

SWAINSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's Report 2018/2019

Overview

This year has been remarkably peaceful compared to recent years, particularly because planning activity has been minimal. The normal and regular topics relating to highways continue to rumble on. The proposed introduction of a Clean Air Zone in the city initially caused local concern but the parameters for this are still being revised.

Planning

There were only four new Planning Applications this year only one of which was controversial. A large new 'barn' had been rapidly constructed at Four Winds Farm without a planning submission. After contacting B&NES Enforcement Dept an application for the 'retention' of an agricultural building was submitted. This Council submitted objections as it was an overly large structure and did not have a design suited to its stated purpose. Unfortunately, after much interaction with B&NES, permission was granted to retain the building.

There were two Enforcement enquiries made which were outstanding from the previous year. One, regarding unauthorised use of agricultural buildings at Pitland Farm was placed in abeyance until further evidence was available. The second related to the ongoing issue of curtilage extension at Beech House. After much interaction with B&NES this to has been parked.

The Manor Barn

Concerns have been raised about the condition of the Manor Barn. B&NES have been contacted and the Conservation Dept said it would put the building on its 'at risk' register but it would be sometime before it could be evaluated. It was recommended that the owner be informed.

Clean Air Zone

Following the cancelation of the Eastern Park & Ride proposals a further initiative to support the transport policies of B&NES was initiated. This would be the creation of a Clean Air Zone (CAZ). Over 8000 objections and comments were sent to B&NES (including one from Swainswick P C) and this has resulted in a major review of the initial proposals. The detailed revision has yet to be published but there is a target date of September 2019 after which an implementation plan will commence.

Highways, Verge Maintenance and Footpaths

The usual pattern of overgrown verges, footpaths and hedges was repeated but with regular contact B&NES, in the main, addressed most issues. Drainage problems along Tadwick Lane re-occurred but were dealt with promptly. The lane has a particularly bad surface in places and some piece-meal repairs were undertaken by B&NES.

The bridge on the footpath between Swainswick and Woolley had subsided somewhat. The problem has not yet been rectified but measures taken to prevent further subsidence. This needs to be followed up with a full repair or replacement. As an aside attempts are to be made to improve the water flow to the trough on the green. The water source relies on a nearby gully drain which needs clearing.

The ongoing impact of the Deadmill Lane 'rat-run' on Larkhall, Ferndale, Brooklyn Road and Fairfield remain unresolved.

Bathavon Forum Meetings

Three forum meetings were attended by the clerk. The most interesting topics were the B&NES budgets and the CAZ scheme proposals.

Ward Boundary Review

The Boundary Commission reviewed the ward boundaries and concluded that little change would be necessary, however the number of Ward Councillors would be reduced. This has now taken place and Bathavon North will be represented by just two councillors, reduced by one.

Swainswick Church – Application for Heritage Lottery Money

As the church is regularly used for a variety of social functions it is planned to alter a part of the interior layout. There is a formal procedure underway and The Bath Museum of Architecture is involved, and work is underway to promote awareness of the structure and history of the church. Full details have been discussed with this council and The Diocese have been consulted on the plans and approval is expected. There have been very few objections raised and Swainswick Parish Council fully supports these proposals.

Swainswick School

A major development at Swainswick Primary school has progressed well and work, for the erection of two replacement classrooms following removal of existing modular classroom buildings, remains on schedule.

Administrative Changes

The Government has revised the bill to drop the requirement for the formalised post of Data Protection Officer and the council has now been registered with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) and the fee paid.

Finance

Our precept remains unchanged at £3000 per annum. The council remains financially secure with a respectable balance of £2922.00. This is a reduced balance due entirely to a £1000.00 contribution being made to assist in securing a new organ for Swainswick Church as the old one was on the brink of irreparable failure.

The Audit for the year has been created and approved by Council on the 11th April and the new Certificate of Exemption has been signed and sent to the external auditors, this being a part of the new audit procedures. The final papers will be authorised on June 10th 2019. The web site will be updated prior to the 1st July following that date as is legally required.

Council Membership

With Council elections taking place in May 2019, for the next 4 year membership, E Charrington has decided to stand down after 25 years of service.

G Davis also stated that he would not be seeking nomination at this time for personal reasons but said that in due course he may like to re-join via the co-option process.

This council unanimously offered both a sincere vote of thank for their contributions to the Parish.

Jonathan Miles

Chairman of Swainswick Parish Council – June 2019