

# **BATHFORD PARISH COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES OF THE BATHFORD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT 7.30PM ON 18 APRIL 2005 IN THE PARISH ROOMS, CHURCH STREET, BATHFORD**

Present: Councillor Shirley Beazer (Chair)  
Councillor Stan Cherry (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Peter Ardley  
Councillor Maureen Breeze  
Councillor Wendy Chambers  
Councillor Jan Hooker  
Councillor John Lloyd  
Councillor Richard Wickham

Also present: Phillip Harris (co-opted member)  
Steve Mackerness (co-opted member)  
Councillor Tony Cox (Ward Councillor)  
Ruth Holding (Clerk)  
16 members of the public (see Annex A)

Apologies were received from Councillor Sally Broadway and Councillor Andy Ginn.

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

- 1.1. Chair Shirley Beazer opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. She introduced the Parish Councillors present, the two co-opted members of the Council and District Councillor Tony Cox.
- 1.2. The Chairman announced that the Parish Clerk, Chris Warner, had retired after 16 years in the post and she welcomed the new Clerk, Ruth Holding.

### **2. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting**

- 2.1. The minutes of the last meeting were agreed subject to the correction of the misspelling of Anne Haworth's surname, after which the minutes were signed as a true record of the proceedings.

### **3. Matters arising**

- 3.1. Resurfacing programme 2004 – Keith Masdin asked the Chair whether the programme for 2004 had been finalised as repairs had not been carried out. Councillor Shirley Beazer said that to the best of her knowledge the resurfacing programme 2004 had never been finalised. The Chairman said that the resurfacing programme for 2005 had been agreed and the details would be covered in the Chairman's report (see item 5 below).

- 3.2. Tyndale – Mrs Almond asked about the long term future for Tyndale. The Chairman confirmed that permission had been granted for the building's use by Carrswood as a centre for adults with learning difficulties for a maximum of two years. Keith Masdin stated that a substantial amount of money appeared to have been spent on the building if it was only going to be put to its current use for two years.

#### **4. Report on Bathford Consolidated Charities**

- 4.1. Revd Tim Ling presented the audited financial accounts for the Bathford Consolidated Charities fund to the year ending 31 December 2004. He confirmed that a £100 donation had been made to Dorothy House. Thanks were given to Richard Robb for auditing the accounts.
- 4.2. Revd Ling reported that following the completion of the church roof repairs which had proved to be sound, work would commence on the interior decoration of the church and repairs to the guttering.
- 4.3. Revd Ling was also pleased to announce that the church was being used by the wider community. It had been used as a venue for concerts and as a rehearsal room for the pantomime. A crèche had been set up for young children during the 10am service on Sunday morning and a new Toddler group for mothers with pre-school children met twice a month on a Monday morning. A new Global Awareness Group had also been set up to consider issues such as the environment and fair trade and how the community of Bathford could respond to these issues at a local level.
- 4.4. Councillor Wendy Chambers asked whether there were plans to remove the Warleigh Pews from the church. Revd Tim Ling said that more space was required in the church for the music group and children's groups. One option being considered was the removal of the front pews to create more space, but a final decision about changing the interior of the church had not been reached.
- 4.5. Councillor Stan Cherry said it would be helpful if residents could propose individuals in the Parish who might benefit from a small donation around Christmas time. No suggestions had been made for 2004 and therefore the donation had been made to Dorothy House. Proposals could be made at any time to a Trustee of Bathford Consolidated Charities.

#### **5. Chairman's Report**

- 5.1. Chair Shirley Beazer made a report covering a number of issues which had arisen during the past 12 months. The full text of the Chairman's report can be found at Annex B. The Chair gave special thanks to Philip Harris in bringing the new footbridge over the By Brook to a successful outcome and paid tribute to Christine Woodyatt who had made a large contribution to the life of the village for many years before her sudden death early in 2005.

- 5.2. Items of particular note were a reduction in the Parish Precept, the proposals for a Park & Ride at Lambridge and the uncertainty around the proposals for an A46/A36 link road, proposals for double yellow lines in Ashley Road, Dovers Park and other roads in Bathford and the agreed resurfacing programme for 2005.
- 5.3. The Chairman's report also included a reference to the future of the Post Office and Shop and the refurbishment of the kitchen in the Parish Rooms.
- 5.4. With regard to housing issues in the village, the Chairman reported that the Parish Council had asked that Tyndale be used as affordable housing after Carrswood's two year tenure came to an end. The Council had also requested that the basement of the Manor be considered for the same purpose. Approval had also been given to Somer for 3 houses on the top rank of the present garages of Mountain Wood to be let under the Local Letting Policy.
- 5.5. There were no questions from members of the public on matters raised in the Chairman's Report.

## **6. Committee Reports**

### *6.1. Amenities Committee*

6.1.1. Councillor Stan Cherry presented the report of the Amenities Committee which comprised himself, Councillor John Lloyd and Councillor Wendy Chambers. The full text of the Amenities Committee report can be found at Annex C.

6.1.2. Items of particular note were:-

6.1.2.1. Play Area – the play area had been extended and a new swing bridge unit had been installed. The Council had also been successful in securing a grant from B&NES of £895 towards the cost of replacing a broken spring toy and enlarging the safety area around equipment to meet changes in legislation.

6.1.2.2. Sports car park – Councillor Stan Cherry reported that due to the success of the youth development programmes by users of the playing field, parking problems were being experienced in the roads around the playing fields at weekends, especially Sundays. The Amenities Committee has been asked to take part in a meeting between Whitehaven and the Rugby Club to address this issue and seek a solution. Whitehaven have offered use of part of their land at a reasonable cost for use as a sports related car park for the playing field. It was considered that it would be in the best interests of the village if the Parish Council was the car park's controlling body and the Council was considering an application for the necessary planning permission.

6.1.2.3. Allotment user rent review – the allotment wardens had proposed that they collect the rents from allotment holders to enable them to monitor

payments and to know early in the season who would be giving up allotments so that these could be reallocated before the end of the calendar year. The Parish Council had agreed to the procedural changes in the collection of allotment rents. Councillor Stan Cherry said that he was unable to announce the revised allotment rents at this meeting as usual as it had been agreed with the allotment wardens that the rent review would be postponed until last year's confusion about the application of rental charges had been resolved at the allotment holder's meeting on 23 April. The new rents will be announced in the Bulletin.

6.1.3. At the conclusion of his report Councillor Stan Cherry invited questions from members of the public. There was discussion on the following items:-

6.1.3.1. Play Equipment – Ward Councillor Tony Cox announced that B&NES grant scheme for replacement play equipment was being repeated in 2005/06. He noted that Batheaston and Bathampton had benefited from substantial grants last year and therefore there was an opportunity for Bathford to apply for funds again. Councillor Stan Cherry said that no equipment in Bathford play area had been condemned and that grants were not available for new equipment only to replace broken equipment. He confirmed that an annual safety inspection was carried out by B&NES and if any faults were identified then the Parish Council would make an application for a grant towards repairs.

6.1.3.2. Sports Car Park – Philip Harris asked whether the Parish Council had any ideas about how to finance the creation of a car park. Councillor Stan Cherry said that no consideration had yet been given to the financial aspects of the project. Mr Harris said that Whitehaven might want repairs to the private road as part of the project. Councillor Stan Cherry said that he wanted to make it clear that the offer of land for a car park had been made by Whitehaven. The Parish Council's interest was in controlling the car park.

6.1.3.3. Dog fouling on the playing field – Prof Almond commented that there were many access points to the playing field so dog walkers could cross the field at any point. Councillor Stan Cherry considered that the large notice on the fence of the play area would be effective in stopping the majority of dog walkers from taking their dogs diagonally across the field.

## 6.2. *Communications Committee*

6.2.1. Councillor Peter Ardley presented the annual report on behalf of the Communications Committee. He was pleased to announce that the Parish Council's website [www.bathford.net](http://www.bathford.net) was now available. He said that the committee had considered other options to improve communication with residents, including increased use of notice boards, the Bulletin and the introduction of a parish magazine. However, these had been rejected in favour of the development of a website on the grounds that notice boards had

limited coverage, the bulletin while effective was a monthly publication and a parish magazine would be too large an undertaking at the present time.

6.2.2. The Parish Council's website would be free from commercial advertising and would provide information on such things as local businesses, history and neighbourhood watch. Organisations would be able to amend their data, but the Parish Clerk would have overall editorial control.

6.2.3. At this point the Chair invited Kenneth Spencer to speak as he had requested in advance of the meeting to say a few words about the *Bathford Bulletin* and websites. Mr Spencer said that the *Bathford Bulletin*, which was funded by the Church and the Parish Council, had been larger in the past. In its current form the Bulletin is 100% information. It could be made bigger again, but advertising would be required to sustain it. Mr Spencer said that he had created a website about Bathford 15 years ago and he questioned the need for another website bringing the total number of websites on Bathford to three.

6.2.4. Keith Masdin made the point that there often wasn't room for information in the Bulletin and he questioned the amount of church content. He suggested that the Bulletin was not in the ideal format for the village.

6.2.5. Councillor Stan Cherry said that there were questions about these issues in the second Parish Plan Questionnaire. The questions were aimed at gaining support for a quarterly magazine. He said that the Marshfield's magazine was a good example. This was paid for by subscription and some advertising.

6.2.6. Keith Masdin reminded the meeting of the village diary in the Post Office. This had been a good suggestion but was hardly used.

6.2.7. Councillor Maureen Breeze said that the Parish Council had commissioned the website [www.bathford.net](http://www.bathford.net) so that the Council had an autonomous, stand alone website without the commercial connections associated with other sites. The website cost less than £30 per year to run as the content had been developed by volunteers and therefore the Council had not spent a lot of the parish's money on this project.

6.2.8. Councillor Richard Wickham emphasised that the Council needed to be able to have direct control over information issued in its name due to government regulations.

6.2.9. Gerry Miller said that the Church would always want to communicate with its parishioners. He acknowledged that some villages had larger publications, but he reminded the meeting that the production and distribution of the *Bathford Bulletin* was a big job and all done by volunteers.

6.2.10. Tony Parr emphasised a point made earlier in the discussion that a lot of residents did not have access to a computer or were not computer literate and these people did not want, or would not use, a website.

6.2.11. The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions to the debate, and closed the discussion on this item as time was moving on.

### *6.3. Finance and Administration Committee*

6.3.1. Councillor Wendy Chambers introduced the annual report from the Finance and Administration Committee in the absence of Councillor Andy Ginn.

6.3.2. The balance at the end of 2004/05 was estimated to be £21,000 less commitments of £6,000.

6.3.3. The precept had been reduced for 2005/06 and comprised the basic precept of £15,141 and £4,000 for special projects. The special projects were the path on the village green and the provision of office equipment. For a Band A property the basic precept had fallen from £18 to £16.43 and the contribution for special projects had reduced from £5.96 to £3.43.

6.3.4. Philip Harris asked for confirmation of the Parish Council's underspend as the savings should have been offset against the precept claimed in the following year. Councillor Wendy Chambers confirmed that money was committed and therefore the liability carried over into the following year.

### *6.4. Footbridge over the By Brook*

6.4.1. Philip Harris reported that work would start on the footbridge this summer bringing the long campaign for a bridge to a successful conclusion and it was hoped that the bridge would be open for the start of the autumn school term.

6.4.2. The plans for the bridge were on display at the meeting. Mr Harris said that the bridge was estimated to cost around £115,000 and was significantly bigger than originally planned due to the requirement to excavate some of the bank.

6.4.3. Philip Harris said that a celebration would be planned to mark the opening of the bridge when a completion date was known. Keith Masdin suggested that Simon Jarvis be invited to open the bridge.

6.4.4. Kenneth Spencer asked that the constructors be asked to do all they can to avoid disturbing the swans. Philip Harris confirmed that no work was being done under the current road bridge and as the swans nested on the opposite side the road bridge they should be unaffected by the work.

## 6.5. *Highways Committee*

6.5.1. Chair Shirley Beazer presented the annual report on behalf of the Highways Committee. The full text of the Highways Committee report can be found at Annex D.

6.5.2. Items of note were:-

6.5.2.1. Box Road – the request to revise the restricted speed limit zone to include Box Road Gardens had been included in the Draft Capital Programme for approval and the outcome was expected shortly.

6.5.2.2. Cycle Path – it was reported that the feasibility of various options, including a bridge and path to the canal, improvements to Batheaston High Street and changes to the by-pass, would be considered this financial year. Work would be carried out in 2006/07 if agreed.

6.5.2.3. Warleigh Lane junction with A363 – a mirror has been fitted at the junction which was a great improvement, but the Council was not complacent about the dangers of this junction. Some traffic calming measures had been provided by B&NES and the Parish Council had been advised that further money was available in 2005 for double white lines and speed limits.

6.5.2.4. Bus Shelter – a parish plan suggestion for a bus shelter upwards from The Crown is being progressed.

6.5.3. At the conclusion of her report Chair Shirley Beazer invited questions from the floor. Prof Almond asked whether there was any possibility of removing the traffic calming measure on Bathford Hill by the Post Office. He said that manoeuvring around the island put drivers in a dangerous position from cars coming down the hill and out of Dovers Park.

6.5.4. Ward Councillor Tony Cox said that the local authority would not normally review traffic calming measures until at least 6 months after the installation to allow drivers to get used to them. He said that the Parish Council could request monitoring.

6.5.5. Philip Harris asked whether the proposals for traffic calming at the lower end of Bathford Hill could be used to put in a request for the calming measure at the Post Office be removed.

6.5.6. Tony Coffin asked whether there could be a request for a no-right turn sign out of the Post Office slip road. Chair Shirley Beazer said that a no-right turn would be introduced as part of the traffic calming measures, but perhaps B&NES could introduce this measure sooner.

6.5.7. Keith Masdin said that he objected to the introduction of double yellow lines around the school as zigzag markings were already in place. Chair Shirley Beazer said that if the current advisory white lines were replaced with double yellow lines then enforcement action would be taken.

6.5.8. Kenneth Spencer said that care should be taken to avoid the displacement of traffic from one area to another in the village. Tony Coffin said that Ashley Road residents do not have off street parking so where will they park? He said that if double yellow lines were to be introduced they should be no more than 2 inches wide.

6.5.9. Tony Parr had a comment about the "Pepperpot" folly structure. He said that the door had been vandalised and people could gain access to the stairs. These were in very poor condition with no safety barriers. Chair Shirley Beazer said that we would bring this matter to the attention of the owners.

#### 6.6. *Park & Ride/Link Road*

6.6.1. Steve Mackerness presented a report on the possible future options for the A36/A46 link road and the proposal for a Park & Ride (P&R) at Lambridge. The full text of the report can be found at Annex E.

6.6.2. Steve Mackerness said that B&NES was preparing a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for 2006-2011 and it was not yet known whether proposals for a link road would be mentioned in the plan. The B&NES LTP would be submitted as a Joint LTP with Bristol, South Gloucester and North Somerset. If included in the plan, a link road would only be mentioned to establish the policy for building it after 2011. A provisional Joint LTP was due to be published in July 2005.

6.6.3. Steve Mackerness presented a number of arguments against the link road. He pointed out that schemes were proposed for road improvements around Westbury and the Bristol ring road which would create clear alternative routes for north-south traffic to the east and west of Bath. A link road would invite traffic to Bath. There was also an argument that a link road would not significantly reduce traffic on the London Road and Cleveland Bridge.

6.6.4. Steve Mackerness then went on to outline the proposals for a Park & Ride at Lambridge and the associated relocation of the Rugby training pitches to the meadows. He said that a group of Bathford residents most directly affected by any link road or new rugby pitches had formed the Bradford Road and Ostlings Lane Link Action Committee (BROLLAC) to respond to the developments.

6.6.5. A number of arguments against the P&R were outlined by Steve Mackerness including the proximity of the site to the city centre which was already in a traffic congestion zone, it would not reduce traffic on the London Road, the site would accommodate a maximum of 800 vehicles with no option for future expansion and the cost was estimated to be £6.6million taking into account the necessary flood alleviation works and resiting of the rugby pitches. Creating rugby pitches on the meadows would have a significant impact on the environment and wildlife of the area.

6.6.6. Steve Mackerness concluded by informing the meeting that Batheaston Parish Council were preparing an alternative planning application for a P&R at Charmy Down which had none of the disadvantages of the Lambridge site and that work was being undertaken to develop a buffer zone around Bath to protect the approaches to the World Heritage Site.

#### *6.7. Planning and Environment Committee*

6.7.1. Councillor Jan Hooker presented the annual report on behalf of the Planning and Environment Committee. The full text of the Planning and Environment Committee report can be found at Annex F.

6.7.2. Councillor Jan Hooker reported that the Committee had received 35 planning applications for consideration. In 77% of cases the Council had no objection to the proposals. 2 cases went to appeal and the refusals were upheld.

6.7.3. More complex issues around traffic safety and parking had been considered relating to Tyndale's use by Carrswood Activity Centre, and B&NES and Carrswood had been responsive to the Council's concerns. The Council had also objected to the application for the Orange Mast at Shockerwick and B&NES had refused permission. Orange had appealed and the decision was awaited. The Parish Council had also been monitoring the newly made entrances to Warleigh Woods with a view to ensuring that the woods cannot be damaged by vehicles or any illegal development.

6.7.4. Councillor Jan Hooker reported that B&NES had responded promptly to complaints about the condition of two stiles on the way from Whitehaven to Portals and had issued notices for the removal of scrap from the green-field part of Lavington's Yard which was now much tidier.

6.7.5. Councillor Jan Hooker concluded her report stating that the Council was looking forward to the completion of the village design statement which will form the frame of reference when considering future planning applications.

6.7.6. Councillor Tony Cox said that in cases in which there was doubt about whether the application should be determined by a planning officer or go to committee, strong views from the Parish Council either for or against an application can make a difference and were helpful in the decision making process.

6.7.7. Tony Parr raised concerns about a proposal for a telephone mast at Claverton and a car park and level crossing which would be visible in the valley. Councillor Jan Hooker agreed to monitor.

#### *6.8. Sweeping and Cleansing Committee*

6.8.1. Chair Shirley Beazer presented the annual report on behalf of the Sweeping and Cleansing Committee. The full text of the Sweeping and Cleansing Committee report can be found at Annex G.

6.8.2. It was reported that B&NES had agreed to empty the two litter bins situated in the lay-by at Sally-in-the Woods on a fortnightly basis instead of monthly.

6.8.3. Councillor Shirley Beazer confirmed that Bathford had declined to join B&NES Parish Sweeper Scheme and had elected to retain B&NES services for sweeping and cleaning which should be carried out every two weeks on a Thursday. However, schedules were not being followed and numerous complaints had been made without success. On the advice of Councillor Tony Cox, Councillor Shirley Beazer had contacted Councillor Ian Dewey who requested urgent action for the sweeping and cleaning of the parish. The response was immediate and long outstanding problems have been resolved. The Parish Council will be monitoring the situation and residents were asked to notify Councillor Shirley Beazer of any problems.

6.8.4. Tony Coffin said that the side access ways in Garstons were not being swept and grass cuttings were not collected. Councillor Shirley Beazer said she would raise these issues with B&NES.

## **7. Parish Hall Management Committee**

7.1. Professor Almond called for agreement that the 19 representatives of the regular users of the Parish Hall be voted "en bloc" and for agreement to 3 village representatives as follows:-

7.1.1. Prof D Almond

7.1.2. Mr M Wright

7.1.3. Mrs M Hawkins

7.2. Philip Harris proposed the motion and Jenny Prall seconded. The motion was carried.

7.3. Professor Almond reported that the Parish Hall was used regularly by 19 local groups and 60 private hirings were also made in the year. The Parish Hall's financial position was very stable. New chairs had been purchased and the kitchen and serving area was undergoing a refit.

7.4. Prof Almond thanked Shirley Beazer for acting as the Parish Hall booking secretary for many years. He said that Shirley had decided to stand down and Anne Haworth had become the new booking secretary.

## **8. Neighbourhood Watch Scheme**

8.1. Councillor Peter Ardley reported that Bathford was a very low crime area and the beat officer PC Roger Parker had confirmed that there had been no significant incidents reported during last year. There was a good network of neighbourhood watch contacts, but some roads were not represented and a significant proportion of Mountain Wood was not covered. Councillor Peter Ardley said that residents felt secure but it was important not to be

complacent. It was hoped that more information would be made available on the Parish Council's new website.

- 8.2. Councillor Shirley Beazer announced Councillor Peter Ardley's resignation from the Council due to his move away from the village. On behalf of the Council she thanked Peter for all his hard work.

### **9. Bathford Link (Neighbourhood Support Scheme)**

- 9.1. Gerry Miller presented the annual report from Bathford Link in the absence of Jack Fielden who sent his apologies. He said that the scheme was operating very well. There was a bank of 40 drivers and the scheme was self financing due to fundraising and donations. He said that there was a core of 30 or so regular users of the service and the Link was very important to them, using it for visits to the surgery, hospital or collecting prescriptions. Gerry Miller extended thanks to the Link's co-ordinator Monica Stockwell for all her hard work.
- 9.2. Councillor Shirley Beazer said that the Parish Council recognised the value of the service provided of Bathford Link and were very appreciative of the work they did.

### **10. Bathford Educational Charity (Bathford Primary School)**

- 10.1. Mrs Bilton presented the annual report on behalf of the Governors of Bathford School. She reported that the school had received a very successful OFSTED report. Without a hall the school was unable to carry out some activities effectively. The main issue that the Governors wished to address was the development of a hall to enable the school to provide breakfast and after-school clubs and space for other activities.
- 10.2. The Governors appreciated concerns about traffic in Dovers Park and Mountain Wood at the start and end of the school day. The school had developed a travel plan and they were considering targets for reducing journeys to school by car.

### **11. Twinning Links with Artannes sur Indre**

- 11.1. Maureen Breeze, Chair of Bathford Twinning Association, updated the meeting on progress of the Twinning Association and links with Artannes sur Indre in France. The official signing of the Friendship Charter will take place on Saturday 29 October when up to 80 French guests are expected in Bathford and when the parish will become formally twinned. Fund raising to cover the costs of the occasion was going well. Residents registered as interested members now stood at over 120 and the Youth Twinning Forum continues to grow.

## **12. Parish Plan**

- 12.1. Councillor Stan Cherry, speaking as Chair of the Parish Plan Steering Committee, presented the annual report on behalf of the Committee. The full text of the report can be found at Annex H.
- 12.2. It was reported that a draft Village Design Statement had been prepared and had been favourably received by the Parish Council. A summary of the Design Statement had been circulated with the Parish Plan Questionnaire 2.
- 12.3. Councillor Stan Cherry said that there had been a tremendous response to the first Parish Plan Questionnaire and Questionnaire 2 was now being sent to residents. The new questionnaire was designed to be answered by individuals in a household including children from the age of 8. The 2<sup>nd</sup> questionnaire passed information back to residents as well as requesting information.
- 12.4. A number of improvements were planned as a result of the first questionnaire including the playground, and a bus shelter at the Crown. A tennis club had been set up and efforts were being made to save the village shop. Organisations in the village had responded to matters raised in the first questionnaire, for example The Crown was now largely non-smoking.
- 12.5. Councillor Stan Cherry thanked all the volunteers and Vivienne Summerhill, Peter McCowen and Robin Harrigan for their contributions.
- 12.6. Philip Harris proposed thanks to Stan Cherry for his guidance of the Steering Committee.

## **13. Proposals for which written notice has been given**

- 13.1. No proposals had been received.

## **14. Management of the Shop as a Community Cooperative**

- 14.1. Peter McCowen addressed the meeting about proposals to operate the shop as a Community Cooperative. He said that Mr and Mrs Suleman wanted to give up the shop and run the Post Office and newsagent only and a Committee had been formed to take forward proposals to operate the shop as a cooperative.
- 14.2. Peter McCowen said that a number of public meetings had been held and 20 people had already volunteered to take an active role in the venture. He encouraged people to attend the public meeting in June at which ways of funding the venture would be considered.

## **15. Any Other Business**

- 15.1. Philip Harris proposed thanks to Chair Shirley Beazer and the Parish Council.

The meeting closed at 10pm.

## **ANNEX A**

### Members of the Public Attending Annual Parish Meeting 18 April 2005

M Wright  
A S Coffin  
Tony Parr  
Ross Keevil  
L Almond  
Darryl Almond  
Keith Masdin  
Julia Masdin  
Marion Rayner  
Gerry Miller  
Peter McCowen  
Hugh Baker  
Kenneth Spencer  
A Harris  
Mrs Bilton  
Rev Tim Ling