

Parish Liaison Meeting – 11th May 2016

Parish Clerks' Working Group- Update

Background

A series of workshops was held in July 2015 for the Bathavon, Chew Valley, Keynsham and Somer Valley Connecting Communities Forums. The aim of these was to help the Forums consider different ways of working together, gain a better understanding of what partners can offer, and review the influence and effectiveness of the Forums. The outcomes of the workshops have now been developed into a series of Action Plans.

One priority that required discussion across the whole area was the need to help parish clerks carry out parish and town council elected members' decisions more effectively through improving communications and sharing knowledge. A number of Parish Clerks expressed an interest in being involved in a discussion on this and a working group was set up to explore further. The working group currently comprises clerks from the parishes of: Clutton, Compton Martin, Dunkerton, Midsomer Norton, Paulton, Peasedown St John, Radstock and Timsbury.

Following its first meeting, in October 2015, the working party undertook a survey of all town and parish clerks in Bath and North East Somerset. The aim was to better understand their needs and identify practical solutions to enable us to work better together. The survey was divided into six main parts: roles and responsibilities, meetings, communications, equipment, training needs, and membership. The survey ran from October 2015 to February 2016. 48 parishes responded to the survey.

Progress

As a result of the survey a number of actions are being followed up, including:

- **Better understanding of roles, responsibilities and processes of town and parish councils.** A dedicated intranet page for Bath & North East Somerset Council staff has been set up, explaining the roles and responsibilities of town and parish councils and setting out information such as: when parish councils hold their meetings; contacts for parish newsletters; information about the Parish Charter. In addition, the Bath & North East Somerset Council staff induction programme now includes more information about parish and town councils.
- **Improved communications.** As identified elsewhere on this agenda, we are developing a dedicated on-line group to help share information and to encourage more collaboration between clerks.
- **Equipment** – In response to the survey, we will be looking at ways to help parish councils share equipment and resources. Clerks also wanted to know more about the 'Transparency Grant' scheme.
- **Training needs** – We are offering a series of training and briefing sessions to keep parish and town councillors and clerks up-to-date on a range of issues. We are also organising a series of IT training and directing them to existing

courses on topics such as health and safety and safeguarding, In formation on this is set out in the Appendix.

- **Membership** - The survey included information about membership of the Avon Local Council Association (ALCA) and Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and the results have been shared with both organisations.

A number of other useful suggestions and requests were made, including:

- Informing parishes about the paid services or equipment hire offered by Bath & North East Somerset Council
- Provision of mentoring for parish clerks

Next Steps

The Parish Clerks Working Group will meet again on the 14th July to review progress. Any other Parish Clerks wishing to be part of the working group are welcome to be involved.

Sara Dixon
Acting Stronger Communities Manager
Bath & North East Somerset Council

APPENDIX - Training and Briefings for Parish Clerks and Parish Councillors

NOTE: The Council will part-fund IT courses to ensure affordability, with a small charge of £30 per delegate, per course (IT courses only).

Name	Description of course
Basic introduction to Microsoft Word 2010	Making a start with Word, use of the ribbons, quick access toolbar, saving, pdfs, new documents, page layout, using & customising spell checker and thesaurus, using the quick format bar (right click menu), bulletin, inserting screen shots, using undo & redo.
Intermediate to Microsoft Word 2010	Navigation through document, using table of contents, context sensitive menus - using tables and drawings, formatting types, backstage view, switching views.
Basic introduction to Microsoft Excel 2010	Making a start with excel, use of the ribbons, quick access toolbar, using paste, creating a spreadsheet format cells, using fill handle, understanding formulas, sorting data.
Basic intermediate to Microsoft Excel 2010	Handy hints, tips and shortcuts, context sensitive menus, using conditional logic, conditional formatting, using lookup data, dates, backstage view.
Microsoft Outlook 2010	Finding you way around, creating messages, reading and replying, signatures, calendars, contacts, links v attachments, out of office
Microsoft Powerpoint 2010	Creating a presentation, understand the slide types and add slides to a presentation, format slides and add layouts, Use drawings, images and tables in a presentation, use SmartArt, Create and alter slide masters, run a slide show including animation, add speaker notes, Produce hand-outs and printout slides, learn some tips on best practise for presentations

Equalities and the role of Town and Parish Councils - the presentation will include an overview of the Equalities Act and the public sector's equalities duty. The presentation will also share best practice, discuss different scenarios, challenging behaviour and support for parish councils. Delegates will have a better understanding of their role within the legislative content.

Fee: None

Suitable for: Parish Clerks and Parish Councillors

Date and time:

- 13th July, from 5pm - 6.30pm, Council Chamber, The Hollies, Midsomer Norton.
- 1st September, from 7pm - 8.30pm, Community Space, Civic Centre, Market Walk, Keynsham

The session will last 1.5 hours.

Briefing by: Louise Murphy, Corporate Equalities & Diversity Officer

An Overview of Parking Services - the presentation will include an overview of parking services, parking enforcement, parking permits, blue badge schemes.

Fee: None

Suitable for: Councillors, Parish Clerks and Parish Councillors

Date and time: Wednesday 25th May 2016, 5pm until 6pm

Venue: Council Chambers, The Hollies, Midsomer Norton, BA3 2DP

Briefing by: Craig Vale, Business Support Officer

A Masterclass in Research and Intelligence - This workshop will look at how to get the most out of local data, including the census and the council's information. It will look at how to create, find and analyse data; how to use that data to inform neighbourhood plans, help make funding bids more convincing and create a good evidence base for local prioritisation.

Fee: None

Suitable for: Councillors, Parish Clerks and Parish Councillors

Date, time venue:

- 18th July, 4pm - 5pm Conference Room, First Floor, Civic Centre, Market Walk, Keynsham *or*
- 27th October, 7pm - 8pm, Community Space, Civic Centre, Market Walk Keynsham

The sessions will last 1.5 hours

Briefing by: Jon Poole, David Singleton, Natalia Urry, B&NES Research and Intelligence Team

A Masterclass in District On-line - the session will include an overview of parking services, parking enforcement, parking permits, blue badge schemes.

Fee: None

Suitable for: Parish Clerks and Parish Councillors

Date and time: 22nd September, 6pm – 8pm

Venue: Keynsham Community Space, Civic Centre, Market Walk Keynsham

Session by: Martin Laker, Systems and GIS Team Leader

To book on any of the above training or briefing sessions, contact: Sara Dixon, Acting Stronger Communities Manager, Bath & North East Somerset Council, email: sara_dixon@bathnes.gov.uk tel: 01225 396594.