

**PARISH LIAISON MEETING**

**Minutes of the Meeting held**

Thursday, 16th July, 2020, 5.30 pm

**Councillors:** Councillor Andrew Furse (Chair), Councillor Dine Romero (Cabinet Member), Councillor Rob Appleyard (Cabinet Member), Councillor Tim Ball (Cabinet Member), Councillor Neil Butters (Cabinet Member), Councillor Paul Crossley (Cabinet Member), Councillor Kevin Guy (Cabinet Member), Councillor Sarah Warren (Cabinet Member), Councillor David Wood (Cabinet Member), Councillor Sally Davis, Councillor Duncan Hounsell, Councillor Eleanor Jackson, Councillor Hal MacFie, Councillor Alastair Singleton, Councillor Andy Wait, Councillor Karen Walker and Councillor Karen Warrington

**Parish Representatives:** Cllr Dawn Drury (Chair of ALCA), and representatives of Bathampton PC, Camerton PC, Chew Stoke PC, Clutton PC, Combe Hay PC, Compton Dando PC, Corson PC, Dunkerton PC, Englishcombe PC, Freshford PC, Peasedown-St-John PC, Priston PC, Publow-with-Pensford PC, Radstock TC, Shoscombe PC, Stowey Sutton PC and Wellow PC

**Also in attendance:** Will Godfrey (Chief Executive), Mandy Bishop (Director – Environment Services), Peter Capener (Bath and West Community Energy), Dave Dixon (Community Engagement Manager), Sara Dixon (Locality Manager), Mark Hayward (Community Engagement Officer), Chris Head (West of England Rural Network), Bruce Laurence (Director of Public Health), Chris Major (Assistant Director, Highways and Transport), Sgt Jon Raisey (Police), Claire Thorogood (Head of Contracting and Performance), Marie Todd (Democratic Services Officer) and Jane Wildblood (Corporate and Community Sustainability Manager)

**1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from:

Cllr Richard Samuel

Cllr Joanna Wright

Alan Butcher – Clerk to Chelwood Parish Council

Jean Fossaceco – Clerk to Shoscombe Parish Council

Trudi Gilbank – Clerk to Farmborough Parish Council

Lottie Smith-Collins – Clerk to Saltford Parish Council

**3 URGENT BUSINESS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR**

There was no urgent business.

#### **4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2019 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

#### **5 PARISH LIAISON MEETING - TERMS OF REFERENCE**

At the ALCA Annual General Meeting held in June, it was recommended that an additional point be added to Terms of Reference under clause 5.3. The clause says:

Items that are not relevant for Parish Liaison will be those:

- That relate to a single, or small number of parishes
- For which other, effective channels of communication exist
- That are day to day operational issues
- That need to be addressed immediately

The Parish Liaison Meeting is asked to agree to add a new sentence at the end of clause 5.3 that states:

*“other than important items raised by a single parish or a small number of parishes that are agreed by the Parish Liaison agenda setting group will be included on the agenda.”*

RESOLVED: To agree to amend the terms of reference for the Parish Liaison Meeting as set out above.

#### **6 UPDATE FROM THE COUNCIL**

Councillor Dine Romero, (Council Leader), stated that when the Covid-19 crisis and the lockdown began the Council worked hard to put in place all the support needed by local communities. Clear communication was key at this time to ensure that issues were shared, and relevant information was provided. Any significant issues which arose have also been brought to the attention of the relevant Government Minister.

Financial issues are now a concern and two tranches of additional support funding have now been received from central Government totalling around £10m. There will also be a share of the £5billion fund for local government. This will cover 75% of lost revenue funding predicted for this year. However, there is still a significant shortfall in income from commercial rents and leisure services which will not be covered by this funding.

A number of webinars have also taken place to communicate with local communities. These covered a variety of topics such as financial recovery, young people, slavery, and climate emergency. There will also be a webinar regarding the hospitality sector.

Councillor Romero thanked all those people in the local communities who have provided much needed localised support along with all those that have been working in the compassionate communities hub.

Will Godfrey, B&NES Chief Executive stated that this has been a very difficult and testing period for the organisation. He thanked Council staff for all the work they have done and also thanked the local Town and Parish Councils and their communities for dealing so well with the challenges that have arisen. Everyone has been focused on continuing to provide the best services that they can. New skills have been learnt during this time and it is now important to make preparations for the winter months.

The webinars referred to above can be viewed using the following link:  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAc6JFBe\\_K5mugdUAHeF9w](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAc6JFBe_K5mugdUAHeF9w)

The following issues were then discussed:

- All B&NES Council-run toilets have remained open during the Covid-19 crisis. The toilets at Waitrose in Bath are privately run but Cllr Dine Romero agreed to investigate when these will be reopened.
- There was some concern around a camping event planned to take place near the Chew Valley lake. Will Godfrey explained that the Council does not police such events but has a public health responsibility. Bruce Laurence, Director of Public Health, explained that the Council's Emergency Planning Events Team does liaise with the police about this type of event if there are concerns. Cllr Dine Romero stated that these concerns have been brought to her attention and that she would investigate the event. It was noted that gatherings of more than 30 people remain illegal and that the police should be informed if necessary.

## **7 UPDATE ON CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND THE RENEWAL VISION**

Cllr Sarah Warren, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Neighbourhood Services, reported that a number of Town and Parish Councils have now declared a climate emergency. A great deal of progress has been made on climate issues and Cllr Warren has been made aware of a school's climate emergency network which shares good practice in this area. She asked Parishes who have declared a climate emergency whether they think this type of network would be helpful to enable them to share ideas. She had planned to hold a large event at the Guildhall to discuss climate change but, due to the Covid-19 crisis she has held a number of webinars instead which have been very helpful. There are a number of excellent groups and ideas in the area such as the "share and repair" groups. It is now important to identify the relevant learning points and take this project forward.

Jane Wildblood, Corporate and Community Sustainability Manager, reported on the following issues:

- The programme of work regarding the climate emergency is now getting back on track and there will be an update to the Parish Council toolkit on climate emergency. The community conversations have been very helpful.
- Covid-19 has had a negative impact on communities in terms of the local economy, travel and leisure. However, there have been some positive outcomes such as people cycling and walking more. It is now important to provide a programme of recovery and renewal.

- The renewal vision includes plans for a green recovery and will have the potential for action.
- This will be important to achieve the new vision for 2030 of becoming carbon neutral. One example of ways to achieve this is the provision of the “Green Homes Grant” which aims to make homes more energy efficient. This will also provide jobs which will help the economy.
- It is also important to shorten food supply chains and to provide food locally.
- Further webinars regarding the green renewal vision will take place.
- There will also be further engagement with the Community Forums to explain what the renewal vision means at parish level.

Peter Capener, Managing Director of Bath and West Community Energy (BWCE), gave a presentation covering the following issues:

- A brief outline of the Bath and West Community Energy not-for-profit organisation, including achievements to date and staffing information.
- How the organisation can help local community renewable energy projects. Local community groups close to BWCE get priority when applying for grants to its independent community fund.
- It is important to retain more funding to be spent in the B&NES area.
- The organisation offers a different way of doing business and aims to support local people.
- BWCE are committed to supporting Town and Parish Councils respond effectively to the climate emergency
- As a community enterprise it needs to manage its resources and match what it can offer to local needs
- It aims to develop a programme of work with all interested councils over the next few years
- It can provide a balance of free and funded support
- If Parish Councils are interested they can get in touch with Nick Bird on [nick.bird@bwce.coop](mailto:nick.bird@bwce.coop)

A copy of the presentation slides is attached as *Appendix 1* to these minutes.

In response to a question Peter Capener explained that BCWE is a financially sustainable business which monitors its growth along with the number and range of its projects. The organisation can offer a wide range of experience and expertise.

## **8 REOPENING THE HIGH STREETS AND PLACES OF INTEREST**

Cllr Neil Butters gave a presentation regarding reopening of high streets and places of interest, covering the following issues:

- The initial focus was on Bath city centre, as this had the largest footfall and therefore is the most challenging when introducing new access restrictions.
- The Council’s Highways Team had to work quickly and without the full consultation period afforded under normal circumstances, to enable social distancing measures to be put in place in time for the re-opening of non-essential businesses on 15 June 2020.

- Following feedback from the town and parish councils of Radstock, Midsomer Norton and Peasedown St John, and having learned the lessons from phase 1 in Bath, and with footfall levels being lower, a decision was taken not to progress the social distancing measures in these areas.
- Keynsham Town Council voted to trial a full closure of Keynsham High Street with effect from Monday 13 July, between 10 am and 6 pm.
- Generally, the access restrictions have worked well with only a few teething problems.
- The restrictions have achieved the objective of providing greater space for social distancing as a response to the pandemic. Some members of the public have suggested that having a car-free environment is generally a nicer experience.
- There have been a few issues which are still being worked through, including Post Officer/Parcelforce collections and deliveries, utility service providers, removal of barriers and access onto Lower Borough Walls.
- The Police are aware of some issues regarding driving in pedestrian areas or not adhering to traffic signs and these locations will be added to their patrol plans; if Police then identify any issues they or the Council will educate and enforce.
- The access restrictions have affected where vehicles driven by or carrying disabled people can park. Although it has taken a small number of disabled parking bays out of use, Blue Badge holders can also park on single or double yellow lines for up to 3 hours.
- You can make your views and opinions known by using the Council's Liveable Neighbourhoods website (<https://bathnesliveablestreets.commonplace.is/>) where people are encouraged to record their views on what sort of improvements are needed across the area to help with walking and cycling.

There have also been issues regarding an influx of visitors to rural areas during the pandemic;

- The pandemic situation, warm weather and related lockdown measures have all led to an increase in the number of visitors to these locations and there have been problems with vehicles parked in a manner that causes safety problems/obstruction.
- In some locations the Council has put in place temporary parking restrictions and Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs) to enable enforcement.
- Each location where problems occur requires its own solution and the Council has worked with the Police to find the best way of dealing with them.
- It is expected that the Government message advising against the use of public transport will soon be changing.

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

Sergeant Jon Raisey reported that the Police are working to prevent contravention of the road closure orders. Delivery vehicles should not be reversing up the street and the Police are patrolling the central areas. If people are able to take photographs of any vehicles who are flouting the regulations this would be helpful to help with enforcement.

Sgt Raisey confirmed that there has been heavy footfall in a number of rural locations in the area and this has presented challenges. He stated that the temporary traffic regulations have helped, however, if one area is closed off people often simply congregate in a different location.

The Chair thanked the police service for the work they have carried out during the Covid-19 crisis.

The following issues were then discussed:

- Cllr Karen Warrington asked whether there are plans for further Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to prevent irresponsible parking e.g. in the Chew Valley area. Chris Major, Assistant Director, Highways and Transport, explained that the Council has a forward programme of TROs to work through and that if areas are added to the programme they will be taken forward. Cllr Neil Butters warned that sometimes parking restrictions can lead to problems in other nearby areas, for example, when restrictions were enforced on the A36 this led to people parking their vehicles in front of houses in the nearby village.
- Cllr Rob Appleyard stated that, to ensure social distancing is maintained the Council has erected barriers to make this easier for residents. Some people have been resistant to these measures; however, it is very important to maintain a safe environment for everyone, particularly those who have been shielding. It is important that people feel confident to return to the high street.
- Cllr Eleanor Jackson pointed out that the solution for one area is not necessarily appropriate for another area. She thanked officers for listening to the concerns of those in the Radstock area. She suggested that hedges should be cut back to allow more space on the pavements. Cllr Neil Butters asked people to inform him of this and he will raise the issue with officers. Pavements could also be made “one-way” on each side of the road which would help social distancing when pavements are narrow. Although, it was acknowledged that not everyone would obey the one-way rule.
- Cllr Hal MacFie stated that the road closure in Keynsham was monitored mainly by shops on the High Street. Dial-A-Ride vehicles are allowed to use the road. It is important to encourage people back to the local shops. Licensing of outside spaces was becoming easier which will help the local economy.

## **9 RESILIENT COMMUNITIES**

Cllr Rob Appleyard, Cabinet Member for Adult Services, thanked all the local groups that have helped vulnerable people in their local communities. The resilient communities hub was set up very quickly and has so far received 6,800 telephone calls, distributed over 300 emergency food parcels, supported over 500 people and has around 1,300 volunteers. This service has been incredibly helpful to those people who have been shielding and has improved mental health and wellbeing. The good practice built up between different agencies during this time needs to be

retained going forward as it represents extremely effective cross-agency working. The Council, Virgin Care and the CCG have all been involved, along with local voluntary organisations. The Chair thanked all those who have been involved in providing this service.

Dave Dixon, Community Engagement Manager, explained that the team realised early on that they would be swamped by the number of calls to the hub if they did not receive help from partners at community level. Without this help the service could not have been provided.

People needed help with things such as replacement hearing aid batteries, food shopping and collecting medication. A short film has been produced to show the work carried out by the team entitled “No Wrong Door”. This can be viewed using the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mJYCpdryll>

Many issues arose during the Covid-19 emergency involving health, safeguarding and financial concerns. A centralised client-based system was created. The aim was to identify underlying, and often multiple, issues within households and to help people to become self-reliant and resilient. The hub has been very effective and a great deal of knowledge has been gained in a short period of time. It is important to retain and share this knowledge going forward.

Bruce Laurence, Director of Public Health, stated that the B&NES area was fortunate not to have too many cases of the virus. However, it is important not to become complacent, to continue to wash hands, test, isolate when necessary and maintain social distancing. It is now important to keep cases low to avoid a local lockdown. The Council is setting up ways to manage any outbreaks and it is important that the public do their bit. Large events should be avoided, and officers will be available to help with any outbreaks in local communities.

Cllr Rob Appleyard noted that this has been a very complicated and fast-moving area of work and he thanked Bruce and the Public Health Team for the great job that they have done over the last few months to deal with the crisis.

## **10 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was noted that the next Parish Liaison Meeting will take place on Thursday 22 October 2020.

The meeting ended at 7.15 pm

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**