

Batheaston Parish Council - Clerk's Report – 14th October 2021

Finances

We have recently received the second instalment of Precept, and thus have a total of over £60k in our bank accounts. I am however aware of significant expense in the near future – most especially on the Playground project – which will reduce our current reserves.

Income from Rhymes Pavilion Bookings and from the Riverside toilet is starting to get back to pre-pandemic levels. Income will be increased further if Council approves charging for our facilities (elsewhere on the agenda).

I am still waiting for confirmation that the claim I submitted on 20th August for VAT paid in 2018/19 has been received and processed. Once I have this, I will progress to reclaim VAT for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

I will start the process of preparation for next year's budget soon, to inform a decision by Council about the Precept for 2022/23.

Communications

I have started an email distribution, using the audience list from BREDAC, and the ca. 15 residents who have signed up via our new website. This has been welcomed by a number of recipients, and I have had no negative comments regarding the use of this medium, etc. The challenge now is to build on this; to keep it going, as a weekly distribution. There are a couple of significant additional steps I intend to take:

- To contact all regular correspondents, to invite them to join the list
- To ensure that the email is sent weekly, by establishing a publishing schedule, and by encouraging contributions from community partners and residents.
- To automate a process of sending email updates to highlight news items on the website.

Playground Project

As reported elsewhere, Cllr Lea's resignation at this crucial stage of the project means that I will have to devote a significant amount of time to this project for the next 3 months at least, to avoid the risk of losing the £18.9k Section 106 funding that is available to use on the project.

Rhymes Pavilion

I have authorised a contractor to board up the toilet door, which I hope he will complete in the next few days, at a cost of £200.

I have only been able to get one electrician to quote to provide electrical safety certificate and to undertake work to address other matters in the main building and the basement. I am in the process of seeking others, but may need to seek your approval to proceed without receiving 3 quotes. I am also seeking quote for plumbing and heating work.

Governance

Disappointingly, no candidates have come forward for co-option. We have had confirmation that there was no request for an election to the post made vacant by Cllr Lea's resignation. We therefore have 9 casual vacancies, available for co-option at the next meeting.

Richard Maccabee, Parish Clerk