Batheaston Parish Council – Council Meeting 21st March 2023
Clerk's Report

Summary

Below are some specific items of interest, and more detail about the important events of the coming two months. Otherwise, my main areas of focus this month have been in supporting the Working Group for the Playground (covered elsewhere); completing year-end related processes, particularly setting up the pension scheme for the handyman; and progressing arrangements for licences and road closures for the King's Coronation Party.

- **The Rhymes Pavilion:** I have held a meeting with one of the Trustees of the Batheaston Leisure Association to discuss alternative models for maintaining and operating the Pavilion. These conversations are continuing. In the meantime, I am progressing with the most urgent of the maintenance tasks, to ensure the building can be used for up to 6 months. Unfortunately, the gutter downpipe has been ripped off the wall, breaking all the brackets.
- **The Tree Survey** identified a number of pieces of maintenance, some of which is quite urgent. I have submitted planning applications (five) for those in the Riverside Park, as it is a Conservation Area. Others include the Jubilee Oak (at the corner of Northend and Solsbury Lane), and leylandii around the football pitch (minor maintenance; not the wholesale removal or pollarding that many would wish for). I have commissioned the work, which should take place in April, assuming planning approval is given (and no nests are found in the trees).
- **Neighbourhood Watch:** I have received an email from the Interim Chair of (recently reformed) Avon and Somerset Neighbourhood Watch Association, asking if there is interest in forming more watches in the Parish (I understand that there is one now, for High Bannerdown). My suggestion is to put this on the agenda for the Annual Meeting of Electors, on 23rd May (see below).

Timetable for the next two months; Council Elections and beyond.

The notice for the Elections – to the Parish and to Bath and North East Somerset Council – has been published today, 20th March. The timetable for the remainder of the process is as follows:

Nomination period starts (Note 1)	Tuesday 21 March
Nomination period closes	Tuesday 4 April
Notice of results for uncontested elections (Note 2)	Wednesday 5 April
Deadline for new proxy vote applications	Tuesday 25 April
Polling day	Thursday 4 May
Election Results Declared	Friday 5th May
(Kings Coronation Sunday 7th May, and Bank Holiday, Monday 8th May)	
Existing Councillors Stand Down and Newly-Elected Councillors Take up Office	Tuesday, 9th May
Annual Parish Council Meeting (Note 3)	Tuesday, 16th May

Annual Meeting of Electors (Note 4)	Tuesday 23rd May

Notes:

1 – the election process is managed by Legal & Democratic Services / Electoral Services at BANES. I am able to help anyone in the Parish by pointing them to relevant documents or sources of support but am otherwise not involved.

2 – Our formal complement is 15 Councillors (one of the highest for any Parish or Town Council in BANES). An election is therefore only required if more than 15 eligible candidates come forward; otherwise candidates are elected un-opposed. Note that this is different than being co-opted subsequently, and crucially if there are fewer than 10 Councillors elected in this way, then the Council will not be able to exercise General Powers of Competence for the next four years. (This also depends on the Clerk being CILCA qualified; which I am hoping to achieve within the next year).

3 – the Annual Parish Council Meeting has to take place within 14 days of new Councillors taking office, and includes a number of formal steps: the election of Chair of Council and declarations of acceptance of office.

4 – the Annual Meeting of Electors is not a Parish Council meeting, even though traditionally it is the Parish Clerk who arranges if and takes minutes, and the Council Chair presides (if s/he is present). The Trustees of the New Village Hall have kindly agreed to host the meeting this year.

As I have noted before **Photo Id** is required for these elections, for the first time. BANES are offering advice and support, particularly for those who do not currently hold any of the acceptable documents (contact: elections@bathnes.gov.uk, 01225-477333).

Richard Maccabee, Parish Clerk
20th March 2023