Batheaston Parish Council Meeting, 14th July 2020 – Clerk's Report

Summary

Audit has dominated the period since the past meeting. This is covered in a separate report.

Other activities undertaken are listed below. Planned activities for the summer can be summarised as "getting our house in order": to support the community post-lockdown, to put in place robust procedures, and to provide the communications infrastructure to be transparent and engaging.

In respect of the last two of these, the resignation of Cllr Jeffryes will mean that I have to devote more effort to complete the implementation of various projects that he was leading.

Progress Made

- **Audit**: as covered in a separate report; preparation for, and supporting the internal audit process.
- **Systems Projects**: working with Cllr Jeffryes:
    - progress has been made on replacing the website, the basis for which should be delivered this week in a state to be populated
    - implementing the business system; I have involved Rachel Orme, who manages Rhymes Pavilion bookings, in this project.
- **Finance Committee meeting, 29th June 2020**
- **Staff**: Brief meetings with the 3 members of staff that report to me.
- **Items planned but delayed**: Submitting the VAT Reclaim for 2017/18.

Re-opening Council Facilities post- lockdown

A current priority is to formalise the approach to the re-opening of the Council's facilities; the Rhymes Pavilion, Playground and Riverside Toilet Block. In all cases, additional measures are required to suppress transmission of C-19, and these measures need to be put in place.

In respect of the Rhymes Pavilion, a number of options have been suggested for its use to support the community:

- As additional space – as a classroom or otherwise – for Batheaston Primary School

- To be used as hub for food distribution St Johns Church and Bath FoodCycle and/or Cool4School Kitbags for Mercy in Action.

- Of a different nature; there is an initiative to re-establish the football club, playing home games on our football pitch on Coalpit Road, and using the changing rooms and showers in the Pavilion.

For all of these, I do not yet have details, but will seek to get these as soon as possible.

When I have these, I will need to check basic considerations: conformance with current C-19 guidance; our ability – and that of the other party/ies to fulfil these; the cost to us of doing so; any other issues, relating to risk, and general Health and Safety considerations; insurance cover; etc.

Council is asked to approve the following:

1. The Clerk will seek to maximise the use of the Rhymes Pavilion to support the community, without preferential treatment of any specific party.
2. In respect to those requests that directly support community initiatives to address hardship and difficulties experienced caused directly or indirectly by C-19 (such as the first 2 of the above options), the charge made for renting will be as lower than standard, and possibly waived completely. The figure will be based on discussion with the other party, bearing in mind their ability to contribute; the value to the community; and the cost of supporting the activity for the Council (including lost income from other bookings).

<u>Planned Activity for the coming 2 month period (in addition to the above item)</u>

1. Complete the internal audit process
   - Submit the forms as approved in the Council July meeting
   - Agree the final submission with our auditor and submit to the external auditor
   - Answer any queries arising
   - Develop a detailed action plan to address issues arising

2. Submit VAT reclaim
   - Aiming to submit from July 2017-March 2018 first, as a matter of priority
   - Then subsequent financial years, to 2019-20

3. Systems projects – I will pick up the 5 strands of systems project:
   - Registering the domain name: hoping to be allowed to use Batheaston.gov.uk, but currently in discussion as it appears latest rules require us to have Batheaston-pc.gov.uk.
   - Website, completion of the development phase; populating it with content; replacing the existing site; cancelling existing contracts; and contacting other organisations to ask them to update their links to it. Note that I will ask you all for content – words and images – to make it relevant and engaging to residents. Then establishing regular update process to keep it up-to-date, with Council documents, and relevant news.
   - Business system: supported by Rachel Orme, with the first objective being to populate the system with static data, to allow me to retrospectively enter financial data for this year. Then to turn attention to asset management, service requests and maintenance.
   - Microsoft Office365: procurement and cut-over
   - VoIP Phone: updating details, to start to use for official Council business (for me, and four others).

4. Playground
   - I plan to seek outline proposals from 3 or more specialists in respect of the Elmhurst Playground, to address the immediate issues, and also medium- and longer-term development plans.

5. Staff Management
    - Have a detailed review of each role; working arrangements, especially as lockdown restrictions ease; and performance
    - For the Handyman, Bert Poole, develop a modus operandi to address residents' priority more directly and promptly
    - For the Booking Clerk, Rachel Orme, to review how the bsueinss system will change the nature of her role, and ways in which she can help exploit the potential it offers for a better service.

6. Last but not least: holiday!
    - I will be on holiday from 23rd July until 10th August. I will be working and/or checking messages for some of this period, but will be "off-line" for much of it (to be confirmed). I will arrange cover.

Richard Maccabee, 13th July 2020