

## Batheaston Parish Council

### Minutes of the Meeting of Batheaston Parish Council 7:15pm on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2019

**Present:** James Jeffery (Chair), Denise Craig, Alexis Pavlou, Andrew Lea, Patrick Vandestein, Catherine McCarthy and Sarah Orme (clerk). Alexis Pavlou, Catherine Gregory and Andrew Jeffryes joined the meeting after item 6.

1. There was no public participation.
2. Apologies were accepted from Paula Day and Derek Greener.
3. There were no declarations of interest from councillors.
4. The minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2019 were approved and signed.
5. **It was resolved** to co-opt Catherine Gregory and she signed the declaration of acceptance of office.
6. **It was resolved** to co-opt Andrew Jeffryes and he signed the declaration of acceptance of office.
7. **Planning**

**7.1. The following planning applications from B&NES were reviewed: -**

**Application Type: Full Application (Extension to date granted by B&NES)**  
**Site Location: 3 Damson Orchard Batheaston Bath Bath And North East Somerset BA1 7AF**  
**Description of Proposal: Erection of a single storey extension to rear of property.**  
**Name of Applicant: Mr & Mrs Bishop**  
**Reference Number: [19/04454/FUL](#) Case Officer: Anna Jotcham**

It was resolved not to object.

**7.2. The following decisions by B&NES were noted: -**

**Application Type: Full Application**  
**Site Location: 10 High Bannerdown Batheaston Bath Bath And North East Somerset BA1 7JY**  
**Description of Proposal: Erection of single storey extension following demolition of existing Conservatory**  
**Permitted**

**Application Type: Tree Works Notification in Con Area**  
**Site Location: 32 Northend Batheaston Bath Bath And North East Somerset BA1 7EN**  
**Description of Proposal: T1 = Ash tree, 30 feet in height. reduce to 20 feet and balance the crown**  
**No Objection**

**Application Type: Tree Works Notification in Con Area**  
**Site Location: 16 The Batch Batheaston Bath Bath And North East Somerset BA1 7DR**  
**Description of Proposal: T1 Magnolia - reduce in height by 3m and width by 3m.**  
**T2 Birch - lift lower canopy to 4m above ground level.**  
**No Objection**

**Application Type: Tree Works Notification in Con Area**  
**Site Location: 278 High Street Batheaston Bath Bath And North East Somerset BA1 7RA**  
**Description of Proposal: 1x Thuja T1 – fell**  
**No Objection**

8. The HR Committee reported 22 enquiries and 14 applications for the post of parish clerk. Three candidates were interviewed. Nobody with parish clerk training had applied, but a broad range of experience was represented. The interviewers have a preferred candidate who has accepted the post, subject to ratification by the HR Committee at its meeting next week. The new clerk's hours will be 25 per week vs the current 20. The selected candidate is keen to start the CiLCA qualification. The council would like to include provision in the contract to recoup all or part of the training cost from salary if the clerk does not stay in post for a period to be decided.
9. **It was resolved** to install a lockable letterbox in the Rhymes Pavilion to provide a postal address for the parish council other than the clerk's residence. The council does not receive funds by post.
10. A resident of The Batch states that her gutters have been damaged by a branch falling from the Jubilee Oak. The tree survey has now been completed and reports that the oak has grown in an unbalanced fashion due to surrounding trees. The crown therefore needs rebalancing within the next three months. Councillors have observed that the B&NES recycling vehicles are striking the lower branches of this tree where the road narrows. All trees on the roadside should be cut back so that there are no branches below 16 feet.

**It was resolved to ask the resident to provide access to her property for the purposes of assessing the damage and obtaining quotation(s) for repairs.**

**Consult with B&NES about their frequency of tree inspections by staff / trained contractors Clerk so as to establish an appropriate schedule including for purposes of insurance**

11. **The tree survey indicates that significant expenditure will be needed before March 2020. This is a busy time for tree surgeons as work cannot be carried out during nesting season which commences in March. Ash dieback has been identified in four trees at Riverside. They will need work in the next two to three years. The council are seeking three quotations by the December agenda deadline.**

**Sarah to pass details for Catherine Gregory to pursue quotes during clerk handover.**

12. **It was resolved** to pay £1377.60 to Tree Maintenance Ltd Invoice 38388 for tree survey.
13. It was noted that SSE's new streetlight maintenance contract costs £850pa (was £360pa) for our 17 streetlights and no longer covers 3<sup>rd</sup> party damage or water ingress to streetlights. We are currently without a contractor to carry out repairs as our old contract was terminated at the end of October. The new LED lights are expensive but may be more reliable. However, they may affect wildlife. Once installed, they can reduce our unmetered electricity bill (after notifying supplier).

ALCA are investigating ways of reducing this cost. We need to research options and decide at the next council meeting as this is urgent.

**Make urgent and strong representations to B&NES for them to use their purchase power and deliver economies of scale for all parishes.**

**Seek alternative contractor**

**Would SSE / another contractor provide a call-out service on a one-off basis?**

14. Andrew Lea has checked the bank reconciliations and accounts for October.

**Clerk**

15. The accounts summary for October and YTD was approved. We have received our second precept payment and additional CIL money.

Sarah apologised for omitting the full October spending report from the agenda pack.

**Include October and November expenditure report in December agenda pack. Send October and YTD summary in Excel format to Patrick**

**Catherine Gregory**

**Clerk**

16. **It was resolved** that due to businesses not attending last year, there will be no council Christmas party. **17. PRECEPT**

17.1. It was noted that figures from April to September show essential annual running costs of c. £45,000 this year. However, this figure is potentially too low by £3,800 given that we have only provided the youth club with £5500 this year whereas in previous years we have provided £500 per month plus £3500 to assist with their insurance and heating costs. The youth club does excellent work and supports young people with homework and also food when needed. It no longer receives funding from B&NES. Councillor James Jeffery will resume attending the youth group committee meetings.

17.2. Anticipated non-earmarked reserves at year-end of £25,000 vs recommended nine-month reserves of £36,000 were noted. (Assuming tree work this year costs £5k.) There has been an increase in volatility due to us undertaking larger projects from regular income.

3. 17.3. The loss of £7,080 B&NES street cleaning payment since 2018-19 was noted.
4. 17.4. It was noted that the clerk's hours will be increased to 25 on appointment of the new clerk.

This will add approximately £3,700 to staff costs (including increased NI etc).

17.5. It was noted that our precept has not been raised for several years and is lower than the average precept within B&NES

17.6. It was noted that we have access to c. £18,000 Section 106 funds for play area development, and possibly other infrastructure projects. It is believed this must be spent by Jan '21.

17.7. It was noted that we have c. £8,000 CIL and Community Empowerment Fund monies to spend on play provision. James has been dialoguing with play equipment providers. CIL must be spent on infrastructure, but not necessarily just in the play area. Our ward councillors also have £2000 available to their ward areas, which we could apply for. The play area needs investment.

17.8. Patrick Vandesteen presented a report on the precept, and this was discussed. There are two ways of approaching precept. The first is top-down to consider how much villagers

are prepared to pay, the second is bottom-up to consider how much villagers are asked to pay.

Prior to this year, we have not spent much on capital projects. However, residents are enthusiastic about these. There are several opportunities e.g. the green corridor.

Communication is vital to build understanding and buy-in to the precept and this should be started as soon as possible. Attention should be given to perception of value of the precept. Several options were reviewed and discussed.

Council reviewed a worked example of taking out a public works loan to fund further infrastructure projects. The system is flexible and allows arranging the loan in advance and only drawing down the funds as needed, without paying interest before then. We might also be able to obtain funding from Wessex Water to create a walkway by the brook. They are supportive of health-promotion projects. The current budget could then be earmarked for expenses.

There may be some economies of scale accessible by working with sister councils. The clerks have already collaborated to some extent. A new clerk has been appointed in Bathampton.

17.9. A draft grant application has been received from the youth club and will be considered in the December meeting. This is a large grant and affects the precept decision.

**Ensure all necessary information has been provided and liaise with Pam Burcombe. Clerk**

17.10. The decision on whether to award other grants next year was deferred.

17.11. **It was resolved** to delegate Patrick, Andrew Lea and Catherine Gregory as the Precept WG to make a proposal regarding the precept and medium and long-term priorities in the hope of setting the precept in December. This WG will only meet for one / two months.

**Formulate precept proposal by 3<sup>rd</sup> December for agenda pack**

## **18. Working Groups**

### **18.1. Parking Working Group**

**18.1.1.** The meeting with Smart Parking went well. They are willing to negotiate the contract and could install around the end of November. However, there are multiple problems with the contract, including mis-referenced, and therefore invalid, clauses. The council noted that signing the contract voids all verbal agreements and concessions made during discussions and thus the importance of ensuring all agreed terms are stated in contract. Specifically, it noted that there will be a three-way relationship between the parish council, the driver and Smart Parking. In November 2015, an appeal on the basis of a similar contract went to the Supreme Court. The judges ruled in favour of the parking company because the contract showed the car park owner has established legitimate interest and terms and service levels a driver could accept in good faith. Clause 5.1 of the Smart Parking contract states that the parish council are responsible for the rights of the driver and the parking WG had resolved to have the final say on PCNs. However, the contract doesn't state this.

It was resolved to sign the contact with SmartParking following negotiation of a mutually acceptable agreement that gives due recognition to this council's requirements of good faith, so accomplished by deploying without delay the skill and expertise that new councillors can contribute to a negotiation, and to that effect, by co-opting, under legal obligation of self-certification of eligibility only, all residents who have submitted their application form by 12 November 2019 via this vote.

**Welcome new councillors and arrange for them to sign acceptance of office forms.  
Clerk**

18.2.1. The update was deferred.

18.2.2. **It was resolved** to pay £32 for winter flowers for the two stone planters beside the bridge. (Riverside is over budget)

**18.3. Christmas**

Spending requests fell within allocated £750 budget.

18.3.1. **It was resolved** to pay Paul Weymouth of Lightfantastic £350 plus VAT for the installation and all testing of six strings of lights on six small Christmas trees along the pavement at the shops. For P Weymouth to fix the lights to the six required Christmas trees. To reconnect these lights to the already in situ fitment within the George and Dragon public house. To reconnect the large lights on the left of the entrance to the car park and all testing.

18.3.2. **It was resolved** to pay £60 to Tony Harding of Northend for six Christmas trees to be fixed on the metal poles on the pavement at the shops. YES

18.3.3. **It was resolved** to pay up to £30 for batteries for the lights for the six small Christmas trees. YES

18.3.4. **It was resolved** to spend up to £100 for mince pies and mulled wine to be served to residents at the Christmas Carol Concert and lights turning on. Thanks were expressed to the George and Dragon and Jones' Store for their donations last year, which enhanced and cut the cost of this event.

18.3.5. **It was resolved** to turn the Christmas lights on at 6:30pm on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November, which is the day of the school fete.

**18.4. Highways**

18.4.1. An update was received on the footpath diversion requests at Charmydown. Path BA21/9 is the ancient main footpath between St Catherine's and Batheaston. These changes would add a significant diversion to the footpath and will be a deterrent to walking between the villages.

**It was resolved** to object to the diversions.

18.4.2. **It was resolved** to pay Bathford Nursery £270 for 18 hanging baskets for winter flowers (12

for the pavement and 6 for the High St)

18.4.3. **It was resolved** to pay Bathford Nursery £64 for winter flowers for 4 wooden planters (1 x London Rd West, 2 x Stambridge, 1 Batch)

18.5. 18.6. **18.7.**

18.8.

The update on the WG review was deferred. Consideration of the Rhymes Pavilion was deferred. **Communications**

The report of the communications WG was deferred. No working groups were dissolved.

## **19. Clerk's Report**

1. 19.1. We have received £4,139.67 CIL payment from The Copse, Bannerdown Rd.
2. 19.2. We still waiting for a decision from B&NES about the noticeboard request nr Riverside.
3. 19.3. Bathavon North Forum 26<sup>th</sup> November 7pm Bathampton Village Hall all welcome.
4. 19.4. B&NES Public meeting Priorities and Key Financial Plans 17<sup>th</sup> Dec, 6:30pm, Banqueting

Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, The Guildhall.

5. 19.5. B&NES are investigating mud / damage caused by Charlcombe Homes development.
6. 19.6. The school have withdrawn their request for 3G surface funding. They will check

environmental concerns. They may approach for funding next year for other projects.

19.7. The clerk said farewell and was presented with a gift by the HR Committee.

## **20. Chairman's Report**

James welcomed new councillors and thanked the clerk for her service.

### **Upcoming Meetings: -**

7:15pm on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December (PRECEPT) in the Rhymes Pavilion tbc These are open meetings.

Members of the public are welcome to attend and may speak by invitation

Signed.....

Dated.....