

Batheaston Parish Council

**Minutes of a Meeting of Batheaston Parish Council held
at 7:15pm on Tuesday 21st February 2023, at the Rhymes Pavilion.**

**Present: Councillors Hannah Squire (Chair of Council),
Peter Bryant, Wesley Hallam, Peter Lewis, Catherine McCarthy,
Alexis Pavlou, Sue Peachey and Kate Skelton.**

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1. Public participation regarding matters on the agenda.

1.1. Ref 14.1.3, Charmydown Planning Reference Number: [23/00429/FUL](#)

1.1.1. The architect of this planning application attended the meeting, and gave a brief presentation.

1.1.2. He conceded that some of the work that had been done previously was not as had been approved, and of a poor standard. He expressed the hope that this application would rectify some of these issues, and return the property to a state more in keeping with the environment.

1.1.3. In response to a question, he confirmed that this is a retrospective application, the third such over the past few years.

1.1.4. He said that there had been contact with Historic England regarding the Listed Building Status, and that they are content with the plans.

1.2. A near neighbour of the property spoke next.

1.2.1. She explained that living near the property had been “a nightmare” over the past 10 or more years.

1.2.2. She commented that there are a number of material inaccuracies in the application, and that there have been multiple, significant breaches of planning law and regulations in the past.

The Chair brought forward this item.

14.1.3 To review the following planning applications from Bath and North East Somerset Council:

Reference Number: [23/00429/FUL](#)

Site Location: Charmydown Barn Charmydown Lane Swainswick

Description of Proposal: Internal and external alterations and subterranean extension to existing barn complex in connection with the already approved conversion to a residential dwellinghouse. To also include reprofiling and landscaping of land surrounding the barns

14.1.3.1 Councillors expressed concern that there was considerable annoyance amongst residents, who clearly feel aggrieved that developments have continued in breach of previous applications and planning law for some 10 years or more.

14.1.3.2 They commented that Charmydown is a precious place, visible from a distance, and the development has made this less attractive.

14.1.3.3 It appears that few of these breaches have been rectified, and that this application leaves many of these changes intact. They confirmed with the Architect that the route of footpath has been altered and will not be rectified by this application.

14.1.3.4 They urged the Architect, and through him the property owner, to engage positively and sincerely with neighbours and with objectors to address their concerns.

14.1.3.5 **Council resolved** to oppose this application due to concerns that previous and current objections had been ignored and that these, and multiple breaches of planning law and constraints have not been adequately addressed in the current application. Councillors would encourage the applicants to engage far more openly and sincerely with neighbours and the wider community.

1.3. A group of residents attended to speak about Item 5.1, Rhymes Pavilion

1.3.1. One of the residents read a letter which had been previously submitted to the Council.

1.3.2. She said that the Rhymes Pavilion is known and loved by many in the village, and people feel a sense of ownership of it. They feel comfortable there.

1.3.3. It is conveniently located in the centre of the village, and easily accessible.

1.3.4. She expressed the importance of Penny's Pantry to the community. She noted that it is particularly important to some very vulnerable people in the community.

1.3.5. Residents recognised that at some point the Pavilion would need substantial refurbishment or more, and that Penny's Pantry would be displaced while this is undertaken. That would however not need to happen for some considerable time.

The Chair brought forward the agenda item.

5. Rhymes Pavilion

5.1. **To approve** a plan from the Clerk to progress the closure of the Rhymes Pavilion, and to commence planning for its refurbishment or replacement.

5.1.1. Councillors welcomed the contribution from the representatives of Batheaston Leisure Association and Penny's Pantry, and thanked them for their constructive offer to assist. Councillors were keen also to express appreciation for the work that all involved in Penny's Pantry have done for the community.

5.1.2. The building does however require a significant overhaul and should possibly be re-sited to provide better access to the Council's recreational facilities. There may never be a good time to undertake this project; it is necessary to grasp the nettle.

5.1.3. Bookings have not recovered to previous levels since the pandemic, and Penny's Pantry is now the only regular client. The net cost of running the Rhymes is £7,000 p.a., which Councillors do not feel is sustainable in the current environment.

5.1.4. Councillors were keen to emphasise that the building would not be closed immediately. There will be consultation with Penny's Pantry and others to ensure that there is no disruption, and that undue stress will be avoided for the volunteers and the users of the service.

5.1.5. They will ask that the Clerk engage with Penny's Pantry and Batheaston Leisure Association to explore how they can help in keeping the building open, as long as this gives the Council confidence that the cost to the community can be significantly reduced.

Clerk

5.2. Council approved the motion

The Chair thanked the members of the public for their attendance and contribution, and resumed the agenda at Item 2.

2. There were no apologies for absence.

3. There were no declarations of interest from Councillors.

4. Minutes of Previous Meetings

4.1. **Council approved** the minutes of the Emergency Meeting of Council held on 1st February 2023.

VILLAGE MATTERS

5. Rhymes Pavilion - Item taken earlier

6. Playground Project

6.1. **Council noted** that good progress has been made on the project.

6.1.1. A request for quotation has been issued, and responses are expected from an adequate number of suppliers to progress.

6.1.2. The Clerk commented that Cllr Skelton has arranged for the groundworks to be undertaken free-of-charge, by family members and volunteers. This means that at least £2,000 more can be spent on play equipment.

6.1.3. He confirmed that it is the intention to bring a recommendation to award the contract to the Council in March.

6.1.4. The project remains on track to complete in June 2023.

6.2. **Council approved** urgent repairs to the value of up to £1,000 to fencing and the yellow self-closing gate.

6.2.1. The Clerk confirmed that this includes the repair to the fence adjacent to the yellow self-closing gate; the fencing along the basketball court; and the replacement of the burnt sleeper on the steps. These items together cost under £500.

6.2.2. He noted however that investigation of the repair of the self-closing gate is still on-going and may unfortunately require more than remaining funds from this resolution, in which case he will seek approval from Council. He confirmed that the gate does need to self-close, within a specified time.

Clerk

7. Highways

7.1. **Council received** a report from Cllr McCarthy. She noted the following continuing items:

7.1.1. Discussions with BANES, and the Primary School, to provide a disabled parking bay near to the school, and to improve the flow of traffic at the beginning and end of the school day.

7.1.2. She will ask the Handyman to clear leaves and other debris from the pavements in that area.

7.1.3. She is meeting Cllr Sarah Warren to discuss the introduction of more double yellow lines on 2nd March, and other Councillors are invited to join her.

Cllr McCarthy

7.2. **Council noted** the correspondence from BANES and WECA regarding bus services. The Clerk commented that BANES is seeking to protect and increase funding for services such as those to Batheaston. At the moment there is no requirement for action from the Parish Council on this matter.

7.3. **Council noted** progress in the repair and upgrade of streetlights, and **considered the proposal** to replace of the Streetlight on the triangle at High Bannerdown, at a cost of approx. £1,630.

7.3.1. The Clerk commented that Volker Highways are continuing with the repair of the light on Vale View Terrace, which has proved quite complex, as the light itself, and its power supply, are quite antiquated.

7.3.2. Council discussed the replacement of the Streetlight on the triangle at High Bannerdown.

7.3.2.1. It was noted that the cost is excessive, given that this is not an area that is lit throughout.

7.3.2.2. The Clerk confirmed that there would be a cost to decommissioning the light. He would need to seek an estimate for this; previous lights have cost approx. £860 to decommission.

7.3.2.3. **Council rejected** the proposal, subject to the quote for the cost of decommissioning the light being acceptable. The Clerk undertook to seek this quote, and to bring this to the next meeting.

Clerk

8. Riverside

8.1. **Council noted** that the Working Group is leading the application for Bathing Water Designation on the Riverside.

8.1.1. This will provide the basis for monitoring, and alerting people to, any sewage discharge into the river, and will also provide a stimulus to making improvements to the access and facilities for users of the river.

9. Suffragette Memorial

9.1. **Council resolved** to pay £161 for 6 vinyl printed photographs for the Suffragette Memorial windows.

Clerk / Cllr McCarthy

10. Coronation Party

10.1. **Council resolved** to initiate planning for a party to be held on the afternoon of Sunday 7th May, at the Riverside, and to request that:

10.1.1. The Clerk arrange the necessary road closures and licences for the event,

10.1.2. Cllr Squire commence planning for the event, with the maximum budget of £1,000.

Clerk / Cllr Squire

FINANCE MATTERS

11. 2023/24 Budget

11.1. **Council approved** the transactions undertaken in January 2023.

11.2. **Council approved** a report on the creation of the budget for 2023/24

11.2.1. The Clerk noted that the costs of running the Rhymes Pavilion, and for any steps taken to close it, will need to be added, if and when these steps are known. This will come from the £30,000 fund for investment in improvement.

11.3. **Council approved** the budget for 2023/24.

11.3.1. It was noted that there is an allocation of £2,000 for the Batheaston Times, even though the Council has previously asked that its costs are covered by sponsorship and similar.

11.3.2. It was however recognised that costs have been reduced, and that gradually sponsors are being acquired, which is bringing the net costs down. The Spring Edition is likely to cost £700, which is about half the cost of some previous editions.

12. Establishment of a Charity

12.1. **Council resolved** to begin the process of establishing a charity to support the Council in fundraising and other operations.

12.1.1. Cllr Bryant volunteered to support the Clerk in this initiative.

Cllr Bryant / Clerk

13. Finance Operations Matters

13.1. **Council resolved** to instruct the Clerk to commission tree surgery as recommended in the report provided by BANES' Tree Experts, up to a cost of £1,200.

13.1.1. The Clerk indicated that he is awaiting a quote from one supplier and will then award the contract.

Clerk

13.2. **Council approved** the award of the contract to cut the grass on the Council's land for 2023.

13.2.1. The Clerk noted that he would seek competitive quotes for this service for the 2024 season.

Clerk

13.3. **Council noted** that all contracts for supply of electricity have been re-procured in the past few months, and thanked the Clerk for his perseverance in doing so.

STANDING ITEMS AND REPORTS

14. Planning Applications

14.1. **Council reviewed** the following planning applications from Bath and North East Somerset Council, and **resolved not to oppose them**:

14.1.1. Reference Number: [23/00246/LBA](#)

14.1.2. Reference Number: [23/00244/FUL](#)

14.1.4. Reference Number: [23/00516/FUL](#)

14.1.5. Reference Number: [23/00467/FUL](#)

Item 14.1.3 had been taken earlier in the meeting.

15. Clerk's Report

15.1. **To receive** a report from the Clerk, including these items:

15.1.1. The Clerk reminded Councillors of the election to the Council, on 4th May 2023. He indicated that he will support any resident who is considering standing.

15.1.2. He highlighted that there will be a period, from 21st March until the elections, during which there will be restrictions on the communication that the Council, and Councillors, make. Further guidance will follow.

15.1.3. He noted the update on the outstanding actions in the "Audit Action Plan".

15.2. **Council approved** the plans to install a bench to commemorate a resident of the Parish.

15.2.1. The Clerk indicated that he would contact the person who has offered to do so, and agree an arrangement whereby the Council's foreseeable costs for the next 10 years are covered.

Clerk

16. Chairman's Report

16.1. The Chairman also highlighted the litter pick by a young resident in aid of the victims of the recent earthquake in Turkey and Syria, and commended her initiative. They asked the Clerk to pass on their thanks to her.

Clerk

16.2. She thanked Councillors for their attendance and for the progress that is being made on a number of important initiatives.

The meeting closed at 9:36pm

Forthcoming Meetings:

Council Meeting, 21st March 2023

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: