enforcement officers are keeping an eye on the site. CRT are recruiting two canal rangers to cover the stretch between Bath and Bradford on Avon and we hope that having regular patrols will help the situation. CRT are also looking at vermin control but this is made more difficult because there are water voles in the area – and they are a protected species. The bin facility is only for the use of licenced canal users but the majority of the problem is caused by fly tipping by non authorised users, CRT have seen a massive increase in fly tipping throughout their network over the last year. A number of people have mentioned seeing fly tipping taking place. CRT have asked that anyone who sees it in action tries to take photographs or at least makes a note of the time and people involved and any number plates etc that might prove helpful in tracing the offenders. Please send details to our clerk Liz and she will pass them on to CRT.

I also wanted to comment on the amazing hedge laying that has been carried out along the canal path by CRT volunteers – led by Ian Reid. It will be great to see how it develops as we enter spring. Unfortunately Covid means that work has had to stop for now but they will restart when they can and are always looking for volunteers to be trained in the art of hedge laying. If you are interested you can contact CRT or speak to the volunteers when they return.

I am delighted to see the Spar shop being well used and also reports online of the new owner making heroic efforts to undertake a two hour walk from his home to open up in the recent snow. However we continue to receive complaints from local residents who are repeatedly woken up by early morning deliveries to the shop, often before 7am. There have also been instances of people being blocked in by lorries delivering to the shop when they are trying to get to work. We have written to the shop owner twice now to seek a discussion or a meeting to discuss the deliveries but have not received any response. Hopefully we will get to speak to the owner soon but if you are inconvenienced by deliveries before 8am you might want to speak to the shop staff directly.

We continue to meet remotely on the third Thursday of each month at 7.30pm but as ever we welcome members of the public to our meetings. Agendas are available on our website along with dial in details. This month I am delighted to welcome Patrick Marsh as a new councillor. This once again brings our numbers up to our full complement of 9.

Stay safe

Moirá Brennan

Ready, steady, census

The 10 yearly census is almost upon us. Households across Bathampton will soon be asked to take part in the nationwide survey of housing and the population. It has been carried out every decade since 1801, with the exception of 1941.

Information from the digital-first census will help decide how services are planned and funded in our local area. This could mean things like doctors' surgeries, housing or new bus routes.

Households will receive a letter with a unique access code in the post, allowing them to complete their questionnaire online. Paper questionnaires will be available on request. Census day is March 21.

For more information, visit census.gov.uk.

Highways

Tony Purpuri

A number of residents have recently commented on the continued speeding and dangerous driving that occurs on the A36 through the village. The village used to run a speed watch group. Teams use a radar gun issued by the police to identify and report vehicles that exceed the speed limit. There may be interest in reinvigorating this group, however it required volunteers to be part of a speed watch rota and also someone to coordinate the efforts. If you are interested or would like to know more please get in touch with Tony Purpuri. Contact details can be found at the end of the newsletter.

You may have noticed some new cameras on lamp posts in the village. These are funded by BANES. The aim is to monitor any changes in traffic after the introduction of the Clean Air Zone which starts in March.

Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs)

TROs are orders to make changes to parking restrictions etc on roads. 4 TROs affecting the village have been subject to consultation (normally signalled by notices attached to lampposts). These were for no parking to be introduced in parts of Bathampton Lane and Down Lane (to improve safety at junctions and improve access for the D1 bus) The Normans and Trossachs Drive. All have been approved (with the Bathampton Lane lines being extended based on responses to the consultation). We should see new double yellow lines appearing soon. We have asked BANES to consider further TROs at the Holcombe Lane Down Lane junction and also at the junction by the surgery. These will be consulted on in due course.

Claiming footpaths as rights of way

Gill Huggins and David Mayo

Do you have half an hour to help us make sure some of the much loved paths in Bathampton can be officially recognised as Public Rights of Way? We have already successfully claimed a right of way over the swing bridge but now need to obtain evidence of use of other well used and much loved paths.

The paths are:

From Candy's Bridge at the bottom of Meadow Lane, turning right (east) walking down the slope to the tow path (about 30m)

The short cut from the south west corner of Holcombe Vale between the houses emerging on the road leading to Holcombe Vale (approx 80m)

The short path from the edge of Hantone Hill to the old tram track (approx 100m)

The path above the Bath Skyline path on Bathampton Down overlooking Bathampton, from the top of the track from St Georges Hill and leading to the woods (approx 1km)

From the University "Westwood" accommodation along the tree line and meeting with an existing footpath that leads to Sham Castle (approx 200m)

From Dry Arch south east through Bathampton Woods towards the American Museum and via stone steps to Bushey Norwood.

If you have used any of these paths please look on our website for the forms you need to evidence your use.

<https://bathamptonparishcouncil.org.uk/claiming-new-footpaths>. **If you would like to discuss the routes or can't access the forms online contact Gill Huggins (460047) or David Mayo (466875).**

The current coronavirus situation has limited all our activities including our opportunities to meet and discuss the ways in which we might respond to the climate and ecology emergency. We invite anyone with ideas, views or suggestions to contact us so that we may take them into account when we are able to make progress in our planning and action. However, reversing climate change is as much about all the changes we can make ourselves as the wider changes that governments and large industry need to make. We have put together a list based on people's suggestions.

1. Avoid food waste; buy local and seasonal food when you can in order to reduce food miles. Consider growing some of your own if you have a garden.
2. Compost vegetable waste for your own garden. Make your garden more environmentally friendly. Introduce bee friendly plants, avoid pesticides, provide shelter for wildlife.
3. Maximise cultivated or lawned areas of gardens to help absorb increased rainfall associated with climate change and minimise non-porous paved areas.
4. Avoid palm oil in ultra-processed food and some cleaning products and toiletries.
5. Buy less stuff, make it last; eliminate single use plastics...use own water bottles and bags, avoid packaged products when you can. Reduce, reuse and recycle. Make use of repair cafes and the Bath library of things.
6. Get home energy advice via the Council's Energy at Home helpline and see if you can make your home more energy efficient. Switch to a green energy supplier. Make use of smart meters to identify high energy use. Consider how you can improve the insulation of your home.
7. Walk, cycle and use public transport as much as you can. Use your car less and take fewer flights. Consider an electric car as your next car. Consider car sharing for commutes and school runs (as and when life gets back to normal) take fewer flights or pay to carbon offset your flights when you do.
8. Donate money to charities that tackle climate change.
9. Reduce meat and dairy consumption or introduce meat free days.
10. Talk to friends, neighbours and share ideas on what to do. Engage with your local school, employer and become active in your community through a local community group, or through your Parish Council. Work with others to decide what your local community could do.

You probably recognise several things in the list you're already doing. No-one can be expected to change everything at once but if we all try and do a little bit more we will help to preserve our planet for future generations.

How to make your home greener and save money

There is a lot of helpful information on the BANES sponsored www.energyathome.org.uk or you can phone them for advice on 0800 038 5680.

Bath and West Community Energy (BWCE) have a great summary called Cut Costs, Cut Cold, Cut Carbon at www.bwce.coop/bwce-briefings

Green Homes Grants have been extended to March 2022 - more information is available on gov.uk

Slightly Batty

Did you know that Bath and Bathampton are special places for bats. The River Avon Bat Project has more information. Roosting places eg in caves on the Downs and the proximity to the river valley mean we have up to 12 species of bats. Bats suffer from lighting at night when they are out hunting. BANES have worked with a local university to make sure they understand the impact of street lighting on bats in particular and choose light fittings accordingly. I am pleased to say that all of our street lights on the roads controlled by BANES dim overnight (11pm to 6am). If you want to learn more about the effect of outside lights on the feeding habits of bats check out the Bat Conservation Trust – and maybe have a think about whether your property has lights on overnight that might be damaging our local bat population. You might even save some money and some carbon by switching them off.

Playground

Unfortunately, a recent inspection determined that the zip-wire was at the end of its life and consequently we were forced to decommission it. The playground is now dated, many pieces of equipment are in need of being replaced. We have been applying for grants to fund the playground update project, however with the zip wire in need of being replaced there will be a shortfall. We will be looking to undertake fundraising to make this up. If you have any ideas or are keen to be involved, please contact Liz Daly or Tony Purpuri. The playground is a vital part of our village community and this project will ensure it will remain so for many years to come.

Please, no dogs on the playground and playing field

We continue to receive complaints from concerned residents regarding dogs in the playground. There are notices posted both at the entrance to the playing field and playground stating that no dogs are allowed unless they are assistance dogs. Sadly, we have been in the position of having to clear up excrement near play equipment.

Toxocariasis is an infection caused by roundworm parasites that are commonly found in the faeces of dogs, cats and foxes and usually affect young children. The parasites can live in soil for years and children can come into contact with contaminated soil when they play and put their hands in their mouths. This is why it is common practice for dogs to be banned from public playgrounds and playing fields.

Allotments

Jan Helps

All allotment plots are now allocated and we have welcomed a few new tenants. We are aware that we have deer entering the site and suspect they are gaining access from the southern boundary where there is a section of low fence. We intend to replace it with something taller in an attempt to make access less convenient although we can't make the site completely deer proof. We are in the process of finding fencing companies willing and able to quote for us. Any suggestions or recommendations would be gratefully received. Please contact Liz, our clerk.

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Website bathamptonparishcouncil.org.uk You can also find us on Facebook (Bathampton Community) and Twitter (Bathamtonpc)