Bath and North East Somerset Council

PARISH LIAISON MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting held
Wednesday, 30th October, 2019, 6.30 pm

Councillors: Councillor Eleanor Jackson (Chair), Councillor Dine Romero (Cabinet Member), Councillor Rob Appleyard (Cabinet Member), Councillor Neil Butters (Cabinet Member), Councillor Paul Crossley (Cabinet Member), Councillor Sally Davis, Councillor Michael Evans, Councillor Duncan Hounsell, Councillor Hal MacFie, Councillor Lisa O'Brien and Councillor Richard Samuel (Cabinet Member)

Parish Representatives: Cllr Dawn Drury (Chair of ALCA) and representatives of Chew Magna PC, Combe Hay PC, Compton Dando PC, Compton Martin PC, Corston PC, Dunkerton and Tunley PC, East Harptree PC, Farmborough PC, Keynsham TC, Midsomer Norton TC, Monkton Combe PC, North Stoke PC, Peasedown St John PC, Priston PC, Publow and Pensford PC, Saltford PC, South Stoke PC, Temple Cloud with Cameley PC, Timsbury PC, Ubley PC, West Harptree PC and Westfield PC

Also in attendance: Will Godfrey (Chief Executive), Lisa Bartlett (Director – Development), Emma Watts (Senior Planning Officer), Mandy Bishop (Director – Environment Services), Carol Maclellan (Group Manager – Neighbourhood Environmental Services), Jane Williams (Corporate Communications Manager), Tim White (IT Project Manager), Dave Dixon (Community Engagement Manager), Sara Dixon (Locality Manager), Marie Todd (Democratic Services Officer), Alison Wells (Community Engagement Officer) and Stephen Sumner (Bath Chronicle)

12   WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

13   EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Democratic Services Officer advised the meeting of the emergency evacuation procedure.

14   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:

Cllr Tim Ball – B&NES Council
Cllr Kevin Guy – B&NES Council
Cllr Sarah Warren – B&NES Council
Cllr Karen Warrington – B&NES Council
Cllr Dave Wood – B&NES Council
Cllr Joanna Wright – B&NES Council

Cllr John Adler – Freshford Parish Council
Jean Fossaceco – Clerk to Shoscombe Parish Council
Trudi Gilbank – Clerk to Farmborough Parish Council

Cllr James Honess – Westfield Parish Council
Whitchurch Village Council

15   URGENT BUSINESS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There was no urgent business.

16   MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2019 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Mandy Bishop, Director of Environment, gave an update on the FixMyStreet system. Following recent feedback by users, including Town and Parish Councils, there are a range of updates to the system which will soon be going live. This will improve the feedback made available to users including details of action that is being taken on issues raised. Mandy will also be attending a meeting of Parish Clerks to provide an update on progress and the system changes undertaken.

17   INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL - WILL GODFREY

Will Godfrey, the new Chief Executive of Bath and North East Somerset Council introduced himself stating that he has now been in post for four weeks and is looking forward to engaging with Town and Parish Councils in the area. Will has lived in the B&NES area since 2009 and has spent the vast majority of his career in local government. He began his career working in mainly rural communities and more recently has worked at Bristol City Council and Newport City Council.

Will's main philosophy is to ensure that the organisation listens to its residents and understands their needs. It is important for the Council to be as human as possible, to avoid the use of jargon and to focus on simplicity. He hopes to visit many of the local Parishes and to see more of the area over the coming months.

18   UPDATE FROM THE LEADER AND CABINET MEMBERS OF BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

(a) Cllr Dine Romero – Council Leader

Cllr Romero stated that the Council values its relationship with the parishes and that this meeting is one of the ways in which it engages with them. She thanked all those people who have contributed to the "Consultation Charter" which will set out the Council's commitment to engagement.

The Clean Air Zone consultation has now closed and the business case will be sent to central government on 13 December 2019. The Climate Emergency is a high priority on the Council's agenda. The Council is looking to organise a series of events to identify how people can make changes to improve the situation.

The Cabinet will be considering a report regarding a council house building programme at its next meeting. The report is now available on the Council website and can be found here:
https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1324

(b) <u>Cllr Richard Samuel – Cabinet Member for Resources and Deputy Leader</u>

Cllr Samuel reported on the following issues relating to his portfolio:

- Next year's budget is currently being prepared. Since the last Parish Liaison Meeting in July the medium term financial strategy has been approved and this gives a good picture of the current situation.
- Decisions now need to be made regarding the budget, council tax levels and fees and charges. There are still a number of financial pressures.
- One of the main financial pressures is children's services, in particular, funding for vulnerable children and those with special needs.
- There has also been a drop in projected income from commercial property largely due to the pressures on the retail sector in Bath City Centre. This has been offset to some extent by the work of the Heritage Team and income from the Roman Baths and Pump Room.
- There has been a drop in car parking income.
- The cost of council loans from the Public Works Loan Board has now doubled due to the interest rate being increased to 2.8%. This may have an impact on capital schemes and the Council will lobby government on this issue.
- The Government has delayed a decision on local government funding until the next financial year.
- The Chancellor was due to make a budget statement but with the pending general election it is unclear whether the new government would be formed in time to do this. Councils need to know the funding position before Christmas.
- The national pay negotiations are currently underway.

(c) <u>Cllr Rob Appleyard – Cabinet Member for Adult Services</u>

Cllr Appleyard reported that the proportion of the Council budget required to provide adult care was previously 67% but has now increased to 82%. There is also an increased demand for adult care services.

A consultation regarding the charging framework for care and support is currently being carried out. The consultation is open until the 3 December 2019 and events will take place in the local area. A "question and answer" document will also be available on the Council website. Cllr Appleyard thanked the Parishes for their help with publicising and arranging these events.

(d) <u>Cllr Paul Crossley – Cabinet Member for Community Services</u>

Cllr Crossley reported on the following issues relating to his portfolio:

- The new mobile library is now in use. The mobile routes are currently being reviewed and details will be sent to Parish Councils for their comments by the end of the year. There are new electronic services such as audio books, electronic format books and magazines. There is also a new community library launched earlier this week in Peasedown-St-John.
- Plans are in place to provide water refill points in the larger settlements.
- Restaurants do not currently have to display their star ratings and the Council is lobbying to make it a requirement to display these to ensure that customers are aware of their food hygiene standards.
- The Council has recently prosecuted two rogue traders and Parish Councils are asked to report any rogue traders they are aware of to the Council so that appropriate action can be taken.
- Cllr Crossley has met with the Offset Earth Company in Keynsham.
- Feedback has been received regarding the colour scheme in the Keynsham Leisure Centre which has caused challenges for some people with disabilities and these issues are being investigated.
- The Council is working with the Lawn Tennis Association to upgrade tennis courts in the area.
- Residents are encouraged to take up the offer of the "Discovery Card" and Cllr Crossley is looking at ways to make it easier to sign up for the card.

(e) <u>Cllr Neil Butters – Cabinet Member for Transport Services</u>

Cllr Butters stated that it is important to involve Parish and Town Councils to ensure that the budget for transport services is allocated correctly. Highway safety is the main priority. Greater emphasis will also be placed on walking and cycling. There is still a lack of funding available for road repairs.

Bus services have received a number of grant subsidies including the 179 bus service. Unfortunately the cost of providing bus services continues to rise.

There will be largescale changes to rail service timetables on 15 December with 75% of timetables subject to change. Electrification work is ongoing and the Council is keen for this job to be completed.

A new fleet of 9 lorries has been purchased for winter gritting.

The Cabinet Members then responded to questions as follows:

- Cheryl Scott, Clerk to Keynsham Town Council asked a question regarding the budget settlement. Cllr Samuel explained that the Government announced its spending decisions at national level in October. This appears to be more favourable than in previous years but no confirmation has yet been received at local level. Budget events will be held throughout November and December.

- Cllr Michael Evans from Midsomer Norton Town Council asked why money had been allocated for councillor initiatives in the light of current budget

pressures. Cllr Samuel stated that the money that has recently been allocated to enable councillors to carry out local initiatives is to enable members to work together in their communities to get things done. The funding was previously held in the community empowerment fund. Each Councillor will be allocated £2k with a minimum award of £200 per initiative.

- Cllr Tony Hooper from Temple Cloud with Cameley Parish Council asked a question about the Bristol City Clean Air Zone. He stated that the restrictions would effectively cut off those residents living in the South of Bristol and also at the South West end of the M32. Cllr Dine Romero agreed to take up this concern with the Mayor of Bristol.

- Cllr Butters explained that the cost of providing bus services continues to increase each year. The WECA bus strategy will soon be available and it is hoped that this will lead to a boost in bus services.

19 UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR OF B&NES ALCA

Cllr Dawn Drury gave an update from ALCA as follows:

- Cllr Drury has just attended the NALC annual conference in Bletchley. She congratulated Donna Ford from Midsomer Norton Town Council who has just been presented with the Clerk of the Year award.

- NALC representatives hope to work more closely with Parish and Town Councils in the future and Councils are advised to make use of the services that they provide.

- Parish Online are about to launch their new digital asset register system which should be very helpful.

- The "Good Councillors' Guide to Transport Planning" is now available. For more information https://www.nalc.gov.uk/news/entry/1328-the-good-councillor-s-guide-to-transport-planning-published-by-nalc

- Around 50% of Parish and Town Councils have now declared a climate emergency. The Clerk of Buckingham Town Council informed the conference that the Council has a full climate emergency plan and would be happy to share expertise.

- A number of local councils are taking on assets such as community halls, churches and pubs. The Plunkett Foundation website can offer information about this type of project.

- The cost of affiliation to NALC will be £7.20 per elector for the forthcoming financial year.

- ALCA meeting dates have now been set for the forthcoming year.

- In collaboration with the Council, ALCA are planning a Clerk's networking event. The date of this event will be circulated shortly.

A copy of the ALCA report is attached as *Appendix 1* to these minutes.

20   PLANNING

Lisa Bartlett, Director of Development and Emma Watts, Senior Planning Officer from B&NES Council gave a presentation regarding planning issues as follows:.

- Joint Spatial Plan – The Planning Inspectorate has rejected the West of England Joint Spatial Plan and the Council now has to reconsider its policies and set out the next steps in the New Year. This includes housing allocations such as how much affordable housing is required. The Council is keen to move on with the local plan and will take on board any suggestions put forward by Town and Parish Councils.

- Green Belt Permitted Development Rights – permitted development can be carried out without planning permission and frees up people to proceed with certain types of development.

- Change of use of agricultural buildings – the building must be capable of conversion.

- Permitted development for agriculture and forestry.

- Protocols for Town and Parish Councils including the process for referrals to the Planning Committee. It is important when commenting on applications to give planning reasons as this will give more weight to a referral to Committee. It is not standard practice to hold a site visit with Town or Parish Councils as there is not capacity to do this. However, Planning Case Officers are happy to answer questions from local councils.

Officers then responded to questions as follows:

- Cheryl Scott, Clerk to Keynsham Town Council, asked about the likelihood of development in North Keynsham being included in the local plan. Lisa Bartlett explained that the Council is unable to finish its hearings due to advice from the Inspector and will now have to start again and reassess the plan. The Green Belt will be reviewed in the light of the Inspector's comments being mindful to produce a sustainable strategy for the whole of the West of England.

- Lisa Bartlett confirmed that it would be appropriate for Keynsham Town Council to invite officers to a closed meeting regarding the Neighbourhood Plan for Keynsham.

- Lisa also confirmed that some of the work carried out relating to infrastructure has translated into the Joint Transport Plan and that Transport and Highways officers are working on this. Mandy Bishop confirmed that some consultation has taken place and officers are considering evidence in the light of the Inspector's report. This will be considered at the WECA Transport Board.

- A query was raised regarding the protocols for Agricultural Need applications. Parish Councils are not formally notified about these applications but sometimes become aware of them by other means. Would the Council be prepared to review its consultation process? Emma Watts stated that there is a different process for this type of application which the Council is unable to change. Any Town or Parish Councils which have specific examples they wish to bring to the attention of B&NES Council were asked to email these to Lisa Bartlett.

- Temple Cloud with Cameley Parish Council suggested that one person could be nominated from each Parish to be the contact person. The perceived lack of communication can be frustrating for Parishes. Lisa pointed out that timeframes are very tight and that Parishes can contact the Case Officer at any stage. There is also a notification function on the website where people can register to be notified of applications in a specific area.

- Keynsham Town Council also gave details of a recent planning application where the Town Council was referred to in the application but was not made aware of this fact. Cllr Dine Romero stated that she was aware of this case and has asked Cllr Tim Ball to look into it.

- East Harptree Parish Council pointed out that it is difficult to proceed with the rural allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan when the strategic development issues are not clear. Lisa confirmed that it would be difficult to firm up Neighbourhood Plans but that the Council would facilitate those areas who wished to carry out some development in their area. There is a slight delay and the Council will not be able to consult on a formal plan at this stage.

A copy of the presentation is attached as *Appendix 2* to these minutes.

21   CLEANSING

Carol Maclellan, Group Manager for Neighbourhood Environmental Services, B&NES gave a presentation regarding routine cleaning and support for community litter picking.

- 3,500 tonnes of litter is dealt with over the course of a year.
- 1,500 reports of litter have been received through the "Fix My Street" system.
- There are 1,285 litter bins throughout the B&NES area. The cost of disposal is rising.
- The cost of emptying one litter bin for a year is £700. The team tries to consolidate litter bins and remove any that are not used.
- There are 48 members of staff in the cleansing team and the service is provided at a cost of £35 per household per year.
- The basic service includes weed spraying, emptying litter bins, cleaning shopping precincts, mechanical seeping once per month, managing the fix my street system, removing graffiti, litter and dead animals and abandoned vehicles, dealing with sharps and needles.
- A team of 13 people is based at Radstock Road where there are two main sweeper vehicles and two response vans.
- Litter picking on verges is an expensive and dangerous activity. This normally takes place around late February/early March.

- Last year 1,080 bags of rubbish were removed from verges.
- A large number of complaints about rubbish in verges are received.
- Community Litter Picks – There are a whole raft of community groups who carry out litter picks with some doing this on a regular basis. The Council provides them with litter bags and hi vis jackets.
- B&NES has recently held a "Big Community Clean Up".
  Further details about community litter picks can be found using the following link
  https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/streets-and-highway-maintenance/litter-street-care-and-cleaning/organising-litter-pick

Carol Maclellan then responded to questions as follows:

- The cost of a blue bag used to store cardboard recycling is £3.50. Cardboard will still be collected even if it is not place in a recycling bag.

- Any group carrying out a litter pick is given an information pack. People are advised not to put themselves at risk and not to pick up anything they feel is dangerous. Cllr Ron Hopkins expressed concern about items such as hidden needles which could cause harm to litter pickers.

22   COMMUNICATIONS AND WEBSITES

Jane Williams, Corporate Communications Manager B&NES gave a presentation regarding the role of the press office. This included the following:

- Details of the Corporate Communications team.
- Responsibilities of the team and their day to day work.
- Details of Council communications in numbers – such as 18,900 twitter followers, 248 mentions in the press last month and 55 media enquiries received on average each month.
- Objectives of the Communications team.
- Getting messages out.
- Media relations and the law – Council publicity is strictly controlled by a Code of Practice established under the Local Government Act 1986.
- Giving people a bigger say – "For a community to be a healthy local democracy, local understanding of the operation of the democratic process is important, and effective communication is key to developing that understanding. Local authority publicity is important to transparency and to localism, as the public need to know what their local authority is doing if they are to hold it to account." *Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity – Explanatory Memorandum.*
- Parish and Town Councils are invited to get in touch with the Communications Team if necessary. They are also invited to subscribe to E-connect, the Council weekly newsletter. People can sign up to E-connect using the following link: https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/econnect

A copy of the presentation slides are attached as *Appendix 3* to these minutes.

Tim White, IT Project Manager, B&NES gave a presentation regarding the Council website. This covered the following issues:

- Changes to the Council website and reasons for the change.
- What work is being carried out.
- The benefits of the new website – the project is an enabler for wider digital transformation.
- Structure of the new website.
- The transactional nature of the new website – the top tasks will be more prominent and the most visited services will be on the home page.   This will adjust dynamically according to user needs.
- Information on pages is laid out in a much more user friendly way, which helps meet new accessibility legislation.
- Word and pdf forms will be replaced with online versions using data the Council holds more effectively and redesigning key online services such as viewing/commenting on planning applications.
- There will be a new approach for policy and strategy documents.
- The way B&NES communicates about consultations will also be improved.
- There will be sites with a commercial/branding focus such as Building Control; there will be a refreshed jobs and careers site and a new Newsroom site.
- The B&NES Newsroom page can be accessed using the following link https://newsroom.bathnes.gov.uk/news
- New web content will be released as it becomes available.

A copy of the presentation slides is attached as *Appendix 4* to these minutes.

Dawn Drury, Chair of ALCA, gave a presentation regarding preparations for the Website Accessibility Regulations. This covered the following issues:

- Compliance with the regulations will become mandatory for all Town, Parish and Community Councils on 23 September 2020 and for mobile applications by 23 June 2021.
- This will mean changes in the way information is published online as well as in the way web pages are written and also documents such as minutes and agendas.
- This is important to improve accessibility of websites and mobile apps to ensure that they can be used by as many people as possible.
- There is provision allowing continued use of non-compliant aspects of a website where compliance is a disproportionate burden.
- Lack of time or knowledge or not giving the matter priority is no excuse for not making websites accessible.
- Accessibility includes website content and design, type of font, ensuring that all documents are in the correct format and colour of print used in the website design.
- Details of "dos" and "don'ts" for users who are deaf or hard of hearing, have dyslexia or have low vision were displayed.
- The aspects of websites that can be checked now are:
    - Is your website correctly formatted?
    - Are you using descriptive links?
    - Are you saving your files in accessible PDF/A format?
    - Is your website written in simple language?

- Details of Compton Dando Parish Council's experience of making a website accessible were outlined.

A copy of the presentation slides are attached as *Appendix 5* to these minutes.

23   TERMS OF REFERENCE - PARISH LIAISON MEETING

The Parish Liaison Meeting was asked to note the proposed amendments to its terms of reference. Feedback can be given following the meeting to B&NES ALCA or to the Council's Communities Team by email: Connecting_communities@bathnes.gov.uk

A copy of the previous terms of reference is attached as *Appendix 6* to these minutes.

24   DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed that future meetings will be held on the following dates:

Tuesday 31 March 2020
Thursday 16 July 2020
Thursday 22 October 2020

Time: 6.30pm
Venue: Community Space, Keynsham

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm

Chair   ....

Date Confirmed and Signed   ....

Prepared by Democratic Services

Parish Liaison 30th October 2019

B&NES ALCA Chair's Report

Most of this report has been formulated from information gained at the NALC Conference 28th/29th October.

I would like everyone to join me in congratulating Donna Ford, Clerk to Midsomer Norton, who was award Clerk of the Year at the NALC presentation event. This is a huge achievement.

- The NALC representatives reported that they would be working closer with Town and Parish Council's in the forthcoming year and would welcome invitations to attend Town and Parish Council meetings.

- NALC reminded us that they have a large suite of support papers including over 100 legal topic notes that are available for member Council's via the NALC website.

- Our friends from Parish Online are about to launch their new digital asset register system. Harlestone Parish Council have been trialling this system and are used as a case study of the Parish Online website. I have contacted Martin Laker of B&NES to enquire if we will be having our usual December training event at Bath Spa University and if so that the digital asset register system is showcased,

- For anyone interested NALC can provide information in respect of mandatory business rate relief for public conveniences.

- I would suggest that any Town/Parish or Community Council involved in a connecting your communities through community transport that you look at the Transport Planning Society's website and obtain a copy of NALC's document 'A Good Councillors Guide to Transport Planning.' For a case study on the formation of a community transport company a good model to look at is
Sevenoaks Route 8 Bus Service.

- A show of hands at the conference highlighted that a good number of Town and Parish Council's had declared a Climate Emergency. NALC will be releasing a webpage in January that will have helpful information on this topic. In the meantime, the Clerk from Buckingham Town Council is happy for you to contact them as they declared, have been working on this matter and have formulated a full plan. NALC are encouraging Town and Parish Council's to declare.

- For those Town and Parish Councils that are strengthening rural communities by taking on assets such as village pubs, community halls, churches etc look

at the Plunkett Foundation which ahs lots of advice on this matter, offers support and can aid with sourcing funding.

Finally, I have been working with Alison and Sara of B&NES Council on forward planning for 2020. This includes planning diary dates which are as follows: -

ALCA MEETING DATES FOR 2020

5th February 11th June and 3rd September 2020

PARISH LIAISON MEETING DATES FOR 2020

31st March 16th July and 22nd October 2020

ALCA representatives, B&NES Officers and the Leader of B&NES Council will be meeting to set agendas for future Parish Liaison meetings on the following: -

w/c 10th February

w/c 15th June

w/c 7th September

If your Town or Parish Council has any items that you wish to be discussed and future Parish Liaison meetings, please do contact me.

Being able to arrange these dates in advance will aid with planning and dealing with Town/Parish Council issues raised more efficiently together with allowing B&NES Council time to prepare response, invite Local Authority Officer and member Councillors along that can help with any issues that we raise.

In December we will be holding our first Clerk's networking event where we will launch the Clerk's Forum and have an update on FixMyStreet. The date of this event will be circulated shortly.

Report by Cllr Dawn Drury – Chair of B&NES ALCA - ddrurypc2015@gmail.com

Bath & North East
Somerset Council

Parish Liaison Meeting

Planning Queries

30 October 2019

Bath and North East Somerset – *The* place to live, work and visit

Green Belt Permitted Development

- What is Permitted Development?

- Additional restrictions on PD apply to sensitive areas and buildings: CAs, WHS, AONB, Listed Buildings

- Green Belt not specified as additional restriction

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Bath & North East
Somerset Council

Green Belt Planning Applications

- Required to avoid disproportionate additions

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Bath & North East
Somerset Council

Bath and North East Somerset – *The* place to live, work and visit

Change of Use of Agricultural Buildings

- Class Q: agricultural buildings to dwellings

Change of Use of Agricultural Buildings

- Class R: agricultural buildings to flexible commercial use

- Class S: agricultural building to a state-funded school or registered nursery

Bath & North East Somerset Council

Change of Use of Agricultural Buildings

- Must be capable of conversion

- Prior approval process

Bath & North East
Somerset Council

PD for Agriculture and Forestry

- Part 6 of the GPDO

- Includes erection of buildings and other specified development

- Prior approval process

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Protocols for Parish & Town Councils

- Committee referrals – Scheme of Delegation

- Material planning reasons

- Weight given to Parish & Town Council comments

- Site visit requests

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Bath & North East
Somerset Council

Communications and marketing

Parish Liaison

Wednesday October 30 2019

Bath and North East Somerset – *The* place to live, work and visit

Bath & North East
Somerset Council

Corporate Communications team

» Jane Williams – corporate communications manager

» Terri Gough – communications officer

» Jonathan Carter – communications (digital) officer

» Katy Wilkins – communications officer design/print p/t

Bath and North East Somerset – *The* place to live, work and visit

Bath & North East
Somerset Council

Responsibilities

» We help services communicate messages as effectively as possible in line with the council's priorities, both externally and internally, to help improve residents' lives.

» We develop key messages about the council, handle the media professionally, in accordance with the law, and provide marketing and brand guidance.

Addressing the climate emergency

Giving people a bigger say

Focusing on prevention

Delivering for residents

Bath and North East Somerset – *The* place to live, work and visit

What we do

» Build and maintain positive relationships with the media

» Actively promote decisions of the council and campaigns

» Proactive media/social media planning

» Maintain accurate records relating to media contact (Vuelio)

» Regular internal staff communications

» Provide branding and design support

» Emergency Planning communications ie severe weather

» Provide media support during elections

» Challenge inaccurate reporting in the media breaches of the code of conduct

» Monitor our performance and take feedback to ensure continuous improvement

Bath and North East Somerset – *The* place to live, work and visit

Council communications: in numbers

People watched 957 hours of our w**e**bcasts between **Oct 2018-Oct 2019**

3,253 people subscribed to the E-Connect newsletter

248 mentions in the press last month

55 media enquiries received on average each month

NEWS

40 proactive news releases published on average each month

18,900 Twitter followers

1,858 Facebook followers

Our objectives

» Improve people's understanding about the council and lives

» Promote a clear, distinctive corporate voice

» Support delivery of the council's strategic priorities

» Build relationships of trust and promote dialogue with staff, residents, communities and partners

» Ensure that the council is fairly and accurately represented

» Ensure that internal and external communications systems are resilient and co-ordinated

» Provide appropriate communications advice to staff and councillors, to enhancing capacity and confidence in many communications channels

»

Bath and North East Somerset – *The* place to live, work and visit

Bath & North East Somerset Council

Getting our messages out

» Handling daily media enquiries - Vuelio

» Producing news releases

» Social media

» Staff Matters

» Intranet – web update

» Photography – news and stock images

» Print and design –

» E-connect

» New news website

» TVs

Bath and North East Somerset – *The* place to live, work and visit

Bath & North East
Somerset Council

Media relations and the law

Council publicity is strictly controlled by a Code of Practice established under the Local Government Act 1986. Seven principles :

» •   be lawful

» •   be cost-effective

» •   be objective

» •   be even-handed

» •   be appropriate

» •   have regard to equality and diversity

» •   be issued with care during periods of heightened sensitivity

Bath and North East Somerset – *The* place to live, work and visit

Giving people a bigger say

"For a community to be a healthy local democracy, local understanding of the operation of the democratic process is important, and effective communication is key to developing that understanding. Local authority publicity is important to transparency and to localism, as the public need to know what their local authority is doing if they are to hold it to account."

Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity – Explanatory Memorandum

BATH LIVE

Welcome to Bath Live, your fast-moving digital news channel to keep you in the know about what's happening in Bath seven days a week. You can follow us on **Twitter** and **Facebook** too.
Things to do in Bath - Bath Rugby - Traffic & Travel - What's On

UPDATED 09:37, 16 MAY 2019

The Midsomer Norton, Radstock & District **JOURNAL**

BBC **RADIO BRISTOL**

THE WEEK IN
Your local FREE paper

BATH ECHO

Tweets	Following	Followers
81.7K	2,936	31.2K

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Parish Liaison Meeting

30th October 2019
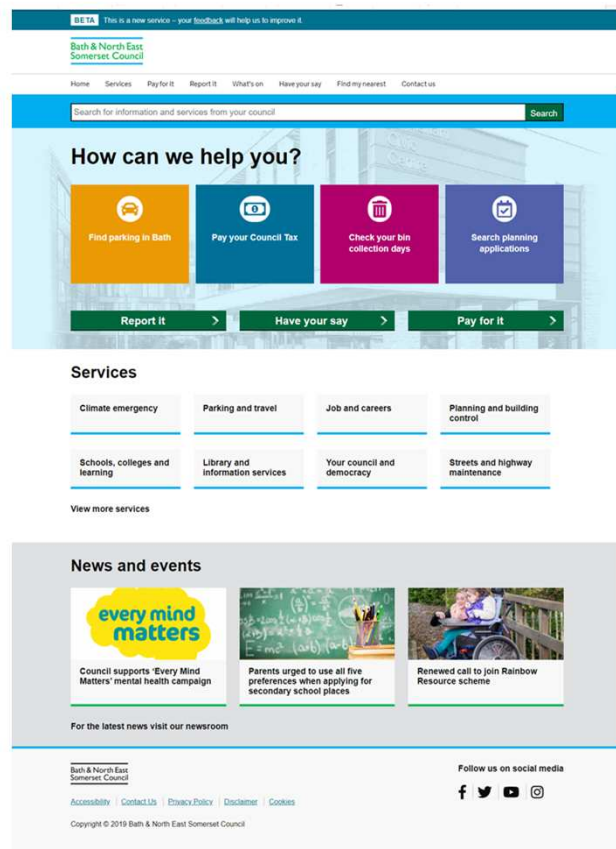
We are changing our website!

Bath & North East Somerset - *The* place to live, work and visit

Bath & North East Somerset Council

Why are we doing this?

- Current website has 1000's of pages added by over a hundred different officers, meaning quality of content is variable, look and feel is inconsistent
- Some content is very out of date and even contradictory and content is duplicated across our own site and other sites
- It is not fully mobile compatible and doesn't meet accessibility legislation
- Feedback from users is that the current site is confusing
- Not enough of our customers interact with us online

Bath & North East Somerset - *The* place to live, work and visit

Bath & North East
Somerset Council

What are we doing?
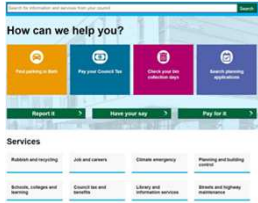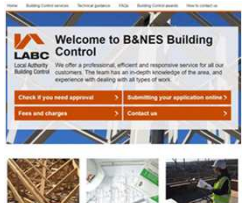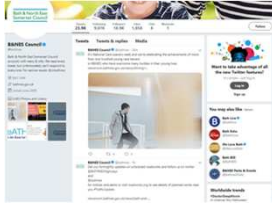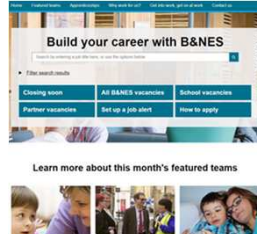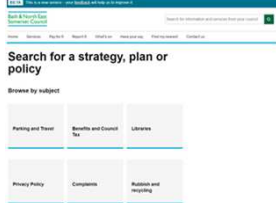
- Using data and analytics to understand the current site and prioritise work
- Conducting user research and testing our redesigned pages with users, changing them if needed
- Replacing existing PDF and Word forms with true online versions (where appropriate), and improving governance of website to ensure consistency and quality
- Using a toolkit (based on Government Digital Services) to provide a consistent look and feel

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Bath & North East
Somerset Council

What are the benefits?

- 24/7 options for customers to interact with council and a reduction in telephone / letter / email contacts (all more expensive)
- More accurate information for users and to service teams
- Improved news/consultation/planning services
- Website will be easier to maintain in future, with reduced duplication as we get people to the right help sooner

Project is an enabler for wider digital transformation

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Bath & North East Somerset Council

Structure of new website

Transactional	Commercial	Newsroom	Social media	Job site	Policy and strategy
Pay for it; Book it; Report it; Apply for it; Signposting to other [external] websites.	Pages and sites with a marketing and branding focus.	Council and partner news, Leader's Blog	Communicate fast moving issues; Complement core transactional site.	Jobs site with consistent branding.	Policies and strategies that we need to publish but distract from core site

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Transactional

Top tasks more prominent

Report it, Pay for it, Have your say grouped together and easier to find

Most visited services on the home page

Will adjust dynamically according to user needs

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Transactional

Information on pages is laid out in a much more user friendly way, which helps meet new accessibility legislation.

Transactional

Replacing Word and PDF forms with online versions, using data we hold more effectively, and redesigning key online services such as viewing/commenting on planning applications

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A new approach for policy and strategy documents...

and improving the way we communicate about consultations.

Developing a strategy for Keynsham

📅 Published: 2018-10-23 📄 Updated: 2019-05-24 🏷 Subject: Parking and Travel

The Keynsham transport strategy was adopted by the council in July 2016. The long term vision is to minimise the negative effects of traffic congestion in and around Keynsham and ensuring it retains its independence and its separate identity within an attractive rural setting by becoming a more sustainable, desirable and well-connected place in which to live and work.

Documents

- Getting Around Keynsham transport strategy
- Exhibition display boards
- Frequently asked questions

Care and Support Charging and Financial Assessment Framework

What are we proposing to do?

Bath & North East Somerset Council is proposing to introduce a Care and Support Charging and Financial Assessment Framework. This will change some of the ways in which we allocate our resources and calculate the charge you will pay.

The council faces continued financial pressures due to the increase in the demand for its services at the same time as managing the reduction in funding that it receives from central government. The increase in demand is as a result of an increase in our older population, improvements to healthcare services and people living longer, some of whom have complex needs and need care for longer.

We want to ensure that we continue to protect the most vulnerable people in our community and by implementing the Care and Support Charging and Financial Assessment Framework we will allocate funding to meet people's needs.

We currently support around 2,100 people who are in need of adult services both in care homes and at home. Care and support service and there are clear guidelines for all councils which are set out in th about how this should be carried out. However some charging deci discretion of the council for example, Disability Related Expenditure

We have used the guidelines from the National Association of Finar Officers (NAFAO) to assist in drafting the Framework as well as rev practice from other local authorities.

Our aim is to:

Downloads

Consultation document
Consultation questionnaire
Direct Payment Policy
Disability related expenditure factsheet
Draft Care and Support Financial Framework
Frequently asked questions

Easy Read versions

Easy Read consultation document
Easy Read consultation questionnaire
Easy Read Direct Payment Policy
Easy Read draft Care and Support Financial Framework

Why are we consulting?

Before the Framework is agreed, we want to find out what people think about the proposals and we will ensure that your views are taken into account before a final decision is made.

Who are we consulting?

We want to hear from as many people as possible, including individuals with care needs, carers and their families, agencies, social workers and anyone who has an interest in adult social care across Bath and North East Somerset.

What are the proposals?

We want your views on the following proposals:

- Individuals will be required to respond within two weeks of being contacted by a care finance officer to arrange a meeting to discuss the financial assessment. If no contact is made within this period, they will be deemed as self-funding.
- The Council will take into account Pension Guaranteed Credit and Employment and Support Allowance benefit that a service user would have an automatic entitlement to, if an application were made.
- A new third party 'Top Up Agreement' will be implemented for families /friends/ organisations who wish to make a top up payment on behalf of an individual. Example a larger room in a care home.
- There will be an improved procedure for setting up a Deferred Payment Agreement (DPA) and an increase in the fees charged for setting up a DPA.
- A new Interim Funding Policy (dependent upon criteria) is proposed for those people who have unregistered properties and for those who are waiting to obtain deputyship to allow them to act on the individual's behalf.

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Sites with a commercial/branding focus such as Building Control, https://buildingcontrol.bathnes.gov.uk/

a refreshed jobs and careers site, https://jobsandcareers.bathnes.gov.uk/

and a new Newsroom site https://newsroom.bathnes.gov.uk/

Bath & North East Somerset – *The* place to live, work and visit
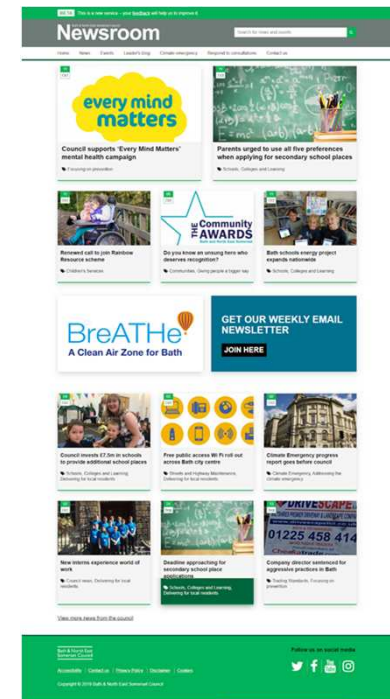
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Information for Parish & Town Councils to start preparing for the Website Accessibility Regulations

PRESENTATION BY COUNCILLOR DAWN DRURY – B&NES ALCA CHAIR

Compliance with website accessibility regulations (WCAG 1.2 AA standard) will become mandatory for all Town, Parish and Community Councils on 23rd September 2020 and for mobile apps by 23rd June 2021. This is going to mean changes in the way you publish information online, as well as in the way you write your web pages and documents such as minutes and agendas.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY OF WEBSITES AND MOBILE APPS SO THAT THEY CAN BE USED BY AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE.

Do not panic! There is provision allowing continued use of non-compliant aspects of a website where compliance is a disproportionate burden.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU BELIEVE THAT THIS WOULD BE THE CASE FOR YOUR TOWN OR PARISH COUNCIL.

IN THIS INSTANCE YOU NEED TO UNDERTAKE AN ASSESSMENT AND DOCUMENT YOUR FINDINGS.

The Assessment

As part of your assessment you should document:

(i)   that you have considered the benefits to users with disabilities of meeting the standards

(ii)   the cost of meeting the standards

(iii)   how it is used by disabled people, how often and for how long

(iv)   your Council's size and resources

LACK OF TIME OR KNOWLEDGE OR NOT GIVING THE MATTER PRIORITY IS NO EXCUSE FOR NOT MAKING YOUR WEBSITE ACCESSIBLE.

Ensuring online accessibility for people with impaired vision, impaired hearing, cognitive impairments or learning disabilities.

The Government has identified that 1 in 5 of the UK population cannot currently access digital information due to websites and apps not being accessible.

WHAT DOES ACCESSIBILITY INCLUDE?

WEBSITE CONTENT & DESIGN, TYPE OF FONT, ENSURING THAT ALL DOCUMENTS ARE IN THE CORRECT FORMAT, THE COLOUR OF PRINT USED IN THE WEBSITE DESIGN.

PLUS ATTACHING SOFTWARE TOOLS.

If you decide to make your website accessible, you should consider software tools and changes to ensure that a person with disabilities may:

➢ change colours, contrast levels and fonts
➢ zoom in up to 300% without the text spilling off the screen
➢ navigate most of the website using just a keyboard
➢ navigate most of the website using speech recognition software
➢ listen to most of the website using a screen reader (including the most recent versions of JAWS, NVDA and VoiceOver)
➢ website text is as simple as possible to understand.

WHERE TO SEEK ADVICE ON THESE TOOLS/AIDS.

TAKE A LOOK AT - ABILITYNET

HTTPS://MCMW.ABILITYNET.ORG.UK/

Designing for users who are Deaf or hard of hearing

Do... / Don't...

Do this.

Do...	Don't...
write in plain English	use complicated words or figures of speech
use subtitles or provide transcripts for videos	put content in audio or video only
use a linear, logical layout	make complex layouts and menus
break up content with sub-headings, images and videos	make users read long blocks of content
let users ask for an interpreter when booking appointments	don't make telephone the only means of contact for users

For more information, contact: access@digital.homeoffice.gov.uk

Designing for users with dyslexia

Do... / Don't...

Do...	Don't...
use images and diagrams to support text	use large blocks of heavy text
align text to the left and keep a consistent layout	underline words, use italics or write in capitals — DON'T DO THIS
consider producing materials in other formats (for example, audio or video)	force users to remember things from previous pages - give reminders and prompts
keep content short, clear and simple	rely on accurate spelling - use autocorrect or provide suggestions
let users change the contrast between background and text	put too much information in one place

For more information, contact: access@digital.homeoffice.gov.uk

Designing for users with low vision

Do... / Don't...

Do...	Don't...
use good colour contrasts and a readable font size	use low colour contrasts and small font size
publish all information on web pages	bury information in downloads
use a combination of colour, shapes and text	only use colour to convey meaning
follow a linear, logical layout	spread content all over a page
put buttons and notifications in context	separate actions from their context

For more information, contact: access@digital.homeoffice.gov.uk

ON PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITES - TAKE A LOOK AT THESE PICTORIAL GUIDES.

HTTPS://PARISH-COUNCIL.WEBSITE/WEBSITE-ACCESSIBILITY-DOS-AND-DONTS-A-PICTORIAL-GUIDE/

The next four slides will explain things on your website that you can be checking now which have minimal financial outlay.

1. Is your website correctly formatted?

Make sure that you are using proper markup to style your headings. You need to do this because some users with visual impairments use 'screen readers' to read out the text for them. These screen readers will often jump through the list of headings so that they can quickly find the information they are looking for.   If you style your headings just using the normal font but making it larger or bold, the screen readers will not recognise them as headings.

If you are using WordPress, you can tell if the headings are styled correctly by opening up the page in the editor and clicking on the headings. The drop-down box at the top of the screen should show 'Heading 2' or 'Heading 3', rather than 'Paragraph' when you have a heading selected.   If it doesn't, simply select the heading that you would like to apply to the text, then click 'Publish' to save your changes.

2. Are you using descriptive links?

Check that links clearly state what they are linking to. This is important because users viewing your site using screen readers will frequently scan through just the links on the page. This means that they don't have the surrounding text to explain where the link is going to. So for example, instead of a link saying 'Agenda' you should set up a link saying 'Agenda 3 March 2019'.

How to write good link text

➢ Put the most important words at the front of the link for example use 'website accessibility – further information' instead of 'click here for more information about website accessibility'

➢ Make sure the links make sense if viewed in isolation

➢ For links that lead to information, use text about that information in the link

➢ For links that take visitors to a page where they will complete a task, begin the link with a verb. For example: 'contact us'

➢ Where possible use the title of the page you are linking to as the link text

➢ Don't use the same link text to link to different places

➢ Think about visitors with reduced motor skills and don't make the link too small as it will be difficult to select. One word links aren't ideal for these users.

3. Are you saving your files in accessible PDF/A format?

All office files that were created after 23rd September 2018 need to be accessible. This means that if you have saved them as PDF files, they must be saved in the accessible version of PDF which is PDF/A.

PDF/A format is a version of PDF. In order for a document to be accessible by screen readers it needs to have 'tags' and 'searchable text'.

Tags are elements that structure the page. For example there are tags for paragraphs, headings, lists, table and images. These tags enable users using screen readers to quickly and easily navigate the page content.

Searchable text means that text is embedded in the pdf, rather than the text existing as an image (for example a scanned form). If you're not sure, open your pdf and try to drag and select the text. If you can do that it is searchable.

Older documents that were published before September 2018 do not need to be accessible unless they are essential for the council's services. However you should state this in your accessibility statement and provide an alternative means of users being provided with that information on request.

How to save Word documents in accessible PDF/A format   Use this link to Parish Council websites for further information.

4. Is your website written in simple language?

When you are writing it is important to think about making your information – whether it's web pages or pdf minutes – accessible to users with cognitive impairments. These include visitors who may have difficulties with memory, comprehending and reasoning or users with adaptive behaviour impairments. For example users with dementia, dyslexia, autism.

You should:

➢Write in plain English

➢Use short, simple sentences

➢Do not use long or complicated words

➢Break up long blocks of text into headings/bullets/short paragraphs

➢Don't use figures of speech

➢Don't use footnotes

➢Don't expect users to remember information from a previous pages

Compton Dando Parish Council
– our experience of making a website accessible

Back in January of this year, our Parish Clerk had a good look at the Government Guidance 'How we are helping public sector websites meet accessibility requirements'.

https://gds.blog.gov.uk/2018/09/24/how-were-helping-public-sector-websites-meet-accessibility-requirements/

We discovered our website did not meet the requirements, in particular we were not able to move around the website using a keyboard and we discovered that scanning in signed minutes and policies which creates a pdf to put on the website, is not readable by a pdf-reader that visually impaired users would use.

We contacted our current website provider for assistance without success, so we began to investigating finding an alternative company that had experience and could look at our website and check fully for accessibility.   We received initial advice from two companies. One company was particularly helpful – Town and Parish Council Websites. In early June of this year, after having a full assessment, as a Parish Council we made the decision to have a new fully accessible website designed. Our website had always had limited functionality and was due for an update anyway.

Compton Dando Parish Council
– our experience of making a website accessible

In mid June, we received some examples of other Parishes Council websites and we chose a style and layout that we preferred.

Our Parish Clerk and Councillors were consulted throughout the design period and were given the opportunity to provide images and have a say in what documents, links and layout that would work best for our Council, Parishioners and other users.

On 23rd October, our new website that had been created in order to comply with accessibility legislation went live. https://comptondandopc.org.uk/

The new site cost £798 (£399 + £399) including the development and set-up of the Website

Hosting Fees including the provision of website hosting and technical support will be charged at £180 per year.

Finally, you need to produce, approve and display on your website an Accessibility Statement. Our Parish Council produced ours by using the Government document – 'Sample accessibility statement (for fictional public sector website)'

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sample-accessibility-statement/sample-accessibility-statement-for-a-fictional-public-sector-website#contents

If you would like any further information please do not hesitate to contact NALC, ALCA and BLCC who have some good guidance documents on website accessibility

Thank you for Listening.

Compton Dando Parish Council

Serving Compton Dando, Chewton Keynsham, Queen Charlton, Burnett and Woollard (East)

HOME   PARISH COUNCIL ∨   LOCAL INFORMATION ∨   USEFUL LINKS   CONTACT US

Compton Dando Parish Council

Compton Dando Parish Council serving the five villages of Compton Dando Parish: Compton Dando,

UPCOMING EVENTS

8:00 pm, November 19, 2019 –

Parish Council Meeting

Privacy &

PARISH LIAISON MEETING – Terms of Reference

Membership

1. Bath & North East Somerset Council will appoint representatives to the Parish Liaison meetings in such numbers as it decides. One of its representatives (usually the Chair of Council) will chair each meeting.

2. The parish and town councils will each be entitled to send their nominated representative (usually the Chair of the Council) and their Clerk to the meetings.

3. The Local Councils Association for the Council's area will be entitled to send representation to the meetings in their own right.

4. Officers of Bath & North East Somerset Council will attend meetings as necessary to advise and assist discussion.

Purpose

5. The Liaison Meeting will provide an opportunity for the discussion of issues of common interest, identified by the Council or by parish/town Councils (individually or collectively), that are relevant for discussion in this forum

6. Items of relevance are likely to be those:

   - That have direct impact on all, or a significant number of, parish/town Councils
   - That support an effective working partnership between tiers of local government
   - Relating to the Parish Charter
   - Where a collective view from Local Councils would be helpful

7. Items that are not likely to be relevant for the Liaison meeting include;

   - Those that relate to a single, or small number of, parish/town area(s)
   - Those for which other effective channels of communication exist (including issues that are already the subject of detailed consultation)

8. The infrequency of Liaison Meetings means that it is not a practical forum through which to engage in routine consultation.

Working arrangements

9. There will be three meetings each year.

10. There is an option for one of these to be a 'Conference style' meeting for networking, and to provide training, updates, briefings and presentations on good practice from parish councils. Where appropriate these will also be provided at other meetings in the cycle.

Agenda setting

11. The agendas will be set through consultation between the Council and parish councils allowing for full ALCA input into the process. This will take account of other forums' interests in discussions on topics and will avoid duplication where possible. Further information on protocols are found in the Toolkit of the Parish Charter.

Public Speaking Scheme

13. The Parish Liaison meeting is a partnership meeting which is heard in open session. Membership is open to invitees only i.e. councillors and clerks from the parish and town councils within B&NES. It is not a statutory meeting of the Council and is not a B&NES member-led meeting. Therefore it is not required to conform to the normal rules regarding agenda content and despatch. Agenda items are mutually agreed beforehand by the parishes and B&NES.

14. It has not been felt necessary to have a separate public speaking item on the agenda because this is a partnership body with clearly defined areas for discussion and restricted membership. The general public may only attend as observers – they have no automatic right to speak or make statements.

15. However, as with most public meetings, the Chair may exercise his/her discretion if notified that a member of the public has given notice that they wish to raise an item of general interest and relevance to the membership. Please contact the Democratic Services Officer if you require more information.