

COUNCIL MEETING 16TH MARCH 2023

**STATEMENTS FROM
COUNCILLORS**

Councillors

1. Cllr Samuel - Farewell statement
2. Cllr Furse - Farewell statement
3. Cllr Curran - Farewell statement

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

M	01	Question from:	Cllr Kumar
<p>Did the council receive emails from Jinan municipal government multiple times with several reminders and some of which were forwarded by me with a request to at least acknowledge the emails. Did our council reply to the emails? If not, why? Does this bode well for our (Including our county and country's) reputation?</p>			
<p>Answer: Cllr Guy</p>			
<p>The e-mail forwarded by you from the Jinan municipal government made a request of the Mayor of Bath to extend an invitation to visit the city and this has been left to the Mayor's office to respond.</p>			
M	02	Question from:	Cllr David
<p>What is the council doing to respond to WHO Air Quality Guidelines and what steps will the council take to improve air quality monitoring and public access to data?</p>			
<p>Answer: Cllr Rigby</p>			
<p>Whilst the aim has been to achieve compliance with the annual average objective level for of 40 µg/m³, the council is fully aware of the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines published in 2021 which propose more ambitious targets for both nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter in recognition of the serious health risk pollution can have upon global health. In the Cabinet Report E3339 Bath Clean Air Plan Annual Report 2021, the council referenced its ambition to create its own reducing target to adhere to these guidelines in future years,</p>			

reinforcing the aspiration that reducing pollution should be an aim in all decision-making. By introducing a local NO₂ objective level for example, where all monitoring locations would aim to achieve an annual average level of at, or below, 36 µg/m³ by 2025, it demonstrates a will to be aspirational in further protecting public health.

Great strides have been paid in the past 12-months to improve transparency and the public access to data. We monitor air quality using two methods, diffusion tubes for NO₂ and automatic analysers for both NO₂ and particulate matter. All historic data from our diffusion tube sites, dating back from 2017, can be viewed on the following webpage: <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/environment/pollution-noise-nuisance/air-quality/air-quality-data-long-term>

All live monitoring data, from our automatic analyser network can be viewed on the following webpage: <https://www.ukairquality.net/> Additionally, all Annual Status Reports can be accessed from the council's website, these include officer interpretation in addition to the monthly raw data sets.

M	03	Question from:	Cllr David
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What steps is the council taking to support schools to address air quality including through school transport initiatives as well as monitoring of air quality, and screening from traffic?

Answer: Cllr Rigby

Launched in 2019, and refreshed in 2022, the Schools' 'Clean Air Tool Kit' is a resource available to all schools across B&NES to support teachers with lessons and activities targeted to specific age groups in support of the national curriculum.

The toolkit includes activities such as monitoring air quality, a guide to setting up a walking bus, bikeability information, leaflets for parents and advice for running an anti-idling campaign. During 2022, schools produced posters which were displayed in the local area to encourage children and their families to walk. This tool kit has been further promoted through school's newsletters at the beginning of 2023, and the school's hub.

Additionally, many of the activities contained in the toolkit are approved initiatives under Modeshift STARS, the national schools award scheme that recognises schools that have demonstrated excellence in supporting sustainable travel.

M	04	Question from:	Cllr Walker
<p>With the introduction of payment parking apps within all Councils car parks within Bath;</p> <p>Can you please tell me how we are enabling those people without mobile smart phones or a mobile of any type, to be able to use our city car parks? For one reason or another not all sectors of society have access to / or are able to use a smart phone or mobile device.</p>			
Answer: Cllr Rigby			
<p>All council car parks, with the exception of Broad Street car park in Bath, accept payment of the parking charge in cash. Broad Street car park had its pay and display machine removed a number of years ago as a result of the its foundation causing significant water penetration and damage to adjacent properties along Broad Street. The presence of vaults underneath the surface meant that no alternative location for a machine existed; however, it remains the only car park across the council where MiPermit is the only option.</p> <p>The flexibility provided by the MiPermit app provides the best user experience when paying for parking in our car parks. Recent data published by Ofcom in 2022 shows that 97% of the UK population have access to a mobile phone, with this dropping to 90% for a smartphone. Of course, it's reasonable to expect that this average will vary when looking at individual age groups, and the Ofcom data identifies that for those aged 65 and over the percentages fall 90% and 68% respectively.</p> <p>For the small number of users that don't have access to a mobile phone, it's also possible to use the MiPermit service to pay for parking in advance from a landline or PC/tablet at home. The MiPermit Customer Service team is available Monday to Friday 8am – 6pm, Saturday 8am – 4pm and Sunday from 10am – 4pm, however it should be noted that payment does not reserve a space.</p> <p>There are currently no further plans to remove machines completely from any car parks. The council is reviewing options for replacement pay and display machines across all car parks as part of its forward plan of works and the acceptance of cash is a core requirement of the specification.</p>			

M	05	Question from:	Cllr Pritchard
<p>A letter from Dave Harding and Anna Box sent out to Chew Valley residents specifically says: “The Tories are trying to steal your vote. With their Voter ID law, voters must have photo identification to vote on polling day. To protect your right to vote, vote by post”. Can you please explain how providing Voter ID is an attempt at stealing someone’s vote, when the law in fact is about protecting our democratic process from voter fraud?</p>			
<p>Answer: Cllr Guy</p>			
<p>It is not for Councillors to explain the views of 3rd parties.</p>			
M	06	Question from:	Cllr Brian Simmons
<p>Will the Charlton House beds all be reopened or are you going to wait for it to be closed by CQC?</p>			
<p>Answer: Cllr Born</p>			
<p>The decision to close the beds was taken by the Director of Adult Social Care and not Care Quality Commission (CQC) and CQC have not pursued any action to close the home.</p> <p>The council will make a decision to open the beds at Charlton House once the Director of Adult Social Care is assured the following is in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decrease in agency staff usage • increase of permanent staff • decrease in safeguarding concerns 			

- permanent senior management in place
- CQC inspection which demonstrates improvement

Use of agency staff at Charlton House is now minimal and has decreased by 75%.

Recruitment of care workers has significantly increased and the home expects to have full complement of permanent care assistant staff in post by April 2023 and recruitment to nursing posts continues and a Deputy Manager post is currently being advertised.

Safeguarding concerns have decreased substantially with 2 referrals since January 2023 which were related to falls.

A new Registered Manager is in place with support of a Senior Clinical Nurse who is seconded from the RUH to improve and maintain good nursing standards for the residents.

CQC are expected to undertake an announced inspection in the next 4 weeks.

M	07	Question from:	Cllr Brian Simmons
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Can you explain why so much money was spent on renewable energy at Charlton House when it was plain to see that the clients' needs have been sacrificed at the altar of Zero-carbon?

Answer: Cllr Born

The installation of rooftop solar PV, LED lighting and air source heat pumps was mostly paid for by Government grant (Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme [PSDS]) and was a replacement for the end of life gas heating system. The council provided funding to the level of the cost of replacing the old system (in danger of failing as it was at the end of its life – a prerequisite for eligibility of the PSDS grant). The effect of the installation of rooftop solar PV, LED lighting and air source heat pumps are that the building has greater energy efficiency and marginally lower running costs while decarbonising its heating. The first full year's data suggests an operating cost saving with no gas consumption apart from for cooking. The solar PV generated 61,000kwh of electricity in the first year and the LED lights reduced electricity demand by 26,556kwh.

Just under £15k additional funding was provided from Council's Renewable Energy Development Fund budget which is an 'invest to save' service supported borrowing pot, meaning that expenditure has the effect the lowering of running costs by more than £15k significantly within the lifetime of the solar PV.

In addition to investing in the fabric of the buildings we have also invested significant resources into staffing the CRCs since taking them back in house.

M 08

Question from:

Cllr Karen Warrington

Can Cllr Guy please furnish us with the criteria he set for the recruit of the new head of the Bath fashion museum? And did that criteria include project management experience and prior successful bid application experience?

Answer: Cllr Guy

The process was undertaken in-line with council recruitment process – an open application, widely advertised across national digital channels including Guardian Jobs. The recruitment was led by the Head of Heritage Services against the attached Job Description and Person Specification.

To note that this role will not lead on the fundraising strategy for the project but will work in collaboration with other Heritage Services staff – including the Fundraising, Marketing and Supporter Development Manager and Head of Service – to deliver a successful fundraising campaign for the project.

The strategic direction of the service is agreed as part of the business planning process and then tracked through regular collaboration between portfolio holder and Head of Service. This recruitment was discussed as part of this process as a key strategic step towards delivering the Re-Fashioning Bath project but the recruitment process was owned and led by the Head of Service including drafting of the job description.

M 09

Question from:

Cllr Alan Hale

Yesterday 'on the knocker' I was reminded by a young woman that I had acted for her and another woman re fireworks and their impact on animals. I had successfully with unanimous voting moved a motion on November 17th 2021 which read;

1. To recommend that all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people.
2. Actively to promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people in the lead up to relevant celebrations and cultural events through existing council communication channels.
3. To write to the Local Government Association to lobby for a limit to the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays.
4. To encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock quieter fireworks for public display.

As the assembled council directed the administration to take certain actions, I would like clarification of what has been done on this. Therefore, can I ask what has been achieved on this matter?

Answer: Cllr Wood

I can confirm that each of the points raised in the Motion was actioned.

Firstly, a new website was developed that provided advice and guidance to those that hosted events could follow. The site, which can be found at: <http://new-banes-website-dev/find-advice-about-fireworks> included advice which encouraged everyone to consider the whole community when using fireworks. And the purpose of the page was to provide guidance for not only those planning a firework display, and want to minimise any negative impacts on animals or other residents, but also for those who would be concerned about the impact of fireworks.

It contained the following advice:

If you're putting on a display

For safe and considerate use of fireworks, please take the following steps:

- Advertise any fireworks at least a month in advance using local press, social media and your Parish Council
- Consider using fireworks with a lower noise level
- Ring fence the fire in advance to prevent animals from taking shelter

- [Read the RSPCA #bangoutoforder Toolkit](#)

If you're concerned about displays

If you are worried about the impact of firework displays on you, your community, pets or livestock, please consider reading the RSPCA #BangOutOfOrder toolkit and displaying posters in your windows if you have a pet who is vulnerable to the noise.

And included the following resources as we linked with the RSPCA:

- Key facts and statistics to help you with local communications
- Suggested social media copy to raise awareness on the impact of local displays on animals
- Video content to encourage conversation around firework displays
- Downloadable cards and posters for residents to display

In relation to the public awareness campaign, a press release was issued, a copy of which can be found on the Councils Newsroom page here: <https://newsroom.bathnes.gov.uk/news/how-reduce-impact-fireworks-vulnerable-people-and-animals-bonfire-night>

Cllrs wrote a letter to the Local Government Association as requested in October 2022 making them aware of the Motion, and requesting the following:

“whether you would support a move to lobby for a limit to the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays.

There was a petition registered with the Government in 2021 which was responded to in November. This received 13,212 signatures, and the response stated that the Office for Product Safety and Standards had also commissioned noise research to test the decibel level of commonly used fireworks. I have requested a copy of the outcome of those tests”.

Finally, officers of the Trading Standards Team visit premises that sell fireworks to ensure that they adhere to their License conditions. Officers were all briefed about the Motion before the selling season and encouraged purchasers to view our webpage, particularly those that were purchasing fireworks for larger displays”.

M	10	Question from: Cllr Alan Hale
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If we have identified a risk that requires a ring of steel between 10 and 6, what intelligence information do we have that there is not a risk to our community and visitors from terrorists at 6.15pm or later? If we have no such intelligence, then surely there is a vital need to keep the ring of steel on 24/7.

Answer: Cllr Manda Rigby

The roads are part of a package of Traffic Regulation Orders which together strengthen security in the city centre by closing a number of roads with the aim of protecting areas of high footfall from 10am to 6pm from a potential vehicle borne threat, either as a vehicle borne improvised explosive device (“VBIED”), vehicle as a weapon (“VAW”) or as part of a layered attack – vehicle transporting attackers and/or weapons sitting alongside our existing and ongoing holistic approach to preventing a terrorist attack and, whilst Counter-Terrorism Advisors at the recent York Street Public Inquiry stated their preference would be 24/7, they did recognise the Council’s response as proportionate to the current threat level. There are agreed processes in place should the threat level change.

Outside the 10am to 6pm period the city centre is less busy, however, it should be noted that there are still security measures in place which mitigates the affects of an terror incident, including Counter-Terrorism training for council officers and businesses with proactive CCTV monitoring.