

Batheaston Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Batheaston Parish Council 7:15pm on Tuesday 10th December 2019

Present: James Jeffery (Chair), Derek Greener, Denise Craig, Catherine Gregory, Andrew Jeffryes, Catherine McCarthy, Patrick Vandestein, and Richard Maccabee (clerk).

Matt Tovey joined the meeting after item 8.

1. Public participation

- 1.1. Mr Stockton joined the meeting his project to convert the Methodist Church on Northend to a home for his family. Councillors commented that they were aware of the development and had favourable impression.
- 1.2. Mr Glen Penhey and Mr Paul Frayling, Directors of H. Mealing & Sons Ltd., and Ms Mari McGuirk of BBA Architects gave an overview of the plans they have to replace the existing buildings, which he described as dilapidated and no longer fit for purpose. He plans envisage two new buildings which may offer additional space for local businesses.

Councillors were concerned to ascertain that there will be no increase in heavy goods traffic, during the building project and subsequently as a result of the new development. Mr Penhey confirmed that disruption during the building work will be minimized and that once complete day to day traffic will be limited to cars and light vans. Mr Penhey stated that he wanted to keep the business at its current size and focus and traffic loads would not change in the future.

He confirmed that the detailed assessment indicated a low risk of flooding. Mr Penhey confirmed there is no intention of changing the development for residential purposes in the future.

2. Apologies were accepted from Paula Day, Alexis Pavlou and Andrew Lea.
3. There were no declarations of interest from councillors.
4. The minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 2019, with the set of suggested amendments that were circulated prior to the meeting were approved and signed. It was noted that it was unusual for so many amendments to be presented to the meeting, and that the previous Clerk had been very efficient in taking contemporaneous and faithful notes.

The new Clerk should minimise the number of changes brought to the meeting.

Clerk

5. **It was noted** that official purdah applies as the General Election Campaign continues.
6. **It was resolved** to co-opt Hannah Hughes as a Councillor.

Contact Ms Hughes and arrange for her to sign the declaration of acceptance of office

Clerk

7. **It was resolved** to co-opt Gisella Gruber as a Councillor.

Contact Ms Gruber and arrange for her to sign the declaration of acceptance of office

Clerk

8. Mr Matthew (Matt) Tovey introduced himself, as a resident in Batheaston, with family here, and born and bred in Bath. He outlined his experience as a technical manager and business owner in Bath.

It was resolved to co-opt Matt Tovey as a Councillor. He signed the declaration of acceptance and joined the meeting as a Councillor.

9. Planning

9.1. The following planning applications from B&NES were reviewed: -

Application Type: Full Application
Site Location: Batheaston Methodist Church Northend Batheaston Bath Bath And North East Somerset BA1 7EN
Description of Proposal: Conversion of chapel and outbuildings into single dwelling with replacement extension and re-modelling of carpark entrance and pedestrian gateway
Name of Applicant: Mr & Mrs Stockton
Reference Number: 19/04889/FUL Case Officer: Helen Ellison

This is the Application that Mr Stockton described in Public Participation, at 1.1.
It was resolved not to object to the Application.

Application Type: Full Application
Site Location: 12 Victoria Gardens Batheaston Bath Bath And North East Somerset BA1 7RD
Description of Proposal: Erection of a two-storey rear and side extension, to follow the demolition of existing rear extension. Provision of a hip-to-gable loft extension with rear dormer.
Name of Applicant: Ms Schlesinger
Reference Number: 19/04990/FUL Case Officer: Thomas Boyle

It was noted that an objection had been posted on the BANES Planning Portal, highlighting inconsistencies in the advice given concerning acceptable developments, which Councillors agreed has been an issue in the past.

It was resolved to contact BANES and highlight this concern.

Clerk

Application Type: Full Application
Site Location: Fosseyway Fosse Lane Batheaston Bath Bath And North East Somerset BA1 7JS
Description of Proposal: Erection of single storey rear extension.
Name of Applicant: Mr & Mrs Mott
Reference Number: 19/05218/FUL Case Officer: Isabel Daone

It was resolved not to object to the Application.

The Clerk highlighted a new application that had been notified since the Agenda was set, and for which Consultation will close before the next meeting:

Application Type: Full Application
Site Location: 6 Brookside Close Batheaston Bath Bath And North East Somerset BA1 7HW
Description of Proposal: Erection of extension to north elevation to facilitate annexe ancillary to main dwelling. Installation of extended balcony to the south elevation. Construction of retaining wall to form a raised terrace and installation of a garden store. (Resubmission of 19/00040/FUL)
Name of Applicant: Mr Kevil Day
Reference Number: 19/05290/FUL Case Officer: Robert Warren

It was resolved to ask BANES for an extension of the Consultation period to allow the Council to consider this application.

Clerk

The following decisions by B&NES were noted: -

Application Type: Full Application

Site Location: 41 Northend Batheaston Bath BA1 7EG

Description of Proposal: Excavation of the existing courtyard and construction of a two storey glazed extension. Internal alterations and repairs to the existing building. Landscaping works and the construction of a new single storey home office.

Decision: **PERMIT**

Application Type: Listed Building Consent (Alts/exts)

Site Location: 41 Northend Batheaston Bath BA1 7EG

Description of Proposal: Excavation of the existing courtyard and construction of a two storey glazed extension. Internal alterations and repairs to the existing building. Landscaping works and the construction of a new single storey home office.

Decision: **CONSENT**

Application Type: Full Application

Site Location: 3 Damson Orchard Batheaston Bath Bath And North East Somerset BA1 7AF

Description of Proposal: Erection of a single storey extension to rear of property.

Decision: **PERMIT**

Application Type: Full Application

Site Location: 5 Barnfield Way Batheaston Bath Bath And North East Somerset BA1 7PW

Description of Proposal: Erection of a detached dwelling and detached garage with creation of new access off Bannerdown Road and associated works

Decision: **REFUSE**

Working Groups

10. Precept Working Group

Catherine Gregory gave a presentation on behalf of the Precept Working Group. She noted

- The need to give separate consideration to recurrent spend and capital investments
- There are a number of “unknowns”, which hamper the process. These are being addressed but will not all be resolved in time to inform the process this year. It is recognised that there is a need for contingency funds.
- Staff salaries are the most significant item amongst recurrent costs.
- Of the capital items, the largest single project in this year has been the £39k spent on the Secret Garden, although she noted that a significant portion of this (£12.5k) came from a grant and that there will be an amount of VAT to reclaim, which further reduces the Council's investment in this project.
- She stressed the importance of completing the Neighbourhood Plan to unlock an anticipated fund of the order of £4.6k for the current year-to-date from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). It was noted that securing the acceptance of the Neighbourhood Plan is a complex and lengthy process.
- The members of the Working Group had determined their respective priorities for revenue and capital spend, with consensus around Communications for the former, and the Green Corridors as a capital project.
- She noted that the Precept for Batheaston is below the average for BANES but is in line with comparable Councils. After 3 years without increase in the Precept, it is now necessary for there to be some increase

10.1. There was discussion of:

- The lack of investment in the past which has led to potentially unnecessary costs now, with examples being Tree Maintenance and the Play Area.
- The proportion of spend that goes into running the Council as opposed to providing services to residents is 50%, which is substantially higher than Charities aim to achieve.
- The need to seek efficiencies

- The opportunity to limit rises in costs by engaging residents in more voluntary activity, as exemplified by the Secret Garden Volunteers.
- The need to communicate the position and the Council's decision with residents before Council Tax bills arrive in April.

10.2. The members of the PWG had each given their view of the appropriate focus and level of increase for the Precept, being, 9.8%, to keep the percentage increase below double-digits; 12.5%, to reassess the reduction over the past 3 years; 14.8%, to allow for investment in maintenance and other tasks as an investment for future reductions.

The discussion tended towards keeping rises below 10%.

CG to consult Councillors on their availability for a Precept Working Group in early January with attendance from as many Councillors as possible.

Catherine Gregory

10.3. Parking Working Group

10.3.1. It was noted that the next action is to seek legal review of the contract.

James Jeffery

10.3.2. The objective of this contract were re-stated, based on two working groups meetings with local residents and businesses in which it was agreed to provide 3 hours of free parking.

10.3.3. In support of establishing a legitimate interest for a contract, Andrew Jeffryes said that he is conducting a survey of use of the Riverside Car Park this week. He has found that a substantial number of cars parked are long-stay, greater than 3 hours. This has re-confirmed the previous findings that many of these cars are left for the day, using it as an informal Park and Ride facility.

It was noted that it is the Bath Christmas Market currently, which will potentially affect use of the Car Park, and therefore it would be worth repeating the exercise in January.

10.4. Riverside

10.4.1. In Andrew Lea's absence the update was deferred to the next meeting.

10.4.2. Tree Maintenance: Catherine Gregory gave an update on the situation regarding quotations for the urgent work needed.

10.4.3. A second quotation had arrived a few hours before the meeting, which she had not had a chance to assess. It was however clear that there was a wide disparity in the costs for the most important item; the removal of branches from the Jubilee Oak.

A budget of approximately £1,500 including VAT was approved for Catherine Gregory to assess quotations, and to commission the work as soon as it is able to be scheduled.

Catherine Gregory

10.4.4. The Clerk is to include the maintenance of other trees, including some fruit trees and those in the Secret Garden, on the agenda for the January meeting.

Clerk

10.5. Christmas Lights

10.5.1. Catherine McCarthy reported that she believed that the lights looked very good, and that "the switch on" had been a success. She did however note that several residents reported that

they were unaware of the event until the last minute, owing to lack of communication from BREDAC, as not all of our residents are on Facebook, Twitter and other social media.

10.5.2. She reported that the Lights and associated items had come in under budget. There had been a number of kind donations from individuals and local businesses.

10.5.3. She reported on early discussions of plans for the Lights next Christmas.

10.6. Highways

10.6.1. The update on the WG review was deferred.

10.6.2. Catherine McCarthy reported that she had achieved lower costs than anticipated for the winter flowers for hanging baskets and wooden planters.

10.6.3. She reported that she has been in touch with the Highways Department at BANES to raise issues relating to the pavement on School Lane. As this is used by young children if needs to be wider, and less susceptible to minor flooding.

10.7. Communications

10.7.1. Patrick Vandesteen gave a presentation on behalf of the Communications Working Group.

10.7.2. He said that communication with residents was viewed as poor, according to a survey he had previously conducted. There is a need for both “push” and “pull” communication, and a range of preferred channels for communication, including social media, web, email and post.

10.7.3. He proposed an outline of an online Communication platform, which would be capable of handling inbound and outbound messages across some if not all the channels required.

10.7.4. Steps that would be required to implement such a platform include: selection of the core software tool; integration with desired channels (where this is not available “out of the box”; and redesign of the website to integrate news and other features.

10.7.5. Based on two preliminary conversations he has had with suppliers of such services, a platform could be provided for between £5k and £7.5k.

10.7.6. Council confirmed that it is happy for Patrick and the Communications Working Group to continue with this development.

10.7.7. On a related matter, Catherine McCarthy raised the topic of the BREDAC database, which contains ca. 1,000 email addresses of local residents. This has ceased to be maintained, and the annual licence fee of £100 has put off others who might be prepared to take on its maintenance. She indicated that if the Council will take on the payment of the licence, then there are volunteers who will come forward to maintain the database.

10.7.8. BPC will ‘adopt’ BREDAC under its umbrella.

Council confirmed that it will ‘adopt’ BREDAC and allocate £100 for the payment of the annual licence fee.

Clerk / Catherine McCarthy

10.8. No working groups were dissolved.

11. Lighting

11.1. The Clerk reported that he has registered interest in collaborating with other affected councils to address the issues with the streetlight maintenance contract.

11.2. Catherine McCarthy reported that she has previously had good lines of communication with SSE when lights have needed repair. She outlined some of the changes in the past which have

resulted in the current situation, and indicated that it may be worth contacting BANES to understand their arrangements for maintenance.

Contact BANES to understand their arrangements for maintenance

Clerk

12. Clerk's Report

- 12.1. The new Clerk introduced himself, and thanked Councillors for their welcome. He indicated that he is picking things up as quickly as possible, but asked for Councillors patience and assistance in his first few weeks.
- 12.2. He indicated that his next priority would be Finances: to gain access to the bank account, summarise accounts for November and Year-to-date; and to pay outstanding invoices. He is aware of the urgent need to provide a summary of the budget to inform the process of setting the Precept for 2020/21.
- 12.3. He will also prioritise reclaiming VAT.
- 12.4. He aims to set up Council Email accounts (@batheaston.org.uk) for those Councillors who do not already have one.

13. Chairman's Report

James welcomed the new councillors and the new clerk and hoped that they would have an interesting time in their roles!

Upcoming Meetings: -

7:15pm on Tuesday 14th January 2020 in the Rhymes Pavilion

This is an open meeting.

Members of the public are welcome to attend and may speak by invitation

Signed.....

Dated.....