

Bathampton Parish Council

Newsletter January 2025

Chairman's Notes

Moira Brennan

This newsletter is coming to you a few weeks earlier than usual as we want to give you as much notice as possible of upcoming road closures around the canal bridge. The closures are necessary for BANES to undertake the works required to improve pedestrian safety. There is further information in the Highways section including details of an event in the Village Hall where you can find out more about the plans.

The other important information that I want to share with you relates to the money that we raise as a Parish Council through Council Tax bills (known as the Precept). As you probably know we have been trying to fund a significant upgrade to the playground. Bathampton's playground was opened in 1971. In 2020 we recognised that the playground was about to be 50 years old. There has been little or no investment in the area during those 50 years but the playground is much loved – and generations of local people have benefited from it, as parents and carers, grandparents and as children. It is also becoming increasingly expensive to maintain and the wear and tear on the surface is being flagged in safety inspections as likely to become an issue in the next few years.

We have made several applications for grant funding but have always been unsuccessful – losing out to schemes that support communities that are perceived to have greater need. A few years ago we made a small increase in our annual precept, with the aim of adding £3,000 each year to the playground fund. In addition many people have made donations towards the project. Currently our funds stand at just over £54,900. The last quote we received put the cost of the project at around £100,000. We are very conscious that the longer we take to raise the funds the more the cost will increase – so we risk never catching up. Given this, the Parish Council has taken the decision to temporarily increase the precept from April 2025, with the aim of adding £20,000 per year to the project funds. Once we can fund the playground upgrade, we will reduce the precept to, once again, just cover our annual operating costs. We believe that the increase in the precept will represent a £20 cost increase for a Band D house for the year, or £2 per month. The cost will be less for bands A to C and more for higher banded homes.

Village Hall

bathamptonvillagehall@outlook.com

If the New Year has inspired you to take up a new hobby or join an exercise class you might like to look at the What's On in Bathampton on the Parish Council website and in noticeboards for inspiration. There are yoga, pilates and keepfit classes as well as 3 art groups and Scottish dancing.

The hall is available for private events. If you want to book an event, contact Katie at bathamptonvillagehall@outlook.com. Prices for parties are from £36 for a 3 hour booking (including time for you to set up and clear up).

New Village Handyman

We are delighted to announce that John Davies has joined Bathampton Parish Council as our new permanent Handyman.

John moved to the village in 2022 and has been enjoying getting to know the local community. He is passionate about community involvement and believes in taking pride in our local area.

John will be responsible for a range of maintenance tasks around the village, including maintaining our green spaces, carrying out minor repairs, and ensuring our community facilities are in good order.

We are confident that John will be a valuable asset to our community, and we look forward to welcoming him to the team.

230 years of Sydney Gardens

Gill Gazzard, a Bathampton resident, has co-authored a book celebrating 230 years of Sydney Gardens. It is a modern and lively book, full of interesting facts about the park. All proceeds from the sale of the book will be spent on improving and preserving Sydney Gardens. To buy a copy of the book visit <https://pay.collctiv.com/sydney-gardens-book-8118>

Playground Project

Liz Daly

As you will see from the Chairman's notes, good progress is being made towards raising the funds needed for the Playground Project with funds currently standing at just over £54,900.

To get us closer to being able to deliver the project, we recently submitted another application for £20,000 to the National Lottery 'Awards For All' grant programme. Securing this grant would be a big boost, getting us closer to being able to deliver the project or potentially allowing us to commence phase one. We expect to hear back in the next couple of months. We'll share updates as soon as we have them.

If you are interested in holding your own fundraising events to raise money for the project or wish to donate directly, please contact the Clerk on bathamptonparishclerk@gmail.com or on 07980627391. Every contribution brings us closer to our goal and a heartfelt thanks to everyone who has already contributed to this existing project.

Highways

Tony Purpuri highways.bathamptonPC@gmail.com

Road Safety

Since my last update significant progress has been made with the planned safety works around the canal bridge. We have supported the iterative design, and recommended changes based on the information from the various consultations we've undertaken previously.

The key changes will consist of:

- **Improved speed hump between The George and the Church, improving pedestrian visibility at the crossing.**
- **Moving from The George, there will be a table top speed hump on approach to the canal bridge to slow vehicles down.**
- **A full pavement will be built on the east side of the bridge and the west side pavement will be improved to prevent vehicles easily mounting the pavements. This will turn the canal bridge into a single lane with a give way.**
- **A matching table top speed hump will be placed between the bridge and the narrowing by Mulberry nursery, again to slow cars in both directions.**
- **The pavement at the narrowing will be widened and raised with bollards installed to prevent vehicles mounting the pavement. This will also turn this section into a single lane with give way.**

These are significant works that will require some time to implement. This will be in a phased approach over the course of 4 weeks, from the beginning of March, starting at The George. During this period the road will be closed but pedestrian access across the bridge will be maintained. The phasing has been designed to allow residents directly impacted by the works to leave/enter the village.

We will be hosting the BANES Traffic Management Team for a public engagement event on Thursday 30th January from 4.45 to 7.30pm at the Village Hall. Full details of the planned works will be presented and there will be an opportunity to ask questions. All are welcome.

Local Plan

Lin King / George Ardrey

Many of you will be aware that the government puts an expectation on local authorities to provide a specified amount of housing in their Local Plan. For BANES this is now around 29,000 houses over the next 20 years and Bathampton's share would be 35 houses. There are very few options of sites within the village boundary and it is surrounded by Green Belt, but the expectation is that some development will be required. The areas previously designated as Local Green Spaces will not be considered by BANES but they are asking for other suggestions. The Parish Council does not propose to identify any sites itself, but if you would like to discuss a possible site then please contact either of us, or contact BANES direct.

King Edwards School (KES) licence for events on their Bathampton playing field

Lin King

The hearing for the licence application took place on October 31st before two BANES councillors. Bathampton was represented by about 10 residents, most of whom spoke, and who were against the licence conditions as requested, asking for more clarity. The other main objection was the inevitable impact on the village of more traffic, pedestrians, car parking and coach journeys; unfortunately we were informed that these are not valid objections to a licence application and therefore could not be taken into consideration. KES had legal representation to make their case. After consideration, the BANES councillors decided to issue the licence in accordance with the operating schedule as requested, except that alcohol sales must cease at 22:00 for a film show. In addition, any Event Management Plan must specifically address arrangements for traffic and parking management and transport of attendees. Full details are available on the BANES website. KES are keen to maintain contact with the Parish Council regarding their events so we hope we can work together to minimise any adverse impact on the village and residents. But if there is any disruption or negative impact, then please will you let me know so that we can raise it with KES.

Keep Bathampton Tidy

Jan Helps

We would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to the team of volunteers who regularly litter pick around the village. There is usually some clearing up to do after the weekly rubbish and recycling collection and we appreciate the contribution from residents who help to keep their own street frontage and local neighbourhood clean and tidy.

We are lucky in Bathampton that the vast majority of properties have drives and gardens in which to store rubbish bins and recycling containers. We would therefore ask you to follow BANES requirements to remove containers off public pavements after they have been emptied. This is in consideration for members of the community who use walkers, wheelchairs and buggies and in order to keep our streets looking tidy.

It is unfortunate that we have had some vandalism in the village again. If you witness these activities or have any information about the perpetrators, please contact the police in the first instance.

Flooding and Drainage

David Beard

National Highways have completed drainage upgrades on the A36 in Bathampton and this has reduced the amount of flooding on the Warminster Road during times of heavy rainfall. However, it has not solved the problem at St George's Hill, where rain water run-off and dislodged gravel from the footpath leading to the pumping station and Bathampton Down continue to cause problems on the A36 at the junction with Bathampton Lane. Bathampton Parish Council is trying to facilitate a multi-agency plan which will address this problem; it involves a coordinated approach involving two BANES departments, Wessex Water, Cotswold Volunteers and National Highways. The aim is to improve drainage and add a stable surface to the footpath. Updates will be included in future newsletters.

Wild Waters Festival Jan Helps Saturday 31st May to Sunday 15th June inclusive

The plans for this two week series of events continues to develop and thank you to those who have been in touch to suggest activities. If you want to be involved or have suggestions or proposals, please contact Jan Helps who is acting as the link for Bathampton via the newsletter email or by phone or contact any of the other parish councillors if that is easier. Don't be shy, we know we have lots of talent and imagination in the village.

St Nicholas Church, Re: Generations Appeal for £500,000

Robin Donald

It will be no surprise to know that the cost of maintaining St Nicholas Church (built in the 13th Century) is very high for a relatively small congregation and costs are increasing. Many who live in the parish but do not see themselves as members of the parish church nevertheless value its presence and want to see the building well maintained. Our central heating and lighting need replacement, hence the Appeal.

The launch of the Appeal will take place in the Church on the 19th January with a presentation and consultation meeting at 2.00 pm, and then a repeat of the presentation and consultation in the Church on Monday 20th at 3.30 pm. All are welcome.

We want to engage with the whole community to serve the parish and build connections and relationships. As it stands the church is only used for about 2% of the time, and we need to find a way to make it warm and welcoming and to enable the space to be used for films, concerts, lectures, indoor games, arts and crafts, school activities and meetings, etc. We plan the following phases

Phase 1

Installation of infra red heating

Phase 2

Installation of moveable chairs (after consultation and approval), improved flooring, improved disabled access

Phase 3

Improvements to Millar room and Audio Visual systems.

Phase 4

Installation of solar panels and battery storage.

Dry Arch Growers

Celebrating 15 years of local food growing

Founded in 2010, Dry Arch Growers is a volunteer-led not-for-profit organisation operating on the site of a former market garden, orchard and nursery where members “sow together, grow together and share together”. The social element of membership is not to be underestimated. With qualified nutritionists, experienced gardeners and expert cooks amongst its members there is no shortage of help and advice for less confident newcomers taking their first steps into community growing. A comfortable wooden cabin provides the opportunity for coffee breaks and lunchtime chats which are not always about vegetables!

We will be holding a celebration event in the summer months. In the meantime, as we look towards the 2025 growing season, if you are interested in what membership offers then take a look at www.dryarchgrowers.co.uk or email info@dryarchgrowers.co.uk or call Phil on 07718 072532 to find out more and arrange a visit.

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Website bathamptonparishcouncil.org.uk You can also find us on Facebook (Bathampton Community) and Twitter (Bathamptonpc). The What's On in Bathampton guide is available on the Parish Council web-site.