

Bathampton Parish Council

Newsletter May 2022

Chairman's Notes

After two years, when we have been unable to hold the Annual Resident's Meeting, we will hold this year's event at 7.30pm on 11 May in the Village Hall. We look forward to seeing you there. The meeting is a legacy from the Middle Ages when local councils did not exist and local decision making was carried out by meetings of the whole community, traditionally taking place in the local church vestry. The meeting is open to all electors registered in Bathampton – who have the right to attend and to speak on matters of local interest. If you have a subject which you would like to discuss at the meeting please contact Liz Daly, our Parish Clerk. We plan to cover items which we thought would be of interest including The National Trust's acquisition of the Meadows, plans for the Playground, trying to improve road safety in the village generally but particularly on the route to school. Representatives from First Bus will be attending to discuss the provision of buses in the village. As usual refreshments will be available at the end along with a chance to chat informally with fellow parishioners and members of the Council.

I am delighted that we have co-opted Rob Bash to join the council. Rob brings our number of Councillors to 7 but we still have two vacancies. If you are interested in becoming a councillor please talk to one of us or come along to a meeting at 7.30pm on the third Thursday of the month in the small room in the Village Hall or to the Annual Residents Meeting.

I am really saddened to say there have been several cases of vandalism in the village recently, including a memorial bench in the green area by the canal bridge and in the church yard. The damage seems to happen in the evenings or overnight. If anyone has any knowledge of what might be going on please contact the Parish Clerk.

Sarah Warren, who is one of our BANES ward councillors, has recently attended a meeting with First Bus. We know that our bus services have not been as reliable as they should be recently and our scheduled service has been reduced. We know there are many issues that feed into this, from staffing to obtaining parts for buses, First are also suffering because bus use has not recovered to pre Covid levels. This is a vicious circle with people less likely to use buses that are unreliable but a real risk that we will lose even more scheduled services if bus use does not increase. It seems like we are in a real use it or lose it situation.

The Platinum Jubilee. St Nicholas Church and the Parish Council are arranging for a plaque to be added to the coronation cross in the churchyard. It will be installed later in the year.

Moira Brennan

Village Hall

The Village Hall is a much used and appreciated village asset – whether you attend art or exercise classes or hold your children's birthday parties there. Managing the hall and the bookings is all carried out by volunteers supported by our fantastic Caretaker and Cleaner. The Hall has been without a Chairman for a number of years. The role is not onerous but it is vital if we are to be able to continue to keep the hall available to all. In addition the Secretary also wants to step down after 4 years in the role and we need a replacement. The role involves setting up 4 meetings a year – creating agenda's and taking minutes. The secretary also makes sure that the trustees are registered with the Charities Commission and understand their roles. If you would be interested in either of these roles please email the hall management committee at bathamptonvillagehall@outlook.com.

We are also starting to see children's parties and family events returning to the hall. If you want to book an event email us at the address above.

The Meadows

Lin King

In February I had a meeting with the National Trust (NT) team and Friends of Bathampton Meadows Riverside. The NT's aim was to talk to people who use the area, to find out what they do and what they want to see there. The Friends were one of several different groups they are meeting. We had an interesting walk through the Meadows. Basically the NT wants to keep the 'green lung' but to increase biodiversity and open it up to other users. They do not intend to do anything in the short term but will gather information and ideas and consult widely. To this end they had a table at the Bathampton Ecotogether day and will be part of the Annual Resident's Meeting on May 11th (see Chairman's notes). They are looking forward to hearing from Bathampton residents. In the meantime, the paths and grass along the 'cycle track' will continue to be cut as in previous years, but now invoices will be picked up by the NT.

Leisure and Amenities

Jan Helps and Liz Daly

Playground

New parallel bars were installed on the playing field on the 17th February and following their return it's been great to see so many children (and adults) enjoying using them.

The Playground Project is still in motion and there are plans to revisit funding opportunities over the next few months. There is currently just over £35,000 allocated towards this project. Because a full refurbishment will cost over £90,000 options to complete the project as a two phased approach are being considered. We will keep you updated on any progress but if you would like to donate you can still do so via the GoFundMe page <https://gofund.me/6ebf4603> or contact the Clerk directly on bathamptonparish-clerk@gmail.com or on 07980627391. Donations received were vital in funding the recent renewal of the zip wire.

Hedges

If you have a hedge bordering a path or your property is adjacent to a junction, please could you ensure that pedestrians, pushchairs and wheelchairs can pass easily and that sight lines are clear for drivers and cyclists. Thank you.

Highways

Tony Purpuri highways.bathamptonPC@gmail.com

Traffic Safety Study

You may recall a few months ago a flyer from the Lib Dems describing a 'traffic light study' for the canal bridge. This was as an outcome of various discussion around the Conker Crossing project and challenges with that project progressing. This study aims to find alternate solutions to improve pedestrian safety on the canal bridge and surrounding areas and is looking at all options – not just traffic lights. We expect the study, commissioned by BANES, to start within the next few months with the outcomes to contribute into a Liveable Neighbourhood application. Alongside this, we will be undertaking public consultation with residents to canvas views and opinions about the bridge but also other affected areas of Bathampton, which we will feed back to BANES so that all aspects can be considered in the Liveable Neighbourhood application. Please come to the Annual Resident's Meeting and give us your thoughts.

National Highways are planning major drainage improvement works along the A36 between Bathampton and Limpley Stoke. They tell us that that work is at the planning stage but will probably commence in summer 2022. Details have still to be agreed and any updates will feature in future newsletters.

In the meantime if you have any views on village road safety issues please email them to highways.bathamptonpc@gmail.com

Speedwatch

The village continues to operate a Speedwatch group to try and deter speeding through our streets. The latest annual statistics have been issued, and for the Bathampton Lane site (a 20 mph road) show that 21% of vehicles travel at at least 25mph, with an average speed (of those caught speeding) of 35mph, and the worst offender at 45mph.

We are in the process of having other sites approved, Warminster Road by the scout hut, and the top of Bathampton Lane. Speedwatch normally operate 3-4 sessions per month, for an hour at a time, so only

for a very small proportion of the time. We would like to do more but as ever we are limited by the number of volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering please get in touch.

A big thank you to all the volunteers, especially Barry Southern, who coordinates the group.

Footpaths

David Beard footpaths.bathamptonPC@gmail.com

Since the last newsletter, we have submitted all six applications to register popular local footpaths as public rights of way. Applications, supported by over 150 user evidence forms from local people who regularly walk along the paths, were delivered to BANES Public Rights of Way team in February and March. These are now in a legal process which may take some time to conclude. We will continue to provide updates through this newsletter. Collecting evidence in support of registration requests has been a tremendous team effort, so a big thank you to everyone who completed user evidence forms and to Gill Huggins and Hazel Parks who coordinated evidence collection.

Over the years, the pedestrian footpath alongside the A36 Warminster Road between St George's Hill and Devonshire Road has become progressively narrower due to overgrowth from the verge and hedgerow. This created hazards for pedestrians as they walked ever-closer to a main National Highways route, with large lorries passing only inches away. After multiple requests to the National Highways agency for action to remove accumulated leaf debris and grass, and with each request being met with a refusal, the path was cleared by three Bathampton Parish Council volunteers in early April. As a result, this path is now much wider and, hopefully, somewhat safer for pedestrians.

In clearing this pavement, volunteers discovered an old trackway running parallel to the A36 on the north side, starting near the public footpath to Bathampton Lane and heading westwards towards St George's Hill. If anyone knows the origins of this track and who might have used it in the past, please let us know. The volunteers also discovered evidence of fly tipping in the hedgerow of the "triangular field" between the Warminster Road and Bathampton Lane. Since this is private land, we are trying to work out how to deal with the matter.

Climate and Ecology Emergency

Jan Helps and Lin King

Repair Cafe

Thank you to all who attended the Bath Repair café event in the village hall. In total 26 items were brought in and 82% were repaired successfully. Among the items repaired were a record deck, a radio and clothing.

It was lovely to meet different members of the Bathampton community and environmental organisations from the local area too.

A huge thank you to volunteers who helped the event run smoothly. Proceeds from the café will be used to help fund the Bathampton village show. We hope to run a similar event in the Autumn.

Heat loss from homes A number of people expressed an interest in using thermal cameras to identify heat loss from houses. We hope to organise some training in the autumn when temperature differences enable the cameras to be used.

Tree planting for the Jubilee

We have begun initial discussions with Curo to explore the possibility of planting more trees on Holcombe Vale. Thank you to those people who expressed an interest in this at the Repair café event. We will be consulting with residents and really hope that people will want to get involved with this project. We hope to record this as part of the Queens Jubilee Green Canopy. Planting could take place in the Autumn when we hope to have planned and sourced suitable trees. Further information will follow, including opportunities to discuss any concerns before a decision is made. If you want to get involved now, please contact our Parish clerk, Jan or Lin. Contact details are at the end of newsletter.

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging

Some residents have made enquiries regarding EV charging. As a Parish Council, we have no land on which to provide charging points. Bathampton has quite a number of households without drives and no ability to install personal charging and they are keen to know when they can anticipate charging facilities from BANES. The information on the BANES website suggests a current aim for 2030. We have raised this with BANES and the challenge at the moment is that Western Power Distribution (the local part of the electricity grid) doesn't have capacity to expand provision significantly, and there are quite a number of other legal and practical issues to be resolved. BANES are working on this and hope to have a way forward in the coming months.

Improving energy efficiency in the village hall

Over the Easter weekend volunteers replaced 17 old style fluorescent tube lights in the village hall with new LED tubes. The change was no more difficult than replacing a tube and starter – albeit at the top of a tall ladder! Our smart meter showed that the old lights burned just over 1Kw per hour. After the change the same lights used 0.38Kw representing more than a 60% saving. We expect that the cost of just under £5 per light will be recouped in around 2 months use – as well as reducing our carbon footprint.

Could you be a member of the Bathavon Climate and Nature Group

The Bathavon Forum consists of all 22 parishes in the area who meet a few times during the year with officers and councillors for the Bathavon area. The group has set up the Bathavon Climate & Nature Group (BCNG) with a view to organising cross parish initiatives and to help parishes to share knowledge and resources and to have a collective voice. The group is looking for people to join a number of interest groups. This is not a group for councillors, it is for anyone who lives in the Bathavon area and has an interest or some knowledge or expertise in any of the following topic areas.

*Natural Environment (Nature Protection) *Renewable Energy *Housing & Home Energy
*Sustainable Transport *Food & Waste * Communications & Education *Health & Well-Being
If you would like to know more or register an interest, please contact Jan or Lin.

Bathampton Women's Institute meet on most of the first Saturdays of each month at Bathampton Village Hall at 10am. Coming up:

- 7 May: a talk from the Friends of Sydney Gardens (open meeting for all)
- 4 June: tea-party with Bathampton Methodist Church to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee
- 2 July: a bring your own crafts session!
- 3 September: our (late) summer garden party in a member's garden
- 10 September: our stall at the Bathampton Show

All women are welcome to attend meetings of the Women's Institute, no matter where you live. Members attend meetings free; visitors are asked to donate £5 per meeting attended. Any questions? Please email us at bathamptonwi@gmail.com or leave a note at 4 Down Lane.

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