

Bathampton Parish Council Newsletter

November 2021

Chairman's notes

In September the Parish Council took the decision to hand back control and responsibility for Jubilee Gardens to the Canal and River Trust (CRT). Many of you will not be aware that the grassy area with benches between the canal bridge and The George is called Jubilee Gardens. As we approach 70 years of the Queens reign it is strange to remember that the gardens were actually named for her 25th jubilee. In 1976 the Parish Council leased an old allotment with a large hedge by the canal path. At the time the canal was not navigable and was dry along many sections. The Parish Council thought the area would be a place where people who lived in Bathampton could picnic. They took down the hedge and opened the area up. At the time the new Playground in Holcombe Lane was only 5 years old and I suspect few people from outside the village would consider walking along the canal path (such as it was). Today the area is a much loved and well used stopping place for all users of the canal path. The Parish Council concluded that CRT are much better placed to deal with the issues that come with responsibility for the gardens. Alan Saunders has looked after Jubilee Gardens for many years and it is has always been an asset. I am delighted to say that CRT volunteers will take over looking after the gardens and their first work day is planned for 2 November. If you would like to help look after Jubilee Gardens you can find out how to volunteer at <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/volunteer>. CRT are also thinking about how they can use the area for events.

I hope you all enjoyed the village show. It was a fantastic event. I have to say a massive thank you to the Village Show Committee and all the volunteers who helped out at the event. The whole show relies on those volunteers and without them it cannot happen. If you enjoyed the show then please consider taking part next year – either as part of the committee or by helping to set up or take down, make teas, man the bar or lots of other vital tasks.

At a recent Bathavon forum we heard that the West of England Rural Network (WERN) has funding to extend their Village Agent project to cover our area. The project has been working in Chew Valley for 11 years and is aimed at helping people to live independent lives. There is a helpful case study video on the WERN website which explains what they can do. They are recruiting for five new roles. Details will be posted on <https://www.wern.org.uk/village-agents-vacancy>

As ever I am ending with a plea for councillors. We now have 3 vacancies and only 6 councillors in place. We met a few people at the village show who expressed an interest in becoming a councillor. We would really urge anyone who is thinking about it to come along to a meeting or speak to one of the councillors. The role is very rewarding and you get to meet local people and help to make Bathampton a better place to live

Moira Brennan

Village Hall

Most of the activities at the Village Hall are now back up and running. For adults you can do everything from art classes, play bridge, learn Scottish dancing, attend yoga or keep fit (including chair keep fit) right in the heart of the village. For children there are Brownies, Playgroup and dance classes. We are also taking bookings for private events and you can contact Kate our booking secretary on bathamptonvillagehall@outlook.com

The Meadows

The 'temporary' river rescue cabinet near the tollbridge has now been moved further along the track towards the Batheaston bridge, near the willow dome. The concrete base and the post for the permanent river rescue cabinet have been installed and the new cabinet should be in place soon.

Lin King

Leisure and Amenities

Jan Helps and Liz Daly

Playground Project During the Parish Council meeting held on the 21st October, the Council agreed to allocate £33,000 of their reserved funds towards the Playground Project. This leaves the Council with general reserves at the minimum level that they are advised to hold to operate successfully.

With the donations so kindly received to date this brings the Playground Project total to around £35,000. The project itself is expected to cost between £80-£100,000 if replacing most or all of the existing Playground equipment and for resurfacing works to take place so we will still need to apply for grants and seek alternative funding.

The Parish Council is aiming to set the precept (our share of council tax) to create surplus funds against budget at the end of each Financial Year to help allocate additional and regular funds towards the Project as well as continuing to apply for grants. Unfortunately grant applications to date and the application for funding to the National Lottery have been unsuccessful due to a higher level of applications received and in view of there being additional local priorities due to Covid-19.

New donations are always gratefully received to help us get closer to our target. Please visit our Go-fundMe page <https://gofund.me/6ebf4603> or contact the Clerk directly. Again, we would like to thank those who have donated to date and we will continue to keep you up to date on progress.

Finally, it's with great delight to have the Aerial Runway back up and running thanks to a very kind donation from a member of the community and the receipt of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money. It's great to see the equipment being enjoyed by so many.

Highways

Tony Purpuri highways.bathamptonPC@gmail.com

Pollution Monitoring A combination of the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) restrictions in Bath city centre and temporary closure of Cleveland Bridge has meant that Bathampton is often used as a diversionary route, with increased traffic volumes and fears of air pollution. The Parish Council has actively represented residents' concerns in meetings with BANES. Whilst the existing air quality monitors show that pollution levels in the High Street are well within the statutory levels, some residents have expressed concern that the monitors had been installed too high. As a result, the BANES CAZ team has agreed to install additional air quality monitors at "breathing" height, attached to the properties of volunteer Bathampton residents. The aim is to record levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), caused by vehicle emissions.

Impact of CAZ We also met with BANES CAZ team to look at the data from the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras which have been installed in the village. The analysis is still relatively immature. Hopefully in future newsletters we will have something more definitive to report. Additional monitoring will start in November and last for 3 months. We have also requested greater granularity of the traffic volume data, especially concerning the continued issues of HGVs coming through the village. One piece of good news has been a significant improvement in compliance of light goods vehicles (LGVs) meeting the CAZ Euro 6 standards. We were concerned that non compliant vehicles would divert through the village to avoid the CAZ. While BANES report that they are seeing higher numbers of LGVs throughout the authority area early data shows that 67% of the LGVs passing through Bathampton are now compliant "clean" vehicles compared to only 14% in 2017 (BANES base period).

Speedwatch We continue to support the Bathampton Speedwatch, and several residents have stepped forward to volunteer. With the additional volunteers we are engaging with the Police to approve other sites through the village. The more volunteers we have the more sessions we can run and the more sites we can cover. At the moment whilst the new volunteers are training we are limited to one or two sessions per fortnight at one site (there are only 2 volunteers regularly going out). Thank you to everyone involved in trying to make Bathampton a safer place.

Bus Service We have received a number of letters about the very poor service experienced recently on the number 11 bus service. Cllr Sarah Warren took this up on our behalf with First. First are experiencing problems with recruiting staff and also staff who are ill or isolating. They are also suffering with lack of access to parts to keep the bus fleet running. They are working to address these issues. The number 11 bus is a supported (ie subsidised) bus service and management of these services now rests with the West of England Combined Authority (WECA). WECA have recently issued a consultation on the future of supported bus services including the number 11 bus. We strongly recommend that if you want to keep what bus services we have that you take part in the consultation which is open until 28 November at <https://consultation.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/>

Footpaths

David Beard footpaths.bathamptonPC@gmail.com

A big thank you to everyone who completed user evidence forms in support of the application to register six Bathampton footpaths as public rights of way (the others are already registered). The six paths are:

1. Hantone Hill to the tramway footpath
2. Holcombe Vale to The Green
3. The shortcut from the Canal towpath to Candy Bridge
4. From Fussell's Wood across Bathampton Down
5. South of Sham Castle to the University
6. Hengrove Wood towards the American Museum and on to Bushey Norwood

The Parish Council is working with BANES to ensure all local footpaths are fully registered as public rights of way before the 2026 deadline and we are making great progress in building the body of evidence to demonstrate uninterrupted public use over a twenty-year period. If you have walked these paths and would like to contribute to the user evidence, please download a user evidence form from our website or contact David Beard (contact details below). The next stage in the process is to make a formal request for registration and to notify landowners of our intention; this is likely to begin in December.

Climate and Ecology Emergency

Jan Helps

We continue to support BANES in its declaration of a climate emergency and a member of the Parish Council attends all meetings focussed on addressing the issue. This has given us an opportunity to find out how other parishes and local authorities are responding and to share ideas, concerns and information with each other as well as with our local BANES councillors and the sustainability team.

We have been asked by the BANES sustainability team to identify what our priorities and areas of interest are within Bathampton, from a list provided by them. Individually, we may all have slightly differing views but from our communications with residents of the village we have concluded that transport and home energy efficiency are the priorities. These two areas also generate the most CO2 within the village.

Whilst we can all do our bit our ability to achieve significant change is largely dictated by government and local authority policy and funding. We will continue to pursue our focus on safe routes to schools and the conker crossing and the improvement to unsafe junctions within the village in order to encourage walking. We are actively engaged with BANES with regard to the inadequate provision of public transport and the current bus service, all of which give people little choice but to travel by car. We are aware that many houses within the village do not have the capacity to install electric car chargers. As electric vehicles are becoming a priority, we will work with the necessary organisations to identify how this could be addressed for householders who don't have the ability to charge at home.

We are fortunate to live in a green and leafy part of the world and we continue to support our natural environment by protecting our footpaths and working with other organisations like Cotswold wardens and the National trust to protect and nurture the woodlands and water meadows.

The villages in the north east of BANES are in the early stages of putting together a climate emergency group. The intention is to attract individuals and groups who wish to be involved who can offer help, expertise and advice. More information will be publicised as it becomes available.

Help with home energy efficiency improvements If you're on income related benefits or have a gross household income of less than £30,000 a year, then you are likely to be eligible for home improvements of up to £10,000 if your home is Energy Performance Certificate rated D, E, F or G rated. This could include measures such as Solar PV, insulation or a new front door. City Energy have secured £7.5m of Green Homes Grant government funding covering local authorities including this area to deliver FREE home energy efficiency improvements to eligible customers. **To find out more tel. 0800 038 5680 or email. energyathome@bathnes.gov.uk**

The energyathome website has lots of ideas for low cost and no cost ways of reducing your energy use which will benefit the planet and your pocket.

Bathampton Luncheon Club (formerly The Maxi Club) The Lunch Club team are looking forward to starting up again with our Christmas meal on January 27th. at the Miller Room, St. Nicholas Church. All villagers over 60 are most welcome. For further information ring **Sara 460196 or Jane 466455.**

Knitting for the Bathampton Christmas Tree Bathampton WI will be knitting decorations for the community Christmas tree, in red and white/silver. If you have any spare yarn to donate (in those colours only!), please drop it off to Veronica Surgey at 4 Down Lane by mid-November at latest. If you'd like to help with the knitting, please ask Veronica for information, or email the WI at bathamptonwi@gmail.com. They can supply simple and more complicated patterns, as needed.

Carols at the Christmas Tree. Bathampton WI will be leading carol-singing at the Bathampton Christmas Tree at 5.30pm on Thursday 23 December, for about an hour. Everyone is welcome to join them: singers will stand inside the Village Hall gates and possibly also spilling over into the Methodist Church car park (permission to be requested), so that the pavement and bus stop won't be blocked. The WI will provide sheets with the words, and are now looking for a volunteer musician and confident singers to help lead the carols. If you'd like to take part, please email the WI at bathamptonwi@gmail.com.

28th Bathampton Scouts Are Back! It's been a long break but finally we can get back to Scouting activities – having fun whilst building skills, confidence and resilience amongst our 6-14-year olds. Do you know a young person who would like to join us? Our Beavers, Cubs and Scouts meet through the week in Bathampton? Can you help us? We are looking for more volunteers, to join our Leader teams, with a bit of time and energy to spare, whether on an ad hoc or a regular basis. You might have an interesting skill to teach one evening, or be keen to help supervise groups as they undertake a variety of tasks each week. In return, we can offer lively evenings, time to connect with young people, and opportunities to give back to the community. You don't need to be Bear Grylls or have any previous experience, as training is provided, you just need to enjoy having fun. If you would like to enquire about membership for 6-14-year olds, volunteer your time or offer a donation, please contact join@bathscouts.org

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