

**MINUTES OF BANWELL PARISH ASSEMBLY
HELD AT THE YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE ON MONDAY 24th APRIL 2023**

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

Present: 14 members of the public (1 virtually), 8 Parish Councillors and 1 District Councillor and the minutes were taken by Liz Shayler (Clerk to Banwell Parish Council).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Parish Councillor Simon Arlidge and Kevin Gibbons.

2. MINUTES OF LAST PARISH ASSEMBLY

The minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 25th April 2022 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.

The post-Covid era has thrown up new challenges with the cost of living crisis and increased energy costs. While these are having a direct effect on our finances the greater concern is for our parishioners. To that end we continue to support and run the Food Bank which provides food to those most in need.

The Public Living Room, which opened last Autumn, provides a welcoming and warm space. Banwell was one of the first villages in North Somerset to offer this service and after a visit from District Councillor Mike Bell our Clerk Liz was invited to give a presentation to Ageing Well network on how to set up and organise a Public Living Room and all the other initiatives that the Parish Council have run. The public living room will remain open all year round.

Daisy our Marketing and Communication Officer worked with Liz to gain a variety of grants for the Public Living Room initiative, the Queen's Jubilee, update the Youth and Community Centre with energy efficient lighting, Riverside play area and Youth Food Club initiatives, all of which had a positive impact on the Banwell community.

Hovering in the background but never far from our thoughts, has been the progress of the Bypass. As well as participating in all the consultations the Parish Council has been in constant contact with the Bypass Team. The culmination of this was the recent unanimous Planning Approval given by North Somerset Council. Construction and changed traffic flows will undoubtedly bring new challenges for us over the next two years but the completed bypass should bring 'peace in our time' for the village.

The other major change over the past year is the increasing size of the Parish, not just from the planned 'Jubilee Gardens' off Wolverhill Road but the growing community at Weston Villages, south of Churchland's Way. Banwell is getting bigger and we must prepare for that eventuality. 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.
- Helping with vaccination clinics
- The Youth Club, which has increased numbers and had successful summer events.
- Affirmed a Civility and Respect Pledge
- Lobbied against the discontinuation of the 126 bus route.
- Set up a Sustainability Working Group
- Putting on a very successful Christmas Market
- Redecorating the YCC

- Finished our program of upgrading old streetlights to LED.
- And last but not least, increased and renovated play equipment at Riverside and Rec

My thanks go out to the Councillors and all the volunteers who make this happen and we welcome Councillor Steve Arlidge to our team.

Daisy left us in March to take up a post with South Gloucestershire Council. She has been a great asset to the Council, helping us get through the pandemic and paying for herself with the grants that were brought in. She will be much missed and we wish her all the best in her new role. But every cloud has a silver lining, and I am pleased to report that David Murphy has joined us as our Communications, Marketing and Grant Funding Officer.

Finally, I must thank Liz who yet again gone above and beyond to keep this show on the road. The Council and the village are indebted to her. She makes Banwell a better place.

ii. Draft statement of accounts for the year ending 31st March 2023

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 reserve for an extension to the cemetery. The Clerk was pleased to say that due to an increase in the Council Tax Base and an influx of Community Levy contributions, whilst our budget has increased the cost of a Band D property is only an increase of 4p at £85.95 a year. The Council recognized that it would continue to be challenging with the cost of household utility bill.

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

4. NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL

i) Ward Councillors Report

Cllr Haverson thanked the Parish Council for being a pleasure to work with during her term of office. She reported that it had been a strange four years but out of the challenges of Covid there had been a silver lining in the form of 'North Somerset Together'.

Housing continues to be an issue with the Governments imposed housing targets and the lack of affordable housing which has now been raised to 40% in North Somerset. The future of Castlewood is still in discussion.

Whilst being a member of the Green party she is not generally in favour of new roads then on balance she believed that they Banwell Bypass was a necessity and so supported it and hoped that effective mitigation measures would be implemented in neighbouring villages.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Haverson for all she had done during her term of office and wished her good luck.

ii) Bus responsive service

A North Somerset Council Officer spoke about the new WestLINK service (bus responsive service). The service consists of up to 30 accessible 16-seater minibuses which you can book to take you anywhere within North Somerset.

Journeys can be booked through a free app, by phoning the call centre or through the website. You can book it when you need it or up to 24 hours in advance. Smart technology will match your journey with other customers to best use the space on board. Currently only £2 per journey for an adult and £1 for a child, free for bus pass holders.

For more information go to: <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/.../tra.../bus-travel/westlink>.

A full copy of this PowerPoint is held by Banwell Parish Council and may be inspected by making application to the Parish Clerk.

5. AVON & SOMERSET CONSTABULARY

No PCSO was present and no report had been received.

6. RECOGNITION OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY AWARD 2023

We have some amazing volunteers but this year I would like to say a huge thank you to Neil Merrick who is this year's winner for going above and beyond in his service to the community.

He has supported the community in a variety of ways by volunteering at every vaccination clinic and also running our amazing Youth Food Club Initiatives from shopping for all the ingredients, preparing and teaching over 20 young people.

The feedback from parents has been amazing the young people that have taken part, have not only learnt some great new skills but they have also gained confidence, learnt how to work with their anxiety and interacted with others they wouldn't normally do. The skills they have learnt will be a basis on which they can continue at home, for some that has been a welcome relief.

Some of the feedback we have received from parents is below.

- What an amazing opportunity for these young people, they have learnt valuable life skills. I can't wait to see what she cooks at home. I hope all the young people get this opportunity.
- Thank you, J has really enjoyed these sessions and he is already trying out his new skills in the kitchen at home. Long may it last.
- Both my children lack confidence, so it is so nice to see what they have achieved in the six weeks and how proud they are.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

A resident spoke stating that whilst he supported the bypass, he had a concern that the potential noise levels had not been addressed in detail so far.

He asked that the Parish Council remain vigilant in scrutinising and commenting on the detailed plans as they are announced.

8. REPORTS BY VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS

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

Banwell Village Hall* – read by Maggie McCarthy on behalf of Kevin Gibbons

St Andrews, Banwell Church* – Maggie McCarthy

Banwell Archaeology Society* - Steve Davis

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

Women's Institute* - Viv Bailey

Gardening Club – Steve Parkinson

Banwell Football Club – Jo Morrish

Banwell Amateur Dramatics* – Jackie Parkinson

Banwell Potigny Town Twinning * – Jackie Parkinson

(*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 22nd April 2024

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

..... Chairman

..... Date