

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday 22nd May 2025

Present:- **Councillors** Michael Auton, Tim Ball, Alex Beaumont, David Biddleston, Colin Blackburn, Alison Born, Paul Crossley, Chris Dando, Jess David, Mark Elliott, Sarah Evans, Fiona Gourley, Kevin Guy, Ian Halsall, David Harding, Liz Hardman, Gavin Heathcote, Saskia Heijltjes, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Duncan Hounsell, Shaun Hughes, Dr Eleanor Jackson, Grant Johnson, Samantha Kelly, George Leach, John Leach, Ruth Malloy, Lesley Mansell, Matt McCabe, Paul May, Sarah Moore, Ann Morgan, Robin Moss, Michelle O'Doherty, Bharat Pankhania, June Player, Manda Rigby, Dine Romero, Sam Ross, Onkar Saini, Toby Simon, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, George Tomlin, Malcolm Treby, Warren, Sarah Warren, Andy Wait and Joanna Wright

Apologies for absence: **Councillors** Anna Box, Deborah Collins, Alan Hale, Steve Hedges, Hal MacFie, Paul Roper, Karen Walker and Tim Warren CBE

1 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

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

2 ELECTION OF CHAIR 2025/26

It was proposed by Councillor Robin Moss, seconded by Councillor Kevin Guy and supported by Councillors Shaun Hughes, Joanna Wright, Gavin Heathcote and Sarah Evans and then

RESOLVED unanimously that Councillor Liz Hardman be elected Chair of the Council for the Council year 2025/26.

Councillor Liz Hardman made and signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office, received the Chain of Office from Councillor Sarah Moore and then addressed the Council. She thanked Members for their support and the outgoing Chair for the excellent example she had set. She explained she was looking forward to representing the Council at citizenship ceremonies and the Corporate Parenting Panel. She explained that one of her main areas of focus would be mental health charities, including Bath Mind, whilst continuing to support the residents of Paulton.

3 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR 2025/26

It was proposed by Councillor Kevin Guy, seconded by Councillor Robin Moss, and

RESOLVED that Councillor Shaun Stephenson-McGall be elected Vice Chair of the Council for the Council year 2025/26.

Councillor Shaun Stephenson-McGall made and signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office, received the Chain of Office from Councillor Liz Hardman and thanked the Council for his appointment.

[Notes;

1. *The above successful resolution was carried with 47 Councillors voting in favour and 2 Councillors abstaining.]*

4 MINUTES - 20TH MARCH 2025

On a motion from Councillor Eleanor Jackson, seconded by Councillor Matt McCabe, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of 20th March 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Grant Johnson declared an 'other' interest, in regard to the Licensing Policy item, as a member of a football club management committee.

Councillor Matt McCabe declared an 'other' interest in regard to the same item, as a Board Member of Komedica.

6 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL OR FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Councillor Liz Hardman explained that, as Councillor Karen Walker was unable to be present, she would be presented with her past Chair's badge at the July Council meeting.

The Chair then;

1. Made the customary announcements regarding microphones and phones; and
2. Announced that the meeting was being webcast and invited anyone who did not wish to be filmed to make themselves known to the camera operators.

7 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There were no items of urgent business.

8 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS AND OTHER ASSOCIATED ANNUAL BUSINESS

The Council considered a report concerning its non-executive and regulatory Committee arrangements for the Council Year May 2025 to May 2026 and associated annual business. The Council was also required to formally undertake a statutory review of the political proportionality arrangements (as triggered under

section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989) in respect of bodies that are required to be politically proportionate, following the recent change in political group membership.

Councillor Kevin Guy, before moving the recommendations, announced his new Cabinet structure and portfolios as set out below;

Cabinet Members	
Cllr Sarah Warren (statutory dep Leader)	Sustainable B&NES
Cllr Mark Elliott (dep Leader)	Resources
Cllr Matt McCabe	Built Environment, Housing & Sustainable Development
Cllr Joel Hirst	Sustainable Transport Strategy
Cllr Lucy Hodge	Sustainable Transport Delivery
Cllr Alison Born	Adult Services
Cllr Paul May	Children's Services
Cllr Manda Rigby	Communications & Civic Services
Cllr Paul Roper	Economic, Cultural Sustainable Development
Cabinet Project Leads	
Cllr Oli Henman	Climate Change
Cllr Ian Halsall	Council Environmental and Waste Services
Cllr Fiona Gourley	Sustainable Transport & Rural
Cllr Onkar Saini	Business and Skills

On a motion from Councillor Kevin Guy, seconded by Councillor Robin Moss, it was then

RESOLVED to

1. Approve the structure for non-executive and regulatory decision making and Policy Development & Scrutiny working;
2. Accordingly, appoint those bodies with membership, terms of reference and delegated powers as set out in the Constitution, noting the amendment to the Restructuring Implementation Committee Terms of Reference as set out in paragraph 4.2 of the report and amendments to the Health & Wellbeing Board Terms of Reference, as set out in paragraph 4.3 of the report;
3. Approve the allocation of seats on those Committees and Panels (such seats to be filled in accordance with the nominations made by the political groups), as set out in Appendix 2 of the report;
4. Appoint to chair each committee and panel those Councillors as may from time to time be nominated by the political group to whom the chairmanship of the body is allocated;

5. Authorise the Monitoring Officer to fill any casual vacancies in membership of all the bodies constituted and vacancy in the office of Chair of such bodies in accordance with the wishes of the political groups;
6. Determine the bodies on which co-opted and independent members are to have seats, as either voting or non-voting members and appoint such members accordingly;
7. Confirm the continuing B&NES membership on Avon Fire Authority of Councillors Paul May, Onkar Saini and Robin Moss;
8. Note the arrangements for the conduct of Cabinet business;
9. Note the urgent executive decisions that have been taken in the last municipal year;
10. Note the activity of the Member Advocates;
11. Instruct the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with Group Leaders, to make appointments on non-executive outside bodies and note that the Leader or Cabinet Members will do so for executive outside bodies, where such vacancies arise;
12. Note the Police and Crime Panel's annual report;
13. Note the calendar of meeting dates that has been prepared up to May 2026 which is available on the Council's website;
14. Authorise the Monitoring Officer to make and publicise any amendment to the Council's Constitution required, or take any other necessary action, as a result of decisions taken at this meeting on this and other reports within the agenda, or otherwise as required by law.

[Notes;

2. *The above successful resolution was carried with 45 Councillors voting in favour and 2 Councillors abstaining.]*

9 LICENSING ACT 2023; REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

The Committee considered a report presenting the findings of a public consultation exercise and recommending to Council to adopting the Statement of Licensing Policy following consideration by the Licensing Committee in April 2025.

On a motion from Councillor Tim Ball, seconded by Councillor Toby Simon, it was

RESOLVED to

1. Note the responses to the public consultation exercise and to accept the officer recommendations in Appendix 1 of the report;

2. Note that the proposed policy was placed before the Licensing Committee on 24 April 2025 and received their input and approval for the policy to proceed to Council for its consideration; and
3. Adopt the revised Statement of Licensing Policy in Appendix 2 of the report.

[Notes;

3. *The above successful resolution was carried with 45 Councillors voting in favour and 2 Councillors abstaining.]*

10 CONSTITUTION; RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONSTITUTION WORKING GROUP

The Council considered a report from its Constitution Working Group recommending revised Contract Standing Orders, financial delegations and a voting process change.

On a motion from Councillor Tim Ball, seconded by Councillor Robin Moss, it was unanimously

RESOLVED to

1. Approve the revised Contract Standing Orders as set out at Appendix 1 of the report for adoption into the Constitution to come into operation on July 1st 2025;
2. Approve the Financial Scheme of Delegations, as set out at Appendix 2 of the report and its addition to the Constitution as a new section at 3.7.12;
3. Agree a delegation to the Section 151 Officer to approve the updated Financial Regulations in due course, as set out in paragraph 3.7 of the report;
4. Approve the additions to the officer delegations scheme to cover the Council's property assets;
5. Agree that all votes on substantive items at Council be named votes, as described in paragraphs 3.9 - 3.12 of the report to take effect from the July 2025 Council meeting; and
6. Agree the consequent procedural rule amendments (as set out in Appendix 4 of the report) that are needed to put this voting decision in place.

11 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Statements were made by the following members of the public.

Susan Charles made a statement about Access, Planning and Buses. Susan called on the Council to have accessibility in mind for all aspects of travel use and gave

some examples of recent problems. A full copy of the statement has been added to the Minute book and the online record.

Jason Towells made a statement about Fosse Way school and called on the Council to reconsider funding students at this vital service. A full copy of the statement has been added to the Minute book and the online record. Councillor Shaun Hughes asked whether there had been any changes in the children's needs that would support the Council's decision, to which Jason replied that the children's needs had not changed. Councillor Sarah Evans asked if this would potentially affect school attendance, to which Jason replied, potentially it would. He explained that transition is very difficult and traumatic for these students and being on site means this is minimised so they are able to access school calmly, and challenging behaviour at home is reduced. Unfortunately, some children may refuse to attend at all. Councillor Lesley Mansell asked if Jason was aware that the Children, Adults, Health & Wellbeing PDS Panel had considered this issue and specifically the disproportionate number of young people with special educational needs within the youth justice system and whether he considered that withdrawing funding may mean these young people are more likely to end up in the youth justice system. Jason replied that, as some of these young people were severely autistic, their needs were different. Councillor Joanna Wright asked if the closure of the residential provision might lead to some children going into care, to which Jason replied that potentially it could mean that for a small group of children.

Joanne Meredith made a statement calling for a new community hall in Keynsham. She spoke as a member of Keynsham light opera group for 25 years, serving as chair of committee for over 10 years and a director for the group since 2010 and also the volunteer artistic director of Phoenix Keynsham Youth Theatre. A full copy of the statement has been added to the Minute book and the online record. Joanne set out the reasons why a community facility was needed and would benefit the Keynsham community. Councillor Dave Biddleston asked whether the problems Joanne had described were experienced by other organisations in the town, to which Joanne replied that she was on a local working group and these difficulties were shared by other groups. Councillor Kevin Guy asked if there was any kind of business case whereby the Council might be able to match funds raised by the community, to which Joanne responded that she wasn't aware that there was. Councillor Chris Warren asked for clarification on the age range for the Phoenix group, which was given, and mentioned the hall at the new Pixash facility.

Bethany Claus Widick made a statement about the Winifred's Lane ETRO, a copy of which has been added to the Minute book and the online record. Bethany explained that the ETRO had made a clear and positive impact on the quality of life and safety in her neighbourhood.

Charlie Knight, a student at the University of Bath, made a statement about making WECA work for Bath, a copy of which has been added to the Minute book and the online record. Charlie thanked the Council for a number of positive impacts the Council had had on the city. Councillor Robin Moss asked Charlie if he was aware that the Council also represented North East Somerset. Charlie agreed that he was aware.

Adrian Inker made a statement making the case for a community hall in Keynsham, a copy of which has been added to the Minute book and the online record. He presented data about the population increase and set out the many benefits such a facility would bring, including bringing together charities and community organisations to encourage joint working and support. Councillor Kevin Guy asked if there was yet a business plan for this proposal, to which Adrian replied that they could work on one, but that it would be helpful to know at the outset that they had the Council's support before investing time and effort. Councillor Dave Biddleston queried whether Adrian was aware that plans for a theatre complex at Broadlands school had been included in the Building Schools for the Future programme some years ago, which had been cancelled by the Conservative government. Adrian replied that he had been involved in the plans for that project, which had coincided with the Academy programme which took this out of the Local Authority's remit which had been very unfortunate. Councillor Sam Ross asked if Keynsham Town Council would be involved in plans, to which Adrian replied that they would be part of any consultation and planning process, but ownership would need to remain with the community.

Taylor Wilson-Quon made a statement about the National Highways recommendation to make the A350 a strategic route from the M4 to the Dorset coast, thereby diverting traffic and particularly HGVs from driving through Bath. He welcomed this as a positive step forward, leading to less congestion and pollution in the city.

Simon McCombe made a statement about rural transport (a copy of which has been added to the Minute book and the online record) and in particular the 'Big Lemon' bus service (X91 and X99) which serves the Chew Valley. He outlined how vital this service was to the community and hoped that WECA would continue to provide this. Councillor Kevin Guy asked if Simon would like to meet with Councillor Fiona Gourley, the new Cabinet Project Lead for Rural connectivity. Simon replied that he was sure the Chew Valley Sustainable Transport Project group would be interested in doing so.

The Chair thanked the speakers for their statements, which would be referred to the relevant Cabinet Member.

12 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Councillor Shaun Hughes made a statement in support of Fosse Way House as a vital and unique lifeline for children and families, as endorsed by their OFSTED report. He praised the outstanding work they did, at a fraction of the cost of alternatives and called on the Council to reverse the decision to withdraw funding before the facility was lost within a matter of weeks. Councillor Joanna Wright asked if Councillor Hughes was aware of the costs B&NES would incur if some of the children had to go into care, to which Councillor Hughes replied that he did not have the costs for B&NES, but was aware from other Councils that it could be in the region of £5k a week, or more if the child has more complex needs. Councillor Kevin Guy asked Councillor Hughes if he had noted from the report that went to the Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel on this issue that decisions made had not been for budgetary reasons, but were educational decisions based upon expert advice as no funding had been withdrawn. Councillor Hughes confirmed that he had, but noted

that the funding was not being provided and disagreed with the contention that these children did not require the service.

The Chair referred this statement to the relevant Cabinet Member.

The meeting ended at 7.55 pm

Chair

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

COUNCIL MEETING 22nd MAY 2025

STATEMENTS FROM PUBLIC

Public (item 12)

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. Susan Charles | Access, Planning and Buses (<i>attached</i>) |
| 2. Jason Towells | Fosse Way school (<i>attached</i>) |
| 3. Joanne Meredith | A community hall for Keynsham |
| 4. Bethany Claus Widick | Winifred's Lane ETRO |
| 5. Charlie Knight | Making WECA work for Bath |
| 6. Adrian Inker | A community hall for Keynsham |
| 7. Taylor Wilson-Quin | HGVs no longer using Bath as a cut through |
| 8. Simon McCombe | Rural transport |

This page is intentionally left blank

Access/Buses

Firstly I'd like to thank Councillor Guy for your invitation last November to meet with Councillor McCabe and Cindy with our Access groups concerns for 'Accessible Planning at the Onset '

We had an informative meeting I hope on both sides, so my many thanks to you all.

Our former Weca Mayor had forwarded our concerns to the Government last summer and I am in touch with Baroness Taylor Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Housing and Local Government who has passed our concerns to the relevant departmental officials for 'careful consideration'.

Our hopes that Accessible Planning for all new build becomes mandatory.

Accessible Buses often a problem not just getting on and off, but over the last two years with ongoing road works on the A4 affecting the X39 bus route between our cities and the A4 Airport bus route.

It seems the joined up thinking between the contractors, planning , street furniture, temporary traffic lighting etc being installed for vehicles to continue their journey between the cities whilst works continues, has not always included bus users.

Last year, the bus stops were going to be closed between the Globe roundabout and Saltford for a whole week. Buses still running ... but NOT allowed to stop for passengers.

Luckily, after a phone call to John Wass of Highways who held an emergency meeting two days before to arrange temporary bus stops, where the buses would be insured, and passengers could carry on their daily routine, as for vehicle drivers.

Resurfacing three weeks ago on the A4 between The Globe and Saltford.

Vehicles had been warned on the roadsides weeks before so could plan ahead. A detour route on A39 around to Hicks Gate planned...on the Internet. Not clear for bus users, and not everyone is on the Internet.

It took again a phone call the week before, notices eventually went up at Corston Turn bus stop, hopefully others, only four days before the 8pm-7am overnight closures. That included three days of a bank holiday weekend.

Along with this lack of communication between services, lack of electronic timetables and bus shelters, it does not encourage bus use, and with a very busy A4, buses can be very, very unreliable.

I'm informed these problems are on many bus routes.

Waiting at a cold bus stop in the rain, wondering if the bus will come,and will it stop.

This does not encourage car users to leave their car at home.

Please, at least more joined up thinking among the services for ALL road travellers.

Thank you for your time.

Susan Charles Cllr.

Corston Parish Council.

Access Banes Chair.

Good Evening Councillors, thank you for the opportunity in allowing me to speak this evening.

I am here to discuss the potential closure of Fosse Way House, the residential provision of Fosse Way School in Westfield.

Fosse Way House is an education provision that extends the learning beyond the school day for students accessing it, this education is vital in supporting those students attending in their preparation for adulthood.

In October 2024 BATHNES LA informed the school that they would no longer be funding placements in the residential provision as they had identified that no child accessing the school required this and that the education Fosse Way House provides can be met during the school day. Whilst Fosse Way School identifies that for some students the teaching of independent living, training and employment, community inclusion and staying healthy can be met through the school day, for others this is simply not possible due to the complexities of their diagnosis and behaviour. For some, the 24-hour education that the school provides can support the development of skills and enhance education, thus reducing the cost of future placements when leaving school due to the education provided.

The Partnership Trust submitted proposals and evidence for six students in January 2025 that they felt would constitute a residential placement, further referrals for other students were put on hold due to the LA's decision. This evidence for a residential placement was gathered from parents, school staff and external services supporting the young people, for example CAMHS. Most importantly it was submitted by people who live with and support that young person every day of their life across all areas encountered at home and in school. A lot of consideration is placed on whether FWH is a suitable placement for each individual and decisions are not taken lightly when applying for funding by the team around the child.

In a recent Scrutiny Panel, we heard that a multi-disciplinary team within BANES had made the decision not to place these students in FWH, citing that the school day can provide this education. Whilst not disputing the credibility of this team, I ask if they know the child better than the team supporting on a daily basis? We are disappointed at the lack of engagement from the LA in terms of these students and are still waiting for contact to be made to parents from January 2025 despite the LA saying they had done this.

FWH is inspected by Ofsted on an annual basis and for the last three years has been graded as Outstanding, this has coincided with the raising of the bar in relation to National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools in 2022. A recent report identified the following:

- Students have life-changing experiences and are prepared for the future.
- Consistent and persistent support from staff means children return home and do tasks they have never done before, or they cope with experiences in different ways.
- Professionals identify that the residential provision helps to bridge the gap between home and school, and that for some families it is vital to provide children with the opportunity to learn skills for the future.
- Leaders are ambitious, innovative and drive research with the goal of improving the experiences of children who attend the residential provision, the school and in the wider community.

The Partnership Trust feel that a provision like Fosse Way House should be celebrated by BATHNES and that serious consideration needs to be taken to decisions made about withdrawing funding for students accessing this. Whilst the Trust are aware that it is their decision to close the provision, without funding from the LA the options to keep this running are incredibly limited. The needs of the children accessing FWH have not changed and the support they require remains the same so this change in stance from the LA is disappointing and could potentially have a detrimental effect longer term on these vulnerable students. We encourage councillors to act on this to keep a provision like this thriving in the local community.

This page is intentionally left blank

Jo Meredith statement

Good evening, thank you to Councillor Dave Biddleston for inviting me to speak this evening on the need for a new community hall in Keynsham.

A quick introduction to who I am. My name is Jo Meredith and I have been a member of Keynsham light opera group for 25 years, serving as chair of committee for over 10 years and a director for the group since 2010.

Our members are aged 18 to 80.

I am also the volunteer artistic director of Phoenix Keynsham Youth Theatre who are an affordable, award-winning musical theatre group for children aged 10 to 17. I helped to re-establish the group over 10 years ago starting with 13 children and we have grown to a cast of nearly 40 with a waiting list!

Both groups serve an important role in the community of Keynsham and the wider area.

Klog rehearse Monday and Wednesdays throughout the year, perform two shows a year, a Christmas concert plus hold fundraising events throughout the year.

The children rehearse once a week and perform one to two shows a year plus hold fundraising events.

Both groups perform at the Keynsham music festival, Winter festival, carol singing at retirement homes, and we have sung for the twinning committee of Bath and the Lord Mayor and their guests.

We find ourselves in the difficult position of having no guaranteed theatre space in Keynsham or the wider surrounding area to perform our shows.

We are also currently having difficulty finding a new home for rehearsals since having to leave Broadlands Academy due to astronomical rising hire charges, unavailability of the venue due to the fact there is only one hall which is also used for exams and school not having available funds to

make their theatre space safe with a condemned theatre rig and essential Stage repairs not completed for several years.

We have for the last two years been trying to make The Space (above keynsham Library) work as a theatre but unfortunately the venue is wholly inadequate.

It is without changing facilities, we currently use the upstairs library offices for the boys to change and we have to use library display boards to create a hanging area and cover the floor to ceiling glass windows so girls can change in safe surroundings, there is no adequate space for technical teams and we currently empty the storage cupboard to house them, the maximum seating for the audience is 108 and in a week long show of Annie in the Easter holidays this year, we sold every seat and had a waiting list for tickets.

When the venue is at full capacity, there is a lack of suitable toilets and front of house space for patrons to comfortably enjoy refreshments.

There are no lighting bars fitted at the venue or ceiling curtain tracks which would be standard in any theatre space.

Next year, we are unable to book the venue for a stage show as it has already been pre booked throughout the year for council meetings, and booked for numerous external classes.

We are now looking as far afield as Conygre Hall in Timsbury, the Rondo Theatre in Bath, and we've just been turned down by Warmley community hall as a venue due to their bookings being at maximum capacity.

A new community hall in Keynsham, would benefit not only the users but the wider community. It would improve people's lives. Community theatre helps build strong community, encourages inclusivity and diversity, supports mental well-being, supports learning and development, provides a positive economic and cultural impact for the

town, fosters future artists and provides community the opportunity to be involved from stepping out on stage, making and painting set, helping front of house serve teas, or attend a show in your local town, with no need to travel long distance or pay high theatre prices and experience the magic of theatre in your town, in a hall you are proud belongs to your town.

This page is intentionally left blank

Council Statement

My name is Bethany Claus Widick, I am a resident of lower Lansdown. I'm here to offer my perspective on the ETRO taking place in my neighbourhood. First, I'd like to tell you how it was, prior to the liveable neighbourhood initiative:

Every morning and afternoon during school run time, we would see parents using Cavendish, Winifred's Lane, Sion Hill, and Lansdown Crescent as cut-throughs on their way to and from Kingswood and the Royal High. There were giant SUVs bombing through the neighbourhood, often with one child, at excessive speeds. They would ignore pedestrians, and we and our daughter were almost hit multiple times, while walking to and from school. We didn't walk our dog during school run times, because we were concerned for her safety, due to some near misses.

We had seen the opposition on class WhatsApp groups, primarily coming from people who don't live in lower Lansdown who simply want it as a convenient way to drive their children to school and shave two minutes off of their route. Their poor planning and "me first" attitude shouldn't require us to accept a dangerous situation. And for parents who lived closer to one school campus, they refused to consider the minibus services that both Kingswood and the Royal High offer to transport children between prep and senior school campuses. They simply preferred to drive.

Now, with the ETRO in place, this is our current situation:

The neighbourhood is quieter, traffic is calmed, and we have seen more people walking and biking, both residents and tourists who frequently visit the Crescent. There is a tangible difference in feeling safer as a pedestrian, walking the dog, walking to and from work down in the city and my daughter walking to and from school.

While we don't have a car, we do take taxis and Ubers as well as the bus, so we have firsthand experience in the impact of the detour on drivers. Moreover, we can actually put a numerical figure on it, which is less than a pound. 1 additional minute, and less than a pound, for a taxi coming up from Kingsmead to pop over to Lansdown Road as opposed to the shorter route of Cavendish. That is absolutely worth it to us, to improve the safety of our neighbourhood, its children, pets, elderly and disabled.

We welcome and appreciate the trial and it has made a clear and positive impact on the quality of life and safety in our neighbourhood. Combined with the additional zebra crossings recently added on Lansdown Road, for which we thank the council most sincerely, there has been a demonstrable improvement in our safety as residents. This ETRO and liveable neighbourhood initiative is another positive step in ensuring that Bath is a liveable, thriving city for its residents.

This page is intentionally left blank

Statement to BANES Council 22/05/25

Good evening Councillors, I wanted to start by thanking the council and you all for the work you do. As a student at the university of Bath, I am profoundly grateful for the work this council puts into ensuring that Bath remains an amazing place to work, live and study for all. As a student I wanted to particularly highlight the value of easy access to heritage sights as well as the U1, the U2 and the U5, all essential services for students living in this city. It remains a pleasure to have lived and worked for the last 4 years in a city that is so hospitable for us all, and failing to acknowledge the work you all put in to not only maintain it but also to make it and the surrounding communities an even better place would be churlish at the very least.

I wanted to also congratulate Cllr Guy on his recent appointment as the first rotating Deputy Mayor under Mayor Godwin. The previous metro mayor's term was a failure in almost every conceivable way, and I hope this early display of bipartisan co-operation will be reflective of the rest of her term. She made much of her ability to work with the national government to gain the financial resources that are desperately needed in many parts of our area and I hope those become available in time to resolve some of the challenges we face. While I'm sure there have already been discussions about how our local communities can be improved through co-operation between BANES and WECA, I wanted to raise awareness on a few points that people living here have made when discussing their local areas.

I know the council has spent much time and effort trying to reduce congestion across Bath. Much of this congestion comes from young families seeking to drop their children off at school. I know that 'Independent Travel to School' is a key goal of this council, but a number of parents with children in school here in Bath have cited the continuously increasing costs of bus tickets as a key motivation in driving their children themselves, taking up valuable road space. If lower congestion is the goal, then making bus travel for schoolchildren cheaper is an obvious place for WECA to start, especially now they have ceased plastering the former mayor on the side of their buses!

The other point I'd like to briefly make is the importance of road maintenance. When I spoke at the cabinet meeting in February, I welcomed the expansion of the road cleaning crews, but more money is needed to fill in potholes and damaged pavements across the region. I met one elderly resident from Westfield (May Tree Drive) who showed me a picture of the substantially damaged pavements outside his home, and he expressed frustration that the council had not got the resource to fix the issue. In a time of ongoing cuts, I applaud the council for doubling their investment in footway repairs this year, and I urge both WECA and Westminster to step up with more money as well.

Thank you for your time councillors.

This page is intentionally left blank

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to address council in supporting the need for a community hall in Keynsham.

Over the last few years the increase in new homes has seen the population of Keynsham grow from 15,500 in 2011 to 20,500 in 2024, and it's still rising.

People moving into these homes have been welcomed and this has enabled the town to become much more diverse and has significantly reduced the age profile.

Unfortunately, we have seen very little improvement in infrastructure and community facilities and its hard to see where any CIL or section 106 money has been spent. A comment often heard in and around the town from countless residents and visitors.

The provision of a community hall in Keynsham would help to address this short fall. It would bring the community together and give residents a facility they could take ownership of, and take some pride in.

In Keynsham we are blessed with having a diverse number of quality performing Arts companies that are inclusive and open to all age groups. At present, there are limited opportunities for these groups to perform in the town. A fit for purpose facility in Keynsham could address this shortfall and bring live theatre back into the town. The benefits that such a facility will bring to residents is obvious to see. More opportunities for participation in the arts and culture for young and old alike, bringing about a major improvement to the quality of life and wellbeing of its residents. Such a facility would also encourage more visitors into the town to spend their money in the local shops and cafes and enjoy the other facilities Keynsham has to offer.

Any Community facility needs to maximise its use and a Community Hall should be no different. To this end, the new Community hall could be multi - purpose and could support the work of the numerous charities that exist to make life better for local residents.

Over the years I have seen the role of the Charity sector change, charities complemented the services provided by Local Authorities and other agencies. Because of year on year funding cuts to these bodies, the charity sector has had to pick up the slack and evolve from complementing those services to providing them.

We are very fortunate in Keynsham in having a great 3rd sector that provides a varied range of support services to help local residents. Bringing these charities together under one roof would bring numerous advantages. It would lead to better communication between charities and enable a more strategic approach to meeting the changing and challenging needs of the town. This could lead to better joint working, joint funding bids and less duplication.

The debate around a community hall in Keynsham is not new and pre-dates this council.

I would argue that the need is greater now than its ever been. If the political will is there, and with the support of the community, this vision could become a reality.

I would first like to pay my respects to Pete Wood who died last week, he was a dedicated member of the West Harptree Parish Council for many years, and leaves a lasting legacy.

Today, I would like to speak to you today regarding the X91 and X99 or locally known as 'The Big Lemon' bus service, which serves the Chew Valley and Bristol area. With thanks to The Chew Valley Sustainable Transport Group – volunteers: Jackie Head, Elaine Workman, Phil Collins and the other members of the Chew Valley community who has kept this project alive and they have worked so hard in getting the project off the ground and in forming a growing bus community.

The Chew Valley area was once served 376 bus service but faced changes in public transport funding, policy decisions by WECA and along with local councils, made the decision to restructure rural bus services in early 2023.

While the Demand Responsive Travel called WestLink was a step forward, many of the Chew Valley Community felt the service was hard to navigate, it was hard to book via the app and that the services were cancelled at the last minute, often leaving people including vulnerable women stranded or people being unable to attend appointments.

With this in mind, local campaigners and transport groups have lobbied WECA to reinstate or improve services, arguing that the cuts have left many rural residents isolated and without reliable transport options. The Big Lemon bus project has stepped in to provide those services.

The big lemon has been in place now for over a year and is a vital link to ongoing bus service to access the wider Bristol and Bath areas. There have been 3361 journeys in 2024 and 3044 individual journeys in 2025 showing a significant increase in the

number of users. This enables members of the community to be more active and feel and less isolated.

The scheme comes to an end in April '26 and the group still do not have guidance from WECA on what success looks like or how this continues, partly due to the new Mayor, but even before this the group were pushing for meetings to understand what the plan is.

It's not just about transport—it's about reducing social isolation, boosting local economies and promoting sustainable travel.

Investing in rural bus services isn't just about mobility—it's about keeping communities connected and thriving.

This page is intentionally left blank