

## **Batheaston Parish Council**

**Minutes of a Meeting of Batheaston Parish Council  
held at 7:15pm on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at the Rhymes Pavilion.  
Present: Councillors Hannah Squire (Chair of Council),  
Peter Bryant, Arif Butt, Peter Lewis, Alexis Pavlou,  
Sue Peachey, and Kate Skelton.**

### **PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

1. **Council accepted** apologies for absence from Cllr Gray and McCarthy
2. **Council received** a declaration of interest from Councillor Lewis regarding Item 16.1.1, due to the close proximity of this to his house.
  - 2.1. He sought a dispensation to participate in the discussion and to vote on it, as he believed that he had detailed understanding of the proposal and was confident that he could act impartially, in the interest of the community.
  - 2.2. **Council approved** the dispensation.
3. **Public participation** regarding matters on the agenda.
  - 3.1. Regarding Item 11.1 – parking restrictions (double yellow lines) to be imposed on the corner of Seven Acres Lane and Prospect Gardens
    - 3.1.1. Residents of Prospect Gardens spoke in support of the proposal.
    - 3.1.2. They recognised that parking is difficult in the surrounding area, and are sympathetic about the problems that residents face; they were hoping to be reasonable.
    - 3.1.3. They referred however to difficulties in the past of access for emergency and delivery vehicles due to the parked cars on Prospect Gardens and the entrance to it. Often cars are parked in ways which contravene regulations.
    - 3.1.4. Residents spoke to oppose, noting that parking is very difficult, and that a number of houses in the area have no off-street parking option.
    - 3.1.5. During discussion there was some agreement reached, to allow parking around the bend to the extend of the fence.
    - 3.1.6. Cllr Squire brought forward the Item forward.

#### **11.1 Highways**

**To approve** a proposal to Bath and North East Somerset Council for parking restrictions (double yellow lines) to be imposed on the corner of Seven Acres Lane and Prospect Gardens (A)  
Expecting PP on this: the 2 papers from PG residents, and the opposing viewpoint.

- 11.1.1 Councillors noted the positive spirit in which the discussion amongst the residents had been conducted, and that there

seemed a strong possibility that a mutually acceptable compromise could be reached.

11.1.2 The representatives of the residents of Prospect Gardens and those of nearby residents confirmed this to be the case and agreed that they would meet and seek agreement to be documented and presented to a future meeting of Council.

**11.1.3 Council deferred** the item, to allow this to take place.

3.2. Regarding Item 16.1.1 Planning Application 23/04772/FUL; the land Between 131 And 153 High Street.

- 3.2.1. A neighbour spoke to highlight some questions, which she aims to resolve with Planning Officers. She commented that she does not wish to thwart the plans, but is concerned about the proximity of some of the proposed structures to her boundary.
- 3.2.2. Comments were made about the difficult access to the plot from the main road, including for disabled visitors, and the likelihood that clients of the proposed services will drive and park on the nearby roads, exacerbating the current problems.
- 3.2.3. The property owner commented that they are seeking to use the land more productively, providing a facility which may be unique in UK.
- 3.2.4. Item brought forward:

**16.1.1 To review** the planning application from Bath and North East Somerset Council, Reference Number: [23/04772/FUL](#)  
Site Location: Land Between 131 And 153 High Street Bathaston  
Description of Proposal: Change of use from agricultural land to a counselling and therapy use (Class E) including the erection of 2 No. Yurts, an Earth Closet, and drainage and landscaping associated works.

16.1.1.1 Councillors noted the concerns about the increase of parking on the High Street and other surrounding streets; the change of use to commercial, and the possibility that this could at some future point allow a less desirable activity; and the visual impact of the proposals, in respect of the possible height of the structures.

16.1.1.2 **Council approved** a submission as follows: The Council does not oppose the application, in spite of concerns about exacerbating parking problems in the vicinity; the possibility that the change of use would allow a less desirable activity in the future; and the visual impact of structures on the field.

**Clerk**

#### **4. Minutes of Previous Meetings**

4.1. **Council approved** the minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

5. **Council noted** progress on actions from previous meetings.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### 6. Human Resources Committee

- 6.1. **Council received** a report from the Human Resources Committee held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024 from Cllr Pavlou, the Chair of the Committee.
  - 6.1.1. He noted that contracts were now in place for all staff.
  - 6.1.2. He stated that he would carry out the performance review for the clerk and would solicit feedback from other Councillors to support this. The Clerk would then carry out reviews for the 3 remaining members of staff.

### 7. Finance Committee

- 7.1. **Council received** a report from the Finance Committee held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024, from Cllr Pavlou, the Chair of the Committee.
  - 7.1.1. **Council approved** a change to the current list of Councillors authorised to approve bank transactions to be the members of the Finance Committee.

Clerk

## BUDGET AND PRECEPT FOR 2024-25

8. **Council received** a report from the Clerk summarising the financial position at the end of the third quarter 2023-24, the expected position at the end of the financial year (31<sup>st</sup> March 2024), and the projection forward to 2024-25.
  - 8.1. The Clerk noted that much of the increase in the Precept from the previous year (£50,000) had been required to address the shortfall in funding.
  - 8.2. The forecast for the current year is a surplus of approximately £23,500. This will recover the Councils reserves to £55,000, which is approximately the target amount (half of annual Precept).
9. **Council received** a report from the Finance Committee outlining the range of options for the Precept and the considerations of each for the Budget.
  - 9.1. The Clerk explained the basis for proposal put forward, in which Councillors were asked to determine the changes to budget as set out below.
  - 9.2. Councillors noted the straitened financial circumstances of many residents, and the need therefore for the Council to seek to minimise increases.
  - 9.3. It was noted however that the Precept is still relatively small, and potential increases amount to only £1-£2 / month for a Band D household.
  - 9.4. Furthermore, there is great potential to deliver much improved services for the community by the investment in projects that the Council has in mind.
  - 9.5. It was resolved that the budget would be based on:

- 9.5.1. the basis that Inflation next year will be 3%;
  - 9.5.2. that in the aggregate there is no scope for saving; the Finance Committee will pursue opportunities identified for saving but these are expected to be required to fund additional resources;
  - 9.5.3. A fund of £10,000 would be allocated for Community Grants, which will be allocated according to tighter criteria under a new policy to be developed by Finance Committee;
  - 9.5.4. £60,000 would be set aside for projects, to provide seed funding and professional assistance for projects and to complement or match external funds.
- 9.6. Council noted that the reserve policy perversely links the target reserve to the Precept, rather than to expenditure, and agreed that this should be changed. They requested that the Finance Committee develop a new reserve policy as soon as reasonably practical.
- 9.7. Councillors agreed that the Precept required should aim for close to break-even for the year.
- 10. The Council resolved** that the Precept for 2024-25 will be set at £124,575, representing a 18.35% increase on this year's figure.
- 10.1. The Clerk will duly submit this figure to Bath and North East Somerset Council.

**Clerk**

## **COMMUNITY MATTERS**

### **11. Highways**

- 11.1. Item Taken Earlier.
- 11.2. **Council approved** a budget of up to £750 for the decommissioning of the streetlight near to Fairhaven Cottages, leaving the lower ornate column in place, marking the footpath, but removing the broken upper section.
- 11.2.1. The Clerk commented that there had been full consultation with and agreement from residents, with help from Ward Councillor Sarah Warren, for which he recorded thanks.
- 11.3. **Council considered** a response to B&NES for Bannerdown Road regarding the proposed Traffic Management measures to reduce speeds and encourage downhill motorists to give-way to uphill motorists.
- 11.3.1. **Council resolved** to submit a response, as follows:  
"The Council fully supports this proposal, having received many complaints and comments from residents about speeding vehicles, with much concern about the dangers to drivers and riders, and pedestrians."

**Clerk**

Clerk

## 12. Rhymes Pavilion

12.1. **Council received** a brief update from Cllr Squire regarding the Working Group on consultation with the community about the future of the Rhymes Pavilion.

12.1.1. She will arrange a meeting as soon as possible to progress the work.

Cllr Squire

## GOVERNANCE MATTERS

### 13. Establish a Working Group for Highways, Transport and Planning

13.1. **Council approved** a Terms of Reference for a new Working Group to cover all aspects of Highways, Transport and Planning that fall under the Council's remit.

13.2. **Council nominated** Councillor McCarthy to lead the Working Group.

13.2.1. Councillors Butt and Lewis volunteered to join the Group.

### 14. Establish a Working Group for Community and Communications

14.1. **Council approved** a Terms of Reference for a new Working Group to oversee the relationships with the residents, community groups and all aspects of communications by the Council.

14.2. **Council nominated** Councillor Skelton to lead the Working Group.

14.2.1. Councillor Bryant volunteered to join the Group.

### 15. Streetvotes Consultation

15.1. **Council considered** a response to the Government Consultation regarding Planning Permission.

15.2. **Council resolved** that the Clerk should submit a response welcoming the intent of the change, but noting that it would be important for Local Councils to have an input, particularly regarding the definition of the "street" [the drawing up of the list of neighbouring properties to be consulted on a proposal]

Clerk

## STANDING ITEMS AND REPORTS

### 16. Planning Applications

16.1. **Council reviewed** the following planning applications from Bath and North East Somerset Council:

16.1.1. Reference Number: 23/04772/FUL – Item taken earlier

**Council resolved** not to oppose:

16.1.2. Reference Number: 23/04809/TPO

16.1.3. Reference Number: 23/04750/FUL

16.1.4. Reference Number: 23/04590/TPO

16.2. **Council noted** that the following decision which has been notified by Bath and North East Somerset Council since the last meeting:

16.2.1. Reference Number: 23/04350/TCA Decision: No Objection

16.2.2. Application Number: 23/04395/TCA Decision: No Objection

16.2.3. **Council noted** that these accord with the view of the Parish Council, which were not to oppose.

## 17. Clerk's Report

17.1. **Council received** a report from the Clerk.

17.1.1. The Clerk commented that supporting the series of meetings (6 formal meetings in just over 5 working weeks) and preparing the budget and Precept had meant he had little time for other items, which he now hopes to progress.

## 18. Chair's Report

18.1. Cllr Squire thanked Councillors for their time and contributions in a busy and productive meeting.

**Meeting closed at 9:17pm**

**Forthcoming Meetings:**

Council Meeting, 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024

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