

**Parish Liaison 13 October 2021**  
**Response to issues raised by BANES ALCA on 6-10-21**

The following matters were raised with the Council, following a recent meeting of BANES ALCA.

<p><b>Question 1</b></p>	<p><b>Maintenance of rural Public Rights of Way</b></p> <p>BANES ALCA discussed the state of some of the footpaths in Bath and North East Somerset, with some saying the council was not maintaining the footpaths adequately and others saying they were not experiencing any issues. Some councillors explained that members of their own councils were responsible for checking the footpaths regularly and reporting back at local council meetings. Others commented that they received a sum of money from B&amp;NES annually to deal with low level vegetation. It was noted though that this sum was often not enough to cover the full amount of work required, and that if parishes chose to take this payment each year, they could not then also request that B&amp;NES carry out the work.</p> <p>An example was given of a footpath leading from the A367 in Peasedown into the Wellow parish boundary, which is well maintained in one area but not in another. It was felt that the PROW team should not have to be contacted to report such issues – it should be covered by regular maintenance.</p> <p>It was recommended that Sheila Petherbridge and Tim Haynes, the Public Rights of Way Officers (PROW) at B&amp;NES, be contacted for further information.</p>
<p><b>Response</b></p>	<p>Graeme Stark, Principal Officer – Public Rights of Way was contacted with Sheila Petherbridge and Tim Haynes copied in. Graeme provided the following response.</p> <p>The council’s Public Rights of Way Team runs a Parish Agency scheme, whereby the Council pays parish councils who wish to enter into the scheme to cut back the surface vegetation on the public rights of way (PROWs) in their parish. 22 parishes signed new agreements at the start of this financial year and are in the scheme. Each receives an annual payment based on the length of the PROW network in their respective parishes. If parish councils choose to receive payment to cut back the vegetation on their PROWs then they cannot retain that payment and still ask the PROW Team to carry out the vegetation clearance. In parishes where the parish council has chosen not to enter into a Parish Agency agreement, the Council remains responsible for the clearance of surface vegetation.</p> <p>In respect of the example cited, the Council had a significant amount of vegetation cut back on that particular path three years ago and has continued to cut back vegetation on an ad hoc basis. A recent site visit did not identify any current problems with surface vegetation on that path.</p> <p>The PROW Inspectors carry out regular inspections across the PROW network. However, it needs to be borne in mind that there is the equivalent of two full time members of staff responsible for maintenance and enforcement on the whole PROW network, which totals over 950km. We</p>

	<p>are therefore reliant to a certain extent on parish councils and members of the public reporting problems when they are encountered. Any maintenance or enforcement problems on the PROW network can be reported directly to the PROW Inspector for the parish. (A map has been provided showing the officers responsible for each area and their contact details).</p>
<b>Question 2</b>	<p><b>Street Lighting Maintenance Contracts</b></p> <p>Geoff Davis, Clerk to South Stoke Parish Council, updated BANES ALCA members that as per his circulated email, all parishes that require street lighting maintenance can obtain this by going via Daniel Connett at Volker who will quote a price and then carry works out.</p> <p>He said that feedback was positive for Volker providing a very good service. Geoff Davis also said that he was trying to arrange for it to become a more formal agreement between Volker and Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council and he would keep all duly updated.</p> <p>The particular issue at the moment is that there are many day burning lamps and it would be useful to know what progress B&amp;NES is making with getting their lights fixed. It is not a Volker issue but a warranty one with the manufacturer.</p>
<b>Response</b>	<p>Stephen Burrell – Principal Engineer Street Lighting, was contacted for comment on progress with day burning lamps. He said that the Council has now changed the specification for the photocell used on new lanterns to a more reliable option. However, there is still a legacy issue to resolve with the manufacturers.</p>
<b>Question 3</b>	<p><b>Fix My Street</b></p> <p>Kathy Thomas reported that she had been finding this area of the B&amp;NES website more difficult to use and report street-lamp failure than it had previously been. BANES ALCA also noted that when an issue is reported, it gets marked as “complete” when it has been passed onto another department / individual for investigation, but this does not always equate to the job having been completed. It was suggested that this should be reported to B&amp;NES as it is a flaw in the system. It would be useful to have an option “anything else”.</p>
<b>Response</b>	<p>Chris Major, Director of Place Management was contacted. He said that the feedback is appreciated and that the council is aware of this concern. Work has commenced, involving colleagues across departments, on reviewing the customer centric outcomes from the service. The project will start to pull together the improvements necessary to address the historic issues that are recognised within the FMS system terminology. This also includes a review and update of the job descriptions and roles for various staff in line with the ‘customer feedback strategy revision and review’ to ensure that there is adequate resource in place.</p> <p>Whilst there are some negative issues, the overall feedback of Fix My Street based on the high level of reports is generally good. However, it is appreciated that the measure is not on the times the system works, but on</p>

	the times where it does not explain as clearly as we want what is happening.
<b>Question 4</b>	<b>B&amp;NES Web Site</b>  BANES ALCA noted that there are issues with the B&NES website no longer being easy to use / intuitive. It is more difficult to find the parish online pages with street-lights etc.
<b>Response</b>	<p>Further detail on the nature of the issues with the website has been requested from BANES ALCA in order that these might be discussed with IT Services.</p> <p>Parish Online is a separate website and Martin Laker, Team Leader for the Systems and GIS team, runs regular training sessions for parishes.</p> <p>Maps with layers, including street-lights, can be found on the Council's website in the following way:</p> <p>From the home page (<a href="https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/">https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/</a>), click Find My Nearest and then maps.</p> <p>You can then click Highways and Street Lighting in the left-hand menu to bring up this layer.</p> <p><a href="https://isharemaps.bathnes.gov.uk/atmycouncil.aspx">https://isharemaps.bathnes.gov.uk/atmycouncil.aspx</a></p>

### Update for Parishes from the Council's Sustainability Team

On 29<sup>th</sup> September, the Sustainability Team held an informal network meeting for parishes on climate and ecological emergency, catching up on the activity being undertaken by the parishes and seeking input about the ongoing support that the Sustainability Team can provide to them. 20 people attended, representing 15 Parishes. Two outcomes from that meeting:

1. The Sustainability Team has circulated a survey [here](#) for those who were unable to attend, deadline of Monday 15<sup>th</sup> November.
2. They have set up a Parish Council specific mailing list for Councillors and Climate and Nature working groups as some of the feedback (prompted by the Solar Together scheme discussion) was that they'd like a more direct link with the team. [Subscribe](#).