

Batheaston Parish Council

Minutes of a Meeting of Batheaston Parish Council is held at 7:15pm on Tuesday 28th July 2022, at the Rhymes Pavilion.

Present: Councillors Hannah Squire (Chair of Council), Wesley Hallam, Peter Lewis, Catherine McCarthy, Alexis Pavlou.

In attendance: Richard Maccabee (Clerk).

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1. Public participation regarding matters on the agenda.

1.1. Two representatives of Grow Batheaston addressed the meeting.

- 1.1.1. They began by briefly updating Council on the planned Water Festival, to take place on the football pitch on 6th August. The group of students have had over 600 replies, and are expecting up to 500 attendees, in the age range 11 to 21 years. All preparations are in place.
- 1.1.2. They then spoke in support of Item 10.1, the Grant Application to support the proposed Suffragette Exhibition in October.
- 1.1.3. They outlined that they have contacts with people who can put together an audio-visual experience, which would make the exhibition more engaging, for a wider audience.
- 1.1.4. They have already submitted a grant request to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £6,500 to cover the other plans for the day.

The Chair brought forward this item for discussion at this point in the meeting.

10.1 To approve a grant of £1500 to Grow Batheaston for the Suffragette Exhibition and related commemorations in October 2022.

- 10.1.1 Councillors expressed concern that the project is already in hand and can be delivered in time for the event in October.
- 10.1.2 It was noted that there may be a need for finances to be allocated to the project.
- 10.1.3 **Council did not approve** the application.
- 10.1.4 Cllr McCarthy will work with Grow Batheaston to co-ordinate the plans.

Cllr McCarthy

1.2. A resident addressed the meeting regarding two items on the agenda.

- 1.2.1. Regarding **Item 11. Audit Action Plan** She is concerned that the Audit Action Plan is overly optimistic with 11 of the actions due to be closed at or before the meeting of Council in September 22.
- 1.2.2. She said that she believes that Councillors will need to support the Clerk, particularly in respect of his role as Responsible Finance Officer.

1.3. On Item 13. Finance, she is concerned that the Council's reserves were significantly depleted during the last year (from £46,200 to £31,400).

1.3.1. She felt that Councillors would need to exercise tight control on finances to restore the reserves to a sustainable level, which is one year's operating costs.

1.3.2. The Chair thanked the resident for her comments and agreed that the Council needed to be cautious.

1.3.3. It was noted that disbanding the Finance Committee, which had been undertaken in the context of a very small complement of Councillors, had reduced the scrutiny of Finances.

2. Apologies were received from Cllr Peter Bryant, Sue Peachey, and Kate Skelton.

3. There were no declarations of interest from Councillors.

4. Minutes of Previous Meetings

4.1. Council approved the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 21st June 2022

VILLAGE MATTERS

5. Queens Platinum Jubilee

5.1. Council received the final summary of accounts for the party.

5.1.1. It was noted that a payment of £100 is still due to be made to the Children's Entertainer. The Clerk will add this to the accounts.

5.1.2. With that amendment to be made, **Council approved** the accounts.

6. Highways

6.1. Council received a report on matters relating to Highways from Cllr McCarthy.

6.1.1. She is pursuing the issue of speeding on the High Street and Northend and liaising with Highways staff at Bath and North East Somerset Council.

6.1.2. She has been working with Ward Councillor Sarah Warren on the issue of pavement parking on Northend, near the junction with Steway Lane.

6.1.3. She is progressing the management of the "green gates" at the end of Catherine Way with the Clerk.

6.1.4. She noted that the action from the last meeting (Item 8.2.2), to establish the need for the repair of the street light near Fairhaven Cottages, was still ongoing.

6.2. Council discussed the item to approve the replacement of the streetlight on West View Road at an estimated cost of up to £1,600.

6.2.1. Councillors noted that this is a considerable expense, as the complete lighting column will need replacing.

6.2.2. Councillors noted that other villages have implemented a “dark skies” policy, which has many advantages in addition to the financial saving.

6.2.3. **Councillors approved a motion to defer** this item to the next meeting, to allow for an assessment to be made of the requirement.

6.3. Council received the proposal to approve the procurement of Christmas Lights, and associated festivities, with a maximum budget of £3,000, from Cllr McCarthy.

6.3.1. She said that she has investigated the cost of purchasing battery-operated lights, to be installed on the lighting columns, to extend the lights to Edison Ford. She had received a quote of £2,000.

6.3.2. Councillors noted that local businesses could and perhaps should support the cost of these lights.

6.3.3. Councillors asked that this item be deferred to the September meeting, to allow for all of the plans for the Christmas festivities to be considered together.

6.3.4. Council approved the motion to defer.

7. Riverside

7.1. Council received a report on the recent meeting of the Riverside Working Group.

7.1.1. Cllr Lewis commented that the Working Group had had a good meeting on 5th July.

7.1.2. He noted that the Council had received a generous offer of a tree to replace one of the Ash Trees that had been felled recently. The Group are considering possible locations.

7.1.3. In respect of possible alternative uses of the Toilet Block, the Clerk commented that he expected the response from BANES to the Pre-application planning submission imminently. There would then be a need to confirm with BANES that any plans are acceptable within the terms of the lease for the Riverside, which would likely carry an additional cost, to be approved by Council.

8. Playground

8.1. Council considered the item to approve the proposed Terms of Reference for the Working Group to take forward the refurbishments of the Playground.

8.1.1. The Clerk explained that this should not constrain or intimidate the group; it should not interfere with the way the group operates. It is however important to allow it to act on behalf of Council and to have a delegated budget.

8.1.2. Cllr Pavlou indicated that the group planned to hold a public meeting the Playground on 17th September, which would carry a small financial cost.

8.1.3. He therefore proposed an amendment to the motion to allocate a budget of £500 to engage in public participation.

8.1.4. Council approved the amendment, and approved the amended motion

8.2. Council received a report on the progress of the next phase of refurbishments from Cllr Skelton, presented in her absence by Cllr Pavlou.

9. Batheaston Leadership Group

9.1. Council considered the item to approve the establishment of a committee to oversee improved communications with residents by all community organisations, including the Parish Council, to ensure that the “Batheaston Times” continues after its successful launch edition, and to include other communication channels.

9.1.1. Councillors noted that it was important the net cost of the Batheaston Times be reduced, either by reducing its cost of production, or by finding some form of additional funding.

9.1.2. Councillors noted that this proposal is subject to discussion with community groups under the auspices of the Batheaston Leadership Group, which might give rise to some amendments. It would therefore be necessary to return to Council for final approval.

9.1.3. Cllr Squire volunteered to be the representative for the Council, to be added to the document.

9.1.4. They asked that the Clerk make these amendments.

9.1.5. Subject to these amendments, **Council approved** the proposal.

9.2. Council approved a proposal to have a stall at the Grow Batheaston Popup Markets scheduled to be held at the Riverside Park this year.

10. Grants to Community Groups

This item was taken at the start of meeting

GOVERNANCE MATTERS

11. Audit Action Plan

11.1. Council approved a plan to address the weaknesses and other actions arising from the preparation of the Annual Governance and Audit Return.

11.1.1. Councillors noted the comments of the resident at the start of the meeting and undertook to support the Clerk in carrying out the plan.

11.1.2. Cllrs Pavlou and Hallam offered their help on the financial management tasks.

12. Human Resources Committee

12.1. Council received the draft minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5th July 2022, noting the following specific items.

12.1.1. approval was given to make overdue payments on pensions to two of the Council's staff, to a value of £2,770.

12.1.2. the Committee approved the review of all staff contracts, to bring them up to date with current legislation and best practice.

12.1.3. The Committee approved a work plan for itself, to include creation and update of HR related policies.

12.1.4. Council noted that the Committee also requires an additional member to be nominated. Cllr Squire put herself forward and was duly nominated to the Committee.

FINANCE MATTERS

13. Finance Update

13.1. Council received a report from the Clerk.

13.1.1. The report emphasised that the Council finances will be tightly constrained this year.

13.2. Council approved the payments made in the past three months.

13.3. Council noted that a submission for the refund of £2,670 in VAT paid in 2020-21 has been made.

13.3.1. The Clerk explained that the refund for 2021-22 will be made once this is paid.

14. Re-Procurement of Electricity Supply

14.1. The Clerk explained that the situation regarding electricity prices is changing rapidly, as it is for domestic supplies.

14.1.1. The motion that Council approved at its last meeting, for the re-procurement of the supply to the Streetlights had not allowed for the process to proceed, as the price had increased by more than 5% in the short period from issuing the agenda to the meeting.

14.1.2. In a similar way, he had received updated advice since issuing the agenda, and asked that Council approve an amendment to the following:

14.1.3. "The Clerk to contract with the cheapest available supplier for the Streetlights at the first opportunity after the meeting, provided that this offers better value for money than the current supply".

and

14.1.4. "The Clerk to procure a contract for the supply to the Rhymes Pavilion for 2023 onwards on the most favourable terms available in coming three months".

14.2. **Council approved** the amendment and **approved the amended motion**.

STANDING ITEMS AND REPORTS

15. Planning Applications

15.1. **Council reviewed** and did not oppose the following planning applications from Bath and North East Somerset Council. Reference Numbers:

22/02462/FUL

22/02475/FUL

22/02600/TCA

22/02621/FUL

22/02702/FUL.

15.2. **Council noted** the following decisions on planning applications have been notified by Bath and North East Somerset Council, reference numbers:

22/01295/FUL, Decision: REFUSE

22/01950/VAR, Decision: PERMIT

22/01671/VAR, Decision: PERMIT

22/01612/FUL, Decision: PERMIT

22/02101/FUL, Decision: CONSENT

15.3. Council noted that these decisions align with the recommendations of the Parish Council, with the exception of 22/02101/FUL, to which the Council objected.

15.4. Council resolved to engage with the Clifton Diocese of the Catholic Church, residents, Bath and North East Somerset Council and other parties concerning the sale of the Catholic Church site on Northend to seek to ensure that the site is used to the benefit of the community.

16. Clerk's Report

16.1. Council received a report from the Clerk.

17. Chairman's Report

17.1. Council received an oral report from the Chairman.

The meeting closed at 9:00pm

Upcoming Meetings:

Human Resources Committee, 6th September

Council Meeting, 20th September

Council meetings are open to the public, and members of the public are welcome to join and may speak by invitation

Signed by Cllr Hannah Squire, Chair of Council:

Date: