

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - MONDAY, 20 APRIL 2009
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

We were delighted and relieved to see the final construction of **three affordable houses** at Mountain Wood which are now appreciatively occupied. We are still attempting to persuade Somer to use the Lower Garages and areas of Mountain Wood for additional affordable housing but their proposals are to renovate some of the existing Lower Garages and use the remaining area as hard standing for parking by residents.

Post Office facilities of 162 years finally came to an end after its inevitable closure in July 2008 and with it the well-earned retirement of Iqbal and Musuma Suleman who gave 25 years of professional service to the community. It originated in Nos 2 and 12 Church Street and ended in what was formerly The New Inn. The **mail box** is now re-located nearby in Dovers Lane.

However, since this unhappy day, **BEFA** have successfully combined both the village shop and the distribution of newspapers and limited post office facilities. The recent cold spell aptly displayed to so many people the importance of local facilities and I urge everyone to make every effort to ensure its survival.

We were threatened with the removal of our one and only **telephone box** (albeit of modern design) presently situated opposite Church Street as it seems a survey had revealed its infrequent and therefore uneconomic use. We fiercely contested its removal on the grounds of playing field emergencies, Childline and Samaritans usage. Offers of "adopt a kiosk" were offered – but they had to be red ones; and "sponsor a kiosk" for £500 per annum – which we declined. . At present it operates under card operation only.

The Finance and Communications Committee (under the Chairmanship of Councillor Sue Barclay) as always have efficiently presented an acceptable and transparent **Precept** which for **2009/10** is £19,764.00. This is approximately a 12 per cent decrease on 2008/09 – and only marginally surpassed by Batheaston's 12.4 per cent.

We congratulate **Bathford Primary School** on their high performance and continuing fantastic fund-raising efforts and in the near future the provision of a new School Hall – long overdue. We endeavour to maintain strong and amicable liaison with the School and its projects.

The task of **Neighbourhood Watch** Co-ordinator (currently undertaken by Councillor Jean Vesey) ensures up-to-date security awareness with the introduction of a single central E-mail address contact for the Police which is then programmed in-house to registered Neighbourhood Watch addressees. Automatic contact with Batheaston also ensures shared information.

The Planning Committee (under the Chairmanship of Councillor Hugh Baker) has with great determination, continued to impressively and efficiently strongly oppose the **Eastern Park and Ride**. We remain actively involved with Batheaston and Bathampton Parish Councils on this issue and well-deserved thanks must be recorded to Steve Mackerness, who has systematically refuted its proposed location. The outcome is still unresolved, but the fight goes on.

The proposed expansion of **housing in the Green Belt** is also of vital importance to us all. Although the current earmarked locations will not affect us, the threatened use of the buffer zone must not be met with complacency and we have ensured our views have been reported. Once again, an enormous amount of input by the Planning Committee on this issue has been involved.

The **Amenities Committee** (under the Chairmanship of Councillor Stan Cherry) has productively progressed and encouraged the activities available to so many (both young and not so young) on the Wynne Wilson Memorial Playing Field and actively endeavours to provide additional requested facilities such as the successful bench project. New ideas and new goals (if you'll pardon the pun) are always paramount.

The **Bathford Bulletin** team, under the tireless input of Ian Plain (Communications Chairman) and Co-Editors Luke Emmett and Steve Chilcott continues to flourish. This also relies heavily on the many volunteers who reliably ensure its monthly delivery.

My appreciation to every gallant volunteer who contributes so much to the life of the Parish: Bathford Link, the Village Shop, Twinning Organisation, Parish Hall, Flower Show, Bathford Society and of course the charities of Hope and Homes for Children and Save the Children who continue to ensure our social life is never dull.

And in conclusion:

To my fellow Councillors –

For your willing commitment to every challenge relentlessly placed before you, and with it the untold hours (and years) of your invaluable and completely voluntary time, expertise and knowledge. My sincere thanks for your sustained loyalty, so admirably evident as a team and to the Parish.

And to Ruth (our Clerk) – You have the respect and gratitude of the whole Council. Super-efficient and totally reliable.

Thank you.

Shirley Beazer
Chair – Bathford Parish Council