

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Electors - Batheaston

held at 7:30pm on Wednesday 24th March 2021

This meeting was conducted online using Zoom, to comply with the Covid-19 restrictions in place at the time.

The meeting was chaired by **Parish Council Chair, Cllr Hannah Squire**, and attended by the following Parish Councillors: Derek Greener, Alison James, James Jeffery, Andrew Lea, Tamsin May, Catherine McCarthy, Alexis Pavlou, Sue Peachey.

Approximately 90 people others joined the meeting, up to the limit of 100 allowed for the Parish Council's Zoom licence.

The meeting was organised and minuted by Richard Maccabee, Parish Clerk.

1. Introduction and Welcome
 - 1.1. Hannah Squire welcomed everyone to the meeting, explained the objective of the meeting, and how she hoped to chair such a large online meeting in a way which would be inclusive and productive.
 - 1.2. She explained the current situation of the Parish Council, inviting people to come forward to be Councillors as there were currently vacancies.
2. Approval of the draft minutes of the Annual Meeting of 2019.
 - 2.1. The Chair noted that there had been no Annual Meeting in 2020 due to the lockdown
 - 2.2. The minutes of the meeting of 24th May 2019 were approved.
3. "Resident's Feedback" – a presentation by a resident
 - 3.1. The Chair introduced this item, noting that this item will include a motion to 'dissolve Batheaston Parish Council immediately and pass all control of Parish Council duties to BANES'.
 - 3.1.1. The resident outlined several concerns, around lack of progress regarding:
 - 3.1.2. The Riverside Car Park
 - 3.1.3. The Playground, which is in a very poor state of repair, and for which Section 106 funding has been available for many years
 - 3.1.4. The failure to complete and approve the Neighbourhood Plan
 - 3.1.5. She contrasted this with focus on a "Green Corridor", with a meeting conducted "in secret"
 - 3.1.6. She also outlined concerns about Leadership Behaviours, outlining concerns regarding the behaviours in a number of interactions.
 - 3.1.7. These had led Grow Batheaston to submit a report to the Parish Council regarding their difficulties in working with them.

- 3.2. She then handed over to other residents who gave a presentation summarising concerns about the Parish Council.
 - 3.2.1. This included reference to the Nolan Principles of Public Life (available [here](#))
 - 3.2.2. The lack of alignment of the Council with residents' "wants and needs"
 - 3.2.3. Governance issues such as the dissolution of Working Groups.
 - 3.2.4. The presentation concluded with a set of requests, to restore governance to that of 2019, re-establishing working groups, and training of both Councillors and the Clerk.
 - 3.2.5. In conclusion, the request for the Council to be dissolved was withdrawn as this was not seen as productive, but the Council was asked to "step up".
- 3.3. The Chair asked Cllr Pavlou to respond to some of the points made.
 - 3.3.1. He pointed out that Councillors give their time without payment, and that he had not seen the presentation before the meeting.
 - 3.3.2. He made a few points by way of immediate response, concluding with the request for any and all residents to work collaboratively with Council.
- 3.4. The Chair opened the floor for other comments.
 - 3.4.1. A resident welcomed the response and reinforced the importance of training and questions of integrity. He was concerned about some of the behaviour amongst teenagers, for whom play and sports facilities are inadequate. He is passionate about the role of sport for the young.
 - 3.4.2. Other residents spoke in support of the Parish Councillors, for the most part recognising that there is undoubtedly more that can be done, but emphasising how difficult the role of Councillors, and that the best way forward will be for everyone to support them.
4. Batheaston Parish Council Web Site – an item submitted by a resident
 - 4.1. A resident introduced the item.
 - 4.1.1. He outlined the background to his involvement in setting up the new website, until his departure in the summer of 2020.
 - 4.1.2. He indicated that since he left, the Council had made no progress to establish the website fully and is not yet legally compliant.
 - 4.1.3. He requested that the current Parish Council reassign responsibility for the website.
 - 4.2. Cllr May responded that she accepted that more work needs to be done and offered to discuss the details with the resident.
 - 4.3. The meeting voted on the motion that "this meeting has no confidence in the ability of the Batheaston Parish Council councillors to maintain the council web site, including the Bredac facility, following the takeover of content maintenance by the BPC Comms Group in September 2020".
 - 4.3.1. The motion was defeated.
5. BPC Standing Orders and other Policies – an item submitted by a resident.
 - 5.1. He expressed concerns that the Council's policies are incomplete and inconsistent, and in some cases do not conform with current legislation, and that this should be remedied as soon as possible, preferably by adopting model versions available from sector bodies.
 - 5.2. He recommended that new Standing Orders include provision for Working Groups.

6. The impact of the Local Government Act 1972 Section 83/4 on the validity of election of councillors via co-option, following the introduction of a new Co-option policy in Summer 2020 – an item submitted by a resident
 - 6.1. He indicated that the policy that had been in place since mid-2020 was not valid, and that co-option of Councillors under this policy have not been valid.
 - 6.2. He has raised his concerns with the Council but has not had an adequate response.

7. Application and Implication of the Nolan principles to the actions of the BPC Councillors – an item submitted by a resident.
 - 7.1. He reiterated the concerns previously expressed about the lack of adherence to these principles, expressing his view that in some cases this occurred in spite of training.

8. Village Green Report to Council - closed session - validity of closure to the Public – an item submitted by a resident.
 - 8.1. He outlined his concerns that closing this session was not valid.

9. Any other business
 - 9.1. There were comments from other residents:
 - 9.1.1. A resident said that he has contacted the Council on several occasions and had very positive interactions on all occasions.
 - 9.1.2. On the other hand, a resident had not received replies to his queries.
 - 9.1.3. Another resident expressed concerns that little was done for young people.
 - 9.1.4. Another encouraged the Council to tap the significant reserves of skills and expertise that exist in the Village
 - 9.1.5. Another resident, who introduced herself as a recent Councillor, put the concerns in context: that the Parish Council has experienced problems for a number of years, and that nearly everyone has contributed to “factionalism”. She encouraged everyone to listen more, and to work to collaborate positively and respectfully.
 - 9.1.6. Another outlined the very many positive initiatives in the Village.
 - 9.1.7. Finally, a resident commended the way that Cllr Squire had chaired the meeting and expressed the desire that the energy demonstrated in this meeting, especially to include services for young people.
He thanked everyone for giving up so much of their time un-paid.

10. Meeting Close and Next Steps
 - 10.1. Cllr Squire indicated that the Parish Council would consider all the points made and provide a formal response as soon as possible.

To be approved at the next Annual Meeting of Electors.

Signed by the Chair of that meeting

Date