

26/01/2021 Clerk's Report to Council

Summary

This report covers the 6-week period since the last meeting of Council, on 15/12/20, including the Christmas break and the first few weeks of another lockdown.

My time continues to be demanded to address queries, complaints and challenges, from Councillors, and residents, which divert attention from day-to-day administration and the urgent tasks of improvement that we have in hand. There is still much to be done to address errors and omissions in past processes, and to fill the gaps in our procedures, and I am making slow progress on this. This is very evident in the report the Internal Auditor's following her interim visit on 1st December 2020.

There have however been some positive developments, as detailed below.

Council Facilities

Rhymes Pavilion was used before Christmas for a small number of events, with the most significant being the weekly "Penny's Pantry" foodbank, which continues in operation, as it is exempt from lockdown restrictions, but there are unlikely to be others that are able to continue.

Playground: it is very pleasing to report that thanks to the efforts of Cllr Lea the urgent repairs were carried out on 20th January. Cllr Lea has submitted grant applications for the refurbishment project, about which we are very hopeful.

Football Pitch: Batheaston Football Club has been re-established and are using the Coalpit Road pitch (though this is now suspended under lockdown).

Public Toilets remain open.

Christmas Lights and Decorations. A more hopeful and positive event: Christmas lights, hanging baskets, and planters were again installed in the centre of the village. This was also co-ordinated by Cllr McCarthy, and welcomed a number of residents.

All-weather pitch floodlights: I continue to dispute a figure of approx. £650 for the outstanding debt for the electricity supply to the floodlights over the past 3-4 years (which was assigned to Batheaston Leisure Association, and not re-assigned to the Council when their lease ended in 2017).

I am in setting up the **new business system, AdvantEdge** in pilot mode, to seek approval from Finance Committee at its February meeting to make it fully live.

GrowBatheaston have offered to plant a number of fruit trees, and locations in the Playground are being considered.

They have also initiated a group to consider setting up a "Community Shop". Cllr Greener kindly agreed to attend the first meeting of this group in my place.

Climate Emergency Cllr Peachey and I have discussed a call for the Council to support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill (<https://www.cebill.uk/>), and will seek Councillor views on this and on how to take practical steps in the Parish to address Climate Change.

Richard Maccabee, Parish Clerk, 26/1/2021