

Amenities Committee Report

The Amenities Committee currently consists of five people:

STAN CHERRY (Chair) JOHN LLOYD WENDY CHAMBERS HUGH BAKER RICHARD WICKHAM

Our area of responsibility covers the playing field, allotments, village sweeping and village grass cutting plus several other issues.

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.

More work will be carried out at the end of the winter season to re-seed and roll the field. We will also be re-building the football goalmouth areas.

Our struggle with dog owners continues and we would remind every dog owner that 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, has continued and is almost complete. Once again we have used the B&NES Parks dept. grant scheme towards costs of replacing broken equipment to replace the Abacus and Noughts and Crosses frames. We are also adding safety barriers at the swings and are to improve the swing bridge area in response to comments from the annual safety inspections. We believe that the renovation and safety modifications will then be 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. During the last financial year we have lost one user of the field (Bear Flat Youth F.C.). However, this has allowed more general use of the field by local sports groups.

Two 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.

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 2007:

Avonvale Rugby Football Club	£338-00
Bathford Cricket Club	£110-00
Bathford Rangers Football Club	£110-00
Bathford Rangers Reserves F.C. (The Crown)	£110-00

Cricket Pavilion

The Cricket Club has not yet replaced their lean-to shed at the back of the pavilion with a secure steel container. The Amenities Committee intended to replace the corrugated iron roof on the pavilion with a more suitable protective material when this was removed. The money for this project has been precepted and will take place when the lean-to is removed this year.

Sports Car Park

This project is now defunct since Whitehaven suddenly withdrew their offer of use of a field for a car park. As we now know, Whitehaven is to close and the property sold therefore there seems to be no way to proceed at the time of writing.

Bathford Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting – 16 April 2007

ALLOTMENTS

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

At the wardens suggestion, the Amenities Committee have made a small plot available, free of charge, for use by youth organisations such as Brownies, Guides and the school to encourage young people to learn about growing food, etc. A small amount of money as also been allocated from the Parish Plan fund (promoting youth projects) should any funding be required.

Allotment Charges

Once again, the rent review formula has thrown up a larger percentage rise than required and the allotments operated well within budget. We have agreed with the Wardens, once again, that there will be no plot charge increase this year. However, it must be noted that there will definitely be an increase in plot charges in 2008.

The water charge (separate, per plot holder and based on meter reading) has risen considerably in the last year – possibly due to the dry season as well as raised charges from the water supplier. Consequently, the water charge will be raised from £2-00 to £3-00 per plot-holder from September this year.

In the autumn, an unidentified lorry damaged the allotment wall at the corner of New Rd. and Ashley Rd. It has since been rebuilt following a claim on the Councils insurance policy to offset most of the cost.

VILLAGE CLEANSING

No major issues have arisen on this front, other than the perennial problem of dog fouling. This is becoming more prevalent in different areas of the parish but is particularly unpleasant when owners walk their dogs on footpath areas and leave their mess behind. We would encourage all dog owners to clean up after themselves and make Bathford an even pleasanter place to live.

FINANCE

Throughout the last financial year the Amenities Committee has continued to work within its budget and for the next financial year will require a smaller proportion of the precept than over the last two years.

OTHER ISSUES

VILLAGE GREEN

The Parish Plan project to install a footpath across the green alongside the British Legion wall has been completed. A final stage of inserting a handrail on the slope remains but we are hopeful that this will be installed by the time you read this.

MANOR GREEN

Following completion of the village green project, several parishioners raised a question about access across the Manor Green and the safety of the steps up to Birdcage Walk. As we were in touch with the Parks Dept. about siting of a bench on the Manor Green, Hugh Baker and I raised the issue once again, with head of the department.

This time the response has been a risk assessment survey of the area with proposals for improvement to arrive very shortly. The Highways and Footpaths Committee will keep local residents informed via the Bulletin and web site as soon as we have the news. The very latest proposal from B&NES appears to favour reinstatement of the steps, together with a handrail – but this has not yet been confirmed!

PARISH PLAN BENCH PROJECT

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

Bathford Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting – 16 April 2007

A total of more than £2300 has been donated to the fund by various individuals and organisations and seven new benches have been purchased and their sites identified. Installation will begin by the end of April.

The committee are hopeful that there will be sufficient funding left in the bench project when installation is complete to fund at least one picnic bench and table on the village green to encourage further use of the facility.

PARISH PLAN MOBILITY PROJECT

The Committee also agreed to take responsibility for the mobility project from the Parish Plan. I led the team on this project last year and, last year, reported the Bathford Mobility Focus Group had completed a survey of the village areas and that a report would be published for the Parish Council.

The report was duly published, together with a list of priority points and we are pleased to report that the highest priority area (the footpath at the corner of Church St.) has been greatly improved thanks to funding from B&NES. They also added dropped kerbs at the junction of Dovers Lane and Dovers Park as part of the same work.

The Parish Council will continue to press B&NES to address further items on the list over the next year.

SUNDAY BUS SERVICES

As reported last year, 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 2006. It was agreed that we should work together with Batheaston P.C. to try to change the decision. Wendy Chambers led a project to carry out a letter writing campaign to change B&NES mind on this issue.

The campaign was successful in that the decision was reviewed and then changed to a reduction in services. This was a solution that we were not against but we were warned that the situation would be reviewed this spring in the light of the amount of use of the service. It is now up to all of us to ensure that the service is used as much as possible.

PARISH HALL GRANT

The Amenities Committee has worked with the Parish Hall committee to secure funding for a loop system for the hard of hearing and a sound system for general use. We are pleased to report that a grant for £1350 has been secured and that work is already under way by the Hall committee to install the two systems.

MEADOW PARK NOTICE BOARD

A replacement notice board was fitted in Meadow Park last year and a brass plaque with the council's name was added in February.

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.