

Amenities Committee Report

The Amenities Committee currently consists of five people: Stan Cherry (Chair), John Lloyd, Wendy Chambers, Hugh Baker and Richard Wickham.

Our responsibility covers the playing field; the allotments, village sweeping and village grass cutting plus a few other areas.

Playing Field

Field Condition

The general condition of the field remains good. Routine maintenance is carried out on the field as required and our aim is to maintain its current level of use and appearance.

During the last financial year we have installed three new benches at the top of the field to replace those that had fallen into disrepair over many years. We have recently installed a fourth new bench on the bottom of the field, under the shade of the trees in summer. The cricket club contributed a donation towards the cost of these benches as part of the 'Bench Project'.

Last year the field was treated to remove weeds and this spring we have re-seeded the field and rolled it in good time for the growing season.

Work was carried out on the trees, following a survey by the Tree Officer. Some trees had to be removed.

Our struggle with dog owners continues but we believe that the situation has improved since the installation of new signage and the new bin on the bridleway. Remember, dog mess is extremely unhealthy for everyone – but especially for children!

Play area

The play area renovation, in response to comments raised in Parish Plan exercise has continued. We have recently fitted a new tower to the swing bridge unit and new spring rider. Once again we used the B&NES Parks dept. grant scheme towards costs of replacing broken equipment to obtain the spring rider. The renovation project is now complete but we will continue to ensure that the play area remains in good condition and meets all current safety requirements.

Sport use and user rent review

The field continues to be well used by clubs covering Rugby, Cricket and Football. Three of the four clubs using the facility now have very active youth development programmes, providing opportunities for young people from the village in their organisations. This year we have allowed an extra football team (Bathford Rangers Reserves) to use the facilities. This is a local team operated by The Crown in conjunction with Bathford Rangers F.C. The pitch has had considerable use this season and we will continue to monitor this use to ensure that the pitch is not over-used.

In accordance with our standing orders, rents for the use of the Parish facilities should be reviewed annually and any changes announced at this meeting. User rents for the Playing Field have been reviewed according to the set formula and will be as follows from September 2006:

Avonvale Rugby Football Club	£300-00
Bathford Cricket Club	£98-00
Bathford Rangers F.C.	£98-00
Bathford Rangers Reserves F.C.	£98-00
Bear Flat Youth F.C. (small pitch)	£50-00

Former Scout Hut

This issue is finally resolved and the hut has been taken over by Avonvale R.F.C. The Rugby Club pay a ground rent for use of the land that the hut stands on and this is reviewed every five years together with the Clubhouse ground rent.

The main use of the hut is to provide changing facilities for the youth teams and the rugby club also makes it available to other youth sports on the field.

Cricket Pavilion

The Cricket Club intends to replace their dilapidated lean-to shed at the back of the pavilion with a secure steel container this year. This will be done in consultation (by them and us) with local residents to identify the most suitable type of screening for the situation.

At the same time, the Amenities Committee intends to replace the corrugated iron roof on the pavilion with a more suitable protective material. The current roof has been in place for many years and now requires serious maintenance.

Sports Car Park

The current situation is that Whitehaven have offered use of part of their land at reasonable cost for use as a sports related car park for the playing field. We believe that if this should happen it is in the best interests of the village that the Parish Council should be the controlling body and to this end we continue to work with the two parties involved to reach a solution to this issue.

The Parish Council have decided to take this project one stage further by applying for planning permission for a sports only car park near the north-west corner of the playing field on land owned by Whitehaven.

The plan will be to provide parking for around 20 cars when there are sporting fixtures. At other times the car park would be closed. It is not intended that there will be any additional lighting associated with this project.

If built the car park will greatly reduce the congestion and parking problems that frequently occur in the Ashley Road/High Street/Bathford Hill areas when rugby, football and cricket practice and fixtures take place.

Allotments

Generally, the situation at the allotments is very good. Currently, all allotments are taken and there is one person on the waiting list. The Wardens (Mike Smith and Martin Wright) continue to manage the allotments superbly and, through their careful management, there are now more plot holders than ever before.

Allotment User rent review

Last year, the wardens requested that we change the system of rent collection last year so that they have information they require to operate the allotments more efficiently. The new system has worked extremely well and its benefits have made life easier for the Wardens and the Parish Clerk.

Allotment Charges

Because the rent review system threw up a larger percentage rise than required last year and the allotments operated well within budget, we agreed with the Wardens that there will be no plot charge increase this year.

The water charge (separate, per plot holder and based on meter reading) was also found to be well within budget and will not change for the next season.

Village Cleansing

No major issues have arisen on this front.

Other issues

Village Green

The project to install a path directly across the green alongside the British Legion wall is finally under way. The tree work has been completed and work will commence on the footpath very shortly.

Bench Project

The Amenities Committee, led by Hugh Baker, has taken responsibility for the 'Bench Project', initiated from the Parish Plan.

To date £1320 has been donated for the purchase and siting of benches in the village. There are also promises of three more benches and some additional donations.

The benches will be placed at suitable locations within the village. Any wishes expressed by the donors will be taken into account, and the views of any nearby residents will be sought prior to any final decisions.

It is also intended that one or two picnic benches/tables will be placed on the village green to encourage the use of this amenity area.

Mobility Project

The Committee also agreed to take responsibility for the mobility project from the Parish Plan. I am leading this project and can, once again, report an exceptional response from the community for volunteers to work on the Bathford Mobility Focus Group.

The situation at the time of writing is that the group has completed surveys of the main areas of the village with regard to mobility access issues. The survey results are being drawn together into a report that will be returned to the Parish Council (within weeks) so that they can bring urgent issues to the attention of the responsible authorities. At least one issue (easier access to the Community Room) has already been resolved as a result of the groups work.

At this point I must thank Mike Whitcombe and the staff at Carrswood (former Tynedale) for their help with this work. They have made their building available for all our group meetings and have actively taken part in our surveys.

Bus Services

Shelters

During the last year we have improved the bus shelter at the village green by installing a side to give protection from the prevailing wind. We have also given a renovation to the shelter to improve its appearance.

The bus stop at The Crown has been moved slightly and a shelter provided to give protection from the elements. This project is not yet complete since we were not satisfied with the size of the shelter and it will be replaced by a smaller style by B&NES in the near future.

Sunday Bus Services

The Council was disappointed to be informed (via the Bath Chronicle) of the changes to the Bathford bus services on Sundays and Bank Holidays from July. It was agreed that we should work together with Batheaston P.C. to try to change the decision. Wendy Chambers will be leading this project – probably as a letter writing campaign – in the very near future.

To summarize, I think that this has been successful year with few problems.

Any issues arising from this report, which you may wish to raise with the Amenities Committee should be directed via the Clerk at the Parish Office.

Stan Cherry.