

Valley Parishes Alliance

Protecting & enhancing the communities in the Avon & Limpley Stoke Valley, East of Bath

Bathampton Bathford Claverton Freshford
Limpley Stoke Monkton Combe Winsley

The Valley Parishes Alliance was formed in April 2010. It is a cross-county border alliance of seven rural parishes (five B&NES and two Wiltshire). Taken together, the seven parish councils which form the VPA represent over 7,000 residents (and over 5,500 electors).

VALLEY PARISHES ALLIANCE MEETING

HELD AT MONKTON COMBE VILLAGE HALL, MONKTON COMBE,

ON THURSDAY 18th NOVEMBER 2021 AT 12.30 P.M.

Present

Mr. Des Wighton	Chairman - Monkton Combe PC
Mr. Lyn Alvis	Monkton Combe Parish Council
Mrs. Anna Beria	Claverton Parish Council
Mr. Julian Carpenter	Freshford Parish Council
Mrs. Wendy Chambers	Secretary - Bathford PC

Apologies for absence were received from:

Mr. Ian Barnes	Limpley Stoke Parish Council
Mrs. Moira Brennan	Bathampton Parish Council
Mr. Martin Mitchell	Claverton Parish Council
Mrs. Glennis Naylor	Claverton Parish Council

1. To accept the minutes of the meeting held on the 8th July 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on the 8th July 2021 were accepted (subject to the following editing by AB) as a correct and accurate record of proceedings. Proposed: AB
seconded: DW

A request for members to confirm their attendance or apologies at meetings had not been wholly successful. The future of the group would be discussed later in the meeting.

- Ref. 2.3 **VPA Highway England Update** – Line 2/3 – AB reported that Councillor Joanna Wright was still a councillor but for accuracy of reporting had changed party from the Liberal Democrats to the Green Party.
- Ref. 3 **Penultimate Para.** - AB asked that a correction be made to cover the area Warleigh Weir and not the Avon.

AB gave a brief resume of the current situation regarding Designated Water Status. Both AB and WC reported that as far as they were aware BANES were not in favour of it at Warleigh Weir.

LA reported on water monitoring work recently undertaken by the Wessex Water at the bottom of Mill Lane and along the Midford Brook with the intention to supply real time data. AB confirmed that she had spoken with Matt Wheeldon of the Wessex Water and they were undertaking a similar monitoring exercise at the Weir to be in a position to supply accurate real time data and allow people to make their own choices.

2. Matters Arising from the minutes of the last meeting

- Ref.2.3 AB reported that she had been unsuccessful in attempting to contact Neil Winters. She was not optimistic of a successful outcome but would once more attempt to contact him to impress the need for involvement of all the VPA Parishes and the potential ramifications on Parishes throughout the valley and more widely into Wiltshire. **Action: AB**
- Ref. 6.5 (2) DW thanked David Batho for all his work on behalf of the VPA in relation to the A36/A46 Link Road. DW had made contact with Sarah Warren, explained the role of the VPA, expressed concerns and indicated that the VPA would not be supporting the A36/A46 link. E mail response from Cllr Warren on the 28th July was as follows: “We will not be supporting an A46/A36 link road for the reasons you mention and will continue to seek alternative solutions to Bath’s congestion problems. Construction of roads will only increase mileage driven, and having declared a climate emergency, we need policies that will lead to a reduction in driving. I hope this is reassuring”
- Ref. 7.3 DW had engaged with a member of the Bathscape personnel who appeared keen to get the VPA involved. Information would be sent to DW who would subsequently disseminate to all members. In addition to adding details to the VPA website Members were encouraged to add details to individual Parish websites. **Action: DW**

3. Treasurer's Report and update on subscription renewals and VPA membership

In the absence of IB or supportive documentation no information was to hand. WC was asked to contact IB and confirm the current situation. It was with concern that one Parish had submitted their subscription in July but to date the cheque had still not been cashed. WC to check on IB's position with regard to continuing with the position of Treasurer.

Action: WC/IB

4. AVA and CAZ Update

Discussion ensued relating to the original purpose of the VPA, the subsequent development of CAZ and the potential development on member Parishes. JC felt it necessary to ensure that anything which impacted on the Parishes should be highlighted but agreed with other members that in future this historical item should be removed from the agenda and, if necessary, road issues within BANES should be amalgamated with the routine Highways England Update item.

5. VPA Highways England Update

DW reported on the correspondence, prepared by David Batho on behalf of the VPA, which had previously been circulated re the M4 to Dorset Coast Connectivity Study. As stated in Item 2 above, although AB was not confident that progress would be made, she would endeavour to contact Neil Winter in an attempt to reignite contact.

6. VPA K and A Canal Committee

6.1 AB reported that Julian Stirling, the Claverton Parish Councillor responsible for the Pumping Station, had:-

- a. Started an Internet fund raising initiative to renew the base of the Pumping Station's wooden storage shed which had become damaged over the years from the floods. It was hoped £2,500 would be raised to repair the damage
- b. Mr. Stirling had met with Mark Evans the Regional Director Wales and South West of the CRT and would continue dialogue in an attempt to resolve ownership of the Weir. The general impression was that the CRT were focusing more on the Canals than on the rivers.

6.2 Claverton Parish Council were currently looking into listed structure status for the weir which they hoped would force some response re. responsibility and ownership

7. Any Other Business

- 7.1 **Dark Skies Initiative** – AB was delighted to report that a member of the Parish had taken the lead with the above initiative. Currently the Parish, with the support of the Cotswold AONB, were making representations/objections re. the proposed change of lighting at the university for the outside pitches. The lowering of the existing lights and replacement by lower lights with more spillage would have a significant additional impact on the skies. WC reported that the current lights were already very visible on the skyline from the Warleigh side of the valley. AB agreed to forward information to all member Parishes to ensure they were aware of the action taken by Claverton, to enable them to discuss with their PCs and support Claverton PC as they feel necessary. **Action: AB**

- 7.2 **Website** - As reported at the last meeting, in the VPA's webmaster's opinion the website which was built approx. 10 years ago was currently unserviceable. In the absence of IB, DW reported that he had communicated with Melina Traub, the developer, and until such time as we could have a discussion with IB, it was decided that any decision re. rebuilding or any suggested maintenance should be put on hold until the VPA could avail themselves of IB's expertise. In the interim, the VPA page had been put on hold until the group had decided how to proceed with building a new site.

WC was asked to discuss the current status with IB when discussing the Group's current financial situation. **Action: WC**

- 7.3 **The status of the VPA – where do we go from here?**

In response to a question by AB re. the current perceived status of the VPA, discussion took place re. the value of continuing formal meetings, and the need to move forward supporting projects with lead personnel.

JC and others present felt it was necessary to work as a group for specific projects to show support and representation from the whole valley. He did however feel he would like to discuss the current situation with his PC and feedback. Others agreed that returning to their own PCs for a steer was the most positive way forward. Dates for the next two meetings were agreed and entered in the hall diary as shown below. At the next meeting members were asked to report on consultations with their own PCs.

8. Dates of Next Meetings

Thursday 8th February 2022 at 7.30 pm at Monkton Combe Parish Hall

Thursday 14th June (AGM) 2022 at 7.30 pm at Monkton Combe Parish Hall