

From the Chairman – Cllr David Lavington.....

**On behalf of the Parish Council may I wish you all
A Very Prosperous and Peaceful New Year**

I would also like to thank all my fellow councillors, who are unpaid, and for our staff, for their commitment and hard work for the Council over the last twelve months.

Councillor Moves

Liz Kingsley has moved from the Village and has therefore resigned from the Council. We thank her for all her work and wish her well in the future.

Richard Clist, from Bailbrook Lane has become our new Councillor.

Mike Willard has been elected as Chair of Highways Footpaths and Lighting.

Bath Transport Package and Bathampton Meadows

The Government office of the South West has decided not to hold a public enquiry into the above, stating that it is a local matter to be decided by B&NES. In spite of the fact that thousands have objected to the scheme, including both our local MPs Dan Norris (Meadows P&R) and Don Foster (Newbridge P&R).

This is disappointing, however the battle continues on several fronts.

(a) We are questioning this decision with the Department for Communities and Local Government. S0SCLG)

(b) We are questioning the validity and benefits of the whole Business Case with the Department for Transport, who would supply the main source of funding.

(c) We have initiated a Judicial Review summons – a judge will ascertain the validity of B&NES actions and whether The Secretary of State should have initiated a Public Inquiry

Vision Plan

Various aspects of the above, are now being considered by the three sub committees of the Council, to decide what is achievable in the short term.

In addition to look at viability and costs and to try to set priorities for the next 5/10 years.

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS - December 2009

David Lavington	Chairman	1 Wayfield Gardens	BA1 7ED	858744
Judith Beresford-Smith		30 High Bannerdown	BA1 7JZ	859270
Pam Blanking		'Summerhill', 45 Morris Lane	BA1 7PS	858728
Lawrence Brass		298 High Street	BA1 7RA	852222
Richard Clist		48 Bailbrook Lane	BA1 7AN	
Alison Creed		1 Coronation Cottages	BA1 7DZ	0797 034809
Kathryn Eardley		106 Northend	BA1 7HA	859055
Sydney Fremantle Ch GPC		'Hill Lodge' Northend	BA1 8EN	852847
Kevin Hawkins		5 Barnfield Way	BA1 7PW	858389
Margaret Johns		3 Catherine Way	BA1 7NY	859515
Peter Martins (Co-opt to HFL)		17 Northend	BA1 7EE	858406
Mike Willard		61 Northend	BA1 7EG	851153
Vito Pecchia		104 Northend	BA1 7HA	852226
David Robins Ch + PEC		'Woodsome', Bannerdown Rd	BA1 8EG	858036
Chris Routh (Co-opt to PEC)		Fairhaven Coach House, Northend		07957260015
Veronica Trenchard		203 London Road East	BA1 7NB	852155
Alan Wright		15 Warleigh Drive	BA1 7PT	858817

Mike Townley	(Clerk)	'Bailrigg', 9 Eagle Park	BA1 7HS	852593
Marc Plenty	(Handyman)	37 Morris Lane	BA1 7PR	
Cyril Coxson	(Handyman)	18 Catherine Way	BA1 7NY	
Justin Quintin	(Handyman)	19 Uphill Drive, Larkhall	BA1 6PB	
Greg Vere	(BLA Warden)	86 Northend	BA1 7ES	
Michael hunt	(Gardening)	"Downleaze", Fosse Lane	BA1 7JT	

B&NES Forward Planning

Consequent on High Court challenges to the Regional Spatial Strategies for the East and South East of England progress on the RSS for the South West is delayed. At the local level, however, B&NES's Core Strategy Spatial Options document is on public deposit until 11 December. Although we are responding on a variety of issues in the interest of the village as a whole, anyone may make a representation. Note that you are not restricted solely to commenting on B&NES's own preferred solutions.

B&NES has published a much-needed Supplementary Planning Document on house extensions in the Green Belt. After discussion with ourselves the extension of Starfall Farm has been permitted.

Vision Plan Report

In response to the recommendations of the Batheaston Vision Plan we are looking to the early implementation of selected supportable and affordable developments.

Colerne Storage

In view of the problems of HGV traffic on Bannerdown Road we have made strong representations to Wiltshire County Council against a proposed additional storage hangar at Colerne airfield.

B&NES's decision on the proposed housing development at the bottom of Bannerdown Road,

noted in the last Bulletin, is still awaited. We have requested an explanation from B&NES of the general highly variable time-lags in determining applications for planning permission. Nevertheless, permission has been given for the conversion of the White Hart to 4 houses.

Housing Developments

We have noticed that the tendency to extend existing houses is now becoming popular in the Barnfield area. In view of changes in the rules regarding planning permission for domestic development you are strongly advised to consult B&NES about contemplated extensions or new accesses and on-site parking. Changes include the requirement that new driveways and open parking areas must now be constructed of permeable materials.

Planning Infringements

We have asked B&NES's now operative enforcement team to investigate various infringements of planning control that have been brought to our notice.

Gardens Security

On the environment front we are investigating enhanced security in the car park/Batheaston Garden. We are always interested to know where you would like additional roadside seating and also to learn of gifts or bequests to provide it.

Cllr Sydney Fremantle – Chair General Purposes Committee....

School Hall: The Government has agreed to finance a new Hall for the school. Construction should start around Easter next year. It is government policy that, to the extent possible, school halls should also cater for the needs of the local community. That has been reflected in the objectives of the new hall design but the Parish Council, responsible for identifying and, to the extent feasible, meeting those needs, was not consulted until very late in the day. We have since had three meetings with the B&NES Educational Dept and the school. The design can readily accommodate the village's needs for meetings. In spatial terms it looks as though the interior arrangements could be slightly modified at minimal expense to accommodate stage

performances and would give an auditorium better than the present one in the Church Hall. But there are severe timing constraints. Educational needs must have priority: that rules out daytime use (apart from weekends) for other purposes during term time. It also rules out Encore's current winter performance schedule because of the need to keep stage scenery and audience chairs etc in place during the school day. Other musical and stage groups which may form in the future may not have the same need for daytime occupation of the hall and any group might find it possible to mount performances during some school holidays. Once the school hall is built, it will not be easy to identify demand which would justify the construction of a new

General Purposes continued.....

village hall unless such a hall is part of a more general scheme involving also commercial uses eg weddings.

Website: The current arrangement of accessing the village website through the B&NES site has not succeeded. The Council is, therefore, in the process of creating a new site and has commissioned an expert to design it. There may be a possibility of combining it with the excellent service of Brian Kallender's BREDAC.

There will be a need for a Village Webmaster to be appointed.

Magazine: The "Local Link" is an useful local magazine for the eastern suburbs of Bath and the villages to the East of the city. But the Council is still hoping it can inspire a periodical more directly limited to the interests and events of Batheaston, sexier than the present bulletin but including the contents of it.

Volunteers to edit such a magazine would be much welcomed and should send their names to the Clerk – Mike Townley

Cllr Mike Willard –Chairman Highways, Footpaths & Lighting Committee.....

High Street – Traffic Calming

Work has virtually been completed to facilitate a full 20 mph speed restriction throughout the Village. Despite some expressed reservations and concerns regarding the relative height of the various ramps in the high St., B&NES, having subsequently surveyed them, concluded that there will be NO alterations or reduction in height.

Apart from the evident benefits of slowing down through traffic, eventually all the unsightly redundant traffic signage will be removed – hopefully eliminating driver confusion, and providing a more attractive approach to and through the village.

Ultimately, it is anticipated that the 20 mph speed restriction will extend up Bannerdown Road to the 30 mph limit zone. Additional measures proposed to implement further traffic calming in Bannerdown Road include chicane narrowing at the bottom end, speed monitoring and liaising with Wilts.CC on the control of HGVs movements. These items are on the B&NES Traffic & Safety Register for feasibility and costing investigation, commencing Sept/Oct '09.

Additional measures still remaining to be remedied, include the "pinch point" build-out at "Renovations" which

requires widening, and yellow cross-hatching at the Northend/High Street junction.

The issue of making pedestrian access and mobility to the High Street shops less hazardous and more convenient to customers is still under consideration at this time. The open gully, sloping pavement and parking, all contribute toward making it a sometimes difficult and occasionally dangerous walking exercise. A proposed remedial solution has been drafted by the PC, including the erection of bollards to deter pavement parking in the High Street, and has been submitted to both contractors and B&NES for costing and approval.

River Footpath

The provision of a pedestrian footbridge to circumvent the damaged and B&NES declared dangerous existing footpath, resulting in its temporary closure on H&S grounds is still under consideration, both on practical and financial grounds, in consultation with the Environment Agency, Ramblers Association and B&NES.

Speed Table at Brook House

The works were constructed by the Council's Term Maintenance Contractor Atkins, in accordance with the construction drawings and standard details. Most of the features, including the Brook House table, were constructed by one sub-contracting gang

Following completion of the scheme, all speed cushions and speed tables installed within the 20mph zone were inspected by the Traffic and Safety team and I can confirm that they have been constructed within the tolerances acceptable for this type of work.

The traffic calming features are expressly permitted by law and the Council is satisfied that they have been constructed in accordance with the design and specification and that they comply with the Highways(Road Humps) Regulations. I trust that when drivers get used to the features within the zone, they will look upon it as a worthwhile zone

Mike Widdowson – B&NES Design & Projects Engineer.(01225) 395240

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Batheaston Vision Plan (BVP Chairman Vito Pecchia)....

The public meeting on the 12th of November saw the conclusion of the Batheaston Vision Plan process started at the end of 2007.

As precursor to the main discussion population data from the National Census was tabled covering the last 40 years for the rural Villages of B&NES.

This showed that the population trend for Batheaston, Bathford and Bathampton had decreased by some 13% over this period, in contrast with the trend of increase in B&NES as a whole and the other rural villages. The official statistics also confirmed that in Batheaston residents in the main tend toward the older age groups, that 60% of households have no children and the 5 to 16 year age group (representing the recreationally active number of young people) stood at 13% of the resident population.

These statistics are interesting for a number of reasons and beg many questions to be asked of elected politicians and the well paid executives who profess responsibility for the future well being of our village, for example;

1. The trend in population decline in 'our group of villages' suggests processes going on which are very different to other rural areas in the region. Thus if nothing else, broad-brush statutory planning policies which treat our group of villages the same as the others should be treated with caution.

2. The ageing group structure of our villages should be a cause for concern. Where are the young people and why are we not attracting young families to come and live here?

The Coalpit Road gives an area of opportunity for a new access and car park to serve the school overnight overspill parking for the estate, an FA approved junior football pitch, the brook footpath, and essential road widening

The semi permanent closure on safety grounds, by B&NES of the river footpath is a disappointment to us all. The enlightened proposal by the Parish Council for a new Avon footbridge linking the car park to the meadows, on the other hand is inspirational. At a cost in our view of not more than £150,000.00 and less than the projected initial and recurring

stock? Should not the discrepancy between young and old focus our attention on the needs priority of the elderly and should not policies on social facilities and recreation be focussed on adults?

Governments supported by local Councils, set great store on providing adequate recreational facilities for all intent on keeping people fit and healthy, and noting that recreation promotes interaction within and across communities. Some residents with long memories will remember the halcyon days when Batheaston boasted great talent in the Bath and District leagues and names like Rich, Hall and Mealing became legends on the field of play. Sadly now our sport field in Coalpit road has been deemed unsuitable by the FA for 'U17 & U18 and Seniors' competitions and the future looks bleak for our aspiring future Beckams'.

We should seriously explore all options to secure a site to suit the FA requirements.

The dire school time parking situation in Northend to be made worse if the school hall goes ahead as proposed, choked up roads on the estate and the incongruous sight of huge 44 ton lorries with precarious overhanging loads dwarfing pedestrians, shaking and weakening buildings on Bannerdown Road to their very foundations, indicates that something should be done.

Nor did the importance of the redevelopment of the lock up garage site and the sportfield land (should it become redundant to its present use) could play in solving these issues and kick start the 'Vision' presented in the Coalpit Road area of opportunity, escape attention either.

The potential for a new access and car park to serve the school, overnight overspill parking for the estate, an FA approved junior football pitch, the Brook footpath and essential road widening and pavement improvements to Coalpit Road were all ideas for future consideration. and essential road widening and pavement improvements to Coalpit Road should be a high consideration.

The semi permanent closure on safety

grounds, by the B&NES of the river footpath is a disappointment to us all. The enlightened proposal by the Parish Council for a new Avon footbridge linking the car park to the meadows, on the other hand is inspirational. At a cost in our view of not more than £150,000 and less than the projected initial and recurring maintenance costs to open the existing footpath, the new Avon footbridge with a smaller one across the brook, would be the key to exciting new possibilities in the future development of Batheaston, giving impetus to:

1. A new footpath and cycleway link to the canal towpath at Bathampton and from there access directly to the heart of Bath.
2. An FA standard football pitch on the meadows;
3. Redevelopment of the public WC site for social and recreational facilities;s?
4. Promote the use of land across the brook from the car park for adult recreation;
5. Creation of a river footpath to Avondale, opening up the river bank land for possible allotment use;
6. Discourage antisocial use of the car park and;
7. Opening views from the High Street to the river and the meadows beyond and making Batheaston Garden more accessible visually and physically.

The vision proposed for the 'Garden High Street' seems to have captured the imagination.

The recommendations for the removal of sign clutter, reconfiguration of the highway, traffic management measures other than yet more bumps, sorting out the levels and pavement access to the shops and fostering a sense of 'place' worthy of a village centre, seem in tune with at least the 82% of residents who supported such an idea in the survey.

Cynics passing themselves off as realists might say that such a vision will never happen. They may of course be right except that at a least now a seed has been planted and who knows how far the collective voice of our 2152 residents will be heard.

In the 1930's, 40% of the Cotswolds was covered in wildflower rich limestone grassland. Today, it is only 1.5% of the total area. Although much reduced, this is still a vitally important wildlife and landscape feature and an important home for a range of plants and invertebrates. Typically it contains over 100 species of wildflowers and grasses and 25 species of butterflies.

Wildflower grassland was created by human activity and has developed since the early farmers cleared the forest to make grazing land for their livestock. This grazing developed and maintained the grassland over many centuries. Changes in farming practice particularly the lack of grazing on this unimproved land can lead to it reverting to its primeval state by way of scrub encroachment followed by the establishment of dense woodland.

This process can be seen in progress on Bannerdown where areas that were freely accessible 50 years ago have become impenetrable. The plateau where mowing has been used, albeit sporadically in the 1980s and 90s, remains open but the wildflower mix has been reduced by the dominant coarse grasses. The uneven terrain that cannot be mown is largely lost to blackthorn and bramble.

In recent years attempts have been made to reduce the scrub cover especially on the southern slope where butterflies used to be abundant. A few parishoners have given their time but the greatest amount of work has been done with invaluable assistance from the Cotswold voluntary Wardens. In addition there has been some use of contractors utilizing Voluntary Sector Funding from Bath and

North East Somerset. Whilst welcome, the impact of all this work is small compared to the area involved. To achieve a rich biodiversity scrub needs to be properly managed and contained

In 2006 the local Farming and Wildlife Advisor secured funding under the Avon Grassland Project from the SITA Trust Landfill Communities Fund for scrub clearance and re-fencing of Solsbury Common to facilitate improved management.

The Freeholders Committee is currently negotiating with Natural England with a view to putting both commons into Higher Level Stewardship. This scheme, which would run for ten years, secures funding for a management plan prepared in agreement with Natural England advisers, designed to enhance the wildlife habitat with defined indicators of success. For Bannerdown an important target for year four would be the introduction of grazing by cattle for at least six weeks between May and September. This would of course necessitate fencing against the road, around the old waste tip and to exclude the cattle from the permanent woodland on the western escarpment. Appropriate gates would be included. Indicators of success include reduction of scrub to a defined proportion of the area and the occurrence of a certain number and density of wildflower species.

In time and in consultation with an arboricultural specialist and the Forestry Commission, improved management of the woodland is envisaged. In the near future some trees identified as a potential hazard on the Fosse Lane Bridleway will be felled.

Batheaston Neighbourhood Group

The Group has been very pleased to welcome four new volunteer drivers this year and we also have a new Co-ordinator:- Ann - on 858485. We would like to thank all our co-ordinators and volunteer drivers for their help and support throughout the year and we wish everybody
A Good New Year.

The other co-ordinator numbers.-
Eileen. 858433 Evelyn 852227. Susan. 852847