

Minutes of Bathford Parish Council Meeting
held on Monday 16 February 2009 at 7.30pm in the Parish Office, Bathford Hill,
Bathford

Present: Councillor Stan Cherry (Chair)
Councillor Hugh Baker
Councillor Susan Barclay
Councillor Wendy Chambers
Councillor Paul Faulkner
Councillor Ian Plain
Councillor John Lloyd
Councillor Jean Vesey
Councillor Richard Wickham

Also Present: 9 Members of the public (7 to items 6a (not 5a) and 2 to item 6b)
Steve Mackerness - co-opted member of Planning Committee
(Items 6a to part 6e)
Janet Bilton, Chair of School Governors (items 5a and 6a)
Ruth Holding (Clerk)

1. Public Five Minutes

- 1.1. Proposed BMX Area – a number of members of the public had attended to speak about the proposed BMX track. The Chair invited them to wait until the full discussion under item 6ai on the agenda.
- 1.2. Letter from parishioner – Cllr Stan Cherry reported that a letter had been received from a parishioner unable to attend the meeting setting out a number of items of concern. The Clerk was asked to copy the letter to councillors for information and comment and to prepare a reply.

Action: Clerk

2. Apologies

- 2.1. Apologies were received from Cllrs Shirley Beazer and Keith Masdin.

3. Declarations of Interest in any item on the Agenda

- 3.1. The Chair called for any declarations of interest. None were made.

4. Approval of the Minutes of the last meeting

- 4.1. Acceptance of the minutes of the last meeting was proposed by Cllr Susan Barclay and seconded by Cllr Hugh Baker. The Council RESOLVED to accept the minutes which were signed by the Chair as a true record of proceedings.

5. Matters Arising

- 5.1. Councillors reviewed the list of actions arising from the last meeting and confirmed where action was complete.

5.2. The following matters arising were discussed:-

- 5.2.1. Survey of Chestnut Trees – Cllr Stan Cherry reported that B&NES were not able to undertake tree surveys due to lack of resources, but had provided an approved list of tree surgeons who could do a survey when the parish council was ready to have this work carried out.
- 5.2.2. Missing sections of wall of Crown Field – this had been reported to the owners.
- 5.2.3. Bank Account for allotment deposits – in view of the ongoing banking crisis and the poor rate of interest it was agreed that there was no advantage to the parish council in opening another bank account which could also expose them to risk. It was agreed that the allotment deposits would be clearly accounted for in the accounts and the money ring fenced in the council's existing reserve account.

Action: Clerk

5. a. Liaison with School Governors

- 5.1. The Chair said that as Janet Bilton, Chair of the School Governors was not yet present at the meeting he would continue with the next item on the agenda and return to this item when Mrs Bilton arrived.

6. Committee Reports

6.1. Amenities Committee

- 6.1.1. Cllr Stan Cherry confirmed that there had been no significant action on Amenity matters since the last meeting and members noted the brief Amenities Committee monthly report for February 2009.
- 6.1.2. Proposed BMX Area Project – Cllr Stan Cherry reported that a public meeting held on 26 January in the parish hall had been very well attended by a number of young people and their parents and at the end of the meeting the conclusion had been that there was general support for a dirt track for bikes in the lower corner of the recreation ground. However, following a site meeting held a few days later the Amenities Committee had received an email stating that the young people wanted a skateboard and scooter area not a bike area, there was concern that the proposed site was not large enough and suggestions were made about other areas in the village as potential locations.
- 6.1.3. The Chair closed the meeting to allow the members of the public present to speak. The young people confirmed that they really wanted ramps and a paved area for skateboards and scooters rather than a bike area. It was suggested that the activities would not be as noisy as feared and the jumps or ramps need not be huge. It was accepted that the site proposed by the parish council might be suitable but they would like skateboard equipment there instead of a dirt track for bikes. The young people said that if cost was an issue then they would be prepared to fundraise. A couple of members of the public expressed concern at the proposed location as being too out of the way.

- 6.1.4. The Chair reopened the meeting to allow the parish council to continue its discussion. Members agreed that the council did not have any other suitable locations within its control on which to site a play space for bikes or skateboards, but there was nothing to prevent the young people from approaching owners of possible alternative sites for permission to play on their land.
- 6.1.5. The council said it would be helpful if the young people could present them with a plan of what they wanted and some indicative costings as a starting point for further discussion. It was concluded that another public meeting should be arranged and the matter considered again by the Amenities Committee.

Action: Cllr Stan Cherry and Amenities Committee

5. a. Liaison with School Governors

- 5.1. Cllr Stan Cherry thanked Janet Bilton, Chair of the School Governors, for attending the meeting and invited her to address the council.
- 5.2. Janet Bilton reported that revised plans for the school's new extension were being submitted to the local authority shortly to incorporate a production kitchen on site and a redesigned reception area in addition to the new hall and administrative offices which formed part of the original plans. Funding had been released by central government for 4 or 5 school projects in B&NES and if the plans were approved, the school hoped that building work could start in the summer of 2009.
- 5.3. The council raised the issue of the perimeter fence which is collapsing in places and is very worn and unattractive. The school's policy was to undertake ad-hoc replacement of damaged areas, but complete replacement was currently beyond the school's budget. There was concern that the fence posed a safety risk and it was reported that children had been injured slipping down the gap between the higher play ground level and the fence. Janet Bilton said that she would refer these reports to the Head Teacher. It had been suggested at a Governor's Meeting that the perimeter of the school could be improved by planting fruit bushes alongside the fence. Members suggested that the replacement of the fence could be added to the contract for the new extension, particularly as part of the fence would have to be removed to allow heavy plant access to the site.
- 5.4. Members asked whether the new hall would be available for use outside school hours. Janet Bilton said that community use did not form part of the current plans and was designed only meet the needs of the school and its pupils. However, once the hall was built then the school would have to plan for extended hours for the children and would consider hiring it out in the evening or at other times. She said that the existing school buildings were used by other village organisations such as Twinning on occasions and there was no reason why the school should not continue to be used in such ways.
- 5.5. Cllr Stan Cherry thanked Janet Bilton for attending and said that the council looked forward to welcoming her to a future meeting for an update on progress of the new building.

6.2. Communications Committee

6.2.1. Cllr Ian Plain reported that the Communications Committee had held a meeting recently and discussed a number of issues primarily relating to the Bulletin. It was noted that a limited number of adverts were appearing regularly in the publication. Feedback suggested that these had been well received by readers and that business was being generated for advertisers. The advertising rates had been published in the Bulletin which was welcomed. As regular advertising was a relatively new initiative it was hard to forecast the level of revenue which would be generated. The Clerk was asked to account for production costs and advertising income separately in the accounts so that the figures could be identified easily. The grant from Quartet was all but used up but it might be possible to find alternative sources of funding. It was confirmed that the closing date for submission of items for the Bulletin was the 15th of each month, except where prior permission for a later submission had been given by the editor.

Action: Clerk

6.2.2. Cllr Ian Plain said that the Committee had also discussed the proposal for a finger post and would need to bring this matter to a full council meeting in the future.

Action: Communications Committee

6.3. Finance and Administration (F&A) Committee

6.3.1. Access to online and telephone banking services – members noted the proposal to register for internet and telephone banking to enable the Clerk more timely access to account information. In view of the need for payments to be authorised by two signatories the council was reluctant to register for internet banking which could expose them to risk. The Clerk was asked to seek advice from ALCA before setting up internet banking. It was also suggested that the Clerk should arrange for paper bank statements to be issued earlier each month.

Action: Clerk

6.3.2. Replacement of photocopier – members noted the two quotes received for the provision of an ex-rental photocopier to replace the council's existing copier which was beyond economic repair. One of the quotes was cheaper and did not tie the council into an expensive maintenance contract. The cheaper copier, supplied by Office Evolution Ltd, provided all the functions required by the council. The council agreed that the need to replace the copier was urgent and suggested that the quote from Office Evolution was acceptable subject to a satisfactory warranty period and level of consumables being supplied with the copier. Cllr Susan Barclay proposed and Cllr John Lloyd seconded a proposal to purchase an ex-rental copier from Office Evolution Ltd at a cost of £500.00 + VAT. A vote was taken by a show of hands and the council unanimously RESOLVED to make the purchase of the copier. The Clerk was asked to make the necessary arrangements for delivery and to ask the company if they would take away the old copier.

Action: Clerk

6.3.3. New Standing Order – members noted that the landlord had asked whether future rent payments could be made by Standing Order. There was no

objection subject to the form being signed by two councillors in accordance with the regulations. Cllr Susan Barclay proposed and Cllr Wendy Chambers seconded a proposal for the rent payment to be made by Standing Order. A vote was taken by a show of hands and the council unanimously RESOLVED to set up a Standing Order. The Clerk was asked to obtain the necessary paperwork for signature at the next meeting.

Action: Clerk

- 6.3.4. Summary of Income and Expenditure to end of December 2008 – members noted the council's income and spend to the end of December.

6.4. Highways, Footpaths and Lighting Committee

- 6.4.1. The monthly report from the Highways, Footpaths and Lighting (HFL) for February 2009 was noted. Concern was expressed that gritting has not been carried out on Bathford Hill or Dovers Park during the bad weather preventing the bus from completing its route. Cllr Stan Cherry confirmed that this matter had already been raised with B&NES. Members also noted that a meeting with B&NES' Property Services Team to review the condition of the school fence had been arranged for 9.15am on Monday 23 February. Any councillor was welcome to attend.

6.5. Planning and Environment Committee

- 6.5.1. Cllr Hugh Baker presented the Planning & Environment Committee monthly report for February 2009. The following items were discussed:-
- 6.5.2. Eastern Park & Ride site – Cllr Hugh Baker reported that the formal planning application for the Park and Ride site had been received by the parish council for consultation and invited Steve Mackerness, co-opted member of the Planning & Environment Committee, to speak on this issue. Steve Mackerness said that the application consisted of 3,500 pages of supporting documentation which had not been copied to the council but which he had viewed at B&NES planning offices.
- 6.5.3. A draft letter of objection had been prepared for consideration by full council at this meeting. The parish council's objections centred around two main principles; firstly that the development would harm the Green Belt and AONB and secondly that the proposed park and ride would not achieve its objectives of reducing traffic congestion because of current "suppressed demand" and the size of the site which cannot be enlarged due to the flood zones. There was also evidence that the Park & Ride would have a negligible effect on pollution levels.
- 6.5.4. The letter of objection also included an appendix which set out references in planning guidance and other documentation to the importance of preserving the green belt and to specific references to this site from which it was clear that there was significant evidence to indicate that development in this area was inappropriate.
- 6.5.5. There were no objections to the proposed draft letter and Cllr Ian Plain proposed and Cllr Susan Barclay seconded a proposal to endorse the letter for submission to B&NES prior to the deadline of 6 March 2009. A vote was

taken by a show of hands and the council RESOLVED unanimously to approve the letter of objection as drafted.

- 6.5.6. Members also considered the leaflet which the Save the Meadows campaign had asked to distribute with the next edition of the Bulletin. The parish council had no objection to the leaflet being issued with the Bulletin, but asked that the reference to the Parish Council on the front of the leaflet be removed. This was to avoid any suggestion that the parish council was associated with the Save the Meadows pressure group. Steve Mackerness was asked to contact the editor of the Bathford Bulletin to discuss ways in which the leaflet could be printed and distributed with the Bulletin.
- 6.5.7. Members noted that if the planning application was approved by B&NES then a request may be made for the application to be "called-in" by the Secretary of State for determination. The council may therefore be asked to return to this issue at a future meeting.
- 6.5.8. Jewson View Farm – it was reported that a planning application was pending.
- 6.5.9. At the conclusion of the committee reports the Cllr Stan Cherry read out a request from Chair Shirley Beazer in her absence reminding Committee Chairs to submit written reports to the meeting wherever possible in order to avoid the need for oral reports which took up valuable meeting time.

7. Planning for the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) 20 April 2009

- 7.1. The Clerk was asked to invite village organisations to set up displays at the APM and to invite the new Beat Manager. The F&A Committee would meet to agree the agenda and refreshment arrangements. Firm details would be presented at the next meeting.

Action: Clerk and F&A Committee

8. Draft rules for the Bath and North East Somerset Group of the Avon Local Councils Association

- 8.1. Members noted the draft rules circulated for comment by email on 8 February 2009. The council agreed that it was content with the rules as drafted.

9. Neighbourhood Watch

- 9.1. It was reported that a car had been stolen from Church Street and there was evidence of prowlers in the Dovers Park area. Details had been put on the Neighbourhood Watch page of the council's website.

10. Correspondence

- 10.1. Cllr Stan Cherry reported the following correspondence issued on behalf of the council or received by the council:-
- 10.2. Card from Mayor of Artannes – members noted the card from the Mayor and Council in Bathford's twinned village of Artannes sending New Year greetings to the parish council. Members agreed that the parish council should send similar greetings next year.
- 10.3. Correspondence issued on "round robin" – members noted the list of correspondence issued as a round robin to all councillors in hard copy or by email.

11. Items to report

11.1. The following issues were raised:-

11.2. Cluster Meeting – Members were asked to note the changed date for the Parish Cluster Meeting which would now take place on Monday 23 February, starting at 6.30pm.

11.3. Holiday dates – councillors were reminded to tell the Chair and the Clerk if they were going away for more than a couple of days so that they knew who was available when planning meetings or if urgent matters arose.

12. Items for the Bulletin

12.1. The council RESOLVED to publish the following notes in the Bulletin:-

12.1.1. Date of Annual Parish Meeting and invite items for discussion

12.1.2. Thank you to village shop for keeping open during bad weather

12.1.3. Ask if anyone knows who took the photo held by History Society of the school in 1970's

12.1.4. Energy saving "Warm Streets" initiative

12.1.5. Date of next meeting.

Action: Clerk

13. Items for the next meeting

13.1. Planning for Annual Parish Meeting

14. Payments for approval

14.1. Payment of the invoices presented to the council at this meeting was proposed by Cllr Hugh Baker and seconded by Cllr Richard Wickham. The council RESOLVED to make the following payments:-

I M Suleman	Rent for parish office – Feb 2009	£100.00
Tonik Ltd	Toner cartridge	£27.72
Corsham Print Ltd	Printing Bathford Bulletin January 2009	£120.00
BWBSL Wessex Water	Allotment Water	£13.25
Mrs R C Holding	Clerk's expenses – petty cash, electricity for office	£60.00
Mrs R C Holding	Clerk's salary – January 2009	£584.79
HMRC	Tax and NI	£57.18
St Swithun's PCC	Maintenance of churchyard	£300.00

15. Date of next meeting

15.1. The next meeting will be on Monday 16 March 2009 at 7.30pm in the Parish Office.

16. Confidential letter

16.1. The Council discussed a letter of complaint in closed session at the request for confidentiality from the complainants. In view of the contents of the letter members considered that the Clerk should be asked to send an acknowledgement letter until the council obtained legal advice on the issues raised.

Action: Clerk

The meeting closed at 9.45pm

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....