

**MINUTES OF BANWELL PARISH ASSEMBLY
HELD AT THE YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE ON MONDAY 22nd APRIL 2024**

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Paul Blatchford (Chairman of Banwell Parish Council).

Present: 9 members of the public, 7 Parish Councillors, 1 District Councillor and the minutes were taken by Liz Shayler (Clerk to Banwell Parish Council).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Parish Councillors Kevin Gibbons, Nick Manley, Kelly Smith, Matthew Thomson & Steve Voller.

2. MINUTES OF LAST PARISH ASSEMBLY

The minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 24th of April 2023 were approved as a correct record of the meeting and were duly signed by Cllr Blatchford.

3. BANWELL PARISH COUNCIL –

i. Chairman's Report

The Chairman, Paul Blatchford, gave the following report.

It has been another busy year for the Parish Council with not one but two elephants in the room in the shape of the Bypass and the Local Plan, more of which later.

I am pleased to say that we have two new councillors, Steve Voller and Kelly Smith which brings us up to 12 so that currently there are no vacancies.

During the year we have seen the village grow with new houses at Knightcott, Jubilee Gardens and the ongoing development at Mead Fields. As the village grows, we need greater staffing capacity, and I am pleased to announce that we have appointed two permanent, part-time posts, Gerry Cronin as an Administrative Officer and Sally Marks as Communication and Marketing Officer. This is also an opportunity to thank David Murphy and Dani Wolfgang-James for their contributions during the past year.

One of the major problems for the village over recent years has been the absence of a lollipop person at the school crossing or to give it its correct title a Zebra Crossing Escort person. In their wisdom North Somerset Council thought it too dangerous to employ someone to do this. May I thank Jonathan MacMillan for volunteering to do this.

Also, during the year, we worked with the Scouts to have shared solar panels installed. Thanks to the support of the North Somerset Business Fund, the Parish Council secured funding for solar panels serving both the Youth & Community Centre and the Scout Building. We are thrilled with this initiative, which will help make our community buildings more sustainable and environmentally friendly. A big thank you goes out to the Scouts for allowing us to utilise their roof space for the solar panels. Their cooperation has been invaluable in making this project a reality. With the installation of these solar panels, we're taking a step forward in reducing both our carbon footprint and embracing renewable energy. It's a small but important change that aligns with the Parish Council commitment to caring for our environment.

Soup and Roll - With a grant from North Somerset Council, we launched the 'Soup and a Roll Initiative' as part of our Public Living Room. Thanks to the grant, we maintained costs at a voluntary contribution of £1 per serving. Running until March 2024, the initiative provided soup to 565 individuals and raised £795 in voluntary contributions. Due to its overwhelming success, we're extending the program beyond March 2024, with a slight price increase to £2. Additionally, as weather warms, we'll introduce alternative offerings alongside soup.

Alongside the activities already mentioned we have also offered:

- Tea and Tech / You Can Do I.T.
- Village Cleans
- Continued live streaming of our meetings.
- The Youth Club, which has increased numbers and has summer holiday events planned.
- Lobbied against the discontinuation of the 126 bus route which has been reinstated.
- Putting on another very successful Christmas Market
- 'Back to Basics' and 'Fun for One' Cookery Courses.

And finally, increased and renovated play equipment at Riverside and the Recreation Ground thanks to grants from North Somerset Play Innovation Fund, Section 106 contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions.

Back to the elephants, both of which have the potential to change the village forever. Firstly, the Bypass, I will not go back over the fine detail but as I am sure you are aware the construction has been delayed because, (Tarmac the parent company of Griffiths), pulled the plug at the last moment. We believe this was because the project did not deliver high enough profits. We have been assured by the Bypass team that several other contractors immediately contacted them on hearing the news and it is hoped that work can start later this year. In the meantime, you may be aware that the sub-contractors have continued with the enabling environmental works and this gives us some confidence.

Elephant number Two is the Local Plan, currently in its draft stage. It includes the planning for a new settlement in the Wolverhill area to the north of the planned Bypass. This has been mooted for many years as can be seen by the number of fields in the area that have been offered up for development by their owners. It has always been our understanding that some level of development would take place here regardless of there being a bypass or not. The Local Plan anticipates 2,800 dwellings in the area which would treble the size of Banwell. Three national developers have been working with North Somerset to plan the new settlement and the Parish has set up a Working Party to act as a conduit between our Parishioners, North Somerset and the consortium of Developers.

This process has started and is ongoing, please visit our website for further information.

Finally, this will be my last report as Chair and I would like to thank our Volunteers, Councillors (past and present) and the Council Staff for all their good work that makes Banwell such a good place to live in. However, my special thanks must go to our Clerk Liz not just for the sheer energy she puts into the roll but for keeping me and the Council on the straight and narrow during my time as Chair.

ii. Draft statement of accounts for the year ending 31st March 2024

The Clerk presented the statement of accounts for the Parish Council for the last financial year and highlighted the level of reserves, including the earmarked reserves for an extension to the cemetery and the Community Infrastructure Levy money currently allocated for an all-weather path around the Recreation Ground. The Clerk was pleased to say that due to an increase in the Council Tax Base the cost of a Band D property is only an increase of 2p at £85.97 a year. The Council recognised that it would continue to be challenging with the cost of household utility bills.

The Clerk invited the Assembly to seek clarification of any issues. There were no queries raised.

4. NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL

i) Ward Councillors Report

Councillor Tristram introduced himself, providing a succinct overview of his responsibilities and the ways in which he has aided Banwell residents in the following areas.

- Planning
- Flooding
- Bypass
- Rehoming a family

- Chair of Children and Young People's panel

The Chairman expressed gratitude to Councillor Tristram for his consistent presence and invaluable contributions to the community.

5. AVON & SOMERSET CONSTABULARY

No PCSO was present, and no annual report had been received. Members of the public were reminded that a monthly report is presented to each Parish Council meeting and forms part of the minutes under public participation.

6. RECOGNITION OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY AWARD 2023

The Parish Council are recognising an individual who has made a huge difference to families using the zebra crossing in front of the school. It is our privilege to announce this year's recipient of the Recognition of Service to the Community Award, Jonathan McMillian.

Rain or shine, Jonathan stands at the crossing, ensuring the safe passage of our young people as they journey to and from school each day. As a volunteer, his commitment to this role goes above and beyond putting himself out in front of the awful traffic to make the environment safer.

Jonathan's was nominated by numerous parents, highlighting the impact he has had on the school community. Jonathan, your commitment to the safety and well-being of our students is truly commendable, and the Parish Council are immensely grateful for all that you do.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

A resident asked about Community Speedwatch. The meeting was told that whilst the Parish Council still officially have a team then it consists of only two members. Hopefully with the hiring of a Communications Officer then there can be a push to recruit more members.

Another resident asked about Speed Cameras and Noise Activated Cameras. The meeting was informed that the Parish Council had a Vehicle Activated Speed Sign (VAS) which is regularly rotated between Knightcott Road, Castle Hill and East Street. While the data collected from these rotations is shared with the Police to enhance vigilance, it's noted that the Parish Council's capacity is limited in directly deploying speed traps. Recognition was extended to Cllr Harding for diligently overseeing the rotation of the VAS every 6 weeks.

Regarding Noise Activated Cameras, attendees were informed that videos capturing noise disturbances can be uploaded to the Police website. It's essential to include the vehicle's registration plate for effective identification and subsequent action.

Concern was raised about the speed and noise of vehicles travelling through the village on a Sunday.

8. REPORTS BY VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS

Reports were presented by the following village organisations over the past year.

Banwell Village Hall* – Neil Humphries-Smith

St Andrews, Banwell Church* – Maggie McCarthy

Banwell Archaeology Society* - Steve Davis

Banwell Bell Ringers* – read by Steve Davis on behalf of Jade Longmoor

Gardening Club – Steve Parkinson

Banwell Potigny Town Twinning* – Jackie Parkinson

Banwell Amateur Dramatics* – Mary Humphries-Smith

Women's Institute* - Viv Bailey

Royal British Legion – Tom Couch

(*Copies of these written reports are held by Banwell Parish Council and may be inspected by making application to the Parish Clerk).

11. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF ELECTORS – Monday 28th April 2025

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at pm and thanked all those who had attended.

..... Chairman

..... Date