



Batheaston Parish Council

Working Groups Review

10 September 2019
Patrick Vandestein



Review set-up

- Interviews on 4 aspects: working groups vs ...
 - voluntary organisations
 - neighbourhood plan policies
 - legal roles and responsibilities
 - interviewee views
- 19 interviews of c45 minutes to-date:
 - 2 BPC members
 - 17 villagers (with differing levels of BPC knowledge)



Key feedback: General

- A. “A good village”:** A valued mix of housing, safety, cleanliness, nature and amenities (shops, school, surgery, transport, ...)
- B. Infrastructure improvements:** Especially pedestrian pavement and footbridge (+ opening up of meadows)
- C. Neighbourhood plan:** Six policies that seem right, motivating and inclusive

While everyone believed some authority must be behind these, few recognised the specific role of the BPC



Key feedback: Working groups

- A. **Focus:** Working groups (“WGs”) seem set up around BPC interests rather than clear choices of community need
- B. **Engagement:** WGs are not managed to recruit, coordinate and optimise collaboration with residents
- C. **Role:** WGs are not focused on the unique value the BPC can add relative to voluntary organisations and residents



A. Focus feedback

- *“WGs don’t focus on priorities of the village; they seem about interests someone shouted about”*
- *“There are areas of need not covered by WGs, like village communications and neighbourhood watch”*
- *“The only WGs listed that I think work are planning and highways, but perhaps more motivated by complaints than policies”*
- *“Lots of energetic people have passed from the BPC to other endeavours and the recently formed - under-strength - council has not yet (!), it seems, cut its teeth”*



B. Engagement feedback

- *“I joined a WG once and it seemed a BPC get-together rather than a community project”*
- *“You need communication, organisation, agendas, action lists and follow-ups to get a team to work properly”*
- *“Discussion is well-meaning but pointless without the right people involved and in the room”*
- *“There is overlap between WGs and little coordination between them”*



C. Role feedback

- *“Interestingly, no WGs seem to exist around the legal powers of the BPC. Like, no WG exists to promote tourism in the village”*
- *“Why does the WG chair have to be a BPC member when in some cases they do not have the required skills or expertise?”*
- *“The BPC is poor at engaging with organisations”*
- *“WGs go too slow and take too long to stay motivating”*

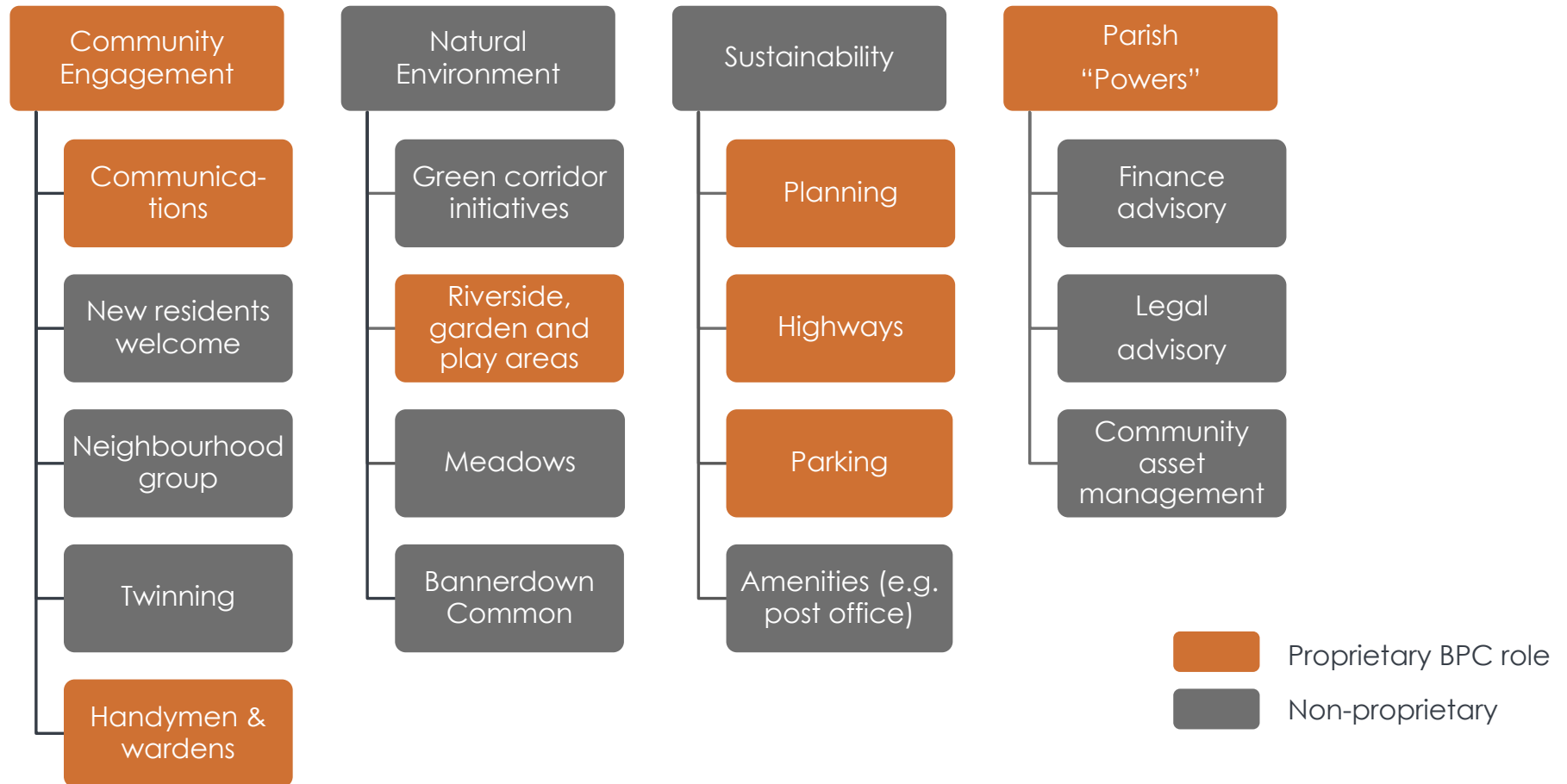


Improving working groups

1. Map the WGs to both longer-term and practical priorities, e.g. the neighbourhood plan policies
2. Create a WG structure that explicitly recruits and integrates residents and their organisations
3. Recruit the best people for the job; permit non-BPC villagers to lead a WG
4. Communicate continuously and 2-way with the village, push (e.g. email, web) and pull (e.g. social media, idea box)



Discussion starter: standing WGs





Immediate action: Communications WG

- Almost all residents rated BPC communications as poor. There is an immediate pay-off from better 2-way communications
- Residents have different needs and preferences of communication: post, telephone, email, web, face-to-face,...
- The remit of the Communications WG is to set up and manage an integrated communications push and pull platform, and organise sourcing and writing of content
- The Communications WG will need active involvement from residents for content and reach



Appendix 1: WGs & voluntary organisations

Existing working groups (& committees)

1. Neighbourhood plan
2. Riverside
3. Play areas
4. Christmas decorations
5. Batheaston Twinning Association
6. Highways
7. (HR committee)

Requested working groups (& committees)

1. Environmental group
2. (Finance committee)

Voluntary organisations

1. Batheaston Youth Club
2. New Village Hall
3. Batheaston Garden Group
4. Batheaston Neighbourhood Group
5. Batheaston Society
6. Batheaston Twinning Association
7. Friends of Bathampton Meadows Riverside
8. Residents Association for Batheaston
9. Bannerdown Common Freeholders
10. Friends of Mike's Meadow
11. [Churches, scouts, brownies]



Appendix 2: Neighbourhood plan policies

1. **“A place we call home”:** The Batheaston Parish Council in all its actions shall foster a distinct sense of place, attachment and wellbeing of residents.
2. **Green corridors:** Batheaston shall reserve existing and new spaces for creating green corridors including a “village green” so as to encourage greater interaction between the different communities of the village, and to promote local wellbeing, health and biodiversity.
3. **Sustainability by design:** A sustainability assessment shall be presented for all development proposals and development proposals shall be supported where they advance the quality of life of the community.
4. **Local economy:** Batheaston shall support measured developments which upgrade and expand infrastructure, business and employment in the village generally and its natural capital specifically.
5. **Shared and clean mobility:** Batheaston shall support and seek to be an early participant in the development of electric, self-drive and shared car ownership.
6. **“The polluter pays”:** Batheaston shall not permit legal limits of pollution to be exceeded, and shall seek direct action and financial redress from parties causing excess pollution.



Appendix 3: Legal roles & responsibilities

Powers

1. Make bye-laws of communal places
2. Community spend of communal benefit
3. Acquire or sell land
4. Engage legal proceedings
5. Take part in any public enquiry
6. Make financial contributions to local tourist organisations allowed
7. Seek changes in legislation
8. List of an asset of community value
9. Exercise the Community Right to Challenge
10. Set the precept
11. Raise money from grant-making bodies
12. Set up a public subscription
13. Act as trustees for a local charity
14. Utilise stream, or spring water
15. Support a public telecommunications operator in providing services

Areas

1. Communal places, e.g., allotments, bus shelters, war memorials, ...
2. Community centres and public buildings
3. Recreation grounds, walkways, seats, ponds, ...
4. Footpaths and Rights of Way
5. Highways – lighting, parking, diversions, notices, traffic calming, tree planting ...
6. Public conveniences, public toilets, clocks, ...
7. Signs – danger signs, place names and bus stops signs
8. Entertainment and the Arts
9. Drainage – of ditches and ponds
10. Litter, litter-bins, anti-litter campaigns, ...
11. Planning advice