

Minutes of Bathford Parish Council Meeting
held on Monday 18 October 2010 at 7.30pm in the Parish Office, Bathford Hill,
Bathford

Present: 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

Also Present: Ruth Holding (Clerk)
Ward Councillor Gabriel Batt (to item 11)
2 members of the public (to item 6b)

Before the meeting opened the Chair reminded councillors and members of the public that item 17 with regard to the riverside land for sale would be a closed discussion from which members of the public would be excluded due to commercial in confidence information.

1. Public Five Minutes

- 1.1. Cllr Gabriel Batt congratulated the council on the degree of consultation with local residents in advance of the planning application for a proposed cricket pavilion on the playing field.
- 1.2. The members of the public in attendance expressed their concerns about the unresolved proposal for a drop-off stop on the Dovers Park loop and the potential that this could lead to the introduction of a permanent bus stop in this location. Cllr Stan Cherry said that the council noted the resident's comments and the matter was on the agenda for discussion later in the meeting.

2. Apologies

- 2.1. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Shirley Beazer.

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 proposal for a new cricket pavilion.

4. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting (20 September 2010)

- 4.1. Acceptance of the minutes of the last meeting was proposed by Cllr Hugh Baker 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. Update Standing Orders – the Clerk reported that the Standing Orders had been amended to include the revised complaints procedure approved by the council at the last meeting.
 - 5.2.2. Neighbourhood Watch Stickers – Cllr Jean Vesey confirmed that she had asked the police for Neighbourhood Watch stickers. Delivery was awaited.
 - 5.2.3. Flower Trough – Cllr Keith Masdin reported that a second flower trough had been purchased for Dovers Park loop. This would be planted out in due course.
 - 5.2.4. Fundraising for school fence – Cllr Keith Masdin said that the parish council should obtain information from the school with regard to the amount of money required and any fundraising plans that the school might already have in order to assess how best to support the school.
 - 5.2.5. New office space in shop premises – Cllr Susan Barclay confirmed that the rent proposed for the new office space put it out of the reach of the parish council.

6. Committee Reports

6.1. Amenities Committee

- 6.1.1. Cllr Stan Cherry presented the Amenities Committee monthly report for October 2010. The following items were discussed:-
- 6.1.2. Proposed new cricket pavilion – Cllr Stan Cherry reported that the cricket club had re-staked the area of the proposed pavilion on the playing field on Sunday 10 October. The architect and three parish councillors had been present to answer any queries from residents. The positions of the corners of the proposed building were still visible on the grass if councillors wished to see them. As a result of the discussions with residents the current planning application was to be withdrawn and amended plans resubmitted. Cllr Stan Cherry said that as this project had moved to the planning stage, the parish council's involvement in the project would transfer from the Amenities Committee to the Planning Committee and the Chair of the Parish Council.
- 6.1.3. Parish Council's Beech Hedge on the playing field – Cllr Stan Cherry reported that the severe pruning of the parish council's beech hedge by persons unknown had been reported to the police as an incident of criminal damage to parish council property. The Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) had made enquiries and a resident had admitted to cutting the hedge, but with permission obtained from the parish council. After looking through his archived records, Cllr Stan Cherry found a reference in 2003 to permission being given to a householder to reduce the height of the hedge to level with the fence height. The householder had relied on this permission to cut the hedge on this occasion. The Clerk was asked to write to the

householder asking them not to carry out any maintenance of the trees in future.

Action: Clerk

- 6.1.4. Playing field boundary with bridleway – Cllr Stan Cherry reported that 4 companies had been asked to quote for the job to close the gaps in the boundary. The parish council is also responsible for maintaining the playing field fencing which runs along the rear of properties in Ashley Road and 2 residents had asked the council to carry out maintenance to sections of the fence adjoining their properties. Quotes were also being obtained for this work.

Action: Cllr Stan Cherry

- 6.1.5. Whitehaven field - Cllr Stan Cherry reported that he had met the landowner of Whitehaven to discuss the maintenance of the hedge adjoining the bridleway. During the conversation the landowner had indicated that he might be willing to sell the field by the bridleway to the Parish Council for a nominal sum. This is the area of land which had previously been identified as the location for a proposed sports car park. The Clerk was asked to put this matter on the agenda of the November meeting for further discussion.

Action: Clerk

- 6.1.6. Drop-off bus stop on Dovers Park loop – Cllr Stan Cherry reported that B&NES had made enquiries about the likely impact of the disability discrimination legislation on the requirements for bus stops and B&NES could not guarantee that a raised kerb would not be installed at the site of the drop-off stop. B&NES had indicated that they would be willing to give consideration to the suggestion made to send the buses round the loop the other way and to put the drop off stop on the green at the spot where the road widens to join the upper part of Dovers Park.

- 6.1.7. The proposal to site the stop on the grass area of the loop was considered to have the advantage of not being directly outside anyone's property as it would be opposite the continuation of Dovers Park. There had been an assurance that there would be no bus shelter or bus box installed. The stop would consist of a post, a raised kerb and a concrete slab on the green. Concern was raised about the bus travelling counter to the customary direction of vehicles using the loop, but a change in direction for the bus was not considered completely unacceptable in view of the low volume of vehicles using the route.

- 6.1.8. B&NES had indicated that the installation of a stop was unlikely to be carried out this financial year due to budget constraints and therefore the parish council had time to consult with the one or two residents most likely to be affected by the new proposals.

- 6.1.9. Cllr Keith Masdin said that he would speak to the resident's concerned and obtain their views

Action: Cllr Keith Masdin

6.1.10. The Clerk was asked to put this matter as an item on the next agenda for decision.

Action: Clerk

6.1.11. Dogs on playing field – following the incident reported at the last meeting, a parish councillor had received a further complaint from a parent whose children had been chased by a pack of 7 dogs running loose on the playing field. Photographs had been taken at the time on a mobile phone. Members agreed that strong action needed to be taken to stop dogs going onto the field and the Clerk was asked to write to the Rugby Club, to the Dog Warden and to the PCSO about this matter.

Action: Clerk

6.1.12. The Amenities Committee was asked to consider whether further measures needed to be introduced to prevent unrestrained dogs getting access to the field.

Action: Amenities Committee

6.2. Communications Committee

6.2.1. There were no items for discussion under this item. A query was raised about the relocation of the notice board from the corner of Dovers Park to a new position by the post box. It was reported that the purchase of a new, larger notice board was under discussion by the committee.

Action: Communications Committee

6.3. Finance and Administration (F&A) Committee

6.3.1. There was no written report. The following items were discussed:-

6.3.2. Annual Return 2009/10 approved by External Auditor – members noted that the external audit of the council's accounts for 2009/10 had been completed and the Annual Return had been passed without qualification. The external auditor had commented on minor matters relating to the completion of the form which would be taken into account when submitting next year's return.

6.3.3. Budgets for 2011/12 – Cllr Susan Barclay confirmed that each committee had submitted their budget requests and the F&A Committee would meet shortly to prepare a full draft budget for consideration at the November meeting.

Action: F&A Committee

6.3.4. Summary of income and expenditure – members noted the summary of income and spend in the second quarter of 2010/2011. There were no matters of concern.

6.4. Highways, Footpaths and Lighting Committee

6.4.1. Members noted the Highways, Footpaths and Lighting Committee monthly report for October 2010. The following items were discussed:-

6.4.2. VAS Sign – it was noted that the operation of the signs appeared erratic, possibly due to the solar panels not providing a consistent levels of power. Cllr Ian Plain reported that he had seen work being done on the signs following the council's reports that they regularly failed to operate.

6.5. Planning and Environment Committee

- 6.5.1. Members noted the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 5 October. Cllr Hugh Baker reported that 3 new planning applications had been received since then.
- 6.5.2. Cllr Richard Wickham reported that a complaint had been made via the website that new planning applications were not listed on the parish council's website. The practice of listing applications had been discontinued some time ago as it was time consuming and the information was already being made available by the planning authority. Residents could access information about planning applications from the parish council's website by clicking on the links to the planning authorities' websites.
- 6.5.3. Valley Parishes Alliance (VPA) – there were no items for discussion under this item.

7. ALC AGM 14 October 2010 – Report from attendees

- 7.1. Cllr Hugh Baker and Cllr Susan Barclay had represented Bathford at the meeting. Both agreed that the meeting had been very poorly run, particularly in view of the important decision to be made with regard to the future of ALCA. If ALCA was to fold, then parishes in BANES could join with the Somerset organisation which it was understood was an effective body. It had been suggested that ALCA might continue with part time staff run on a voluntary basis, but it was not considered that this was a serious option.
- 7.2. No final decision had been reached at the meeting and a Special General Meeting would be held, on a date to be announced, to consider this matter again.

8. Plans by Avon Wildlife Trust for the improved management of Brown's Folly Nature Reserve

- 8.1. Members noted the proposals outlined by the Avon Wildlife Trust for the improved management of the ecology of Brown's Folly Nature Reserve on which the public had been invited to comment. Although members understood the wishes of the Trust to prevent large mobile homes etc from entering the car park by the introduction of a height barrier, they were less favourable to the proposal to add lockable gates to the car park entrance as there was a risk that the gates would not be open at the times that visitors wanted access to the reserve such as early morning dog walkers, or that the gates would eventually be permanently locked.
- 8.2. Several members recalled that years ago the area was never so thickly wooded and there were open views both from the reserve and outside it looking up to the folly tower itself which was much more clearly visible than now. Members suggested that the Trust should give priority to clearing the reserve, removing trees and restoring the views from the area and to the folly structure. The Clerk was asked to pass the council's views to the Wildlife Trust.

Action: Clerk

- 8.3. A resident had sent comments on the proposals to the Chair of the Parish Council and the Clerk was asked to forward these to the Wildlife Trust separate from the council's comments.

Action: Clerk

- 8.4. The Clerk was asked to put a note in the next edition of the Bulletin informing residents about the Trust's plans and inviting them to comment, together with a reminder about the important ecology of the nature reserve and the need to treat the area with respect.

Action: Clerk

9. Village of the Year Prize Giving event – 12 November 2010

- 9.1. Cllr Stan Cherry reported that the Village of the Year prize giving event had been arranged by BEFA and would be held in the school in the afternoon of 12 November. Due to a prior engagement Cllr Shirley Beazer was unable to attend and the parish council would be represented by Cllrs Hugh Baker, Wendy Chambers and Stan Cherry.

10. Proposed dates for Parish Council Meetings in 2011

- 10.1. Acceptance of the dates for parish council meetings in 2011 was proposed by Hugh Baker and seconded by Cllr Ian Plain. The council RESOLVED unanimously to accept the meeting dates as listed.

11. Neighbourhood Watch

- 11.1. It was reported that there had been 2 incidents of brick throwing causing damage to a property and a vehicle recently. There had also been the concern reported at the last meeting of glass being left of the playing field footpath. A resident had also had cause to call the police after seeing young people on the playing field setting light to plastic cups and being concerned that they were going to set fire to the litter bin.
- 11.2. Cllr Stan Cherry said that the police had been very quick to respond to all these reports and the PCSOs had operated regular patrols on a Friday and Saturday evening for several consecutive weekends in an effort to catch or deter the trouble makers.
- 11.3. The Clerk was asked to put a note in the Bulletin asking residents to report any suspicious activity immediately to the police as this gave them a better chance of catching offenders than reports made several hours or days after the event.

Action: Clerk

12. Liaison with School Governors

- 12.1. Cllr Jean Vesey reported that there had been no meeting of the School Governors since the last meeting of the parish council.
- 12.2. Members noted that three vacancies for parent governor had arisen as the terms of current governors had come to an end, including that of the Chair of Governors.

13. Correspondence

- 13.1. Cllr Stan Cherry reported the following correspondence issued on behalf of the council or received by the council:-

13.2. Cutting of beech hedge – one resident had responded to the council's letter seeking information about the damage to the beech hedge on the playing field. The Clerk was asked to send a reply.

Action: Clerk

13.3. Common land alongside A363 – it was reported that BANES had contacted the parish council about the maintenance of trees alongside the A363, claiming that a stretch of trees are on common land registered to the parish council. Members had no recollection of common land in that area and further enquiries would be made with regard to ownership.

Action: Cllr Shirley Beazer

13.4. Privatisation of the Post Office – members noted the correspondence from the Communication Workers Union about the proposed privatisation of the post office. The matter was deemed too 'political' for the parish council to respond to as a collective body, but councillors were not prevented from responding to the campaign as private individuals if they wished to.

13.5. Consultation on proposed school closure – members noted the consultation document issued by BANES on the proposed closure of Culverhay school. A copy had been sent to parents of school age children.

13.6. National Survey of Charities – Cllr Stan Cherry reported that the questionnaire had been completed.

13.7. Parishes Liaison Meeting – In Cllr Shirley Beazer's absence, Cllr Stan Cherry asked whether any other councillor was able to attend the Parishes Liaison Meeting on 20 October 2010 in Keynsham.

14. Items to report

14.1. Condition of road surface outside school – it was reported that there had been a complaint about the poor condition of the road surface in Dovers Park by the school. Cllr Stan Cherry advised that this could be passed to Cllr Shirley Beazer for reporting to B&NES or reported direct through Council Connect.

15. Items for the Bulletin

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

15.1.1. Inform residents of plans by Avon Wildlife Trust to improve management of Browns Folly Nature Reserve

15.1.2. Remind residents about the ban on dogs on the playing field

15.1.3. Remind residents to report any incident of criminal activity immediately to the police

15.1.4. Date of next meeting

Action: Clerk

16. Items for the next meeting

16.1. Consideration of budget for 2011/2012

16.2. Consider the offer of field by Whitehaven/bridleway.

17. Closed discussion on the possible purchase of riverside land for sale in the parish

17.1. Cllr Stan Cherry reminded councillors about the confidential nature of the discussion and asked members not to disclose commercial in confidence information to anyone outside the council as this could harm the council's position in negotiations. The discussion was closed to members of the public, but the members of the public in attendance had left before this point in the meeting.

17.2. A confidential note of the discussion was made and will be held separately from these minutes and may be made public at a future date at the council's discretion.

18. Payments for approval

18.1. Payment of the invoices presented to the council at this meeting was proposed by Cllr Susan Barclay and seconded by Cllr Ian Plain. The council RESOLVED to make the following payments:-

I M Suleman	Office rent Oct 2010-paid by standing order	£106.00
EDF Energy	Electricity for office in Manor Basement	£20.43
Corsham Print Ltd	Printing Oct edition of Bathford Bulletin	£120.00
R Millbank	Grass Cutting September/October	£330.00
John Lloyd Contractors	Installation of basketball area	£3,307.62
The Phone Coop Ltd	Phone and Internet charges Sept 2010	£30.08
Cllr H Baker	Travelling expenses	£35.90
Mrs R C Holding	Clerk's expenses	£60.00
Mrs R C Holding	Clerk's salary September 2010	£521.71
HMRC	Tax & NI	£9.02

19. Date of next meeting

19.1. The next meeting will be held on Monday 15 November 2010 at 7.30pm in the Parish Office, Bathford.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....