

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 and several other issues.

PLAYING FIELD

Field Condition

The general condition of the field remains good. We will continue to work to improve the appearance whenever an opportunity arises.

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

There have been no significant changes in the play area over the last twelve months. All equipment is in good condition and continues to be well used.

Sport use and user rent review

The field continues to be well used by clubs covering Rugby, Cricket and Football. This season there is only one football team using the field on Sundays, the team from The Crown having disbanded at the start of the season. The rugby and cricket clubs continue to provide opportunities for young people to have coaching in their respective sports from an early age.

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. Following the review in September (based on the Retail Price Index at that time). This has resulted in a small reduction in field rents in the coming financial year, balancing out the relatively high rent in economic terms from last year. We continue to follow our stated policy that the rents we charge local users reflects will encourage use of the field (especially by young people) and are comfortable with the rents charged.

User rents for the Playing Field have been reviewed according to the set formula and will be as follows from September 2008:

Avonvale Rugby Football Club	£378-00
Bathford Cricket Club	£124-00
Bathford Rangers Football Club	£124-00

During 2008, we came to an agreement with Avonvale RFC to apply a rent reduction for 'lack of use' of the main pitch, dependant on the number of times they used the pitch during the season. This was implemented last year and a small refund was repaid to the club.

Cricket Pavilion

Last year I reported that the cricket club had suggested a plan to replace the old building at the top of the field with a new pavilion in sustainable materials in keeping with the situation. The Amenities Committee, supported by the full council, has worked with the club on this project since November last year to once again improve facilities on the playing field. The situation at the time of writing is that the Parish Council has agreed to become a stakeholder in this project.

Because the building to be replaced is in the ownership of 'the parish' it has been agreed that we will support the project to replace the building and lean-to by contributing the money precepted over the last two years for repairs to the existing building into the fundraising for the project once construction work gets under way (subject to a formal agreement being in place). Also, we will apply for any necessary planning permissions since the current building is in the parish's ownership.

On completion of the project use of the building will be granted to Bathford Cricket Club for a peppercorn rent with all maintenance and operating costs paid for by the club. Should the cricket club fold then control of the building will

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revert to the parish council on behalf of the parish. The club will be willing to offer use of the amenity to other field users on request.

At the time of writing, a club representative accompanied by a PC representative are in the process of speaking to all neighbouring properties along Ashley Road individually to ensure that they all receive correct information and are allowed to input their suggestions. On completion of this stage full details will be published in The Bulletin for all residents to digest.

ALLOTMENTS

Once again, the situation at the allotments is very good and the Wardens (Mike Smith and Martin Wright) continue to manage the allotments superbly. All allotments are taken (despite splitting many down to half plots) and we have a waiting list.

Allotment Charges

As previously reported, we are now operating a 'ring fenced' budget for the allotments whereby any profit from rents goes towards improving facilities or reserves to contain future costs. At the end of the first complete year of operation the system is proved to be working well and no allotment rent increases are necessary.

VILLAGE CLEANSING

No major issues have arisen on this front, other than the perennial problem of dog fouling. This is becoming more prevalent in several 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 year 2009 / 10 the Amenities Committee has continued to work within its budget. Along with other committees we have targeted less spending for the coming year in light of the current economic forecasts and our budget for 2010 / 11 is approximately 10% less than last year.

OTHER PARISH PLAN ITEMS

MOBILITY

In May last year new dropped kerbs were installed on Bathford Hill to allow easier access across the road to the bus stop and the south side of the road.

In the coming year we have allocated £1500 toward the cost of three further dropped kerbs in various locations identified by the Mobility Survey carried out in 2005.

BUS SERVICES

For some time we have been working to improve the situation at the Crown bus stop on Bathford Hill. Despite many requests for a 'build out' at this stop when the kerb was finally raised, B&NES argued that there was no restriction for buses pulling in to the stop – despite the fact that cars are parked there every day. It is now some five years since this work was first requested – and we still await a 'bus box' to be painted on the road to persuade drivers not to obstruct the stop.

We are still in discussion with residents and B&NES on providing a 'drop off' stop at the top of Dovers Park for users of First Bus services.

PARISH PLAN

P.P. BANK ACCOUNT

For those who are not aware of this account: a brief explanation. This account holds money we were allowed to retain at the end of the preparation of the Parish Plan. It has continued to grow slightly over the last few years.

The account is used to provide funds specifically for projects identified as a need directly from the parish plan and is within the control of the parish council. The council is very careful about donating precept money to local causes but the parish plan account is there specifically for this use. Any individual or organisation may approach us for assistance with a project providing the request meets the required criteria.

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During the last twelve months the account has provided donations of £50 towards the sponsorship of the Bathford Calendar and £250 towards a £500 donation to Peppertop. Currently, the account balance stands at £3257.02p.

P.P. REVIEW

The Parish Plan was published in 2005 and, since it was prepared, many changes have been accomplished – sometimes unnoticed. The Council felt that it was time that the plan was reviewed again to identify further steps forward. As a result of that review a few questions were raised which we felt warranted further comment from the parish as a whole.

As a result, you will have received a questionnaire with your April copy of The Bathford Bulletin asking for your comment on our conclusions. There is also space on the sheet for you to add any suggestions for new issues that may have arisen in the intervening five years that were not covered by the plan itself.

The Council would encourage all parishioners to consider this issue and return the page from the bulletin with your comments to the parish office.

IN CONCLUSION

I believe that, once again, this has been a satisfactory year. We will continue with our aim of working within budget and to maintain parish amenities to a high standard within the budget constraints we have imposed, in line with other committees, in order to reduce our precept during the current economic climate.

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,
Chair – Amenities Committee.