

Batheaston Annual Village Meeting
Minutes of the 2025 Meeting
Held on Tuesday 25th March at the New Village Hall

Welcome and Introduction

Hannah Squire, Chair of the Parish Council, chaired the meeting and opened it by thanking the Trustees of the New Village Hall for hosting it.

The meeting was kindly hosted by the New Village Hall, and featured a wide range of speakers from community organizations in Batheaston.

There were approximately 40 residents of the village in attendance.

Minutes of the 2024 Meeting were approved.

We opened with short updates on two events at the New Village Hall, the monthly the Film Club and the impending Art Sale in aid of Parkinsons (which was very successful, by the way!) [@Sarah, please omit this if there is a report elsewhere].

We then had two special presentations, the first being from Michael Auton, of the Community Catalysts (<https://www.communitycatalysts.co.uk/our-work/bath-and-north-east-somerset/>). This is one of a network of such organisations throughout the country that seek to support people set up and run businesses to offer help at home to older people, or to adults with physical, learning, or other disabilities in the community.

Forbes Robertson then gave a presentation on behalf of the Twinning Association who will celebrate 20 years of twinning by welcoming a group from Oudon, on the River Loire in France, in July. As usual they will provide a range of activities for their guests, including hikes and picnics, and a party at the end of the visit. He noted that the group is self-funding, and invited everyone to the French Café they are hosting on 8th June.

Parish Councillor Peter Lewis gave an overview of the wide range of day-to-day activities that the Parish Council is responsible for, and the projects that it has in its sights. He highlighted one of these which he is leading – to establish the Batheaston Emergency Response Team (BERT!) – to prepare for and handle emergencies such as the floods in November. He also introduced an idea for setting a pre-school nursery in the village.

He closed with a plea for more Councillors and Volunteers.

Tina Lewis told the meeting about plans she has to run Bingo at the Rhymes Pavilion – the first session due to start soon.

Representatives of Grow Batheaston gave an overview of their activities including the seed swap and plant sale the following weekend; the forest garden; junior football coaching sessions on Saturday morning; and the Art Trail in September.

Grow Batheaston and the Parish Council are both running events for the Wild Waters Festival: respectively “Tales from our River Bank”, an evening of talks, film and art on 6th June, and the Riverside Party on Sunday afternoon, 8th June.

Rob Kendall, who is both Secretary and Land Manager for Batheaston Freeholders Association, the “Guardians of the Batheaston Commons since 1719”, and the Parish Warden for the Cotswolds Voluntary Wardens, gave a brief overview of the range of activities of both organisations. He then gave a presentation on the recent project to create an Accessible Route on Bannerdown Common, to improve access to the common for those with limited mobility.

Cllr Sarah Warren, one of the Ward Councillors for Batheaston, briefed the meeting on the work that is in plan to restore the riverside section of the limestone link footpath, which she noted has been allocated 40% of the capital budget for such projects. She also explained the process for the Local Plan, which will set out how B&NES intends to build 29,000 new homes over the next 20 years. She closed by mentioning the severe financial challenges facing Local Authorities, meting the growing demand of social care and children’s services, but reported that B&NES had been able to agree a balanced budget.

Audience members asked about a regular topic (and gripe): buses! This featured as the main item in last year’s meeting, with speakers from WECA and B&NES, who had explained in some detail the challenges of delivering the service in the current context.

We are grateful to the Trustees of the New Village Hall for hosting the meeting, and the Parish Council will provide light refreshments.

Cllr Squire closed the meeting, thanked the speakers and all who attended,

If you have any questions about this article, and in particular if you have a suggestion for a speaker next year, please contact Richard Maccabee, Parish Clerk,
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and invited everyone to stay and mingle and enjoy the light refreshments.