

**MINUTES OF BANWELL PARISH ASSEMBLY
HELD VIRTUALLY ON MONDAY 26th APRIL 2021**

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

Present: 8 members of the public, 7 Parish Councillors and the minutes were taken by Liz Shayler (Clerk to Banwell Parish Council).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Lisa Stannard, Kirsty Bowles, John Haynes, Sue Badger, Jerry Corfield and Parish Councillor Dawn Parry.

2. MINUTES OF LAST PARISH ASSEMBLY

Given that the Parish Assembly was cancelled in 2020 due to Covid-19. The minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 13th May 2019 were approved as a correct record of the meeting and were duly signed by Cllr Harding.

3. BANWELL PARISH COUNCIL –

i. Chairman's Report

The Chairman, Paul Harding, gave the following report.

Good evening everyone, welcome to the 2021 Parish Assembly. I will keep this short. We were unable to hold the Parish Assembly last year due to the outbreak of Covid. Don't worry we all thought, the Prime Minister has said we will flatten the curve in three weeks, so a year on, and billions of pounds of taxpayers money given to companies no one has ever heard of for PPE, and the world beating test and trace system, I shall say no more on that one, we are still in the middle of the greatest pandemic in living memory, so tonight we are on Zoom. Hopefully, given the success of the vaccination program, the end is in sight.

A year ago, who had ever heard of Zoom, in fact who had really heard of Covid. Such a short word for a virus that has caused the deaths of millions, directly or indirectly, and has changed the way we live and work forever. It has also meant that the Parish Council has stepped into the role of other organisations to provide advice, support, and even food to our residents and needy families.

Many thanks must go to Liz our clerk, Russ the assistant clerk (unpaid), Churchill and Langford Minibus Society, Banwell School and of course the Covid volunteers, all arranged and co-ordinated by Liz. Without these volunteers, much of what that has been achieved, would not have been.

So, what has happened since the last meeting.

Covid – as this still dominates it seems fitting to start here: The PC has organised a network of Covid volunteers and street co-ordinators. Amongst other things, these volunteers have provided food or donated money, and have staffed the car park and provided crowd control in the surgery for the highly successful Banwell Surgery vaccination days.

The PC, working with Banwell School are now a recognised outpost of Weston Food Bank. We have provided food and cooking equipment to needy families cooked meals at Christmas and providing food in half term when the Government refused to do so.

With the help of local chef's, during the Easter holidays we ran an Easter Food Club – live streaming cooking events. The events are still on zoom if you want to follow them.

We have provided a Zoom booth in the YCC to enable those without computers to contact Citizens Advice and use the internet. Our web site provides details of all local organisations and the help available.

We have welcomed Daisy – our new Communications and Grant Funding Officer. You will see Daisy's work on Facebook and our new logo. She has also started to bring in grant funding – the first of which was from Asda to help finance the Easter Food Club.

We had a lot of work to do on the YCC due to years of neglect by North Somerset Council, but it is finally fit for purpose. We now have a safe and shiny new car park, new doors, a new security system and of course it is Covid secure. We are hoping to tap into grant funding to improve the green credentials of the building such as solar panels and an electric charging point.
What else:

Due to the generosity of the Kathleen Jones Trust, the parish now has a new Scout and Guide Hut. The PC and Scouts have worked together on the site to enhance the external facilities of this new building.

The long-awaited By-Pass has been announced and more importantly funding allocated by government and a main contractor appointed. A bit of a double-edged sword as inevitably the garden village will follow, and not everyone is in favour of the by-pass, but we now have a unique opportunity working with NSC to revitalise Banwell, provide effective traffic calming, ban most lorries and give us our village back. The route has not yet been finalised. Public consultation will start shortly.

After years of denial, Wessex Water were responsible after all for the Banwell Bog at Riverside. It has now been repaired and dry again.

Recreation Ground – we made improvements, provided picnic benches and the zip wire. Sadly, due to government guidelines, the zip wire is not yet operational. Hopefully by the end of June it will. More funding is available, so as Covid recedes, we will turn our attention to what else we can provide. We will also look to improve Riverside.

The Youth Club is up and running again with our provider YMCA Dulverton. It is great to see our young people back in the YCC.

There are many organisations within the village which you will be hearing from some of them shortly. These organisations need you to support them.

The Parish Assembly is an opportunity for our organisations to say what they have achieved. Again, I offer my thanks to these organisations and hope they grow and continue to prosper in the next year. Similarly, we wish all the businesses in Banwell a prosperous year. Use them or lose them.

Where do we go from here? The government in their wisdom has decided they don't have enough time to extend the legislation allowing us to meet remotely, so from the middle of May, its back to live meetings, which we can't have because we can't meet inside until June. Regardless of what happens, your Parish Council will be here for you. Covid will dominate for some time, and even after it has subsided, we will continue to build on community spirit that has grown since Covid arrived. If you want to become a councillor, we have vacancies. If you want to help our Covid work either financially or in person, contact Liz.

All I have left to say is thank you for attending, and don't forget, you are cordially invited to partake of cheese and wine at the end of the evening. Sorry forgot – Covid – you are welcome to partake of a virtual piece of cheese and glass of wine.

ii. Draft statement of accounts for the year ending 31st March 2021

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. It was reported that although there was no increase to this year's precept requirement that due to a decrease in the tax base then there was a 1.9% increase in the parish precept for 2021/22.

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

4. NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL –

i. Richard Blows Policy & Partnership Lead

Richard Blows gave a report detailing the following points.

- The formation of and make up of North Somerset Together (NST) to co-ordinate North Somerset Councils (NSC) response to Covid.
- Banwell Parish Council as a founding member of NST and the Clerks engagement with the partnership. Praise for the Parish of Banwell and their great volunteer team taking part in activities throughout the year.
- How NST have supported residents through the pandemic and its evolution to include influencing the development of health and social care provision and building new networks across North Somerset.
- Banwell as central to NST work providing a model for smaller communities and how Parish Councils can be active civic leaders in their communities.
- North Somerset forward plan including the use focusing on five objectives.
 1. To use NST to deliver NSC Empowering Communities objective, enabling connected, cohesive & resilient communities.
 2. NSC continuing to be an enabler and facilitator of community-led action, focused on what matters locally.
 3. NSC to support devolved community action that is people-centred, strengths based, creative, entrepreneurial & agile.
 4. Support community action with re-commissioned capacity building & specialist voluntary services and clear commitment to wider VCFSE sector.
 5. Connect community action to statutory services delivered by NSC & their partners including BNSSG, Sirona & Police.
- The important role Parish Councils can play in the continued development of informal social support and other opportunities for example the Holiday Activities work Banwell undertook over the Easter holidays.
- Grants / funding that Banwell have been able to use to support their residents.
- Work with Avon Local Council Association to show how NST can work more closely with Parish & Town Councils.
- The hope that Banwell and its Parish Council will want to continue with NST on this journey.

ii. Ward Councillors Report

Cllr Haverson gave a brief outline on the following points.

- The amazing work of the Banwell Covid Volunteers who supported the Surgery with the vaccination clinics.
- That after many years the Banwell Bypass might become a reality.
- North Somersets Green Infrastructure Policy of particular interest in Banwell are the beelines and conservation of the wetlands.
- The increase by the Governments of the Housing energy efficiency that North Somersets Planning Department can insist on.
- The possibility of 20mph zones within the villages.
- The airport expansion public enquiry.
- The new bus service route 51 which goes from Weston to Langford
- She has been elected as Vice-Chairman of North Somerset.

5. WEST OF ENGLAND RURAL NETWORK

Dick Whittington gave a report on the West of England's Rural Network (WERN), their aims, Village Agents, Community infrastructure (Community transport, Community Shops & Pubs, Village Halls and Community buildings), recovery from Covid – 19 and working with the Parish Council. (A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is available by making an application to the Parish Clerk)

6. AVON & SOMERSET CONSTABULARY

The following report was received from Avon & Somerset Constabulary.

Well, what a year it's been! Never in the 25 years' service have I known a year like this. On a positive note, things are slowly getting back to "normal". It is great to see how busy the GP surgery is with

people keen to get the vaccine, to ease traffic during these busy sessions we would kindly request residents avoid parking opposite the surgery.

During the lockdown policing was vastly different, crime rates decreased but Covid breach reports replaced them, again slowly things again are getting back to normal.

We have had some team changes, we welcome a new police officer to the rural team PC Sophie Bailey, Sophie will be covering the villages along with PCSO's Kayley and Mike, we also have a new Sgt, PS Phil Rudden has taken the helm, we have also gone digital, please look us up on Facebook "Weston and Worle Police" and Twitter "ASP North Somerset" another year of change!

You may have seen that beat surgeries are returning, next month we will resume the monthly beat surgery held at the Banwell garden centre, here you can meet your local team, report crimes, take advice on security or even get your bike security marked with "Bikeregister" as always, your local Neighbourhood team are on hand, you can contact us by calling 101 or 999 in an emergency.

We continue to promote Horse and Farm watch within the rural communities, if you are not already signed up and would like to know more details about this free scheme, please drop a quick email to 9671@avonandsomerset.police.uk, we also offer free leather tack marking for horse owners.

7. RECOGNITION OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY AWARD 2020 & 2021

This year given the pandemic and the sheer volume of volunteers who supported the Parish Council then the Chairman handed over to the Clerk who co-ordinated the response to the pandemic.

We will start with 2020 which was an extremely strange but for me a heart-warming year. With lockdown being announced towards the end of March within 2 weeks I had over 100 people who had volunteered to help either to coordinate the response for their road or to help with tasks such as shopping, picking up prescriptions, appointments, picking up the post, a regular phone call, donations of food and money and other things. The community response has been fantastic and as it was so difficult to choose, it was therefore decided to award the shield to both the covid coordinators and to the covid volunteers to show the Parish Council's appreciation for everything they have done during 2020 no matter how big or small.

For 2021 our coordinators and volunteers are continuing to support members of the community but with not the same demand. However, in January in association with our amazing surgery we started the covid-vaccine clinics. I very quickly had over 30 people volunteer to do a marshalling stint whether in the carpark or inside the surgery. The surgery has also been supported by their fantastic team who have given up their weekends to either vaccinate or provide admin support.

A huge thank you therefore must go to the vaccination volunteers as they braved sub-zero temperatures in January & February and who are still turning up to support the clinics now. It is with the help of this amazing team that the surgery has vaccinated over 2800 people with their 1st vaccine and of these, 1000 have had their 2nd vaccine. The Parish Council would like to show their appreciation for everything they have done and so the 2021 award goes to the vaccination volunteers.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say a particular thank you to Nikki Linfield who has joined us this evening. She has led the vaccination marshals in the carpark and I could not have done it without her and Nik's dedication and enthusiasm. It will be remembered for: human space invaders, the carpark disco and Dr Pauls flossing. I have a little something to say thank you which I will give you on May the 8th at the next clinic.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No requests or comments were received.

9. REPORTS BY VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS

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

1st Banwell Scouts* – presented by Brian Redden

Churchill & Langford Minibus Society* – Trevor Smallwood
Banwell Allotment Society* – read by Liz Shayler on behalf of Jerry Corfield
Banwell Village Hall* – Maggie McCarthy
New Creation Churches* – read by Maggie McCarthy on behalf of Kirsty Bowles
Love Banwell* – read by Liz Shayler on behalf of Lisa Stannard
Banwell Caves Heritage Group* – read by Liz Shayler on behalf of John Haynes

(*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 25th April 2022

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9pm. and thanked all those who had attended.

..... Chairman

..... Date