

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

Present: Councillor Shirley Beazer (Chair)  
Councillor Stan Cherry  
Councillor Hugh Baker  
Councillor Susan Barclay  
Councillor Wendy Chambers  
Councillor Paul Faulkner  
Councillor John Lloyd  
Councillor Keith Masdin  
Councillor Jean Vesey  
Councillor Richard Wickham

Also Present: Ruth Holding (Clerk)

**1. Apologies**

1.1. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ian Plain.

**2. Public Five Minutes**

2.1. No matters were raised under this item.

**3. Declaration of interests 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 (12 October 2009)**

4.1. Acceptance of the minutes of the last meeting was proposed by Cllr Stan Cherry and seconded by Cllr Susan Barclay. 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. Relocation of notice board – it was confirmed that the oak posts had been ordered. It was noted that the notice board was in need of some refurbishment and it was suggested that this should be done before it was remounted in its new location next to the post box.

**Action: Cllr Ian Plain**

- 5.2.2. Frequency of committee meetings – although the Chair of the Communications Committee was absent from the meeting, it was requested that there should be a meeting of the committee shortly as there had not been one for a while. Cllr Shirley Beazer said that she would speak to Cllr Ian Plain about the need for a meeting. The council briefly discussed whether there ought to be a minimum imposed on the number of meetings a committee should hold in a year, but concluded that this should be a matter for each committee to determine based on the amount of business to be dealt with.  
**Action: Cllr Shirley Beazer**
- 5.2.3. Farm Watch – Cllr Wendy Chambers said that the farm in Warleigh was not a member of the Farm Watch scheme, but they would look for details of the scheme and consider whether it was appropriate to join.
- 5.2.4. Accident black spot on road to Kingsdown – Cllr Shirley Beazer reported that she had spoken to B&NES again about the frequency of accidents on this stretch of road, but B&NES was not convinced that an adverse camber was to blame. Cllr John Lloyd said that it was important to inform B&NES every time there was an accident to build up a body of evidence. Cllr Stan Cherry pointed out that the area of subsidence on this road appeared to be worsening.
- 5.2.5. Build out at bus stop by The Crown – Cllr Stan Cherry reported that B&NES has indicated that this work may be done at the end of November/early December as there was a break in a contractor's schedule.
- 5.2.6. Tree surveys – Cllr Stan Cherry confirmed that B&NES carried out surveys of trees on their own property, but did not undertake surveys for other landowners. The parish council would have to commission a private contractor to carry out any surveys when considered necessary. There was concern that B&NES had not undertaken a survey of the trees on Dovers Park loop for some considerable time. Cllr Stan Cherry said that under Freedom of Information, any councillor or private individual could ask for details of when the last survey was carried out and what the findings were.

## **6. Committee Reports**

### **6.1. Amenities Committee**

- 6.1.1. Cllr Stan Cherry presented the Amenities Committee monthly report for November 2009. The following items were discussed:-
- 6.1.2. Allotment Budget – Cllr Stan Cherry reported that he had almost completed work on a new financial spreadsheet which would record the rolling budget for allotment income and expenditure from one year to the next. This would provide a tool to track income from plot holders and expenditure on the allotments in order to determine when the next rent rise may be necessary. Cllr Wendy Chambers said that some of the plot markers were in poor condition and it may be beneficial to renew the markers if funds were available. It was confirmed that deposits would be shown on the spreadsheet, but these funds were ring-fenced to be returned to plot holders when they gave up their tenancy.

- 6.1.3. Cleansing – Cllr Keith Masdin reported that the street sweeper went round the village on Thursday last, but had been prevented from cleaning the gutters because its route coincided with waste day and the refuse collectors had moved all the black sacks into the road pending the arrival of the waste disposal truck. The council understood that the street sweeper was supposed to visit the village fortnightly on a Tuesday, but this no longer appeared to be the case. Cllr Shirley Beazer said that she would contact B&NES to obtain a street cleansing zone chart and timetable for the parish. When the details of the rota were confirmed the parish council would inform parishioners by way of a notice in the Bulletin.

**Action: Cllr Shirley Beazer**

- 6.1.4. Playing Field Rents – Cllr Stan Cherry said that during discussions about next year's budget a question had been raised about the level of rent charged to users of the playing field and it was suggested that the levels were too low. Cllr Stan Cherry said that rent levels were set in accordance with the agreed calculation based on the RPI. As Trustees of the charity which managed the playing field the council would have to maintain it, whether or not there were sports clubs who used it. In his view the council should welcome the contributions that the rents made towards the costs. Cllr Wendy Chambers said that the F&A Committee had raised the question of whether there should be a review of the charging policy when it was looking at all the lines in the accounts.

## **6.2. Communications Committee**

- 6.2.1. In the absence of the Chair of the Committee no matters were reported for discussion at this meeting.

## **6.3. Finance and Administration (F&A) Committee**

- 6.3.1. Cllr Susan Barclay tabled the draft budget for 2010/2011 which had been put together following a long discussion by the committee on the basis of the budgets requested by committees and analysis of centralised costs such as electricity, office expenditure etc.
- 6.3.2. Cllr Susan Barclay explained that the allotment budget was being operated as a stand alone element of the budget, but the same figure for income and expenditure had been included in the budget sheet to balance the accounts as the financial activity relating to the allotments would still appear in the parish council's general ledger.
- 6.3.3. The committee had discussed the issue of the level of the council's reserves in some detail. They suggested that the cost of the basketball hoop should be taken from reserves not added to the precept. It was also recognised that a significant proportion of the reserves related to money which was being held pending the commencement of projects, some of which had been carried over for a number of years. The Committee agreed that a concerted effort should be made to carry out overdue projects such as the well capping in order to spend the money held for this purpose.
- 6.3.4. A large proportion of the reserves could be spent on the proposed Vehicle Activated Speed Sign, but Cllr Shirley Beazer said that the timing of the purchase was dependant upon B&NES developing the plans for the

proposed improvements to the junction of Ashley Road and the High Street. The parish council could not purchase the sign independently.

- 6.3.5. Cllr Sue Barclay pointed out that the level of reserves was unlikely to rise any higher due to the fall in interest rates, and the lower levels of VAT being claimed by the council.
- 6.3.6. The committee had looked carefully into the amount of money that the council spent on electricity for the parish council's office in the basement of the Manor (metered) and the office under the shop (key). The parish council rarely used its office in the Manor except for storage of archive material, but the Bathford Society also stored archive material in separate room in the basement of the Manor which used the same electricity supply. The F&A Committee had approached the Bathford Society about a possible annual donation towards electricity costs. The electricity in the office under the shop was used by both the parish council for its office and the shop to run its freezers. Consumption appeared to be running high but this was probably due to a freezer being left on fast freeze by mistake and consumption was expected to fall now this problem had been rectified.
- 6.3.7. As a result of the budget discussions, the budget had been set at a total of £22,818.00 giving a required precept of £18,324.00 which was a reduction of 7.29% on last year's figure. The precept would be brought back to the council at its meeting in January 2009 for formal approval. It was accepted that there may be some adjustment in the figures if additional projects were proposed in the meantime.
- 6.3.8. Cllr Stan Cherry said that the basketball hoop could be purchased in this financial year if necessary and proposed expenditure of £1,300 on this item which had been agreed in principle at a previous meeting. This was seconded by Cllr Hugh Baker. A vote was taken by a show of hands and the council RESOLVED unanimously to approve the expenditure.
- 6.3.9. Summary of income and expenditure to the end of September 2009 – Councillors noted the report of income and spend for the half year from 1 April to 30 September 2009.

#### **6.4. Highways, Footpaths and Lighting Committee**

- 6.4.1. Cllr Shirley Beazer presented the Highways, Footpaths and Lighting Committee monthly report for November 2009. The following items were discussed:-
- 6.4.2. Verge cutting – at the request of a parishioner Cllr Shirley Beazer had asked B&NES to carry out verge cutting, but had been advised that it was now too late in the season and cutting would not recommence until next year.
- 6.4.3. Drop-off request bus stop on Dovers Park loop - members noted that the Clerk had received a phonecall from B&NES confirming that the council and bus company had no objection to a request drop-off stop at the top of Dovers Park loop and a small flag would be fitted to the lamp-post at the top of the loop. The service would start from 29 November 2009. The council agreed to wait for confirmation in writing before announcing the start of this service.

**Clerk's Note** – following objections from residents the introduction of this drop-off service has been postponed while their concerns are addressed.

- 6.4.4. New bus tickets – Cllr Stan Cherry reported that he thought he had seen information that return bus tickets would be valid on any service. In addition B&NES had announced the introduction of a new 'BathRider' bus ticket which would be valid on any Bath bus service whoever the operator was. The Clerk was asked to put a note in the Bulletin about the new ticket.

**Action: Clerk**

- 6.4.5. Congestion at bottom of Bathford Hill – Cllr Keith Masdin said that during rush hour it was increasingly difficult to pull out of Bathford Hill onto the A363 and queues were building up. He asked whether B&NES could be approached about traffic control or the introduction of a roundabout. Cllr Shirley Beazer said that the parish council had raised this issue before and been informed that there was insufficient space available for a roundabout. Cllr Shirley Beazer said that she would contact B&NES again about this matter.

**Action: Cllr Shirley Beazer**

## **6.5. Planning and Environment Committee**

- 6.5.1. Cllr Hugh Baker presented the Planning and Environment Committee monthly report for November 2009. The following items were discussed:-
- 6.5.2. Tyndale on shortlist of locations for a 'wet house' – surprise was expressed that Tyndale had appeared on a list of potential sites for a hostel and 'wet-house'. B&NES had made the decision to locate the facility elsewhere in the city, but Cllr Hugh Baker said he had written to B&NES expressing concern that the site had been short-listed without any prior consultation with the parish council. A reply had not yet been received.

## **7. Report from Parishes Liaison Meeting held on 14 October 2009**

- 7.1. Members noted the personal notes taken by Cllr Shirley Beazer at the Parishes Liaison Meeting recording the outcome of discussions on items of interest to Bathford.

## **8. Valley Parishes Alliance Meeting**

- 8.1. Councillors noted the minutes of the first meeting of the Valley Parishes Alliance group. The parish council's representative at the group had indicated that it would be helpful if the council could formally record its support for the group. Cllr Hugh Baker made the proposal that the council 'commits to support the initiatives of the Valley Parishes Alliance Meeting and asks Steve Mackerness to represent its views at the meetings. There would be no expenditure associated with the commitment.' This proposal was seconded by Cllr Jean Vesey. A vote was taken by a show of hands and the council RESOLVED unanimously to support the Valley Parishes Alliance Group.

## **9. Proposed date for Parish Cluster Meeting in 2010**

9.1. Councillors noted that it was proposed to hold the next Cluster Meeting on 22 February 2010.

## **10. Neighbourhood Watch**

10.1. Cllr Jean Vesey reported that she was frustrated that she was getting no co-operation from the police and by the apparent lack of interest in the parish in the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. She thanked Cllr Stan Cherry for his help and support and wondered whether it was time that she considered stepping down from the role of Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator.

10.2. Fellow councillors encouraged Cllr Jean Vesey to stay in the role. They suggested concentrating her efforts on the core group of active Neighbourhood Watch Members and to stop trying to expand the scheme for the time being if there was no interest from certain areas in the parish.

10.3. It was suggested that the council could write to the Chief Superintendent in Bath or the Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset about the apparent lack of support and feedback from the police with regard to Neighbourhood Watch issues.

10.4. The Clerk was asked to put a note in the Bulletin to inform residents that despite repeated requests for volunteers to join the Neighbourhood Watch scheme none have come forward and that the roads without a Neighbourhood Watch contact cannot therefore be regarded as covered by the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme until such time as volunteers come forward.

**Action: Clerk**

## **11. Liaison with School Governors**

11.1. Cllr Jean Vesey reported that the diocese had appointed a new foundation governor to sit on the Governing body until a new vicar was found. Work on the new hall was progressing well.

## **12. Correspondence**

12.1. Cllr Shirley Beazer reported the following correspondence issued on behalf of the council or received by the council:-

12.2. Leaflet about Park & Ride (P&R) bus services – members noted the leaflet issued by B&NES giving details of the extra bus services to Bath's P&R sites during late night shopping and Sunday shopping in the run-up to Christmas.

12.3. The Forest of Avon – members noted the announcement that the Forest of Avon Partnership was being wound up, but their work would be continued by the Forest of Avon Trust. The Trust had asked about the possibility of grants from parish councils. Members considered that the work of the Trust was not of immediate benefit to Bathford and therefore it would not be appropriate to make donations to the Trust's work.

12.4. Cotswolds Conservation Board – the Board had issued a Notice of Result of Ballot confirming that Hazel Bleaken had been elected to represent Parish Group 6 on the Cotswolds Conservation Board.

12.5. New Recycling Arrangements – members noted the leaflet issued by B&NES about the new arrangements for recycling cardboard and household plastic.

12.6. Digital switchover – members noted the Community Outreach Pack issued by digitaluk. The Clerk was asked to put a note in the Bulletin informing individuals and local groups that information about digital switchover was available if they wished to borrow it.

12.7. Twinning – Members agreed that it would be an appropriate gesture to send a Christmas card to the Mayor of Artannes-sur-Indres, Bathford's twin town. The Clerk was asked to get contact details from the Twinning Association.

**Action: Clerk**

### 13. Items to report

13.1. Bathford Consolidated Charities – Cllr Stan Cherry reported that the winding-up of Bathford Consolidated Charities had been formally concluded and all its assets transferred to Dorothy House, the local hospice providing care for patients in the local area included Bathford.

13.2. Tree felling in grounds of Bathford Manor – Cllr Keith Masdin reported that he had been contacted by a resident concerned that a tree had been felled in the grounds of the Manor. It was suggested that the resident should contact Somer Housing as they managed some of the properties in the Manor and could have been carrying out ground maintenance.

13.3. Dog fouling – members noted the letter submitted for publication in the Bathford Bulletin from a resident concerned about the unpleasant levels of dog fouling in Ashley Road.

### 14. Items for the Bulletin

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

14.1.1. Christmas goodwill message to parishioners

14.1.2. Information available about digital switchover

14.1.3. Details of new recycling and waste collections

14.1.4. Neighbourhood Watch

14.1.5. New BathRider bus ticket

14.1.6. Date of next meeting.

**Action: Clerk**

### 15. Items for the next meeting

15.1. Approval of Precept for 2010-2011

### 16. Payments for approval

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

I M Suleman	Office rent Nov 09 - paid by standing order	£103.00
The Phone Co-op Ltd	Phone and internet charges Sept 09	£28.65
The Phone Co-op Ltd	Phone and internet charges Oct 09	£28.59
Corsham Print Ltd	Printing Bathford Bulletin Nov 2009	£87.00
Mrs R C Holding	Clerk's expenses – petty cash, electricity for office	£60.00
Mrs R C Holding	Clerk's salary – October 2009	£436.22

**15. Date of next meeting**

15.1. The next meeting will be held on Monday 18 January 2010 at 7.30pm in the parish office.

The meeting closed at 9.28pm

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....