

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2023 – RECITED AT EVERY VILLAGE MEETING.

Thank you for so many of you joining this annual Parish village meeting, it is lovely to see you. As we go into Spring, our minds are set on the forthcoming elections in May, an important time for the Council as we see some Councillors leave us and others join. If you are interested in becoming a Councillor, Election nomination forms will be available to download from the B&NES website Elections Page from 21st March together with full details on how to complete the paperwork. Completed Nomination Forms need to be delivered to the Guildhall Bath by 4.00 p.m. on the 4th April 2023

For those of you who have not attended an Annual Parish meeting previously, I will just explain about this meeting and format of our Parish Council meetings and for those of you that have heard this before, I apologise.

A Local Council must hold an Annual Parish Meeting between March and June (May in Compton Dando). The Parish Meeting is a meeting of the parishioners (anyone on the electoral register of the Parish). Because our parish includes several villages, which may have differences in their points of interest, we also hold meetings in each of the five villages in March to collect their opinions. A summary of these will be added to the minutes recorded for the Annual Meeting of the Parish in May. The Parish Council will take note of the Parishioners' wishes expressed in these meetings and take matters forward to the full Parish Council to be discussed further and if required these matters will be acted upon. Items must be placed as an item on the agenda of the monthly Parish Council meeting in order that they can be discussed. Any parishioner can come along to a Parish Council meeting, and they can speak for 3 minutes before the meeting opens, on whatever they wish to bring to our notice. Minutes of the Parish Council meetings are available to all parishioners who would like to see what is discussed and what decisions are reached. These are available on village notice boards, from the Parish Clerk, or on the parish council website (www.comptondando-parishcouncil.org.uk). Meetings may also now be filmed or recorded in line with the protocol on the website.

Throughout the year we have several standing items which we oversee. These include:

1. Planning matters (applications, appeals, enforcements): planning applications are considered by the Parish Council before they are decided by BANES. We discuss our recommendation (we can support, object, or make comments). The recommendations are based on our understanding of the local environment and planning policies, not on personal preferences. In the past year, the Parish Council has considered 20 planning applications (the exact same amount as the previous year).

There are several planning enforcements matters that are still being investigated by Bath and North East Somerset Council.

2. The Parish Council has reported to the BANES Council (through Council Fix My Street B&NES) local issues such as potholes, fly tipping, flooding, water leaks, blocked drains & gulleys, damage to verges and damaged road signage. The Parish Clerk monitors the action or progress of these reported matters. Members of the Parish may also report problems via Fix My Street B&NES. They can also check that matters have been reported and follow the progress of a reported problem via this platform. In respect of fly tipping a concern for our Parishes figures have fallen extensively to 782 tonnes compared to 1917 in the previous year.
3. As Trustees of the Parish Hall the Councillors attend regular meetings with members of the Parish Hall Committee to ensure all that is well.
4. Our Parish Precept is used by the Parish Council to pay for local services including: -

Streetlighting, grass cutting, maintenance and running of the Parish Council website and the services of a Parish Clerk.

We have also used some of the Precept for essential training for Councillors.

This year, the Parish Council voted to increase the precept from £13,615.35 to £14,318.48 (5%). This increase was felt necessary due to cover increases in our costs and to assist with the maintenance of the Parish assets. The Small Authorities Audit Appointments Authority (SAAA) have recently appointed new auditors for 2022-2023 to 2026-2027 to the Parish Council these are BDO.

B&NES Council budget 2023/24 was considered at their February meeting.

Due to increasing demand for services and rising costs caused by inflationary pressures B&NES Council have increased their share of Council Tax in 2023 to 2024 by 4.99%, including 2% ringfenced for Adult Social Care.

This means the Bath & North East Somerset Council element of the Council Tax for a band D property for 2023 to 2024 is £1,653.90, an increase of £78.60, or £1.51 per week.

With precepts added for the Police and Crime Commissioner, Avon Fire Authority and parishes, the average total Council Tax for a Band D property in 2023 to 2024 is £2,052.09.

The Parish Council will be again awarding s137 grants. Applications in the past have been awarding funding for numerous good community projects.

Some of the issues that the Parish Council have dealt with include: -

1. The Parish Council is still supporting the PCAA in legal challenge against Bristol Airports appeal to expand.
2. The village of Queen Charlton in our Parish was selected for the B&NES Liveable Neighbourhoods programme. This is one of four proposals for through-traffic restrictions across Bath and North East Somerset being piloted ahead of wider improvements under the community-led LN programme.

The LN programme aims to improve health and wellbeing through safer, quieter residential streets and rural roads with better spaces for walking, wheeling and meeting others outside.

3. Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) for Park Copse (Bluebell Wood) Compton Dando is still being worked on and an Appeal is being launched after the Parish Council recently received notice that an Order was not to be made.
4. The Parish Council is part of a collective of other local Parish Councils looking at rural transport issues.
5. In the past year, the Parish Council have produced new and reviewed existing policies in order to keep compliant with regulations.
6. The Parish Council has responded to numerous B&NES and WECA consultations throughout the year and has given its views on the B&NES Partial Local Plan Review and will continue to work closely with the Local Production with the new Local Plan. The Local Plan will establish the planning framework for the district up to 2042. It will contain a vision, strategy and policies to guide and manage how the district grows and changes over the next 20 years, and how planning applications for new development are decided.
7. Finally, the Parish Council would like to thank Sue for her service as Clerk to the Parish Council.

Thank you for your time and for listening to this Parish Council report and we would welcome any questions that you may have.