

PARISH LIAISON MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting held

Wednesday, 14th July, 2021, 6.30 pm

Councillors: Councillor Lisa O'Brien (Chair), Councillor Tim Ball (Cabinet Member), Councillor Manda Rigby (Cabinet Member), Councillor Dine Romero (Cabinet Member), Councillor Sarah Warren (Cabinet Member), Councillor David Wood (Cabinet Member), Councillor Sally Davis, Councillor Eleanor Jackson, Councillor Vic Pritchard, Councillor Alastair Singleton, Councillor Andy Wait and Councillor Karen Warrington

Parish Representatives: Kathy Thomas (ALCA Chair), Dawn Drury (ALCA Deputy Chair) and representatives of Bathampton PC, Chew Magna PC, Compton Dando PC, Compton Martin PC, Dunkerton & Tunley PC, Farmborough PC, High Littleton PC, Keynsham TC, Peasedown St John PC, Priston PC, Publow with Pensford PC, Radstock TC, Shoscombe PC, Timsbury PC, Wellow PC and Westfield PC

Also in attendance: Will Godfrey (Chief Executive), Anna Brunton (Forest of Avon Trust), Mark Cassidy (Tree and Woodland Officer), Mark Hayward (Community Engagement Officer), Joanna Scammell (Virgin Care), Alex Stone (Forest of Avon Trust), Claire Thorogood (Head of Contracting and Performance), Marie Todd (Democratic Services Officer) and Alison Wells (Community Engagement Officer)

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:

Cllrs: Alison Born, Neil Butters, Paul Crossley, Tom Davies, Kevin Guy, Duncan Hounsell and Richard Samuel

John Adler – Freshford Parish Council
Robin Campbell – Combe Hay Parish Council
Cllr David Huffadine – Hinton Blewitt Parish Council
Trudi Gilbank – Farmborough Parish Council
Kathryn Manchee – Dunkerton & Tunley and Camerton Parish Councils
Lottie Smith-Collins – Saltford Parish Council
Stowey Sutton Parish Council
West Harptree Parish Council
Whitchurch Village 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 24 March 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

5 INTRODUCTION FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Cllr Sarah Warren, Deputy Leader of the Council, explained the changes that have been made to the B&NES Cabinet, which came into effect in May. Details of the current portfolios are set out below:

Cllr Kevin Guy – Leader of the Council
Cllr Tim Ball – Cabinet Member for Planning and Licensing
Cllr Alison Born – Cabinet Member for Adults and Council House Building (Job Share)
Cllr Tom Davies - Cabinet Member for Adults and Council House Building (Job Share)
Cllr Dine Romero – Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Communities and Culture
Cllr Manda Rigby – Cabinet Member for Transport
Cllr Richard Samuel – Deputy Council Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Resources
Cllr Sarah Warren - Deputy Council Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate and Sustainable Travel
Cllr David Wood - Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services

Cllr Warren also thanked the Parish and Town Councils for the tremendous support they had given to their communities over the last 16 months during the Covid-19 pandemic.

6 UPDATE ON COUNCIL ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES

Will Godfrey, Chief Executive, outlined the key organisational changes that have taken place in B&NES over the last few months. He explained that the Council delivers 850 different services and employs around 2,500 people. It is, therefore, very important to have an organisational structure which maximises efficiency. The new structure will enable functions to deliver outcomes clearly linked to the corporate plan.

The Strategic Leadership Team now comprises of:

- Will Godfrey – Chief Executive
- Mandy Bishop – Chief Operating Officer
- Sophie Broadfield – Director of Sustainable Communities (who will be in post in August)
- Cherry Bennett – Director of People and Policy
- Andy Rothery – Chief Finance Officer

Recruitment to all senior manager roles has now been completed and all new members of staff will be in post by the end of August.

7 COMMUNITY WELLBEING HUB

Jo Scammell, Head of Commissioning and Wellbeing at Virgin Care, and Claire Thorogood, Head of Contracting and Performance at B&NES Council gave a presentation regarding the Community Wellbeing Hub. This covered the following points:

- How the wellbeing hub can provide help and support
- How and why the hub was set up
- The partner organisations involved
- Services provided
- Current response pods
- Activity and impact
- Case study illustrating how the hub can assist individuals
- Positive feedback received from members of the local community
- Looking to the future

The hub was set up at the end of March and has received over 13,000 calls. It provides assistance with many different activities and services, such as emergency food parcels, collecting prescriptions, gas and electric top-up, befriending calls, support for people who are shielding and mental health concerns. People only have to tell their story once and do not get passed around between different organisations. The partner organisations are located in one building and also hold regular multi-disciplinary meetings. There is input from both social care and the safeguarding service if necessary. There is no wish to return to a silo working arrangement and so the co-working hub model will be developed going forward.

Cllr Dine Romero, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Communities and Culture thanked Jo and Claire for their presentation. She also thanked all those people who have been involved with the community hub for all they have done to help and support residents during this difficult time. The hub provides a unique service involving the Council, private sector, and volunteers. Cllr Romero stated that she supports this model for future working and stressed the importance of the triage element of the service as this often identifies underlying issues that have not been addressed.

Cllr Romero then gave an update on her portfolio which covered the following issues:

- The pandemic has impacted upon children and young people in schools and colleges due to closures and the need for bubbles to self-isolate. She thanked the Public Health Team who have worked very hard with schools to address these issues.
- Free school meals will be provided over the summer holidays via vouchers and some funding has been provided by the Government for this.
- A range of activities will take place over the school holidays, including a food programme to encourage healthy eating and an activity challenge.
- The programme to improve tennis court provision in the area is well underway and a number of tennis courts have now been refurbished.
- As infection rates rise in B&NES, residents, businesses, and visitors are encouraged to remain cautious and look after each other following the Government's planned lifting of Covid-19 restrictions. From Monday 19 July,

most legal restrictions will be lifted, and new government guidance will be introduced.

- Just because the restrictions are being lifted does not mean that Covid has gone away. Case numbers are rising, frontline health and social care staff are still under consideration pressure, as are businesses and organisations.
- The good news is that the vaccine reduces the risk of getting very ill and people are urged to get their first and second jabs and to follow the new guidance. A vaccination bus will be used in the area (details will be advertised on the Council website) and there will also be drop-in vaccination sessions at the Pavilion, Bath over the next few days.

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

8 CABINET MEMBER UPDATES

The following Cabinet Members gave updates on their portfolios:

(a) Cllr David Wood – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services

- Proposals for a new recycling centre in Keynsham will be considered by the Cabinet and the Planning Committee in July.
- There will be additional investment in a number of areas within the neighbourhood services portfolio. This will cover services such as littering on main roads, fly tipping, dog fouling, road repairs, street signs and gully clearing. Proposals to improve customer service are also being considered and this may include the provision of area officers who would be named contacts.
- There is a national shortage of delivery drivers which is affecting all local authorities and is making it difficult to recruit staff to the waste and recycling service. Additional loaders have been recruited and Cllr Wood thanked the crews for their hard work.
- Arrangements are in place whereby Parishes can obtain, via Purchase Order to Daniel Connett (Daniel.Connett@volkerhighways.co.uk), both reactive maintenance and planned maintenance works. All of the Parishes who have used this service to date are very happy with the prompt and effective service received and with the costs involved. However, this is an informal arrangement brought about by the present circumstances.
- There are no plans to introduce charges for recycling.
- The Highways Team cut rural verges (those outside of restricted speed limits) and permissive cycleways by a 1m swathe twice a year. The verges in urban areas are maintained by the Parks Team and frequency of cuts are different and more amenity related. The cut is arranged through Volker Highways using a local farmer under sub-contract and involves cutting wider areas as visibility splays at high-risk junctions. From start to finish the cut takes up to eight weeks. Cuts are usually timed during May/June and September/October, depending on growth rates. Cutting this year has continued into July. If any Parish is concerned about any particular stretch of road or junction, they should report any issues to Fix My Street using the “Report It” page on the B&NES website.

- Some verges are cut less often, where safe to do so, and an assessment is made on both ecological benefit and safety.

(b) Cllr Sarah Warren – Cabinet Member for Climate and Sustainable Travel

- A Climate and Biodiversity Festival will take place in Bath from 13-26 September 2021.
- The Council's internal performance monitoring framework will now be required to take climate change into account.
- Sustainable transport will be a priority, including active travel schemes, cycle routes and pedestrian improvements.
- The proposed closure of North Road in Bath has now been put on hold and further investigations will take place to find out whether this is the appropriate route for such a scheme.
- Liveable Neighbourhood Schemes will shortly be introduced. These neighbourhoods will be less dominated by cars, for example, there will be residents' parking, pedestrian infrastructure improvements and the ability to close some roads. The neighbourhoods will be co-designed with the local community. 15 schemes have been approved so far. Another round of applications will be considered shortly and if anyone has an area or scheme which they would like to be considered they should contact their local ward councillor who can submit an application.
- The following consultations will be taking place:
 - Bath Transport Delivery Plan – from August to September.
 - WECA Bristol to Bath Strategic Corridor "Metrobus Bristol to Bath" – from late July to early September.
 - WECA A37/A367 Bus, Walking and Cycling – to take place in the Autumn.
 - WECA West of England Mass Transit – from September to December.
- The Highways Team has ordered a number of 'Collision Route' signs that will be erected on the A367 between Odd Down Park & Ride roundabout and Skinner's Hill junction to highlight the hazards generally caused by irresponsible driving behaviours. These should be in place by early September 2021.
- A37/A367 Bus, Walking and Cycling Study – In April 2021, WECA, in partnership with B&NES, commissioned AECOM consultants to undertake transport option development work for the A37 and A367 corridors. The study aims to identify potential improvement for buses, pedestrians and cycles along the corridors and links to adjacent villages. If schemes with significant benefits are identified, the Council will be in a good position to access considerable levels of funding from WECA. To date, the consultants have undertaken a site, policy and data review and identified potential options. This work has been informed by liveable neighbourhood applications submitted by ward councillors on and adjacent to both routes, plus information from officers. A full public consultation supported by suitable documents and maps is planned in the Autumn the team will be in contact with the Parish Councils as part of the consultation process.

(c) Cllr Manda Rigby – Cabinet Member for Transport

- Cleveland Bridge in Bath is currently closed for repair, and this has impacted on traffic flows throughout the local area. This work is expected to take 12 weeks.
- The Cabinet will consider reports on Bath City Centre Security and on-street parking permits and charges, at its meeting on 20 July. There are proposals to move residents' parking charges to a more emissions-based system.
- From 19 July social distancing requirements will no longer be in force. A number of barriers were put in place to assist with social distancing and these will be removed. However, some areas wish these to remain and the Council will work with the community on this. The Council will publish a list of which barriers are to be removed.

(d) Cllr Tim Ball – Cabinet Member for Planning and Licensing

- The Council has two key consultations planned for late summer/early autumn. These are the Local Plan Update and the Transport Delivery Plan. In addition, there are a number of transport projects that are being led by WECA working in partnership with B&NES.
- B&NES Local Plan Partial Update – this will be a formal 7-week consultation on planning documents, including the Local Plan review and supplementary planning documents (SPDs) for transport and green construction. The consultation will take place in August and September 2021.

Kathy Thomas from ALCA expressed concern that B&NES Council appear to be directing a lot of the communication and consultations through the local ward councillor rather than directly contacting Parish Councils. She pointed out that the Parish Charter specifically mentions working directly with Parish Councils.

Cllr Manda Rigby explained that all the consultations mentioned are public consultations and confirmed that any design details will be discussed with local communities.

Cllr Sally Davis stated that it is important to ensure that both local Ward Councillors and Parish/Town Councils are kept informed.

9 UPDATE FROM ALCA B&NES

ALCA B&NES recently held its AGM and Kathy Thomas is now Chair of the Group with Dawn Drury as Vice Chair. Kathy Thomas gave an update covering the following issues:

- ALCA will soon have a new website.
- Due to the period of lockdown over the last 16 months, training has been provided online. This is working very well. The aim is to offer all Parish and Town Councillors some basic training with one free training session. There is a move towards more online meetings and training.
- There is some concern about the prospect of running hybrid meetings.

10 TREE PLANTING GRANTS AND INITIATIVES

Mark Cassidy, Tree and Woodland Officer and Alex Stone and Anna Brunton from the Forest of Avon Trust gave a presentation regarding tree planting grants and initiatives. This covered the following issues:

- Transforming and accelerating action for local trees and woodlands
- The importance of trees to our environment
- National and regional targets for tree planting
- Information about the Forest of Avon Trust
- The Forest of Avon Plan
- The “Trees for Climate” Fund
- What can potentially be funded
- Landowners, community groups, businesses, schools, churches and others have the opportunity to plant their own trees
- Proposed scheme design criteria and reporting standards
- The Forest of Avon Trust contact for the B&NES area is Anna Brunton, Tel: 0117 963 3383

There is a target to double tree cover and to plant 100,000 trees by 2023. It will be important to work with local communities to achieve this.

The Forest of Avon Trust was established 30 years ago and has the ability to combine resources to enable tree planting. Ash dieback has killed up to 1 in 6 trees in the region and it will be important to replant as a result.

The “Trees for Climate” fund will be available until 2025. If Parish and Town Councils have any potential tree planting projects in their areas they should get in touch with Anna Brunton or Alex Stone (Email: alex.stone@forestofavontrust.org or anna.brunton@forestofavontrust.org). An environmental impact assessment may be required in some areas, such as an AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). Planting can be on private or public land. Further details can also be found on the Forest of Avon website - <https://forestofavontrust.org/>

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

11 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the next meeting will take place on Wednesday 13 October 2021 at 6.30pm via Zoom.

Dan Norris, West of England Metro Mayor and Mark Shelford, Police and Crime Commissioner are scheduled to attend the October meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.15 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services