

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Batheaston Parish Council**  
**held at 7:15pm on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2019 in the Rhymes Pavilion**

**Attendance: Councillors: Emily Wright (chair), Derek Greener and Catherine McCarthy, Sarah Orme (clerk)**

**Eight members of the public attended.**

Refreshments were served.

Councillors and clerk introduced themselves.

**Emily Wright introduced the current work of the council: -**

Emily acknowledged the progress and amazing work of volunteers in developing the Riverside area.

Neighbourhood plan – village survey of over 300 responses. We have taken this information into the policies we would like to promote for any developments within the village boundary. Next is for this to go to B&NES.

Christmas Lights last December was the biggest event. Quite a complex operation to ensure we made it value for money, a community event and stay in line with Health and Safety. We have learnt from this session and hope to ensure an even bigger turnout this year.

Parish Council now having two meetings per month for faster decision making. We are seeking to communicate with the community through our website, social media sites, noticeboards and through working with other village organisations.

In the future, and following the success of the Riverside project, we want to focus on how we can improve the recreational facilities in the village – The Rhymes, the playing field and playground. We don't know what that looks like yet – but we will be looking for ideas and we're connecting with the school and B&NES to make the most for all our residents

Through the last election period, we lost some of our vital long-standing councillors. We really want to attract more people to join who can bring their skills and commitment to our village.

**Working groups provide a less formal opportunity to get involved.**

- o Handling HIGHWAYS issues
- o Developing our RIVERSIDE area
- o Drafting our NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
- o Maintaining and improving our PLAY and Rhymes facilities
- o Developing our mini SUFFRAGETTE museum in the old phone box
- o Planning and delivering the XMAS LIGHTS

You can get involved by contacting Sarah

**The new clerk, Sarah,** praised the hard work of our volunteer councillors and presented a brief overview of the draft, unaudited accounts. There will be a period for public viewing of all accounts during the audit process in the summer.

**Derek Greener introduced the Riverside Working Group and the work on the Secret Garden as follows: -**

“I am a member of the Riverside working group and before the presentation on the secret garden project, I would like to clarify the Parish council’s involvement with the Riverside Area.

The previous Parish council arranged for the Community asset Transfer (CAT) of Batheaston Gardens, Car Park and Toilet block from BANES to the BPC, however, BANES still remain the Landlord.

This area is generally referred to as the Riverside Area which includes the Secret Garden.

To help manage this important asset the BPC set up a Riverside working group to make plans/recommendations to the full council.

The secret garden already has a group of volunteers known as (Batheaston garden group) which to date have spent hundreds of hours updating and maintaining the secret garden, The RWG now comprises of 4 councillors and 4 volunteers, 2 of which are from the BGG. Over the months this group has established a new vision plan for the Secret garden which was agreed at the last BPC meeting and funds have been allocated.

Many people have been involved with this project over the years, but I would like to mention two RWG members, Councillor Susanne Hagen and Catherine Gregory of the Garden Group. Susanne, on behalf of the BPC obtained a £10,000 grant for this project and has worked very closely with Catherine who has been our champion and driving force on this project.

I would now like to hand over to her for a presentation on the secret garden plan.”

**Catherine Gregory gave a fascinating presentation on the history of the Secret Garden and Riverside area**, with some interesting historic photos and also pictures of the garden today. She detailed the great work that has been carried out by the Garden Group over the last months, with many hundreds of volunteer hours contributed. She explained the necessity of improving the pathways in the garden and outlined the accessible pathways project that will be starting in July.

Several residents shared reminiscences about the history of the Secret Garden.

**Emily thanked everyone for attending and invited questions and comments.**

**Pam Burcombe thanked the council for their financial support which enables 48 young people to attend the youth club.**

**During the evening the following issues were raised by residents who attended: -**

Some residents don’t have computers and it’s important that we display information on noticeboards. They would like a noticeboard at the bus stop. The council doesn’t own a noticeboard at the bus stop. It was suggested that we post council notices on the bus stop itself. We are unsure of permission would be granted for this.

Some people don’t like Facebook. Emily explained that we use a variety of methods to communicate.

It would be a major improvement in communications with the residents if the working groups produced basic notes for the public. The clerk explained that it is already difficult to fit all of our legally required documents on the noticeboards, as well as being time consuming to do. It was agreed that the website would at least be a start for working group transparency. The clerk does not

attend working groups as her hours don't allow this, and sometimes there is nobody present able to take minutes. Perhaps the last 10 minutes of each working group could be spent jointly recalling and recording the important points, recommendations and actions from the meeting. Otherwise the first that residents hear of working group matters can sometimes be when a recommendation appears on the council agenda. Emily has produced a draft one-page format for notes from working groups. When we get our new website working, which will be after the audit, these can be put online.

It would also be good if the meetings of working groups were better advertised.

Councillors updated the residents present on the different working groups and their function. The clerk explained that we have moved away from having many different committees to try to increase efficiency since running committees requires much more bureaucracy, and there's a danger of not getting anything done.

Residents also raised concerns about people riding bikes in the Secret Garden, although this has not been seen recently. However, there are issues with people letting their dogs off the lead and not clearing up after them, which is dangerous as small children play in the Secret Garden.

Residents raised complaints about the parking issues on the Estate. The recent survey showed that many households own multiple cars, even as many as four. There simply isn't enough space for them all to park. Also some people do not park efficiently or tidily. This has contributed to the loss of bus routes through the Estate.

A complaint was also raised about overgrowing vegetation and potholes. These issues can be reported on the B&NES Fix My Street website. Councillor Catherine McCarthy agreed to report the overgrowing vegetation and an area of potholes to B&NES as highways coordinator. Catherine also volunteered to talk to Rae Mepham about the plans, if any, of Crossman Homes and whether they are going to make good their site.

*All members of the public who can access the Internet can also use this service to report problems. The link is <https://fix.bathnes.gov.uk/>.*

*Alternatively please call B&NES on 01225 394041 for any highways issues.*

*Signed.....*

*Date.....*