

Batheaston Parish Council – Council Meeting 21st February 2023

Clerk's Report

Summary

Other areas of focus have been the Riverside, with a number of jobs done, and more to do; the installation of signs restricting the length of stay in the car park; and the Playground, which has a number of maintenance jobs to do.

I cover here some specific items:

Audit Action Plan

I have not updated Council on the status of this for 3 meetings. Of the 18 recommendations from the Internal Auditor's Report, the 4 outstanding actions are as follows:

1. Risk assessment: review, update and adopt the risk assessment before 31 March 2023.

This is not likely to be completed. A risk management policy is required to support this activity, which I hope to bring to Council at its next meeting.

2. Review and update the asset register at least annually.

This is not likely to be completed. As I have mentioned to Council before, a full-scale review of all assets is required, with the opportunity taken to log these on the finance system, with planned maintenance and other management tasks recorded.

3. The Councillors Registers of Interest are not available from the Council's website.

I aim to complete this in the coming month.

4. Documenting the day-to-day procedures that are undertaken by the RFO in order to implement the requirements set out in the Financial Regulations.

I am unlikely to be able to complete this before year-end (I will aim to document year-end processes as I go, and then add the day-to-day detail thereafter).

Tree Survey

The tree survey has been undertaken by BANES and identified some relatively urgent work on a few trees, and some longer-term priorities. One quote has been received from the tree surgery company we have used in the past year, and a second is expected soon from BANES. Approval is sought elsewhere on the agenda for the known value.

Memorial Bench

A resident has asked if it would be possible to sponsor a bench in memory of a deceased relative. I propose to offer to proceed on the basis of an agreement that will constitute a "10-year lease", and ensure that the net cost to the Council is covered for that period. I will also seek suggestions for the location from the Playground and Riverside Working Group, and assuming a clear option is identified, proceed to have the bench installed. **Approval is sought to proceed.**

Elections to the Council in May

As Councillors will be aware, the elections to Council will take place on 4th May this year. The process is managed by BANES. I note now:

- There a pre-election period from 20th March until the election during which Councillors and Council are constrained particularly with respect to publicity. More guidance is here: <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/guidance-and-resources/pre-election-period/what-pre-election-period-means-practice> (I am awaiting a NALC guidance note).
- Nominations are open from 21st March until 4th April 2023.
- All 15 places on Batheaston Parish Council are available for election. If 15 or fewer eligible candidates come forward, then those that stand will be elected un-opposed on 5th April.
- If more than 15 people stand for election, the notice of poll will be issued on 25th April, and the election will take place on 4th May.
- If fewer than 10 people stand then Batheaston Parish Council will not be able to have General Power of Competence for up to 4 years. (The other prerequisite is that I complete the CILCA qualification). In brief, this allows a Council to do “whatever a private individual can do”, for instance to open a shop.
- I will promote the election, encouraging residents to stand for election, through the website and email updates, and will support individuals who need directing to sources of information or help.

Richard Maccabee, Parish Clerk
21st February 2023