

**MINUTES OF THE BATHFORD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON 19 APRIL 2010 AT 7.30PM IN THE PARISH HALL, CHURCH STREET,
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 Ian Plain
Councillor Jean Vesey
Councillor Richard Wickham
PCSO Victoria Jones (Speaker)
June Brassington – Bath & North East Somerset Library Services (Speaker)
Polly Jordan – Somer Housing
Councillor Gabriel Batt (Ward Councillor)
Ruth Holding (Clerk)
41 members of the public signed the attendance sheet

1. Apologies

1.1. Apologies were received from Mr Mackerness, Mr Harris, Mrs Bilton and Ms Smith.

2. Welcome and Introductions

2.1. Chair Shirley Beazer opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. She introduced the Parish Councillors present, co-opted members of committees and the Clerk. She also welcomed Ward Councillor Gabriel Batt, Polly Jordan the Sheltered Housing Officer for the Mountain Wood bungalows and thanked PCSO Victoria Jones and June Brassington for agreeing to speak at the meeting.

2.2. Chair Shirley Beazer said that copies of all the reports presented by the Committees could be found on the table near the door if people wished to take a copy away with them.

2.3. The Chair drew attention to the displays by village groups which had been put up around the room and she encouraged people to look at these during the coffee break.

3. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting

- 3.1. Chair Shirley Beazer reported that the draft minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting had been made available on the council's website. There was no objection raised from the floor with regard to the accuracy of the minutes of last year's meeting and they were signed by the Chair as a true record of proceedings.

4. Matters arising

- 4.1. There were no matters arising.

5. Chairman's Report

- 5.1. Chair Shirley Beazer made a report covering a number of issues which had arisen during the past 12 months. The full text of the Chairman's report would be published on the parish council's website www.bathford.net or could be requested from the Clerk.
- 5.2. Items of particular note were the completion of the new school hall and the partial replacement of the school's boundary fence partly funded by a grant of £4,000 from B&NES Council. The remaining sections of old fencing would be replaced as funds became available. The Bathford Bulletin continued to be an excellent source of information about events taking place in the village and production costs were being offset by a limited number of advertisements each month; the Chair reported a 7% reduction in the precept; the parish council had been proud to support the Chairman of B&NES nomination of the village shop for consideration for the Queen's Award for Volunteers; councillors had enjoyed an informative tour of the paper mill by kind invitation of De La Rue.
- 5.3. Chair Shirley Beazer announced that following the decision to wind up Bathford Consolidated Charities, a matter which had been reported and agreed at the last Annual Parish Meeting, a total of £3,999 had been passed to local charity, Dorothy House as their services would continue to benefit those in the parish in need of the charity's help.
- 5.4. The Chairman thanked the many organisations and volunteers for all they contributed to the life of the parish. She also thanked fellow councillors and the Clerk for their support and help during the year.
- 5.5. The Chairman of the Parish Hall Management Committee, Prof Darryl Almond, gave a short report on another successful year for the parish hall. The very high use of the hall by 24 local groups and 35 one off bookings during the year meant that the hall was in a stable position financially and had been able to purchase 20 new chairs and a stock of glasses for the kitchen. The toilet facilities had also been redecorated. The election and membership of the Parish Hall Management Committee was proposed by Shirley Beazer and seconded by Prof Daryl Almond. The election and membership of the Committee was confirmed by a show of hands.
- 5.6. Prof Daryl Almond announced that there was a vacancy for 1 village representative on the Parish Hall Management Committee and invited any resident interested in joining the committee to come to see him in the coffee break.

6. Overview Report from Amenities Committee

- 6.1. Cllr Stan Cherry presented the report of the Amenities Committee. The full text of the report would be published on the parish council's website www.bathford.net or could be requested from the Clerk.
- 6.2. Cllr Stan Cherry announced that as the annual charges for use of the recreation ground were calculated on the basis of RPI the rent would decrease slightly from last year to:-
 - 6.2.1.1. Rugby Club £378 per year
 - 6.2.1.2. Other sports users £124 per year
- 6.3. There was no change to allotment rents which would remain as follows:-
 - 6.3.1.1. Allotment full plot £14 (£7 for concessions)
 - 6.3.1.2. Allotment half plot, £7.00 (£3.50 for concessions)
 - 6.3.1.3. Water charge £3 per plot holder
- 6.4. The idea for a new cricket pavilion had been mentioned at the last Annual Parish Meeting and over the past year the parish council and the cricket club had been considering plans for a new building. To date a representative of the parish council and the cricket club had met with every resident on Ashley Road likely to be affected by the proposal, with the exception of 2 households. Funding would come from the cricket club through fund raising and grants and there would be a contribution from the parish council. The architect and representatives from the cricket club were present at this meeting with the plans which residents were invited to look at during the coffee break.
- 6.5. It was reported that the allotments continued to be fully let and Cllr Stan Cherry thanked the volunteer Allotment Wardens, Mike Smith and Martin Wright for their work in managing the allotments so effectively.
- 6.6. With regard to mobility and transport matters Cllr Stan Cherry reported that funds had been ear-marked to provide 3 more dropped kerbs around the parish and the proposal for a drop-off only bus stop on the Dovers Park loop was still under discussion with B&NES. The parish council's request for a build-out at The Crown bus stop had been refused by B&NES and a raised kerb was installed.
- 6.7. Cllr Stan Cherry informed the meeting that funds were still available in the Parish Plan account for community projects and invited local groups to apply for funding when necessary. Parish Plan funds had been used to contribute to the production of the Bathford Community Calendar and the work of Pepperpot Pre-School.
- 6.8. Cllr Stan Cherry thanked all the members of the Amenities Committee for their work during the year.

7. Overview Report from Planning and Environment Committee

- 7.1. Cllr Hugh Baker presented the report of the Planning and Environment Committee. The full text of the report would be published on the parish council's website www.bathford.net or could be requested from the Clerk.

- 7.2. Cllr Hugh Baker thanked the members of the committee for their hard work and committing their time to meeting twice a month during busy periods.
- 7.3. A total of 40 planning applications had been considered during the year, the majority of which had been supported. There had been few contentious matters arising. Permission had been granted for housing on the site of Tyndale and demolition of the existing building was still awaited. Work on the alterations to the main house at Whitehaven had been completed.
- 7.4. Cllr Hugh Baker reported that Bathford Parish Council had joined an “alliance” with fellow parishes in the Limpley Stoke valley to give a stronger local voice on matters of mutual interest to the parish councils to the east of Bath. The formal constitution of the group was currently being drawn up.

8. Overview Report from Highways, Footpaths and Lighting Committee

- 8.1. Cllr Shirley Beazer presented the report of the Highways, Footpaths and Lighting Committee. The full text of the report would be published on the parish council’s website www.bathford.net or could be requested from the Clerk.
- 8.2. The meeting noted that priority point 1 on Bathford Hill/High Street near the Royal British Legion would remain and 2 vehicle activated signs were to be positioned on this stretch of road, one on the downhill side above the junction of Dovers Park and the other on the uphill side of Bathford Hill below the junction to the shop. The signs would flash to vehicles exceeding the speed limit.
- 8.3. The prolonged spell of cold weather at the start of the year had highlighted the inadequate provision of grit bins across the parish. Residents had been invited to suggest locations for additional grit bins and a list had been sent to B&NES for consideration.
- 8.4. It was noted with regret that a third fatality had occurred on the A363 through Sally-in-the-Woods. B&NES were considering safety measures included anti-skid surfacing and additional warning signs and the parish council had suggested further measures including rumble strips.
- 8.5. Other issues of particular concern with regard to highways, footpaths and lighting were the number of pot holes, inadequacy of verge cutting and weed control during the year, the loss of a cast iron street lamp in Pump Lane which had been replaced with a modern style lamp without consultation with the parish council and the problem of illegal and inconsiderate parking in the parish.
- 8.6. Cllr Shirley Beazer took this opportunity to remind residents of the B&NES Council Connect number 01225 394041 which could be used to report concerns about any issue including flooding, potholes, street lighting etc to the council.

9. Overview Report from Finance & Administration Committee

- 9.1. Cllr Susan Barclay presented the report of the Finance & Administration Committee. The full text of the report would be published on the parish council’s website www.bathford.net or could be requested from the Clerk.
- 9.2. It was noted that the council’s income and expenditure for the year had met its forecasts. With prudent management the parish council had been able to lower

the precept by 7% for 2010/2011, making it 1 of only 4 councils in the B&NES area to set a reduced precept.

- 9.3. Cllr Susan Barclay noted that there had been a favourable response to the limited number of adverts being published in the Bulletin the revenue from which helped to offset the printing costs.

10. Overview Report from Communications Committee

- 10.1. Cllr Ian Plain presented the report of the Communications Committee. The full text of the report would be published on the parish council's website www.bathford.net or could be requested from the Clerk.

- 10.2. Cllr Ian Plain reported it had been a quiet year for matters relating to communications in the parish. The Bathford Bulletin continued to be popular with residents as the main source of information and news about events in the parish. Cllr Ian Plain thanked the editors, proof readers and distributors for their valuable contribution to ensuring that the Bulletin reached every house in the parish each month.

- 10.3. Plans were being made to move the parish council's notice board from its current position on the corner of Dovers Park to a site next to the post-box where it would be seen by people using the village shop. A volunteer was needed to rub-down and re-varnish the notice board prior to the move. Anyone able to take on this task was invited to speak to Cllr Ian Plain in the coffee break.

11. Speakers

- 11.1. *PCSO Vicky Jones*

- 11.2. PCSO Vicky Jones thanked the parish council for the opportunity to speak to residents and gave apologies on behalf of the police's Neighbourhood Watch team who were unable to attend. Vicky reinforced the importance of an effective neighbourhood watch group to an area for deterring and detecting criminal or anti-social behaviour and encouraged residents to participate in their local neighbourhood watch group.

- 11.3. Vicky also reported that 2 suspects had been arrested in connection with recent crimes in the area.

- 11.4. Vicky also drew resident's attention to the no-cold calling zone recently established in Bathford. This covering the sheltered housing area in Mountain Wood managed by Somer housing and was designed to prevent cold callers, doorstep salesmen, con-men etc from entering the area and thereby improving the security and safety of the residents.

- 11.5. *June Brassington, Library Services Manager*

- 11.6. June Brassington thanked the parish council for inviting her to speak at the meeting. She opened her talk by setting out the purpose of libraries which ranged from providing free access to information and knowledge, helping to improve standards of literacy, providing neutral community space, aiding community cohesion, expert advice and access to IT and the internet.

- 11.7. Libraries had links with colleges of further education and provided adult learning courses which were very popular.
- 11.8. The library provision in B&NES comprised 8 static libraries and 2 mobile libraries attracting 1,300 visitors and around 332,000 lendings over the year. However, B&NES was part of a consortium of other local authority libraries called Libraries West giving residents access to other libraries in Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire. This brought cost benefits to the local authorities and improved the service to residents as books could be borrowed from any library and returned to any library. In addition residents no longer needed to visit a library to reserve or renew books as this could all be done on-line at www.librarieswest.org.uk The service had been awarded a Customer Services Excellence Award in 2009.
- 11.9. June went on to outline some of the challenges facing libraries, in particular the need to use resources in the most effective way. B&NES was keen to make library services part of the community, for example the service facilitated reading groups, including one for carers and would be looking for volunteers to help extend services. B&NES was also looking at ways of making services available later in the evening.
- 11.10. B&NES had issued a questionnaire about library services to parish councils. The replies indicated that the main issues of concern related to a lack of information about mobile library routes and times and a lack of joining information. A review of responses by 1,200 members of the public showed that 65% used branch libraries and only 10% used the mobile library service. Mobile libraries were the least used services provided by the council and therefore the council would have to consider ways to overcome the barriers to people using the mobile library and look at ways to make the service more effective, perhaps by linking it to other village events.
- 11.11. June said that the government had issued a policy statement on libraries which could be viewed from the B&NES website. Libraries would have to change in the future and take on new technology such as e-books and e-readers in order to remain a valued community asset.

The speakers were followed by a coffee break of 20 minutes.

12. Proposals for which written notice has been given

12.1. Suggestions for ways to improve the appearance of the parish

12.2. The Chair invited ideas from the floor for improving the appearance of the parish. The following suggestions were made:-

- 12.2.1. clearing rubbish from roadsides;
- 12.2.2. cutting verges and hedges;
- 12.2.3. cleaning signs, particularly the name sign and twinning signs at the entrance to the village;
- 12.2.4. display a map of the village showing sites of interest;
- 12.2.5. repair the old pound wall;

- 12.3. The meeting was reminded that BEFA Plus was coordinating an entry into the regional Village of the Year competition and residents were invited to get in touch with BEFA if they were able to help with the submission.
- 12.4. A member of the public expressed concern about the number of vehicles entering and leaving Jewson's View Farm on the A363 at the entrance to the village. Cllr Hugh Baker said that planning permission had been granted for a shed on the site for the intensive rearing of cattle, but the parishioners' concerns would be raised with the planning authority.
- 12.5. The Chair referred to the successful outcome of the campaign to reinstate the 7.30am mill whistle. A petition arranged by a concerned resident had attracted a significant number of signatures and the whistle had been reinstated by popular demand.

13. Open Question and Answer Session

- 13.1. There was an observation from a parishioner that the new school hall seemed very dominant for the Dovers Park streetscape and asked if the parish council had seen the plans in advance. Cllr Hugh Baker confirmed that the parish council's planning committee had considered the plans in advance and the height was not perceived to be a particular concern.
- 13.2. Residents were interested to know whether the new school hall would be available for community use. A resident who was also a school governor reported that the school was aware of the interest of community groups in using the hall, but there were no immediate plans to hire out the facility as the school's priority was to look into the provision of extended school facilities for the benefit of children and parents. However, the school had not ruled out making the facility available to community groups at some time in the future.
- 13.3. A parishioner expressed concerns on behalf of a number of residents about the proposed new cricket pavilion on the playing field. The parishioner queried why any new building could not be sited at the bottom of the field away from residential properties. It was explained that due to the slope to the bottom of the field the cricket square would not be seen from a pavilion in this location and a building would also affect the Jubilee Trees which had been planted in 1977 by a beneficiary or public subscription, no one at the meeting was sure how they had been funded. It was further explained that the sewage pipes ran at the top of the field so a building at the top of the field could be linked more easily to these services. Other residents spoke in support of the new building which was intended to provide improved facilities for players and spectators. The formal planning application had not yet been submitted, but it was noted that there were objections in principle to the building.
- 13.4. A parishioner queried the cost of the basketball play area as shown in the budget. It was explained that the figure shown included the cost of purchasing the basketball hoop, the cost of installation and the creation of a playing surface. It was confirmed that the basketball area would be located between the scout hut and the cricket practice area.

14. Formal Closure of Meeting

14.1. Cllr Shirley Beazer repeated her thanks to parishioners for attending and participating in the meeting.

14.2. Chair Shirley Beazer thanked Margaret Hawkins and Joyce Helps for preparing the refreshments.

14.3. Cllr Stan Cherry proposed a vote of thanks to the Chair.

14.4. The meeting was formally closed at 9.25 pm.

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....

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