Batheaston Parish Council – Council Meeting 18th June 2024
Clerk's Report

Summary

I am learning that May and June are peak times for my workload, and will look at ways to spread the load in future years. This might involve brining forward the Annual Village Meeting to March- which is the earliest it can be held, and which might beneficial, in providing a chance to preview parties, fetes, and other summer.

The submission of the AGAR return after this meeting will be the penultimate "set piece" of this period, with only the Summer Party to go (see below). I look forward then to catching up on other tasks.

Year-End, Budget Preparation and "AGAR": The final stage for the "**Annual Governance and Accountability Return"** (AGAR) is elsewhere on the agenda. This is a detailed and slightly laborious process, but I am finding ways to streamline it. I am pleased to say that the end result is positive – a further improvement on previous years – with fewer concerns raised by the Internal Auditor.

If Council approve it tonight, I will publish it, and open the period for the public to inspect records. I will turn my attention to this year, operating finances more strictly to the budget, more efficiently. I will also be able to reclaim VAT paid last year, approximately £9,000.

Rhymes Pavilion: With the considerable assistance of a group of residents involved in Penny's Pantry, we are nearing the end of the tasks required to fully re-open the building. A fire inspection was undertaken earlier this month, and an electrical safety inspection is booked for 25th June. This will also include replacement of the wall heater in the kitchen and the hot water supply for the ground floor. My current expectation is that total cost of the actions taken will fall within the £3,000 allocation made by Council.

I am expecting the plans from the two students from University of West of England this week, giving their ideas to help to develop plans for the next generation of the building.

Summer Party: I have submitted the Event and Road Closure applications and am awaiting confirmation that these are approved. If so, I will then speak to our insurers, submit the alcohol licence and order the road closure signage. As part of the Event Application, I created detailed plans for the event itself, with documents covering ambulance access, looking after children, etc.

I then need to pick up other projects: **Elmhurst Growing Spaces; Communications,** including procuring and installing new noticeboards; reinvigorating the use of the email updates; and updating the website to reflect new Working and Project Groups etc (and subsequently to make improvements to its structure and content); asset register and risk review (as set out in the plan approved by Finance Committee); overhauling HR documentation.

Richard Maccabee
Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer
18th June 2024