

Notes of the Annual Village Meeting held in St Johns Church Hall on Tuesday 3rd May 2011

Present: Cllrs D Lavington, J Beresford-Smith, P Blanking, K Eardley, S Fremantle, J Heffer, M Johns,
D Robins, M Tabb, V Trenchard, G Batt, M Veal

Apols: Cllrs L Brass, A Creed, K Hawkins, V Pecchia

Attending: 30 members of the Public i.e. total attendance = 42

Cllr D Lavington (Chairman) welcomed all residents to this Annual Meeting, and confirmed that everybody had received copies of the Annual Report.

The framework of this Meeting was outlined and commenced with a Review/Questions on the Report.

The Annual Report is a legal requirement, as is this Meeting, so that all residents have an opportunity to query any actions of the Parish Council (BPC).

Annual Report

(a) Councillor Elections. Despite vigorous canvassing only 14 nominations received for the 15 Councillor positions so all nominees are appointed and need to be formally recognised when they all sign their "Acceptance" forms on Tuesday 24th May 2011.

The Meeting was reminded that the Elections this Thursday 5th May are to select 3 District Councillors and also vote on the Referendum.

It is regretted that Parish Councillor nomination papers were only issued 22nd March – for completion by 4th April. An improvement in this timing.

(b) The Council Precept Tax for this next year was reduced by almost 19%. Reserves stand at over £76,000.

(c) Charmy Down Project There were no costs incurred in the last 2 years – but B&NES has mentioned it in their BTP Transport Package.

The VeracityBath (VCB) Organisation was established to 'fight' the BTP proposal to site a Park & ride on the Bathampton Meadows. Batheaston has seats on the VCB Board and the battle continues. Much depends on this week's elections for District Councillors and control of the B&NES Cabinet.

(d) 16 Street Lights Last year's proposed expenditure of £20,000 for renovation was cancelled because B&NES could not honour its proposal to adopt them after improvements.

(e) Traffic Calming A resident queried the value of the measures. Not designed by the BPC but required because Police insist on physical measures before agreeing to legal reduction in speed limits.

This requirement might change with proposed Government legislation.

(f) River Avon Footpath. B&NES has now agreed to minimal repairs to re-open the footpath. But are actively investigating the provision of a Footbridge/Cycleway across the River. The West of England Partnership is pursuing a £5 million grant to provide a Cycle Footpath all the way from the Bath Spa University to Batheaston.

(g) Youth Club. Last year B&NES dropped the £16000 investment in our Youth Club (together with all other rural Youth clubs) so that only £650,000 remained for the 2 x Youth Clubs in Bath.

There was no consultation and the Parish Council continues to fight this closure – which occurred on 24th March.

But the BPC will continue with its £8000 annual donation and the Youth Club intends to open at the end of May – for 2 x nights only.

Refreshments were now served.

Replacement Village Hall

(h) Ms Carole Bond – Village Hall Trust chairman) presented an update on the new Hall, after generous tributes to her predecessor Graham Richardson.

1. During last year a number of consultation exercises were completed to determine what residents required in a new Hall.
2. Meetings held for residents with the architects – White Design Associates – who presented 'concept' outlines, showing a new Hall replacing the existing Church Hall.
3. The architects has studied some 12 potential sites in the Village and accepted that the Vision Plan's wishes (by 50% of correspondents) were perhaps the correct site.
4. The building must be multi-use and some 66% of the proposed space is "lettable". Only 9% is corridor space.
5. A Lottery Grant bid in 2007 was unsuccessful, but a bequest - in 2009 kick-started renewed interest.
6. The home of Ms Patsy Townsend has now been sold and some £440,000 is now banked.
7. A total spend of £750,000 is programmed so another Lottery Bid is to be progressed.
8. Various fund-raising events are planned eg Cream Teas, Encore's "Pizzaz" etc.
9. Major Trusts, National companies etc. are also to be pursued.
10. The Replacement Hall will attract more parking and spaces along the School Lane walling are proposed.

11. A planning application has just been approved for 12 new parking spaces on land besides the Methodist Hall and some £25,000 will be required.
12. The Trust will hold an AGM soon – in the Summer.

Ms Bond was thanked for her presentation, and answers to queries, and the audience endorsed these thanks with applause.

School Alterations – Ms Sarah Webber

- (j) 14. The Primary has over 220 pupils and is oversubscribed. The OFSTED Inspection last October found the results “excellent” and School is in the top 8% nationally
15. A leaflet showing the stages in the provision of the new School Hall, Classrooms and “Meadows” area was issued.
16. Build of the new Hall started in September 2010 and, despite the very poor Winter, construction is only running one week late – at this time.
17. The “Meadow” is being developed as outdoor classrooms and much volunteer work has converted this “abandoned” allotment land.
18. Again volunteers are sought to commence the Straw-Bale House, which is being laid down on a bed of ‘packed’ tyres soon. This building is for the whole Community and will even have an earthen toilet.
19. Whilst our local builders are on site the old buildings should see new flooring and some re-roofing.
20. The entire {Project had a satisfactory start because the BPC and BLA provided the ‘construction site’. Many thanks.

Ms Webber was thanked for her exposition and, again, the audience warmly appreciated the information.

The Meeting closed at 9.30pm, but many groups took the opportunity to converse