

**Minutes of the Bathford Annual Parish Meeting**  
**held on 14th April 2014 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 Peter Martin  
Councillor Maureen Millbank  
Councillor Richard Wickham

Jane Thomas (Speaker from Bathford Village Shop)  
Councillor Martin Veal (Ward Councillor & Speaker)  
Jon Cooper (Clerk)

26 members of the public signed the attendance sheet

**1. Apologies**

- 1.1. Apologies were received from Councillor David Le Lohé and Councillor Geoff Ward (Ward Councillor)

**2. Welcome & Introductions**

- 2.1. Chair Shirley Beazer opened the meeting, thanked everyone for attending and she introduced the Parish Councillors present, co-opted members of committees and the Clerk. She also welcomed Ward Councillor Martin Veal and Jane Thomas as speakers and for agreeing to contribute to the meeting.

**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 and were also available in the hall. The minutes were proposed by Mr R Wallace and seconded by Mr T Parr; accepted and 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. The A363 at the Brunel Bridge had once again become impassable, even after the floods had subsided. The lack of adequate maintenance to drains cleared only twice a year had been repeatedly raised with BANES. Councillor Martin Veal was requested to follow up the matter.

- 5.2. Following news that Batheaston Post Office was due to close, a petition of 170 signatures had been raised from Bathford to support its retention. The final outcome of this was still unknown.
- 5.3. The Curo Affordable Housing Survey was understandably a controversial and ongoing issue with the additional pressure of the Rural Exception Policy.
- 5.4. The Precept for 2014/2015 was set at £16,895.00 down from £17,495.00.
- 5.5. The Community Shop was recognised as being a credit to the village and the number of volunteers was rising all the time.
- 5.6. Thanks were recorded to Councillor Gabriel Batt, who had sadly died recently, for the funding of £2000 for the Box Road bus shelter.
- 5.7. Councillor Martin Veal was thanked for his donation of £5,000 for a Vehicle Activated Sign to be located, on a rota with other sites, on the Box Road.
- 5.8. Thanks were given by The Chair to Cllr Stan Cherry as Vice Chairman and all members of Bathford Parish Council.
- 5.9. It was noted there was an opportunity for co-option onto the council, any parishioner interested in becoming a Parish Councillor was asked to contact the Clerk.
- 5.10. Parish Hall Report – - It was reported that there were 22 regular groups currently using the hall and these along with the three village representatives were approved en bloc. Approval was proposed by Cllr Shirley Beazer and seconded by Cllr Hugh Baker. The hall had a busy year as along with the regular groups there have been 43 one off events such as parties and quizzes. The hall has had ongoing renovation and improvements. Martin Wright had taken the role of managing regular bookings while Julie Collins remained the booking secretary for one off bookings. There was a request for recommendations of further improvements that could be made to the hall.

## **6. Speaker - Ward Councillor Martin Veal**

- 6.1. In a change to the order of the agenda, Ward Councillor Martin Veal was the next speaker.
- 6.2. Cllr Shirley Beazer was thanked for having worked with Ward Councillor Martin Veal on village issues for a long time.
- 6.3. Batheaston's toilet block was to remain closed and it was expected that Batheaston Parish Council would make it part of a future plan. The new pavement in Batheaston was estimated as costing £40,000 if their Parish Council project managed it in house, however, they did not appear to want to take on further responsibility. The new bridge was originally going to be a wooden structure but there was still no date on its expected opening.
- 6.4. Batheaston's new Village Hall continued to be delayed by Judicial Reviews called by a vocal minority. Batheaston Parish Council did not support the planning application for the hall due to parking and by being contrary to their vision for the area.
- 6.5. Ward Councillor Gabriel Batt had recently passed away and his active and monetary contributory role in Parish affairs will be sorely missed
- 6.6. Following a landslip, the A431 road at Kelston was scheduled to be closed for six to twelve months and this timescale was considered unacceptable.
- 6.7. Sites for a moveable vehicle activated sign on the Box Road in Bathford were being investigated. The sign would be shared with locations on Bannerdown Road and Warminster Road.

- 6.8. Ward Councillor Martin Veal had been proposed as next Chairman of the Council for BANES. Village organisations were offered the opportunity to invite him to any local events.
- 6.9. Ward Councillor Martin Veal left the meeting at 8.10pm

**7. Speaker – Jane Thomas, Bathford Village Shop Manager**

- 7.1. Jane took over from Kevin as shop manager in September 2013 and had been impressed with the time and energy people gave to the local community.
- 7.2. A request for new volunteers was made as a number of current volunteers were stepping down.
- 7.3. Thanks were given for the donations that made the recent refurbishment possible.
- 7.4. The shop was reported as running at a profit and every effort was made to keep prices low and to use local suppliers.
- 7.5. Further thanks were given to those delivering the newspapers, in all weathers. Jenny, Ron, Roger, Ann, Diana and a number of younger paper boys and girls, start from 5.30am to organise and deliver them. The importance of continuing to buy papers from the shop to maintain a sufficient order from the wholesaler was stressed.
- 7.6. The Sunday roast dinners had proved popular however, a small price rise in these was thought to be necessary to ensure the future viability of providing this service.
- 7.7. A reminder was made to please use the shop whenever possible.

**8. Speaker – Councillor Peter Martin on Affordable Housing Survey and Rural Exception**

- 8.1. BANES were creating a Core Strategy which would state where development could and could not take place. Bathford had provided an input into this document and it was hoped this would be implemented in the summer. It would also state which areas would be protected.
- 8.2. Bathford was thought to be in a good position to avoid large developments due to being in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, within the green belt and by having a local site of scientific interest and having a Village Design Statement. The Village Design Statement was considered a good document by BANES and it was suggested that any development should be in fill only.
- 8.3. Following the Affordable Housing Survey distributed and collated by Curo, it was thought there was a possibility that some social housing could be built but this was now less likely. The Rural Exception Policy would allow for social housing to be built in the green belt if a local need could be established. Some potential sites had been highlighted on a map and displayed. Curo expected a demand of thirty to forty people but only nine had been identified, one of whom was on the social housing list. In order to make the scheme viable, Curo wanted to build a minimum of fifteen houses, two or three would sold at market value. The Parish Council had facilitated with the scheme to reach the point where a decision could be made. It was noted that in the survey that 80% of respondents were happy for social housing to be built if it was needed.

**9. Speaker – Councillor Susan Barclay, Financial Summary**

- 9.1. The budget set for 2013/14 was sufficient for the Parish needs and ensured adequate funds remained in the Business Reserve account for any unforeseen expenditure.

- 9.2. The forecast budget for 2014/15 had been set slightly lower than last year. However, as the Council is occasionally dipping into its reserves, it may well have to consider increasing the precept at some stage in the future.
- 9.3. As always the Council was ever mindful of the current economic climate so would continue to strive to reduce costs wherever possible.
- 9.4. A few new businesses had started advertising in the Bathford Bulletin during last year, in addition to our regulars, which is encouraging. Although the printing costs increased in 2011 we have still not increased the advertising fees, which have remained the same since the new-look Bulletin was introduced. This may have to be reviewed if the printing costs increase again.
- 9.5. Wherever possible, opportunities were explored to receive funding by grants for future projects for which this is a possibility.
- 9.6. A BANES £1,800 donation, to be spent specifically on the youth in the village had been used wisely by the five local organisations. £600 still remained to be spent before the end of the year.
- 9.7. Councillor Peter Martin approached the Ward Councillors with regard to enlisting their support for a bus shelter on the A4. The Parish Council were very grateful to Ward Councillor Gabriel Batt for both his support and financial help in acquiring £2,000 for the project from the Ward Councillor Funds.
- 9.8. Playing Field Maintenance - Fencing Repairs. The Parish Council continued to use the remainder of the £2,500 grant received the previous year for new gates and fencing.
- 9.9. Highways/Footpaths/Lighting. The A363 maintenance survey was satisfactory last year but work may be required with the next survey.
- 9.10. BANES supplied the Snow Wardens with all the necessary pallets and equipment required last winter so we will hold the £500 over for next winter.
- 9.11. No expenditure was required on highways vegetation or footbridge maintenance last year but we are hoping to landscape the footbridge this year so funds will be required shortly.
- 9.12. Office expenses – Postage. We agreed to bulk buy our postage stamps before the recent rise to save money in the future.
- 9.13. £500 Jubilee contingency money from the 2013-14 budget remains in our Reserve account but has been earmarked for a village Legacy stone near the A4 roundabout entrance to the village. It is hoped that it will be erected as soon as the weather permits. This is proving to be a very long drawn-out affair and Councillor Wendy Chambers has spent a great deal of time, sometimes frustrating in overseeing this project so many thanks go to her for all her efforts.

## **10. Proposals for which notice has been given**

- 10.1. A pedestrian crossing had been requested near the railway bridge. It was suspected this was not a crossing point that was used enough for BANES to install one there but they would be asked.
- 10.2. A wildflower area had been suggested however, there were issues of the correct location and ongoing maintenance. Quotes had been sought but they had been high.

**11. Open question and answers**

- 11.1. Future of Batheaston Post Office – it was expected that this was to be closed and replaced with a mobile unit visiting a few times a week offering a reduced service. The Post Office were looking for this branch to have extended opening hours and increased footfall to maintain its current service but there appeared to be no current options of a premises available. Batheaston’s APM was scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> April where more information may be available.
- 11.2. Concerns had been made regarding parking charges – the car park between the shops and the doctors in Batheaston are now charging between 9 and 12 with the intention of stopping people using the area as a park and ride for Bath. Charges would be refunded for customers of the Post Office. Parking was available in the car park within the doctors car park for patients.
- 11.3. A36/ A46 link road – Steve Mackerness of the Valley Parishes Alliance, stated that this road was still in the BANES Core Strategy but not in their 10 or 15 year plan, therefore the project looked unlikely. The Park and Ride sites were still awaiting a response from consultants and it was the Valley Parishes Alliance view that nothing would happen on this until after the election in May 2015.

**12. Formal closure of meeting**

- 12.1. Cllr Shirley Beazer thanked the speakers, Martin Wright for organising the refreshments and the parishioners for attending.
- 12.2. The meeting closed at 9.10pm

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....