

Chairman's Report – 11 October 2021

1. Community Renewable Energy

BWCE have undertaken a desk survey of the area and identified 11 possible locations for renewable energy.

They have engaged with the landowners of the fields that we identified as possible locations and are waiting for authorisation from the 2 landowners to continue the investigations.

The next step is to visit the area in detail rather than just visiting the 2 landowners.

Progress has been hindered by both the fuel supply issues and also Covid – which still remains in force in this area.

As details begin to grow, there will be a need to go out to the community for a consultation on this project during the Scoping Study stage which will help focus on the next stage when locations are technically considered and the business case is built.

BWCE will shortly be engaging with the electricity companies to identify the constraints of feeding into the grid and possible differences in constraints across different locations. It is possible that an overall solution will be more effective utilising multiple sites depending on the configuration of the grid.

2. Land Behind the Glebe

There is no substantive news on progress – still waiting for the BANES internal processes for formally declaring this land as surplus.

There is the possibility of maintaining the Land behind the Glebe under licence from BANES which would overcome this whole process.

3. Annual Parish Meeting

The date for this meeting needs to be confirmed, potentially 10 November.

The Parish Council is requested to confirm a parish Meeting being held either in mid-November or early December.

4. Notice Boards

The Midford Lane notice board has notices pinned to the outside of the board.

As the Notice Boards are dual fronted, it is worth having at least one half of each board open to the public. The Midford Lane board used to be fully open, with a swivel 'switch' between the two doors.

The PC is requested to agree to this approach which better supports the community using the notice boards.

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5. Community Health

The formal notice of funding for Village Agents is imminent, and expected to be positive. This is the community element of Preventative Health Care, the other part being Social Prescribers based in the surgeries working alongside the doctors.

I attended the BoA Health and Wellbeing Group, which was the first meeting since LiFERAFT went into hibernation and was intending to undertake a graceful exit. It was stated at the meeting that due to changes in funding and also BANES, Swindon & Wiltshire working together (joined up) it would be beneficial for Freshford PC to have a continued presence on this forum.

6. Ownership of the Verge outside of the Memorial Hall

The suggestion that Parish Council should consider taking ownership of the verge outside of the Memorial Hall has been followed up.

The standard BANES process first requires BANES to decide whether the transfer of the asset is acceptable to BANES. If it is acceptable, then the PC will need to fund an official land valuation survey (c.£1,500). It has been said that the costs to the PC would be required to fund the BANES costs for the sale of the asset as well as the purchase price.

All in all, a lengthy and expensive process.

It has been suggested that the PC might like to explore the possibility of taking on the verge under licence from BANES. This is a new concept brought in to allow local PCs and groups to maintain land as they wish without the overheads of an outright purchase.

A request has been put to BANES to initiate this process.

It is probably best to wait for the outcome of this process before addressing the 'bollards vs stones' question as the PC maintaining the land under licence from BANES may change possibilities.