Freshford PC Chairman's Report - 11 March 2019

1. Parish Liaison Meeting

A very brief overview of the Parish Liaison meeting held yesterday.

Mandy Bishop is the new Director of the Environment.

Tim Warren listed the BANES achievements over the last 4 years. The key point is budget. As local authorities are needing to become largely, if not totally, self-funding, BANES have put in place revenue streams in property and heritage:

- Commercial Property investments
- Housing company buying empty houses, refurbishing and re-utilising
- Providing Heritage facilities, such as the Roman Baths

This is achieved through a preferential fixed rate very low interest rate and making annual returns of 6-8% profit.

BANES is in the top 5 or 6 authorities for recycling.

The clean air zone will not apply to cars.

There has been a 12% increase in children needing social care – which is a worrying statistic.

Adult and Social Care is c.81% of the current budget, and this percentage is likely to increase.

The underlying and unstated message is that future budgets are probably only going to be met by reducing other services – and this will increase pressures on parish councils.

There will be a 90k Community Empowerment Fund next financial year. Any surplus will be distributed around the requests already received.

A scheme is being brought in looking to ban single-use plastic – however supermarkets were notable by their absence from the list of areas to address.

Branch libraries are either now, or becoming, Community Libraries.

A new mobile library will be put in service at the end of April. It will be narrower than the current library and better able to navigate the villages. New services will be provided as well. It would seem that we have not lost the mobile library.

WACA and rural transport will be addressed after the elections. There was dismay all round that WACA held a meeting the previous day to gain views – but no-one was aware of this meeting.

Fix My Street is up and running: https://fix.bathnes.gov.uk/ and the main reportit page being https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/reportit.

BANEs prefer this approach to reporting issues as things then get tracked. They currently have a service management issue as once an issue is handed over to whichever agency is used to resolve the situation, the ReportIt entry is set to Closed – when it may not be resolved for weeks or longer.

The Electoral Register has been re-indexed, and PCs need to formally request a copy should they require one. I suggest that we do.

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The elections are being announced on 18th March. Nominations are to be made between 19th March and 3rd April.

Nomination Papers should be handed in by hand to the electoral officers who will be located next to Reception in the Guildhall.

As regards the nomination papers, these need to be requested, or downloaded from the BANES website.

Apparently, PDF copies of the papers have already been circulated to the PC Clerks and MS Word versions will follow.

Key points:

- Proposer and Seconder must be on the electoral roll
- The witness and Home Address 'attester' must be the same person
- The Witness does not have to be a local person

The counting will be different this time. Ballot boxes will be collected up and take to the Sports Village at Bath University. The counts will be undertaken on Friday 3rd May.

So it looks like the election will be Thursday 2nd May.

2. Homewood Farm

Homewood Farm provided an overview of the state of their plans to Roger Paine, Craig Underdown, Jean Hawker and myself.

The purpose was to enable Roger and Craig to have time to view the plans in advance without being constrained by a PC meeting – which isn't a discussion forum anyway.

Homewood Farm are looking to develop a multi-facet facility providing a golf training driving area and an events area including weddings and local events.

They are concerned about intrusion and noise and the initial plans are considering these aspects. The music area (disco) will be in a partially underground facility. The site is to be expanded in a rural context.

There is no doubt that from an enterprise perspective this is very interesting, there are real concerns about the impact on neighbouring properties.

This type of approach enabled a friendly discussion where points could be raised for addressing, such as light and noise pollution, and consideration of neighbours before the formal process of the planning application was underway.

Howewood Farm asked whether there was any community aspects that could take advantage of the facility.

One point of interest is that they are looking to landscape the field, which would have the effect of reducing the intrusion of the A36 noise.

They were made aware of the tunnel under the A36, which if that could be included in the scheme, would provide at least 1 means of pedestrians crossing the A36 safely.

3.   PC Laptop Backup

The most effective approach to providing an offline backup of the PC laptop is to use one of the cloud storage offerings, and have files backed up automatically.

Using an external disc would provide physical backup, and protect against a disc failure but not provide a safe backup in the event of a fire or theft.

Potential offerings of cloud storage include:

Supplier	Storage	Cost per Year
Google Drive	1TB	£79.99
DropBox	1TB	£79.00
Microsoft OneDrive (Personal)	1TB	£59.99
Microsoft OneDrive (Business)	1TB	£94.80

The Google and Dropbox offerings are for disc space only.

The Microsoft offerings includes Office 365.

The Microsoft personal offering includes, Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access and OneDrive.

The Microsoft business offering includes Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Exchange, OneDrive, SharePoint and Teams.

Basically – we pay for the Office 365 licence and 1TB cloud storage is included – why pay for another offering as well as Office 365.

Worst case we use the Personal option. The business option is only useful if we all have a licence and that is too expensive.

One consideration is that we may be able to be included in the Government scheme, or within BANES licencing (if they use it). This has not been explored yet.