

## PARISH LIAISON MEETING

### Minutes of the Meeting held

Wednesday, 13th October, 2021, 6.30 pm

**Councillors:** Councillor Lisa O'Brien (Chair), Cllr Kevin Guy (Leader of B&NES Council), Councillor Dine Romero (Cabinet Member), Councillor Sarah Warren (Cabinet Member), Councillor Neil Butters, Councillor Sally Davis, Councillor Duncan Hounsell, Councillor Eleanor Jackson, Councillor Hal MacFie, Councillor Matt McCabe, Councillor Robin Moss, Councillor Vic Pritchard and Councillor Alastair Singleton

**Parish Representatives:** Kathy Thomas (Chair of ALCA), Dawn Drury (ALCA), and representatives of Bathampton PC, Batheaston PC, Chew Magna PC, Claverton PC, Compton Dando PC, Compton Martin PC, Dundry PC, East Harptree PC, Farmborough PC, Freshford PC, High Littleton PC, Keynsham TC, Newton St Loe PC, North Stoke PM, Peasedown St John PC, Priston PC, Publow with Pensford PC, Saltford PC, Shoscombe PC, South Stoke PC, Stowey Sutton PC, Timsbury PC, Westfield PC and Whitchurch VC

**Also in attendance:** Will Godfrey (Chief Executive), Mandy Bishop (Chief Operating Officer), Sara Dixon (Locality Manager), Dan Hatcliffe (Neighbourhood Policing Team), Marie Todd (Democratic Services Officer) and Alison Wells (Community Engagement Officer)

#### 12 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### 13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Alison Born, Tom Davies, Manda Rigby, Richard Samuel and Andy Wait – B&NES  
Janette Stephenson – ALCA  
Trudi Gilbank – Clerk to Farmborough Parish Council

#### 14 URGENT BUSINESS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There was no urgent business.

#### 15 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

## **16 INTRODUCTION FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Cllr Kevin Guy, Leader of B&NES Council welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated that he was looking forward to hearing from Mark Shelford and Dan Norris, the guest speakers.

## **17 MARK SHELFORD - POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR AVON AND SOMERSET**

Mark Shelford, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Avon and Somerset spoke about his role, including the following issues:

- There are plans to introduce a councillors' crime forum. This will be organised by council area and will take place over one day. It will provide an opportunity for councillors to drop in to discuss any issues they wish to raise. This is likely to begin after Christmas.
- One of the roles of the PCC is to appoint a Chief Constable and this process is currently underway. The proposed appointment will be considered by the Police and Crime Board and the appointment will then be formally announced. The new Chief Constable should be in post by late November/early December.
- The PCC also has to set a Police and Crime Plan, and this has been out to consultation for 12 weeks. The Plan will next be scrutinised by the Police and Crime Panel.
- Negotiations will also take place regarding funding and this will involve individual councils.
- PCCs must also contribute to national and international capabilities, such as the recent G7 conference which took place in Cornwall.
- The PCC chairs the local Criminal Justice Board which brings together various agencies which are involved with the criminal justice system. The Board includes representatives from prisons, the probation service, the Crime Prosecution Service and Clinical Commissioning Groups. Attempts are also being made to include the education sector as excluded children are much more likely to become involved in criminal activity than those who remain in school.
- Another role of the PCC is to commission victims' services. This includes services such as The Bridge in Bristol which provides excellent support to victims of rape and sexual assault.
- The Commissioning Team has made bids to the Ministry of Justice of around £1.6m to boost support for victims of domestic and sexual violence.
- It is also important to ensure that the police priorities are correct and reflect the concerns of local people.
- The PCC has taken on a role relating to economic and cyber-crime and hopes to reduce the number of people falling prey to this type of scam.
- A Chief of Staff from the Ministry of Justice has been appointed.
- A review of the commissioning programme has commenced to ensure that the process is as efficient as possible.

Mark explained that he had previously been a local councillor and thanked Unitary, Town and Parish councillors for all the work they do for their local communities. He

previously served on the Police and Crime Panel and felt that he had skills to offer to the role of PCC from his work in the military and in business.

The priorities of the PCC are:

- To provide an efficient and effective police service which makes the people of Avon and Somerset safer and makes them feel safer.
- The Police are the community, and the community are the Police. Policing in this country is by consent and it is vital for people to have trust in the Police service.
- The thread running through the Police and Crime Plan is to prevent crime rather than just chasing criminals.
- The Police and Crime Plan was out to consultation for 12 weeks and received an excellent response. The PCC holds the Chief Constable to account on priorities within the plan.

Mark then addressed the issue of violence against women. He stated that he was horrified and disgusted by the murder of Sarah Everard. He was concerned that this has destroyed trust in the police and stated that it is now the responsibility of the police to rebuild this trust. Misogyny must be dealt with efficiently and effectively at all levels, including at low-level command. An independent telephone line will be available for police officers to report any improper behaviour to ensure that any sexual impropriety is dealt with straight away. It is important to ensure the right culture going forward and to deal with any inappropriate behaviour early (both in the police and in the community) to prevent escalation. Education is also an important aspect and respect needs to be taught in schools. The emphasis also must be on the perpetrator of sexual violence and not the victim, whilst providing wrap-around support for victims. It is also important to ensure that more cases are taken to court. Numbers have increased over the last four months from 1.2% of cases to 11%. The target in three years' time is for this to increase to 50%. Whilst this is still not enough, it is a great improvement.

The PCC will be visiting local constituencies on an eight-week rotational cycle to speak to local people.

### Questions

The PCC then responded to questions as follows:

- Allegations of corruption or misconduct within the Police service are taken extremely seriously. Officers can be suspended or removed from public facing duties if necessary. If there is evidence of gross misconduct, then they will be dismissed. The PCC can also reduce pension rights.
- Domestic violence is totally unacceptable. The PCC is working up operational plans to make the night-time economy safer, particularly for women.
- Some funding has been obtained from the Home Office Safer Streets initiative including £300k for the North Somerset area.

The Neighbourhood Police Sergeant for the Bath team is Daniel Hatcliffe and he is the contact for any operational questions. Contact details are:

Email: [Daniel.hatcliffe@avonandsomerset.police.uk](mailto:Daniel.hatcliffe@avonandsomerset.police.uk)

Tel: 07802 874264

Parishes can also find details of their neighbourhood policing team here:

<https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/your-area/>

The Chair thanked Mark Shelford for attending the meeting.

## **18 SAFETY FOR WOMEN - COUNCIL MOTION**

Cllr Dine Romero, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Communities and Culture, explained that, following the murder of Sarah Everard, some of the women councillors in B&NES have worked together to submit a motion regarding violence against women. The cross-party group felt strongly that victims should not be blamed for attacks on them and that women should be able to go about their daily lives without fear.

The motion was agreed unanimously at the B&NES full Council meeting in July and a response will be brought back to the November Council meeting.

Cllr Romero highlighted the following key issues:

- The group believes that women have the right to expect to be safe wherever they are.
- The Council is reviewing lighting in certain areas.
- Officers are working with licensed premises to implement and raise awareness of the “Ask Angela” scheme. This is a scheme to encourage women who are receiving unwelcome attention or feel unsafe to use a code word to bar staff who can alert someone to help. This means that women don’t have to confront the perpetrator themselves.
- Council Officers have been asked to ensure that the areas they are working in are safe spaces. Parish Councils and Housing Associations will also be included in this work.
- Schools, universities, colleges, and youth centres will also be asked to promote a safety and respect for all agenda.

Mark Shelford, PCC, supported the motion and stressed that attitudes must change.

If any Parish wishes to raise concerns regarding lighting, overgrown trees/bushes etc that is a safety concern then they are asked to contact either their local ward councillor or Cllr Dine Romero.

Cllr Romero will provide a further update at the next Parish Liaison Meeting.

*A copy of the Council motion is attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes.*

## 19 DAN NORRIS - WEST OF ENGLAND METRO MAYOR

Dan Norris, West of England Metro Mayor, attended the meeting to talk about his role and to answer questions from Parishes. He talked about the following issues:

- The West of England region will benefit from strategic working. Over the last four years the region has not been granted any funding over and above the Government's original intentions. The Mayor wants to increase funding for the area by working strategically across the region.
- The Government wants ideas which are bigger than the sum of their parts. Councils in the past have demonstrated a culture of "divvying up" funding between their respective areas. However, if the combined authority works effectively across the whole area, as other regions have done, more funding could become available.
- The Mayor is hoping to meet with the Prime Minister soon to discuss strategic working. He does not consider his role to be party political and feels that most people would agree what a good public transport system or good training looks like.
- He wants to allocate funding to the best bids that come forward, irrespective of where they are in the region. These ideas should benefit the region as a whole.
- This region can do as well as other parts of the country by working hard for this in a strategic way.

### Question and Answer Session

Dan Norris then responded to questions as follows:

- Villages and hamlets need more support and just over half a billion pounds has been secured for a public transport system. The big emphasis will be on buses. The funding comes with conditions which largely focuses on urban links. He acknowledged that public transport is important in rural areas too. He would always focus on ensuring that the service is excellent, but funding restrictions may only result in "good enough", which may be better than the services we have now. We will need transport hubs to improve connectivity. Transport officers across the different council areas need to work closely together. The Bristol to Bath link is important but not the only priority. Help from the local areas will be important to ensure that the system works for all.
- The Mayor has visited Cleveland Bridge to see the closure. A strong case has been made regarding the problems caused by heavy goods vehicles crossing the bridge. There is some tension with Wiltshire regarding this issue and it would also have a knock-on effect across the whole South West area. It is important to work together to solve this problem.
- There is very little actual "affordable" housing in the area. It is difficult to heat and run a house and good insulation is crucial as bills are continuing to rise.

Future needs must be anticipated, and the green belt must be considered. It is important to consider what is truly green belt. It is also vital to build more homes, including council houses. Young people no longer have enough money to buy their own homes, and this is a problem.

- The Mayor is very supportive towards work being done to protect women and girls. Having worked in child protection he understands this issue and the need for women and girls to be able to protect themselves. It is a much wider problem than we read in the headlines and the way women are treated is poor and this must be addressed. Until there is true equality then it will be difficult to fully deal with this problem.
- The Mayor does not have the power to mediate with regards to the proposed development of 250 houses put forward by Mendip Council. This does have a large impact on areas on the border such as Westfield Parish. It highlights the need for more strategic thinking.
- The Mayor agreed to look at the study undertaken by the Valley Parishes Alliance regarding the M4 to south coast arterial route.
- It is important to target resources to provide residential accommodation and empty retail spaces could be part of this. The pace of change has altered because of the pandemic and it will be important to analyse the data regarding new ways of working and shopping etc. The changing pattern of retail can be put to positive use.
- The impact of the Clean Air Zone was discussed, and the Mayor noted the need for more strategic cross-party working to deal with this type of issue which affects a wide area. Cllr Sarah Warren pointed out that the Government required B&NES to bring in a Clean Air Zone and that 95% of vehicles are currently compliant with more being encouraged and assisted via grants to upgrade their vehicles. It was noted that there is also an increasing number of vans and HGVs on the road due to more online shopping.

The Chair thanked Dan Norris for attending the meeting.

## **20 B&NES ALCA - QUESTIONS**

A number of questions have been submitted by B&NES ALCA and a copy of the questions and responses are attached as *Appendix 2* to these minutes.

## **21 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS - 2022**

It was agreed that future meetings will be held on the following dates in 2022:

Wednesday 23 March  
Wednesday 13 July  
Wednesday 12 October

All meetings will start at 6.30pm. It is likely that meetings will be held via Zoom, Parish Councils are asked to pass their views on whether they wish to meet virtually or in person to Alison Wells – email [Alison\\_Wells@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:Alison_Wells@bathnes.gov.uk)

The meeting ended at 8.04 pm

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**