

PARISHES LIAISON MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting held

Wednesday, 12th October, 2016, 6.30 pm

Councillors: Councillor Alan Hale (Chairman), Councillor Tim Warren (Cabinet Member), Councillor Patrick Anketell-Jones (Cabinet Member), Councillor Anthony Clarke (Cabinet Member), Councillor Michael Evans (Cabinet Member), Councillor Charles Gerrish (Cabinet Member), Councillor Paul Myers (Cabinet Member), Councillor Vic Pritchard (Cabinet Member) and Councillor Martin Veal (Cabinet Member)

Parish Representatives:

Also in attendance: Ashley Ayre (Chief Executive), Andrew Pate (Strategic Director, Resources), Andy Thomas (Strategic Manager - Communities), Martin Shields (Divisional Director - Environmental Services), Chris Major (Group Manager, Transport & Parking) and Lorinda Trebaczyk (Campaigns Manager - Waste Services)

47 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

48 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation as set out on the agenda.

49 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Martin Veal, Rosemary Naish (Chair, Clutton PC), Martin Robinson (Chair, Dunkerton PC), Tanya West (Clerk, Peasedown St. John PC) and Bathampton PC.

50 URGENT BUSINESS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There was none.

51 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE 11TH MAY 2016

These were approved, subject to one amendment: item 41, last sentence delete *"included an update on the Parish Sweeper Scheme"*. It was agreed that although this was included in Martin Shield's PowerPoint slides, he had not spoken about it.

52 LEADER'S REPORT

Councillor Tim Warren, Leader of the Council, addressed the meeting.

Planning and Transport

He said that consultation on the West of England Joint Spatial Plan and Joint Transport Study would commence shortly. It covers the period up to 2026. He urged parishes to submit responses if there was anything in it they did not like. The next phase of formal consultation commences on 7 November 2016. (Comments can be submitted at www.jointplanningwofe.org.uk). Information is available on the Council website at:

<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/joint-strategic-planning-strategy>.

Information about the Joint Transport Plan can be seen at <https://travelwest.info/projects/joint-local-transport-plan>). The West of England is bidding for £7bn of funding.

Devolution

The devolution package was agreed by Cabinet and Council on 29th June. There was a public consultation in June and August and the proposal was then submitted to the Secretary of State. It had been expected to come back to Cabinet in September, had been delayed because of the Government had other priorities at present. It will probably now come to Cabinet in late November. There will still a couple of issues to be sorted out, but it was looking like a good deal for B&NES. The Secretary of State will be visiting the West of England shortly to discuss the package. The election for the joint Mayor will take place next May. North Somerset had not agreed to the proposal, so only B&NES, Bristol and South Gloucestershire are included.

The meeting noted the updates.

53 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES UPDATE

Martin Shields (Divisional Director Environmental Services) introduced his colleagues Chris Major and Lorinda Trebaczyk.

53.1 Consultation on Public Transport

Chris Major gave a presentation on public and community transport. A copy of his PowerPoint slides is attached to these minutes as Appendix 1.

He said that the Council's strategy was based on the vision that those who could travel independently would do so, and that those who cannot get the support and transport that match their needs. The Council is looking for a greater social return on the money it spends on public and community transport. The Council's aim is to maintain current levels of public and community transport as far as possible, subject to it being needed and offering value for money. The Council works with all groups providing transport and seeks to reduce the number of vehicles going over the same routes. There is an ongoing Strategic Review of what can be provided in each area, and a report on this will be issued very shortly.

Major transport providers are only interested in key routes. The Council was lucky to be able to work with Keynsham Dial-a-Ride through Councillor Brian Simmons. There are strict legal rules preventing the Council from giving support to community groups for journeys that commercial operators wish to provide.

85% of bus services provided by the commercial operators in Bath and North East Somerset are operated on an entirely commercial basis and the Council does not get involved in them. First Group representatives had given recently given a presentation at a meeting and had made it quite clear that their first duty is to their shareholders. Commercial operators are not permitted to cross-subsidise different routes. The Council subsidises a small number of routes and parts of routes that the commercial operators regard as unprofitable. These are mostly within the network of routes established by the operators. Operators often notify changes of routes and timetables at very short notice. The Council focusses on trying to maintain daytime services important for education, employment and healthcare. The changes to bus services notified to the Council on 4 September were far more extensive than at any previous change date. The Council has agreed to supply short-term support for a number of services until a sustainable solution is found. Each bus costs about £160,000 a year to run.

Chris Gittins (Clerk, Timsbury PC) said that he was concerned about the slow downward spiral of bus services in rural areas. He had contacted First four days before the changes were implemented and was told that no revised timetables had been printed. After about 10 minutes they had found a file they could send him. He had printed this out and attached it to the bus stop. He knew someone who had lost his job because of the change and someone else who probably would as well. One bus had left the stop 5 minutes before it was scheduled to, and the bus service was only hourly.

Chris Major suggested that one solution might to encourage more car sharing and more co-ordination and harmonisation of movements of people to hospitals and other community facilities.

Cllr Tony Clarke said that for the current financial year the Council had tried to identify which bus services could be made commercial with some small changes. Subsidy reductions had in fact been relatively small. On one service that the Council had ceased supporting it had been found that each passenger was costing £12 per trip; the Council did have financial problems and had to be very careful it was not using money in a way that was not equitable. He was particularly concerned to preserve rural services. Officers had worked hard on the issues, and Informal Cabinet had met on two or three occasions and had looked at every route. The administration was determined to get as many people out of their cars as possible and to ensure that people could get to work.

He agreed that the failure of operators to provide timely advice to passengers of changes to services was a significant problem, but the Council has no control over this. The Council has a Bus Expert Improvement Panel that meets two or three times a year under the chairmanship of the London Transport Commissioner, Sir Peter Hendy, which has been successful in establishing negotiations with operators, but unfortunately legislation in place for the past thirty years prohibits any form of co-operation between bus operators as anti-competitive. However, there is a Bus Services Bill going through Parliament at the moment, which will allow cross-ticketing between operators and would give local authorities significant powers to make decisions about routes and timetables.

Judith Chubb-Whittle said that she understood that parish councils had the power to subsidise bus services. However, because of budget restrictions they were not able to do this. Cllr Warren responded that there were plans for the Chew Valley that would allow more to be done without increased subsidies. The challenge for all councils was to do more with less money. Devolution would allow for the franchising of bus services, which would give greater power to prevent operators from dropping unprofitable services.

53.2 Parish Sweeper Scheme

Martin Shields gave a presentation. A copy of his PowerPoint slides is attached to these minutes as Appendix 2. He apologised that Carol Maclellan had not been able to attend tonight's meeting.

He said that in the course of the review of the scheme a number of detailed conversations had taken place with parishes. It was clear that the scheme is popular, and that the parish sweepers are recognised as being knowledgeable. Parish sweepers know the area, and have the ability to be flexible and to respond to issues efficiently and practically. They are a good link between residents, the parish council and B&NES Council.

Concerns have been expressed that there is no allowance in the Scheme for growth, like new housing developments and new roads. Some sweepers do additional work voluntarily, and the Council is grateful for their good will. It is apparent that there is some confusion about responsibilities. Council staff still went out to do things that the sweepers could do, so there was scope for better co-ordination. Parishes were sometimes not sure what they could expect from the Council, e.g. in relation to the emptying of bins.

Increasing financial pressure on the Council requires all service areas to be carefully reviewed and savings made. It was important to achieve consistency of approach; at present £73k is spent on 18 parishes, less than half, and there is no funding for any additional parishes wishing to join the scheme. Most parishes received between £2.5k and £3k per year. There are no clear terms of reference for this money. What can the Council expect the parishes to do? What is the scope for parishes to decide how to spend the money? How is it possible to demonstrate value for money? There needs to be a fundamental review of what the scheme is about. Parishes should consider what they want from the scheme and what things they could be doing in their own communities that would mean that B&NES staff did not have to be sent out.

The Council has a responsibility for the health and safety of parish sweepers which it cannot delegate to the parishes, and this needs to be factored in to discussions about the future of the scheme.

There had been suggestions from parishes about the scheme, but now the discussion needs to be taken to a new level. Further suggestions from parishes about a cost effective scheme were welcome.

Andrew Orme of Freshford PC said that discussions about revisions to the scheme had been ongoing for some time and asked when a timetable would be set for meaningful progress. Martin acknowledged that progress had been slow; this was partly because of a worsening of the Council's finances. He expected that dialogue with parishes would be concluded over the next couple of months and that then a proposal could be formulated. The budget for the revised scheme would have to be approved by Council. If the revised scheme was going to cost more, then clear benefits would have to be demonstrated. Andrew responded that Freshford PC considered that further resources were required for street cleaning in order to achieve a basic minimum standard for a decent environment and that at present B&NES Council was not being very helpful. Martin agreed that greater clarity was required about aims and responsibilities.

Lyn Alvis of Monkton Combe said that he had shown Martin the many miles of footpaths in the parish. He also suggested that Martin and his team would find the parish council more informative than the parish sweeper.

Chris Clemence of Hinton Charterhouse PC said that his parish council had not been consulted about the scheme and were not aware of what the consultation period or process were. Martin said that he and his team would pick this up and ensure that information went to all parishes.

53.3 Waste and Recycling

Lorinda Trebaczyk (Campaigns Manager, Waste Services) updated the meeting on changes to waste and recycling. A copy of her briefing note is attached.

She said the changes were approved by the Council in July and will be introduced in Autumn next year. Households will be supplied with a 140 litre black wheeled rubbish bin as standard. Where this is not appropriate for particular households because of their size or special needs, a larger bin or gull-proof black sacks will be provided. Household rubbish collections will take place on the same day of the week every other week; there may be changes to the current collection days. Recycling will be collected every week. Residents will be able to order an additional one or two recycling boxes.

The reasons for the changes are:

1. To keep the streets cleaner. At present rubbish sacks are being more than half filled with recyclables like food; they often split and spill their contents.
2. To increase the amount of material recycled.
3. To reduce costs. Every lorry load of waste costs the Council £1000, but from every lorry load of recycling the Council earns £100.

Martin Shields explained that when “cost savings” were referred to, it should be understood that the costs of waste and recycling operations were going up all the time, but that these measures would slow the rate of increase.

Lorinda showed the different types of bins, boxes and sacks that the Council would provide. She explained that any type of plastic bag could be used in the bins and boxes. Full instructions would be issued to households on the use of the different types of containers.

Information about the changes is available on the Council website at:
<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/bins-rubbish-and-recycling/waste-strategy-statistics-and-health-safety/zero-waste/recycling>.

John Twist of Corston PC asked whether the collection of garden waste could be alternated with other recycling because they were small country lanes in the parish and there could be congestion when a lot of rubbish bags were put out. Lorinda replied that this would be looked at.

A parish representative said that in country areas there were more problems with foxes scavenging from rubbish bags than with gulls.

The meeting noted the update.

54 CABINET MEMBER FOR POLICY, LOCALISM AND PARTNERSHIPS- UPDATE

Councillor Paul Myers, Cabinet Member for Policy, Localism and Partnerships addressed the meeting.

He said that his portfolio was a new one and designed to bring together a lot of the issues relating to liaison with the parishes.

The Parishes Charter Working Group was now ready to begin work and was looking to meet for the first time in November. This would be followed by a workshop in December. His aim was for a new and updated Parish Charter to create a framework for joint working between the Council and parishes. He hoped this would help solve some of the communications gaps, for example about the Parishes Sweeper Scheme, which had come to light at tonight's meeting. The Parish Charter should set firm ground rules and allow discussions with individual parishes, which could move as fast or slow as they liked on particular issues, but with a level playing field and clarity about what was on offer.

He had attended the AGM of ALCA at the weekend and had been impressed by some of the ideas that are working in other parts of the country.

He congratulated South Stoke on completing the purchase of the Packhorse Pub as a community value asset. He understood that there were now eight of these assets in B&NES; training on them could be arranged for towns and parishes, if there was sufficient interest.

Work was progressing on the proposal for additional powers for Kelston Parish Meeting in connection with their broadband project.

Presentations had been made at Connecting Communities Forums on community libraries, which had sparked requests for presentations from other parishes. He encouraged delegates to attend presentations at the Forums. He suggested that it would be more productive to use the Parishes Liaison Meeting for detailed discussions, rather than for it to continue to be taken up with multiple presentations.

The content of *Connect* magazine was changing; the last issue contained more about what communities were doing. *Connect* was delivered to all households in B&NES and was an excellent means of communicating news and sharing ideas from parishes. It could be a means of making residents aware of Christmas events, for example.

In conclusion he said there was still time to make nominations for the Chairman's Community Awards; the deadline was 25th November.

The Chairman said that every year the Chairman of the Council supported fund raising for charities. This was usually done by means of a large event with rather expensive tickets. He had decided on a different approach, and would sponsor a number of smaller events. He invited parishes to consider organising their own events to raise funds for the Chairman's charity. He said that this year he was supporting three charities. The first was RICE (Royal Institute for the Care of Older People) a dementia research and treatment centre located at the RUH. The second was Designability, who provide Wizzybugs, small powered wheelchairs, to children under five with cerebral palsy. The third was Butterflies Haven at Keynsham, a voluntary group for children with autism and their families. He would welcome invitations from parishes to attend any events that they organised and would attend every one he could. They should send such invitations to the Chairman's office.

55 PARISH CHARTER REVIEW

Judith Chubb-Whittle (Co-Chair Stanton Drew Parish Council and Vice-Chair of B&NES ALCA) updated the meeting.

She said that the members of the Parish Charter Working Group are:

- Andrew Pate (B&NES Strategic Director of Resources)
- Andy Thomas (B&NES Strategic Manager-Communities)
- Alison Wells (B&NES Community Projects Officer)
- Martin Robinson (Member, Dunkerton and Tunley PC)
- Nick Stevens (Member, Freshford PC)
- Tony Crouch (Member, Keynsham TC)
- Lesley Welch (Clerk, Westfield PC)
- Rosemary Naish (Chair, Clutton PC)
- Judith Chubb-Whittle (Co-Chair, Stanton Drew PC)

Councillor Paul Myers is Chair of the Working Group.

She invited delegates to feed issues into the Working Group. The first meeting is to take place on 24th November, 5.30-7.15 pm at The Hollies. A workshop would take place on 6th December in Keynsham commencing at 6pm -9pm.

56 ATRIUM ONLINE SYSTEM - UPDATE

Andy Thomas updated the meeting.

He said the Atrium system could be used for sharing information with parishes and other external organisations, including other councils. It could also host online discussions. It was now ready for testing by users. Parishes could give feedback and suggest content. Officers could demonstrate the system in parishes or at Council offices. He invited parishes to contact him if they would like a demonstration.

Members noted the update.

57 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Councillor Tim Warren suggested that “identifying affordable housing needs in rural areas” should be “identifying affordable housing solutions in rural areas.”

It was agreed that Environmental Protection should present to a future agenda.

Judith Chubb-Whittle noted that War Memorials had been previously suggested as an agenda item. Andy Thomas responded that this issue was to be dealt with in another forum.

A parish representative suggested that the Meeting should revisit rural broadband. Councillor Anketell-Jones said this could be linked to an item on economic development.

58 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed that because the date of the next scheduled meeting of 15th February 2017 is the day after the Council’s budget meeting on 14th February, the next liaison meeting should be moved to Wednesday 8th March 2017. Future dates would be set at that meeting.

[**UPDATE:** because no suitable venues are available on 8th March 2017, it has subsequently been agreed that the next meeting will take place on the originally scheduled date of **15th February 2017**. The other meetings in 2017 have now been scheduled for **22 June 2017** and **26 October 2017**.]

The meeting ended at 7.55 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

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Transport and Parking

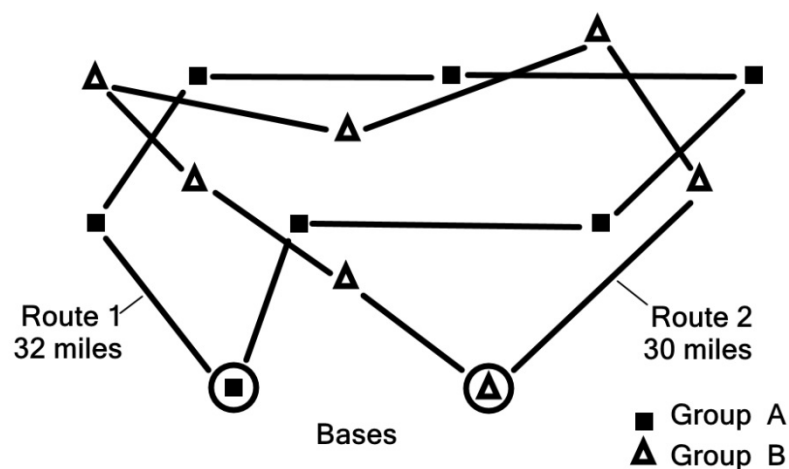


Getting from A to B Strategic Review

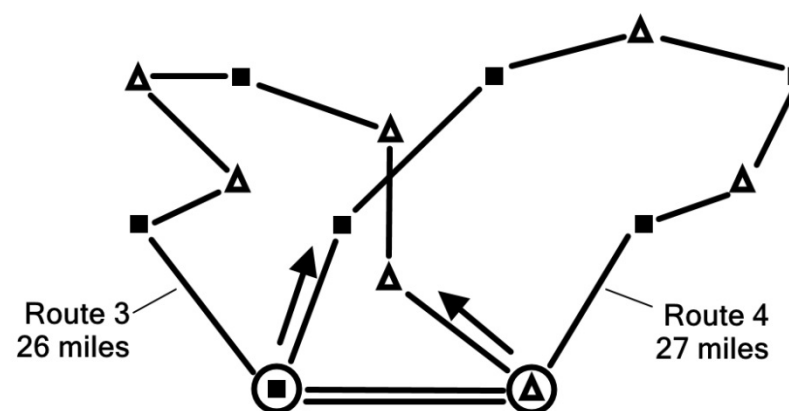
- Programme looks at options for moving people differently – high level of innovation
- Focusses on individuals to ensure best possible solutions
- Empowerment for communities

Total Transport in practice

Separate Scheduling



Joint Scheduling



**Co-ordination saved 9 miles
(15%).**

Review - Community transport

- Key to protecting transport for vulnerable groups and;
- Need to make them sustainable
- Need to update the ways of working and link with wider network
- Pilot scheme proposal with Cllr Brian Simmons and Keynsham Dial A Ride
- Links with Transport Strategies for Chew Valley and Somer Valley



Bus routes - Key points

- Bus routes in B&NES are all run by commercial operators who we have no control over – and they are responsible to their shareholders
- 85% of these routes are completely commercial.
- Available support goes to fund the routes (or parts of routes) viewed as uncommercial, or socially or strategically necessary - comprising of less than 40 contracts
- Areas for support can only be assessed after the operators confirm their plans to us - which can be very short notice
- Operators are also open to receiving support directly from other bodies such as Parish and or District Councils
- We are also being careful to retain support where possible for daytime services providing a good number of people with access to health services, education and employment opportunities.

Service changes made

- Around 60 service changes made on 4 September by commercial operators in reaction to needs of shareholders and business – much larger than any previous change date
- Operators state the changes were all designed to make services on balance more attractive and as such more sustainable in the long term
- In some cases we have stepped in with temporary support in order to give time for a sustainable solution to be found – For example:
 - **38:** As a response to First withdrawing the evening and Sunday services on the 38 we have negotiated with Bath Bus Company to extend their 7.30pm and 8.30pm journeys from Bath to Keynsham Church around South Keynsham. This has given First time to come forward with a new 38A evening service which we hope will prove sustainable solutions
 - **379:** First's new 178 (Bristol - Radstock) is currently not as fast as the 379 it replaces – in the peak it's some 15 minutes slower. We have therefore agreed to temporarily fund two fast morning peak journeys arriving into Bristol at 8.15am and 10.15am and one fast return journey leaving Bristol at 4.50pm until a more sustainable solution can be found

Consultation

- Operators have no requirement to consult before making their changes – but we have reiterated to them that they should be doing more as it benefits everyone – especially their customers
- Operators state that the changes to the commercial network that are being made are all as a result of a lack of demand for the routes as currently configured, making them uneconomic to run
- Where De Minimis changes to support have been made due to a lack of demand this is only after having undertaken snapshot survey work to establish the number of people travelling and the reasons for their journeys
- **However we are aware that different communities may have different priorities and so we are planning a wider consultation on where to target any available support in future years**

Thank you

Any Questions?

Parish Sweeping scheme review update October 2016

- » Last meeting we discussed review findings, positives and issues. Aim was to develop proposals to address these.
- » Progress slower than hoped due to changing financial position within the Council
- » The Council's financial position is now worse than when review began. Need to make further significant savings. Can't carry on doing everything we've done before as a Council
- » The review highlighted confusion about who does what and potential efficiencies through reducing duplication. The Council still administers & responds to complaints in the parishes taking part in the scheme as it does throughout the district. Still has an operational presence in each of these areas to respond to complaints.
- » £73K spent on 18 parishes – (45 parish councils & 3 town councils) less than half of parishes benefit from funding. There is no funding for other parishes who may wish to join.
- » Is there a better way to spend this money? Is this value for money? No easy solution.

- We need to see if we can come up with a more cost effective scheme that meets the objectives of the Parish sweeper scheme but is of benefit to all parishes rather than a small number.
- This will mean redefining the Parish sweeper scheme contract to be clear on responsibilities and responses to complaints – we need to ensure statutory health & safety obligations are met.
- Council will be talking to Parishes over the next few months about ideas.
- Any further thoughts from the Parishes about how a cost effective scheme could work to the benefit of all is welcome. We'll compile suggestions over the next month.
- Email Patricia_vincent@bathnes.gov.uk

Changes to your recycling and rubbish services autumn 2017

Introduce ourselves and explain that this is an initial briefing and we will be back with more details as the plans progress. Explain that we may have to take some of their questions away and feedback at future meetings.

What is changing?

In July the Council approved plans to make changes to your recycling and rubbish collection service.

Starting in the autumn of 2017 we will give you and your residents a wheeled 140 litre bin for your rubbish which we will collect every other week. We realise that one size does not fit all so in a small number of cases where a 140 litre wheeled bin is not suitable for the property, or family situation we may provide a larger bin or a gull-proof sack to contain rubbish for collection - we have already introduced these successfully in some areas to help tackle the problem of gulls scavenging rubbish bags and making a mess in our streets.

Collection days may change as we will need to redesign the routes for our vehicles.

What is staying the same?

We will collect food waste and recycling every week as we do now, and in addition are very happy to provide extra containers to help you recycle more. If you subscribe to our garden waste collection we will also continue to collect this every other week.

Why are we introducing the changes?

1. To keep our streets cleaner

Containing rubbish in a bin or bag will prevent animals and birds ripping open bags and making a mess which is unpleasant for everyone and costs us to clear up.

2. To recycle more

We have a very comprehensive recycling collection where you can already recycle 17 different types of household waste every week. We know that our residents can recycle more than they are currently doing – about 75% of a household's waste can be recycled using the current collections but we still find that over half of an average rubbish bag consists of items that could have been recycled. Our local research shows that if you recycle all you can you will still have space left in your rubbish bin when collected every other week.

Show bin (and how 3 bags will fit in) and gull proof sack. Also show 3 ways you can use to contain your food waste in the caddy – compostable liners, wrap in newspaper (fish and chips style) and everyday plastic bags).

The change will help to encourage everyone to use their food recycling collection – only about 50% of households currently use this. 30% of the waste in black sacks currently is food.

3. To save money

Every lorry load of waste costs £1000 to dispose of whilst every lorry load of recycling earns an income of £100, so reducing the amount put out as rubbish is essential.

We want to continue to provide a first class collection service with one of the most comprehensive recycling services in the country, but we are also dealing with reductions in funding from national government.

Timescales

We are still in the planning stages for introducing these changes and we will need time to procure new vehicles and plan the operational changes.

2017

January/February – we will write to let you and your residents know whether you will receive a standard 140 rubbish bin or gull-proof sack (our research has already shown that over 80% of homes should be suitable to receive a standard 140 litre bin). If residents feel they will struggle with the type of bin, they can contact us and we will provide advice over the phone, and we can send someone to assist and to determine the best solution if they meet criteria for requiring more space.

During the **spring and summer** we will be organising plenty of road shows, talks to community and resident groups and door knocking, with plenty of opportunities to ask questions. Our ‘bin doctors’ can visit homes to give one-to-one advice and support. We will also be providing an extensive publicity campaign with updates through our website, news releases, Connect magazine, weekly council emails, community newsletters, and social media.

We will send a leaflet around 6 weeks before the bin or gull-proof sack is delivered with more information and confirmation of collection day.

Autumn (dates tbc)

The bin will be delivered with a full instruction pack, advising the date the new collection starts and a calendar to show forthcoming collection dates for the year.

We need your help to get everyone ready for the change – 3 steps to better recycling.

The main message is to start now – try to get into the habit of recycling as much as you can so that when the new bins arrive, residents are already going to be prepared and find it simple to manage.

1. Recycle more – find out what you can recycle including the things you may not regularly throw away such as batteries and small electricals. You can order an additional green box for free from Council Connect to help you – mix cans and squashed plastic together in one box and paper and glass etc in the other.
2. Start using, or make better use of your food recycling bin – don’t put any food scraps in your rubbish. Help spread the word that you can now use plastic bags in your kitchen caddy.
3. Make sure you put your recycling out by 7am on your collection day only and bring your empty containers back in to keep our streets tidy.

You can find out more at www.bathnes.gov.uk/recycle - regular updates will be provided as we confirm more details.

Please get in touch if you know of any community groups/meetings you would like us to visit, any community events where we may be able to hold a road show or other ways you could help us get all of our residents ready for the change. Contact wastecampaigns@bathnes.gov.uk

Any questions?