

**MINUTES OF THE BATHFORD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON 18 APRIL 2011 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 John Lloyd
Councillor Ian Plain
Councillor Jean Vesey
Councillor Richard Wickham
John Summers (Speaker from Trustees of Bathford Chapel)
Simon Tapscott (Speaker from Governing Body of Bathford School)
Councillor Gabriel Batt (Ward Councillor)
Councillor Martin Veal (Ward Councillor)
Ruth Holding (Clerk)
28 members of the public signed the attendance sheet

1. Apologies

- 1.1. Apologies were received from Mr Mackerness, Mr Malone, Mrs Field and the Bathford Energy Group.

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 Councillors Gabriel Batt and Martin Veal, and thanked John Summers and Simon Tapscott 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 and would be published on the council's website.
- 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. Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Cllr Batt and

seconded by Mr Parr and these 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's report covered items of particular note including the reinstatement of the Mill Whistle, the Bathford Flower Show Centenary event, the continuation of the mobile library service after it was threatened with closure and the commencement of work to replace the dilapidated school fence.

5.2. The Chair reported a small increase of in the precept of 1.23% giving a precept for 2011/12 of £18,560.

5.3. Chair Shirley Beazer thanked BEFA for co-ordinating and submitting an entry to the Village of the Year competition and congratulated the team on winning the large village category. A plaque to commemorate the win had been purchased and hung on the wall of the shop.

5.4. The Chairman recorded her thanks, on the behalf of the council, to the many volunteers whose efforts kept the village thriving and she recorded her own personal thanks to Cllr Stan Cherry for his support as Vice-Chair of the Council and his work as Chair of the Amenities Committee.

5.5. Cllr Shirley Beazer reminded residents that this council's 4 year term of the office would come to an end with the elections in May 2011. Some existing councillors had decided not to stand for re-election and the Chair invited residents to consider standing for election.

5.6. A short report on another successful year for the parish hall was presented. The election and membership of the Parish Hall Management Committee was proposed by Mr C Gillard and seconded by Mr R Wallis. The election and membership of the Committee was confirmed by a show of hands.

6. Overview Report from Amenities Committee

6.1. Cllr Stan Cherry presented the report of the Amenities Committee.

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 increase to:-

6.2.1.1. Rugby Club £414 per year

6.2.1.2. Other sports users £135 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. Playing field - the main concern expressed by residents was the problem of dogs running loose on the field. Residents were reminded that dogs are banned from the field. More robust fencing had been installed alongside the field boundary with bridleway to badgers and rabbits causing damage to the

field. There were no major changes to the play area planned for the coming year, but the fencing around the play area would be repaired. Cllr Stan Cherry recorded his thanks to the volunteer coaches at the rugby and cricket clubs for their dedication to youth training and development. The parish council had joined the Somerset Playing Fields' Association this year for an annual fee of £10 to get access to help, advice and information about grants for the playing field and the clubs that use it.

- 6.5. Cllr Stan Cherry was pleased to report that the basketball hoop installed early in 2010 was still well used.
- 6.6. Allotments - Cllr Stan Cherry thanked the volunteer Allotment Wardens, Mike Smith and Martin Wright for their work in managing the allotments so effectively and reported that Clive Higgs had also volunteered to assist with warden duties.
- 6.7. Bus Services – Cllr Stan Cherry was pleased to report that after 2 years of discussion the drop off bus stop on Dovers Park loop had been installed and was in use. Complaints had been made that bus drivers were laying over at the stop, contrary to the agreed conditions of use, and the PC would take up this issue with the bus operator.
- 6.8. Cllr Stan Cherry concluded that the Amenities Committee had completed a number of projects in the year to benefit the community. He thanked Cllr Hugh Baker who was standing down at the election for his work on the committee and Cllr John Lloyd for his substantial practical help. Cllr Stan Cherry also thanked Cllr Shirley Beazer for her leadership of the council during the past 4 years and the work she did behind the scenes much of which went unreported

7. Overview Report from Planning and Environment Committee

- 7.1. Cllr Hugh Baker presented the report of the Planning and Environment Committee. He thanked the members of the committee for their support and committing their time to the regular meetings.
- 7.2. Cllr Hugh Baker reported that 2010/11 hadn't been a particularly busy year for the Planning Committee as only half the usual number of applications for planning permission/listed building consent had been made in the parish. Most of the applications had been supported by the committee. 2 contentious applications had been made during the year; one for a new cricket pavilion and the other for a large new dwelling in Church Street. Cllr Hugh Baker said that the council was required to be objective in all cases.
- 7.3. Cllr Hugh Baker reported that it had been expected that the demolition of Tyndale was have been carried out in August 2010, but an archaeological survey had resulted in delays.
- 7.4. As reported at last year's meeting Cllr Hugh Baker confirmed that Bathford Parish Council continued to send a representative to the Valley Parish Alliance (VPA) group formed to give a stronger local voice to parish councils to the east of Bath. It was hoped that the VPA would be invited to sit on the Bath Transport Commission to ensure that views of parishes on this side of Bath were properly represented.

8. Overview Report from Highways, Footpaths and Lighting Committee

8.1. Cllr Shirley Beazer presented the report of the Highways, Footpaths and Lighting Committee. She thanked the members of the committee for their support and advice during the previous 4 year term of this council.

8.2. Issues of particular concern were:

- instances of falling masonry from the railway bridge which had been reported to Network Rail;
- high speeds of vehicles along the Box Road;
- repeated requests for the repainting of the white lines at the junction of Bathford Hill/A363;
- installation of Vehicle Activated Signs to reduce speeds through the village;
- refusal by BANES to remove the priority point on Bathford Hill by the Royal British Legion;
- the large number of HGVs going up Bathford Hill taking soil to the site of a new driving range at the golf club in Kingsdown;
- additional dropped kerb installed to further improve access to the Community Rooms in Mountain Wood;
- the parish council had achieved little success in obtaining additional grit bins for the parish, although BANES had agreed to provide one for Ostlings Lane;
- the stabilisation of the carriageway on the A363 had begun. It was hoped that once the structural work had been completed further safety measures could be implemented;
- the parish council had been required to carry out emergency work to ensure the safety of trees on common land adjacent to the A363. This work had not been budgeted for, but the cost had been met from reserves.
- inconsiderate parking, parking on double yellow lines and on the zig-zags was causing a nuisance to residents and was unacceptable

9. Overview Report from Finance & Administration Committee

9.1. Cllr Susan Barclay presented the report of the Finance & Administration Committee and she thanked Cllr Wendy Chambers and Cllr Ian Plain for their support and work in committee.

9.2. It was noted that the council's income and expenditure for the year had met its forecasts. Mindful of national economic conditions the parish council had made only a very small increase in the precept. As reported previously the council had faced unexpected tree maintenance but had sufficient reserves to meet the costs.

9.3. Cllr Susan Barclay reported that there continued to be a favourable response to the limited number of adverts being published in the Bulletin the revenue from which helped to keep production costs to manageable levels.

10. Overview Report from Communications Committee

10.1. Cllr Shirley Beazer presented the report of the Communications Committee.

10.2. The plan to move the parish council notice board reported at the last annual meeting had been completed and the notice board now stood next to the post-box.

10.3. The Bathford Bulletin continued to be effective at getting information to every household in the parish and she thanked the editorial team for their work each month and to the volunteers who distributed the newsletter.

10.4. Cllr Shirley Beazer reminded residents that information was also available to residents via the parish council website.

11. Speakers

11.1. *Mr John Summers, Secretary of the Trustees of Bathford Baptist Chapel*

11.2. Mr Summers thanked the parish council for the opportunity to speak to residents about the plans for the future of Bathford Baptist Chapel which was no longer being used as a place of worship.

11.3. Mr Summers explained that the Trustees of the Chapel had met recently and concluded that the chapel should be renamed The Old Chapel and the existing Trustees should be replaced by a Management Committee, comprising representatives of the local community. The Chapel would then be made available for use by the community.

11.4. *Simon Tapscott, School Governor*

11.5. Mr Tapscott reported that the School Governors appreciated the interest from the community in using the new school hall, but the governing body had concluded that the new facility would be restricted exclusively for school use for the first 12 months after completion. Mr Tapscott said that governors were now actively looking to widen use to include community organisations from September 2011 and were considering the policies that needed to be put in place to enable this to happen.

11.6. Mr Tapscott confirmed that the project to renew the school fence would be completed over the next few months and the school was also talking to Pepperpot Pre-School about creating a new entrance to the pre-school from Birdcage walk to prevent adults from entering school grounds during school hours.

11.7. *Stan Cherry, Parish Councillor*

11.8. Cllr Stan Cherry reminded residents that the parish plan had been produced 5 years ago by a dedicated team of volunteers. Improvements had been made in the parish as a result of the plan and it was now time to review it as there had been changes in the parish over that time as new people moved into the village maybe with fresh ideas and the parish now faced different challenges and priorities.

11.9. Cllr Stan Cherry asked residents to think about whether the parish should have a new plan and if so, residents would need to step forward to form a team to progress this matter. Cllr Cherry said that if there was someone willing to lead the project, then the parish council would help to arrange an open meeting to gather more support.

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

12. Proposals for which written notice has been given

12.1. Ideas for projects in 2012/13

12.2. The Chair invited ideas from the floor The following suggestion was made:-

12.2.1. Fingerpost – suggested it would be helpful to have a fingerpost in the village, but no agreement reached on the location; fingerposts can be expensive and are of no use if fingers go missing or point in the wrong direction.

12.2.2. Future APM dates – it was suggested that these should be held outside school holidays and holy week or earlier in the year.

13. Open Question and Answer Session

13.1. The following issues were raised by residents –

13.2. 20mph speed limit – residents suggested that there should be a 20mph speed limit in Dovers Park past the school. “Twenty’s plenty” campaigns were running in many rural villages and Batheaston and Bathampton have 20mph limits. It was suggested that speed humps should be installed on the High Street in place of the existing traffic calming measures which parishioners did not consider were effective at slowing the traffic.

13.3. Weight restriction on bridge – Cllr Shirley Beazer confirmed that a weight survey had been undertaken by B&NES but a restriction was not considered necessary due to low volumes.

13.4. Playing Field Maintenance – there was an observation from a parishioner that the playing field cost more to maintain than was raised in income and queried whether the residents should subsidise the playing field and its users. The parish council was the trustee of the playing area and had a duty to maintain it, even if it wasn’t used by any clubs. Cllr Stan Cherry said that the cricket club maintained the cricket square at their own expense. Annual rents were calculated in accordance with a formula based on RPI so that rent levels went up and down according to the index. It was queried whether rental rates should be linked more with the cost of maintenance and that the rents should be reviewed, perhaps in comparison with prices charged by other providers of playing fields such as B&NES.

13.5. Precept – a parishioner said that they would not want to see the precept increased in 2012/13 and was concerned that there was no indication of the amount held in reserves in the financial information given to parishioners. Parishioners asked for an assurance that a full financial breakdown would be presented to the meeting in 2012.

13.6. Double Taxation – concern was expressed about double taxation with regard to residents paying council tax to B&NES and a precept to the parish council for the same schemes of work. Ward Councillor Martin Veal said he appreciated the concern of residents, but in the current economic climate, B&NES did not have sufficient funds to meet all requests for funding and if communities wanted particular projects to be carried out they would need to raise the money through the precept.

13.7. Community Meeting Places – reference was made to the fact that with the change of use of the Old Chapel there could soon be 4 places to hire in the village, the parish hall, the school, the Legion and the Chapel. It was suggested that there should be co-ordination between all the venues offering facilities to hire to ensure that none of the businesses failed due to saturation of the market.

13.8. Overgrown bushes around footbridge – concern was expressed at the growth of shrubs around the footbridge affecting visibility and safety. Cllr Shirley Beazer confirmed that B&NES were responsible for maintenance in this area, but the parish council would look at carrying out the work on a one-off basis if B&NES were not able to provide the full level of service this year.

13.9. Transport Commission – Ward Councillor Martin Veal confirmed that he had given up his position on the Transport Commission on condition that this was given to the Valley Parish Alliance to ensure they had status as a consultant on transport matters.

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 the volunteers from St Swithun’s 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 9.50 pm.

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....

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