



**Notes of the meeting of the Bathavon South Forum
held on Wednesday, 15th of November 2017
in the Freshford Village Memorial Hall - Freshford Lane, Freshford, Somerset, BA2 7UR.**

Meeting Attendance:

John Adler – Freshford Parish Council (**Chair**)
Sarah Clark
K Manchee – Camerton, Dunkerton & Tunley and Englishcombe Parish Council
M Robinson – Dunkerton & Tunley Parish Council
D Orme - Dunkerton & Tunley Parish Council
Fiona Hassard – Priston Parish Council
Louise Callan Priston Parish Council
Cllr Neil Butters – Ward Councillor Bathavon
Lyn Alvis – Monkton Combe Parish Council
Chris Clemence – Hinton Charterhouse Parish Council
Chris Winpenny – South Stoke Parish Council
David Trethewey – Divisional Director for Strategy and Performance, B&NES Council
Dave Dixon – Community Engagement Manager, B&NES Council
Mark Hayward – Community Engagement Officer, B&NES Council
Councillor Charles Gerrish – Cabinet Member for Finance and Efficiency, B&NES Council
Councillor Paul Myers – Cabinet Member for Economic and Community Regeneration, B&NES Council
Councillor Karen Warrington – Cabinet Member for Transformation and Customer Services, B&NES Council
Ashley Ayre – Chief Executive, B&NES Council
Gary Adams – Finance Officer, B&NES Council

Apologies:

Cllr David Veale – Ward Councillor for Bathavon
Shoscombe Parish Council
Combe Hay Parish Council
Avon Fire and Rescue
Avon and Somerset Police

1. Welcome and Introductions

John Adler opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance. John then handed over to Ashley Ayre to begin the next agenda item.

Council Financial Plans and Budget Engagement

Ashley Ayre opened the presentation by setting the scene for the presentation “Challenges we face” (attached)

Councillor Charles Gerrish presented the remainder of the presentation providing further context and inviting involvement in the discussions that the Council will be holding over the next 12 months.

Questions and Comments were invited from the floor:

1) It was pointed out that where shop owners have properties with residential units above them there are rules around SIPP's that makes it unattractive for people wishing to invest in making the units suitable for the rental market. Could the Council lobby for changes that could help with this?

2) The Council owns a lot of the properties in the city and retail stores that have been here for a long time appear to be disappearing. What can be done to prevent the loss of popular city centre shops?

Response – The Council are one of the bigger owners of commercial shops in the city and it does benefit from the business rates that it collects. It does not set business rates as this is done by central government. The Council works flexibly with tenants to provide help where they can. Occupancy rates in bath shows we have a void of around 5%, nationally the figure is double this.

The level of commerce that is now conducted on the internet has weakened the ability for the traditional shops to be able to compete. Where cafes come along to replace the shops that close they are seen as an offering to people that have additional free time to fill

3) Where so called useful shops in the city do disappear these are often replaced with numerous coffee shops and cafes.

Response – Where a property is banded for use that allows the change to take place there is no powers to stop this when we are not the landlord, where a change to the band is needed then planning permission must be agreed.

Where the Council is the landlord then we do have the right to decide on the mix of tenants we wish to have.

4) Will the Council be the landlord for all of the Bath Quays Development?

Response – We are presently asking for expressions of interests for sections in the development, we expect to see partnerships that we will be part of and this will give a mixture of different types of employment.

Permitted developments such as the one on the Pickfords site in Bath can be seen as having a double impact on then Council finances. Not only does the Council not have business rates to collect it also has no Council tax to collect from the Student Block that replaces the existing business.

5) Why has the situation got so bad with Adult and Children's Care requiring 80% of the overall budget?

Response – The presentation outlines the pressures, the aging population in B&NES is rising at a higher rate than the national average. There are combinations of increases for the demand in services, the quality of many of these services (example - special needs schools places), are seen as attractive to people moving into B&NES.

The percentage of other incomes has reduced and new government reforms have not yet been put forward.

It is also worth noting that there are positives we need to remind ourselves of, success with Ofsted, quality care home delivery, staff success and huge savings already made. There are many things we are still doing but in a different way.

6) What is the situation with the link road?

Response – There is an investigation still to come on this, conversations / lobbying of government on funding is awaiting feedback.

7) The issue of cycle lane safety was highlighted, it was suggested that installing raised middle separators would increase safety.

8) The issue of communal waste collect points such as those used in Europe was a suggestion.

3. Welcome to Freshford

John Adler provided an overview of the Parish of Freshford

- The parish boundary is not a true representation of the whole community as areas such as Limpley Stoke and Hinton Charterhouse have overlaps to the natural boundaries where common postcodes share the same issues.
- Among the facilities that Freshford has are the surgery and dispensary which are under threat due to access issues in the present premises. An extension to the village hall is seen as an alternative space for relocation (subject to planning permission and finance). The extension is just one part of the Freshford Neighbourhood Plan.
- For access to alternative health provision outside of the village, the nearest surgery in B&NES would be in the Combe Down area of Bath.
- The village hall is looking tired and a new roof and redecoration are the ambition to improve this facility that has great value in keeping numerous groups and activities going.
- The rise in Air BnB's in the village is a worrying trend as there now appears to be 15 from a total of 419 houses. The rise sees lower numbers of homes for local people and an increase in the issues of speeding and parking.
- The village has a successful neighbourhood watch scheme that shares information between local people.
- Freshford also has a local shop, post office, pre-school, primary school, church, railway station and a visit from the mobile library.

4. Police / Fire Service updates

The Police were not able to send an Officer to the meeting.

The Fire Service provided a summary report dated September 2017. Dave Dixon explained that the report contains local contact information along with details of incidents for the local area.

5. Agreement of the minutes of the last forum meeting - 20 July 2017

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

6. Community Empowerment Fund Update

Dave Dixon explained that the Community Empowerment Funding is available and applications need to be received by 31 January 2018. Cllr Paul Myers is the cabinet member that is responsible for the funding and in this first year has provided a minimum of £250 per parish with the larger areas receiving 50p per resident.

A number of parishes have already applied and received their funding for public realm projects. The form is straightforward but it does need to show match funding either in cash or volunteer hours.

Action – Examples of successful projects to be circulated.

7. Parish Two Minute Updates

Dunkerton and Tunley

- 1) The local cricket ground is being used by Bristol Lions Cricket Club. This is seen as a positive step following the closure that happened 2 years ago. Local parishioners are interested in the renovation of the cricket pavilion through the use of EU funding.
- 2) The management of CIL across the region strategically is of interest.
- 3) The implementation of rural broadband has seen a successful engagement with the provider True Speed. This should see the Parish be able to access a high speed fibre network to the home in the near future.

Action – Freshford need to be provided the contact details for True Speed

Monkton Combe

- 1) True Speed has provided the service and they also included the local school so they could have free internet access. This is an offer that schools and village halls are able to be involved in. When working with BT they proved to be a waste of time.

Priston

- 1) The village has had broadband from True Speed for over a year now. The experience has been very good and there has only been 4 hours downtime in the last year.
- 2) The village hall requires refurbishment and funding steam ideas would be welcomed.

Action – Share information with Priston on the aggregates sustainable levy fund and the funding bulletin from B&NES Council.

Hinton Charterhouse

- 1) There are two developments that are in the planning stage, one of these raises concerns as it is on the green belt.
- 2) The A36 road needs attention; there are ruts that drag your vehicle.
- 3) Work on the neighbourhood plan is getting underway.
- 4) BT have successfully installed broadband, this was helped by Jack Dyson funding the scheme.

South Stoke

- 1) The Packhorse Public House has raised £1 million through 400 subscribers. There will be an extensive refurbishment, extension and re-laid gardens when it reopens in the spring of 2018. This was the first ACV in B&NES.
- 2) The B3110 through Midford is used as a cut through and a number of concerns have been made about turning Lorries, pavement / road safety issues and the need for warning signs.

Freshford

- 1) There is a concern regarding the number of vehicles being directed to the village by Sat Nav systems.
- 2) The development of the old mill has seen an increase in traffic through very narrow lanes.

Action – Commercial Sat Nav Companies have the ability to adjust the navigation information. Craig Jackson at B&NES Highways is the link to contact if there are routes that needs updating.

8. Any Other Business

Councillor Paul Myers asked that everybody encourages local people and organisations to become involved with this forum. There are different ways to build the forum and looking at what other areas have done will help.

Action – John Adler will be arranging a meeting with Parishes to discuss ways to help this forum succeed.

8. Future Meeting

Dunkerton and Tunley to host the next meeting 6-8pm (Date in March 2018 to be agreed)

