

Minutes of Bathford Parish Council Meeting
held on Monday 18 January 2010 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 John Lloyd
Councillor Keith Masdin (from item 6a)
Councillor Ian Plain
Councillor Jean Vesey
Councillor Richard Wickham

Also Present: Ward Councillor Gabriel Batt
Steve Mackerness (from item 6c to part of item 6e)
Ruth Holding (Clerk)

1. Apologies

1.1. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Paul Faulkner. Cllr Keith Masdin had sent his apologies for his late arrival to the Chair prior to the meeting.

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. Cllr Stan Cherry declared a non-prejudicial interest in the item on the proposed cricket pavilion as President of the Bathford Cricket Club.

4. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting (16 November 2009)

4.1. Acceptance of the minutes of the last meeting was proposed by Cllr Hugh Baker and seconded by Cllr Stan Cherry. 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. Tyndale – Cllr Hugh Baker reported that he had written to B&NES about this site being included on a list of possible locations for a “wet house”, but had not received a reply. Ward Cllr Gabriel Batt said that he would follow this up on the council’s behalf.

- 5.2.2. Relocation of notice board – Cllr Ian Plain reported that completion of this project would be delayed until the weather improved.
Action: Cllr Ian Plain
- 5.2.3. Communications Committee meeting – Cllr Ian Plain reported that a meeting of the Committee would be arranged as soon as possible.
Action: Cllr Ian Plain
- 5.2.4. Mechanical Sweeping – Cllr Shirley Beazer reported that B&NES carry out mechanical sweeping of the village monthly on a Tuesday and litter picking is arranged fortnightly on a day of the week yet to be identified by B&NES. Cllr Wendy Chambers asked whether the mechanical sweeping schedule included Warleigh. It was assumed that all areas of the parish were included, but Cllr Wendy Chambers was asked to notify the chair if the conditions in Warleigh Lane indicated that the road was not being swept regularly.
Action: Cllr Wendy Chambers
- 5.2.5. Condition of lay-by following road works – it was noted that equipment and rubbish had been left in the lay-by by Bathford Bridge following the road works. It was reported that the contractors would be returning to clear the site.
- 5.2.6. Junction of Bathford Hill and A363 – Cllr Shirley Beazer reported that B&NES seemed sympathetic to improvements to the junction, but any future solutions would depend on the results of the speed survey currently being undertaken on the A363.
- 5.2.7. Neighbourhood Watch – Cllr Jean Vesey reported that a Neighbourhood Watch meeting had been arranged for 3 February 2010.

6. Committee Reports

6.1. Amenities Committee

- 6.1.1. Cllr Stan Cherry presented the Amenities Committee monthly report for January 2010. The following items were discussed:-
- 6.1.2. Swings in play area – it was reported that the last play area safety inspection had identified loose shackles on the swing seats. Cllr Stan Cherry said that he had been to carry out the repairs but could find nothing wrong with the shackles. He had asked for the play area inspector to contact him to discuss the matter but was still awaiting a reply.
Action: Cllr Stan Cherry
- 6.1.3. Basketball Hoop – Cllr Stan Cherry reported that he was awaiting further details with regard to the installation of the hoop before this project could be taken further.
- 6.1.4. Bench on High Street – it was confirmed that there had been no comments received from the residents near to the new location of the bench and therefore work to move the bench would be carried out when the weather improved.
Action: Cllr Stan Cherry

- 6.1.5. Crown Bus Stop – the parish council had asked B&NES to install a build-out at the bus stop to make it easier for the bus to pick up passengers while still retaining space for on street parking. However, B&NES had indicated that it would not sanction a build-out at this location as they did not consider it necessary. Instead B&NES would be installing a raised kerb and a bus box to prevent parking and allow the bus to pull in. The parish council remained of the view that a build-out was the best solution. Ward Cllr Gabriel Batt said he would be happy to assist the parish council with this matter and he arranged to speak to Cllr Stan Cherry outside the meeting to obtain further details of the problem.

Action: Cllr Stan Cherry and Ward Cllr Gabriel Batt

- 6.1.6. Cricket Club Pavilion – Cllr Stan Cherry reported that Bathford Cricket Club (BCC) had made significant progress on this matter and he tabled drawings of the suggested design of the new pavilion. These showed a single storey, timber clad building, divided inside to provide home and away changing areas, toilet facilities and a tea area/multi-use training room. The new building's pitched roof would stand approximately 1ft higher than the existing pavilion and store hut and its footprint would be about 1.5 times the current area. The new building would have a different orientation so that the front of it faced the cricket square.
- 6.1.7. BCC have invited comments on the proposals from the parish council's Amenities Committee given that the council is the major stakeholder in the recreation ground. The Amenities Committee was to discuss this at its next meeting. In the meantime, members were invited to give their initial views. The first issue raised was one of disabled access as there did not appear to be a way in except up the steps shown on the plan. Cllr Stan Cherry confirmed that BCC has spoken to the planning department at B&NES with regard to the proposals and the drawings were based on advice received.
- 6.1.8. Cllr Stan Cherry said that the Amenities Committee had discussed options for charging the cricket club a peppercorn rent with all responsibility for the ongoing costs of maintenance, insurance and utilities being passed to the club, but no final decisions had been made.
- 6.1.9. Cllr Stan Cherry said that there would be a site visit with representatives from BCC and a representative of the ECB at 11am on Sunday 31 January and the club had been offered the use of the parish office for a meeting afterwards. Any members of the parish council were welcome to attend.
- 6.1.10. Cllr Stan Cherry said that the next Amenities Committee meeting would be held on 27 January or 3 February when the proposed cricket pavilion would be discussed in detail.

6.2. Communications Committee

- 6.2.1. There were no matters for discussion at this meeting.

6.3. Finance and Administration (F&A) Committee

- 6.3.1. Cllr Susan Barclay reported that the parish council was facing a significant rise in the cost of the electricity to supply the 3 street lights on the footpath by the play area which are owned by the parish council. The current suppliers

had notified the council that it would be imposing a monthly standing charge in addition to the cost of supply which would result in an increase in costs from around £3.00 per quarter to approximately £280.00 per year. The parish council's supplier had claimed that it had been under-recovering the cost of supplying the electricity for a number of years, hence the sudden large rise in costs.

- 6.3.2. The council would be able to purchase electricity at a cheaper rate from its existing suppliers if it entered into a 12 month contract amounting to around £220.00 per year and a copy of the contract had been seen by the F&A Committee. Members agreed that before entering into a contract the parish council should ask B&NES what rate they paid for street lighting to confirm whether the contract offered by its current supplier was competitive. It was also suggested that the parish council should ask B&NES whether they would consider adopting the 3 street lights, thereby relieving the parish council of the cost of the electricity and maintenance. The Clerk was asked to write to B&NES.

Action: Clerk

- 6.3.3. Precept for 2010 -11 – Cllr Susan Barclay reminded members that the draft budget has been discussed in detail at the meeting in November 2009. No amendments had been proposed since then. Using the tax base figures issued by B&NES in December 2009, Cllr Susan Barclay reported that the annual charge for a Band D property in the parish would fall from last year's figure of £24.65 to £22.93, a reduction of 6.97%.

- 6.3.4. Cllr Susan Barclay proposed acceptance of the budget and precept for 2010 -2011. This was seconded by Cllr Wendy Chambers. Council RESOLVED unanimously to set a precept of £18,324.00 for 2010 -2011. The Clerk was asked to complete the necessary paperwork.

Action: Clerk

6.4. Highways, Footpaths and Lighting Committee

- 6.4.1. Cllr Shirley Beazer presented the Highways, Footpaths and Lighting Committee monthly report for January 2010. The following items were discussed:-
- 6.4.2. Award for B&NES Highway team – it was reported that the B&NES team had won a national award for the way in which it had coordinated and integrated the work of other agencies and utility companies in roadwork projects.
- 6.4.3. Potholes – it was noted that potholes were being repaired on the A363, but another large hole had opened up at the bottom of the hill.
- 6.4.4. Vehicle Activated Speed Signs – Cllr Shirley Beazer reported that B&NES would be retaining priority point 1 in-situ and would identify the locations for two vehicle activated speed signs. The cost of both signs would be met by B&NES.
- 6.4.5. Grit bins – the spell of bad weather had revealed that there were areas in the parish in which residents did not have access to a grit bin or that an existing grit bin was located in the wrong place. It had been suggested that the

parish council could consider purchasing additional grit bins, if B&NES would agree to provide the grit. Cllr Shirley Beazer had obtained a map showing the location of current bins and this would form the basis for the review. The Clerk was asked to put a note in the next edition of the Bathford Bulletin inviting residents to suggest where additional grit bins could be positioned. Members noted a letter from a resident asking for the return of the grit bin removed from Dovers Park turning circle.

Action: Cllr Shirley Beazer/Cllr Stan Cherry

6.5. Planning and Environment Committee

- 6.5.1. Cllr Hugh Baker presented the Planning and Environment Committee monthly report for January 2010. The following items were discussed:-
- 6.5.2. Expansion of Bristol Airport – Cllr Hugh Baker reported that he had written to North East Somerset Council in response to the proposals to expand Bristol Airport requesting a ban or stringent restrictions on night flights.
- 6.5.3. Eastern Park & Ride (P&R) – Cllr Hugh Baker introduced Steve Mackerness, co-opted member of the Planning Committee, who had been invited to this meeting to update members on the latest situation with regard to the proposal to build a P&R on Bathampton Meadows. Steve Mackerness explained that the planning application to build the P&R had been approved by B&NES and therefore action was being organised to challenge the decision in the courts. To this end a “Guarantee Company” VeraCityBath Ltd (VCB) had been incorporated specifically to bring proceedings against the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and B&NES in relation to their actions with regard to the approval of the planning applications for the Bath Transportation Package of which the P&R forms one element.
- 6.5.4. Steve Mackerness declared himself to be one of the eight directors of this company, but there was no conflict of interests between being a director in his individual capacity and being a co-opted member of the Planning Committee, provided that he declared a non-prejudicial interest at any time that the P&R was discussed at council meetings. The other directors of VCB comprised members representing the views of Bathampton, Batheaston and Claverton parish councils and concerned individuals.
- 6.5.5. It was noted that VCB had been granted a Protective Cost Order (PCO), limiting the company’s liability in reimbursing the plaintiff’s costs to £2,000 should the case be unsuccessful. VCB had already lodged its claim against the Secretary of State and considering lodging a claim against B&NES. To pursue claims could cost up to £50,000 and funding was required. Batheaston, Bathampton and Claverton parish councils had made donations. Steve Mackerness invited Bathford parish council to confirm its formal support for VCB and its aims and to consider a donation towards the costs of the legal action being taken.
- 6.5.6. The parish council thanked Steve Mackerness for his detailed presentation on the situation with regard to the P&R. They invited him to stay at the meeting for the next item to update the council on progress to establish a Valley Parishes Alliance Group.

- 6.5.7. Valley Parishes Alliance Group (VPAG) – Steve Mackerness reminded members that an alliance of parish councils to the east and south east of Bath had been proposed to provide mutual benefit and support in response to common threats to the area and to contribute to discussions on issues of common interest. Representatives from eight parish councils had attended 3 exploratory meetings held to date. Recent discussions had suggested that the VPAG would need funding to be an effective body, but Steve Mackerness was of the view that while the alliance was a useful means of information exchange between parishes, no funding should be considered until the group has proved to be effective.
- 6.5.8. Cllr Hugh Baker thanked Steve Mackerness for the tremendous amount of work he had done with regard to keeping the parish council informed of events with regard to the P&R and for representing the council at VPAG meetings. This was echoed by the Chair.
- 6.5.9. Steve Mackerness left the meeting to allow the parish council to discuss the issues raised with regard to the Park and Ride and the VPAG.
- 6.5.10. Members agreed that their response to the incorporation of VCB and the request for a donation was an important matter which required more time for discussion than was available at this meeting. The Clerk was asked to put this item on the agenda for the February Meeting.
Action: Clerk
- 6.5.11. Some members expressed concern that the council's representative on VPAG was not a full councillor and that if VPAG gained more prominence then a full councillor may have to join. There was some discussion on what benefits another group might bring over and above the individual parish council and Cluster Meetings, but members considered that the alliance did bring something new in terms of it being a cross-county group and a larger group of parishes would have a stronger voice when approaching local authorities. Members were strongly of the view that no funding should be given to the group.
- 6.5.12. Members recalled that it had taken a resolution at the parish council meeting in November 2009 to support the aims of the VPAG and that Steve Mackerness would act as the council's representative at the meeting. Cllr Hugh Baker proposed a resolution confirming that:-
- 6.5.12.1. "Bathford parish council wishes to be associated with an alliance of parishes in the Avon Valley in order to discuss matters of common interest and that Steve Mackerness will act as the parish council's representative. The council will be kept informed of the activities of the Alliance Group by a copy of the minutes being included in the Planning Committee's written report to the parish council meetings. The parish council will make no financial contribution to the VPAG at this time."
- 6.5.13. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Ian Plain. A vote was taken by a show of hands and members RESOLVED unanimously to agree the proposal.

7. Items for the Parish Cluster Meeting 22 February 2009

- 7.1. Members suggested the subjects of Gritting, Cleansing, Priority Point 1 and traffic management at the junction of Bathford Hill with the A363 as items for the agenda of the next Cluster Meeting. Councillors were invited to submit any additional items to the Clerk before the deadline of 1 February.

Action: All Councillors

8. Survey of Library Services

- 8.1. Members noted the questionnaire, for completion by each individual councillor, which had been issued by the Library Service to gather information to help them in a review of the delivery of library services. It was suggested that it would be helpful to have the views of residents with regard to this issue and the Clerk was asked to send an electronic copy of the survey to the editor of the Bathford Bulletin so that it could be included in the next edition.

Action: Clerk

- 8.2. Councillors who wished to comment were asked to return their completed questionnaires to the Clerk by 31 March 2010.

Action: All Councillors

9. Sustainable Communities Act Amendment Bill

- 9.1. Members recalled that the parish council had given its support, by writing to local MPs, to the introduction of the Sustainable Communities Act which had become law in October 2007. Local Works, the organisation behind the campaign to get the new law had written to the parish council towards the end of 2009 seeking help in getting an Amendment to the Act which would empower parish councils to be involved in the Act's processes. Local works were asking parish councils to write to Ministers asking them to give immediate support to the Amendment Bill to enable legislation to be passed in the short parliamentary session before the general election. A draft letter to the minister had been issued with the agenda for consideration.

- 9.2. Cllr Susan Barclay proposed that the council continue support for this legislation and send the suggested letter. This was seconded by Cllr Hugh Baker. Council RESOLVED unanimously to write in support of the Sustainable Communities Act Amendment Bill.

Action: Clerk

10. Planning for Annual Parish Meeting 19 April 2010

- 10.1. Members agreed that a note should go in the next edition of the Bathford Bulletin informing residents of the date of the meeting and inviting suggestions of items for discussion. It was suggested that a speaker from the Library Service may be of interest. It was also suggested that Neighbourhood Watch should be an item on the agenda to raise the profile of the scheme and encourage more volunteers to participate. In view of the short time left for discussion, members agreed to defer more detailed consideration of this item to the next meeting.

Action: Clerk

11. Annual Return to the Charity Commission

- 11.1. Members noted the copy of the on-line return sent to the Charity Commissioners with regard to income and expenditure in 2008-2009 on the Wynne Wilson War Memorial Recreation Ground.

12. Neighbourhood Watch

- 12.1. The date of the next Neighbourhood Watch Meeting had been announced earlier in the meeting (see paragraph 5.2.7). There were no other matters for consideration.

13. Liaison with School Governors

- 13.1. There were no matters to report.

14. Correspondence

- 14.1. Cllr Shirley Beazer reported the following correspondence issued on behalf of the council or received by the council:-
- 14.2. Christmas Cards – members noted the Christmas cards sent to the council from the Chair of B&NES and Dan Norris MP.
- 14.3. Parish Charter questionnaire – Cllr Shirley Beazer reported that B&NES had issued a questionnaire about the parish charter at the end of last year. As there was no parish council meeting before the deadline for return of the questionnaires, it had completed by the Chair on behalf of the council in consultation with Cllr Hugh Baker.
- 14.4. Youth Service Newsletter – members noted the newsletter publicising the activities provided by B&NES youth service.
- 14.5. Heritage Events – members noted the leaflet issued by B&NES advertising Heritage Events taking place between January and April 2010.
- 14.6. Army Presentation Team – the council had received an invitation to the Army Presentation Team's event at The Forum, Bath on 25 February 2010. Any councillors interested in attending were asked to contact the Clerk.
- 14.7. Joint Waste Core Strategy Policy – B&NES had issued a consultation document on the next phase of the strategy for waste disposal facilities in the region. None of the proposed sites appeared to affect Bathford directly. The documents were passed to the Planning and Environment Committee for consideration.
- 14.8. Avon Wildlife Trust Event - the council had been invited to attend a lunchtime event at Dyrham Park organised by the Wildlife Trust about its wild flower project. Any councillors interested in attending were asked to contact the Clerk.
- 14.9. Bus Stop on Dovers Park – members noted the copy of the short letter from B&NES to a resident about the proposed request stop on Dovers Park Loop. B&NES were considering the suggestion that buses should stop to drop-off on request without the need for a marker on the lamp-post or elsewhere.
- 14.10. Sustainable energy seminars – members noted the seminars being arranged by The Centre for Sustainable Energy and suggested that the information be passed to Bathford Transition Group.

15. Items to report

15.1. Green boxes on pavements – the Clerk was asked to write to householders who were permanently leaving recycling boxes on the public footpath to keep these on their own property until collection day.

Action: Clerk

15.2. Clearing gas points – it was noted that a gas utility company had cleared debris from various gas points but had left all the muck in the gutter on Bathford Hill. Cllr Ian Plain agreed to contact the company to get the rubbish cleared.

15.3. Bathford Calendars – sales had gone well and about 100 calendars remained. Some would be sent to Artannes and it was suggested that the remainder could be given to newcomers to the village as it contained useful telephone numbers for local services etc.

15.4. Whitehaven – it was reported that the two new dwellings created from Whitehaven had been named Titan Barrow House and The Bishop's House.

15.5. B&NES Economic Development Strategy – the parish council had not received a copy of the consultation direct. Cllr Ian Plain said he would a copy to the Clerk to enable the council to consider whether it should comment.

15.6. Earthquake in Haiti – Cllr Keith Masdin reported that village-wide fundraising events had been planned to raise funds to purchase Water Survival Boxes which would help to supply families with clean water for a year in the aftermath of the earthquake.

15.7. Blue bags for cardboard recycling – any residents who had not yet received a blue bag were advised to contact Council Connect and request a bag. A note would be put in the Bathford Bulletin.

16. Items for the Bulletin

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

16.1.1. Date of Annual Parish Meeting and invite suggestions for items for discussion

16.1.2. Invite residents to identify locations for grit bins

16.1.3. Advise residents to contact B&NES if they have not received a blue bag for cardboard recycling

16.1.4. Neighbourhood Watch

16.1.5. Date of next meeting

Action: Clerk

17. Items for the next meeting

17.1. Request for support from VeraCityBath Ltd with regard to action against the Eastern Park & Ride

17.2. Planning for the Annual Parish Meeting

17.3. Income and Expenditure for 3rd quarter 2009/2010

17.4. Request for support from Peppercot Pre-School

18. Payments for approval

18.1. 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 Jan 2010 - paid by standing order	£103.00
The Phone Co-op Ltd	Phone and internet charges Dec 09	£29.07
EDF Energy	Electricity for office in Manor basement	£28.99
EDF Energy	Street Lighting	£26.38
Corsham Print Ltd	Printing Bathford Bulletin Jan 2010	£87.00
Mrs R C Holding	Clerk's expenses – petty cash, electricity for office	£60.00
Mrs R C Holding	Clerk's salary – December 2009	£427.83

18.2. As there was no meeting of the parish council in December 2009, members noted that the following payments were authorised by two councillors on 18 December 2009

I M Suleman	Office rent Dec 09 - paid by standing order	£103.00
Corsham Print Ltd	Printing Bathford Bulletin Dec 2009	£120.00
B&NES	Grounds maintenance on playing field	£1,771.17
Mrs R C Holding	Clerk's salary – November 2009	£530.18
The Phone Co-op Ltd	Phone and internet charges Nov 09	£31.23

19. Date of next meeting

19.2. The next meeting will be held on Monday 15 February 2010 at 7.30pm in the parish office.

The meeting closed at 9.45pm

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....