



The **Bitton Parish Council**

Covering: Bitton | Oldland Common | North Common | Upton Cheyney
Swineford | Beach and part of Willsbridge (south of the A431)

www.bittonparishcouncil.co.uk ISSUE NO. 57 | SEPTEMBER 2018

Bitton **Biodiversity Plan**

Last year South Gloucestershire Council published its Biodiversity Action Plan. This is available on their website at:

www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/Biodiversity-Action-Plan-2016-26.pdf

This was also broken down to parish level and the Bitton Biodiversity Action Plan is available at:

www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/Bitton-BAP.pdf

The document has maps showing the parish's designated wildlife sites, lists of species and suggested actions. It makes interesting reading and it is surprising just how varied the wildlife around us is.

Do take a look at it.



Newsletter



How to **contact** the **Council**

Bitton Parish Council is always pleased to hear the views of local residents on any matter of interest or concern. You may contact the Council in a number of ways:

- ▶ **Via our website:** www.bittonparishcouncil.co.uk
- ▶ **Via the Clerk:** Mrs Sharon Robbins, 4 Hencliffe Way, Hanham, Bristol BS15 3TH
Tel: 01454 868102 Email: bittonpc@blueyonder.co.uk
- ▶ **Via Councillors:** A list of Councillors and their contact details is shown on the website and all parish council notice boards or is available from the Clerk.

Council meetings

The full Council meets on the second Tuesday of each month (except August).

- ▶ The **Planning Committee** meets every **three weeks** on a **Monday**.
- ▶ The **Environment and Leisure Committee** meets on the **fourth Tuesday** of **January, April, June, September** and **November**.
- ▶ The **Finance and Youth Committees** meet **as required**.

All meetings start at **7.30pm** and are held at the **new Community and Youth Centre, rear of Redfield Edge Primary School, High Street, Oldland Common BS30 9TL** unless otherwise stated. Full details of the meetings including agendas are posted on parish notice boards and on the Council's website 5 days in advance. A diary of meeting dates is listed on the website. All meetings are open to the public and you are welcome to attend. An opportunity is always given to speak to Councillors about any matter of interest or concern to you.

Bitton Parish **Fund**

Bitton Parish Fund for the Elderly. This rather strangely named small local charity has as its objectives to provide social opportunities for residents of the parish who are past their retirement age. It is run by a Committee of 10 local people who give their time freely, which is appreciated.

The Committee usually organises two coach trips per year plus a Christmas Tea. The coach trips offer a scenic drive to a venue where refreshments are provided. This year our first trip was in May to Sanders World Garden Centre near Burnham on Sea for tea. Our second trip, in October, is for a fish & chips lunch at Simpsons Restaurant in Cheltenham. At Christmas we work with a local school (usually a different one each year) for an afternoon of entertainment plus tea and mince pies, with a free raffle.

Exceptionally, Cherry Garden Primary School in Bitton invited guests through the Fund to come along to an 'End of World War II' party that they were organising last March. Pupils had been doing a project on this theme and wanted to talk to people who had wartime memories – if not of fighting themselves then the effects of rationing, living during the Blitz, etc. It was a lovely afternoon with everyone singing all the old songs, eating lots of cake and chatting. The school did fund-raising to cover the cost of the coach which took some of the guests to the school, which the Fund Committee members really appreciated.



If you live in the parish and are retired then perhaps you would like to join us on one of our outings. Or perhaps you know someone who you feel would benefit from a trip out. Either way, contact the Clerk to Bitton Parish Council (details on page 2) who will put you in touch with one of the Committee members. The Fund also considers applications for small grants to other organisations with the same aim of providing social opportunities to local retired residents. If you belong to an organisation and wish to apply then contact the Clerk.



Buggy walks

For the past two years the Council has organised a monthly buggy walk aimed at parents and carers of young children. These are held on the first Monday of each month, meeting at Bitton Station at 9.50am to start the walk at 10am. Led by Emma and Sarah, we aim to cover about 3km and then return to the Station café to enjoy a coffee (and sometimes cake!).

A few months ago we decided to start a second walk – same arrangements as before but this is on the third Monday of each month. The photo shows our two new buggy walk leaders Sharon and Kat on their first walk. Both events are very popular, offering a chance for some healthy exercise followed by an opportunity for socialising. All details are on our Facebook page at Bitton Buggy Walks.

Creative Arts Competition

Each year Bitton Parish Council organises its Creative Arts Competition for young people to show their ability via mediums of painting, drawing, handwriting, computer graphics, poetry and essays. Prizes and certificates are awarded in each age group and are usually presented at school assemblies.

Once again we had a very high standard of entries in 2018.

Our appreciation goes to all those who entered and our congratulations to those who won in each category.

Guided footpath walks

Our programme of roughly monthly guided footpath walks continues through the Autumn. Join Clive Brett on a Sunday afternoon for some enjoyable exercise (nothing too strenuous) and good company. For further details contact Clive on 0117 3295183, 07434 869429 or at clive@brett.org.uk

Sunday September 16th at 2.30pm

Meeting in the car park by Keynsham Lock. Sat Nav BS31 2DD
A riverside walk towards Saltford and return via Bitton.

Sunday October 21st at 2.30pm

Meeting by McBrida factory, Francis Way Bridgegate Sat Nav BS30 5JW.
Webbs Heath & Siston. Some gentle climbs.

Sunday November 18th at 2.00pm

Meeting at the lay by on the main road on Lansdown opposite the turning to Avon Fire and Rescue Service, near the Grenville monument.
No post code but map reference 51.429744, -2.402921.
A fairly flat walk. Potential for an end of season meal.



Annual Report 2017/18

The Annual Report last year recorded a busy year for Bitton Parish Council and this has continued throughout the following 12 months.

Our brand new Community & Youth building to the rear of Redfield Edge Primary School was handed over to us last July – nearly completed – and we held a formal opening ceremony on 23 September. The guest of honour was George Hankins, a young professional cricketer for Gloucestershire CCC who lives in Bitton and has represented England at U19 level. He was a delight and accomplished his duties well. We are so lucky to have young sports stars like George and Siobhan Marie O'Connor, an Olympic swimming medallist, in the parish who are such excellent role models for our young people and willing to work with this Council on our special projects. Gradually the outstanding work on the building has been finished off. The grounds maintenance contract started in April 2018 and has much improved the look of the building's surrounds. The remaining items now are replacement of the bollards (the original ones were not up to the job) and the erection of a fence, which we are discussing with South Gloucestershire Council and the Wellsway Multi Academy Trust who are responsible for the adjacent land, following the implementation of the diversion of the public footpath PBN10. Things are going well and the building is increasingly used, although there is room for more community use.

Councillors are keen to ensure that young people in the parish are catered for and made to feel a valuable part of our community. In addition to the Youth Club which runs on Wednesday and Friday evenings we organise the

Parish Playscheme, which operates for 2 hour sessions on 5 or 6 days during school Easter holidays and 15 days during the Summer holidays. Being free of charge the sessions are very popular with up to 100 children attending on each occasion. We offer both indoor and outdoor play. It gives the youngsters a chance for socialising and burning off some energy – and their parents a couple of hours off! Oldland Parish Council regularly awards this Council a grant towards the costs, which is much appreciated.

The Council, jointly with Oldland and Siston Parish Councils, leases land at Warmley Forest for a skate park. We are currently looking to refurbish this but, in view of the high costs involved, must gain grant funding to do so. We have formed a Friends Group and are approaching funders with our plans. The three Councils must pay insurance for the site even though there is very little equipment there at present, in order to cover its public liability responsibilities. The Group has agreed that, if grant funding cannot be gained to refurbish the skate park then the lease may have to be relinquished and the site handed back to South Gloucestershire Council.

For the very young ones, or really their parents, we arrange monthly Buggy Walks from Bitton Station. The walk is about 3k and is followed by chat and coffee in the Station Café. These walks have been on-going for more than two years and are very successful with often more than 20 parents with pushchairs joining in. As from April 2018 we are walking twice a month and this seems just as popular. Our thanks go to our volunteers Emma, Sharon and Kat who make this possible.



We also offer a programme of roughly monthly guided footpath walks, each lasting about 2½ hours. These explore the many public rights of way in the parish and beyond and afford the chance of exercise, socialising and exploring and enjoying the wonderful landscapes and interesting places on our doorsteps. Again, we are grateful to our volunteer Clive who organises and leads the walks. Perhaps you would prefer to take on one of the nearly 100 allotments we have on 2 sites in Oldland Common, growing your own food while getting some exercise. There are a couple of vacancies just now. Or would you like to join our Friendship & Exercise sessions which offer gentle exercise and socialisation to those who are a bit less mobile but who wish to keep as active as possible? These are led by a fully qualified trainer who will cater for all levels of ability.

The Council continues its annual Creative Arts Competition for young people which encompasses pictures, models, short stories, poems and handwriting. It also runs the Bitton in Bloom Competition which includes residential gardens, schools, community facilities and local businesses.

In addition to its existing small grants programme whereby awards up to £200 can be made to local organisations which will benefit the parish and its residents, Bitton Parish Council is now able to fund larger projects through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This is money which developers have to pay to South Gloucestershire Council to offset the effects of new development. A proportion of this comes to Bitton Parish Council either for it to use itself on local projects or to make awards of over £200 to other organisations. Details are on our website. To date CIL awards have been made to Bitton Recreation Club for new heating and the Avon Valley Railway towards their new platform canopy. Applications are invited from any local organisation for projects that will benefit the parish and its residents. The Council also has ideas for projects which it can undertake itself.

On a day-to-day level Councillors discuss and comment on every planning application for sites within the parish. They consider and react to consultations put out by

South Gloucestershire Council on a variety of topics covering everything from health to infrastructure and the local plan. The Council is responsible for 18 bus shelters plus numerous public seats, marker stones and other items of street furniture which are all maintained regularly. We are planning to install a new bus shelter at Mill Lane/Hazelbury Drive, North Common (Keynsham bound). We also have a programme of footpaths maintenance to cut back vegetation along some of the more rural public rights of way and maintenance of some small planted areas which provide colour in the area. At the moment Councillors are undertaking a survey of all footpaths in the parish to ensure they remain passable and in reasonable condition. Councillors took part in the Big Spring Clean, collecting litter and rubbish from all parts of the parish to keep our area looking tidy.

During the year one Councillor has resigned for personal reasons and one new Councillor has been co-opted. All Councillors operate in a voluntary capacity and work hard for the benefit of the communities that comprise the parish. The Parish is also extremely well served by the Parish Clerk and the Parish Council Leisure Officer, by the Youth Leader and his staff, all the play staff who assist at the Playschemes and by numerous volunteers who support a wide range of activities for Parish residents. Bitton Parish Councillors would like to express their appreciation to all of these for their help in improving the local environment and the lives of local residents.

***Audit** of accounts*

A boring topic for many but it is important that local residents have the opportunity to see what the Council does with its money.

Bitton Parish Council's accounts for the year 2017/18 have been completed and audited. The accounts and audit report are available for inspection should you wish to exercise your right. Contact the Clerk (details on page 2) to agree a mutually convenient time.



Bitton in Bloom Competition

Once again Bitton Parish Council has organised its annual Bitton in Bloom and Allotments competitions. Councillors have the enjoyable task of viewing the various allotments, residential gardens, businesses and schools that take part – and the difficult task of judging them!

The newsletter will be published before the presentation evening so we don't want to give away the results by printing them here. Suffice to say that the standard of entries was, once again, very high and we

have some wonderful pictures of award-winning displays to show at the presentation evening. Our congratulations go to all our prize winners. Our thanks go to all of you whose gardens are visible to



those of us walking or driving past and the pleasure we derive from the colour and beauty displayed in them. It all goes towards making this such a desirable place to live.

Community and youth building

Our Community and Youth building, to the rear of Redfield Edge Primary School at High Street, Oldland Common has been open for a year! (Go up the drive to the right of the school and we are beyond the playground). Our hope is that it becomes a valuable facility serving the whole parish.

We are opening up use of the building and the open space around it for occasional bookings for children's parties (up to age 11), community events, anniversary celebrations or any other get-together you may wish to organise. There are also daytime, evening and weekend slots available for group hire. Have a look at the Facebook page under Oldland Community & Youth building or phone Caroline on 079020 43108 for more details.



Or join in one of our regular activities at the building:

New Tracks Youth Club: meets on Wednesday and Friday evenings from 7 – 9.30pm for young people aged 11 -18 years old. Lots of activities or just time to socialise in a warm, safe environment.

Friendship & Exercise: meets on Wednesday mornings from 10 – 11.30am primarily for our older residents. Offers 45 minutes of activity aimed at retaining core strength and exercising joints and muscles. Nothing too strenuous and can be done sitting if preferred. Followed by a tea break and then 30 minutes of something fun eg skittles. Contact Spencer Davies on 07825 155954 or info@sportingchance-pt.co.uk

Little Learners Toddler Group: meets on Thursday mornings 10am – 12 noon for parents and pre-school children. Lots of things to do and play both indoors and out. Offers a social opportunity for both adults and young ones. Contact Victoria May on 07776 298900.

Heather's crafts: meets monthly on a Saturday morning from 10 – 11am. Heather will demonstrate and assist you to make beautiful crafts. For more details including dates phone her on 0788 414 1717.



Allotments

Do you fancy growing your own fresh fruit, flowers, herbs and vegetables? Bitton Parish Council has two allotments sites, both in Oldland Common. The larger site is off North Street and the smaller at Redfield Hill. From time to time plots become vacant. If you would like to discuss taking one on then contact the Council's Leisure Officer, Sarah Jones on 07757 796155 or sarahjonesbpc@hotmail.co.uk

During this year the Council has turned one plot at our North Street site into a managed wildlife area. We have planted 7 fruit trees, all local varieties of apples and plums. They will be pruned to limit their height but we hope that in the future they will flourish and provide a good harvest.

Photo competition

Bitton Parish Council organised its first Photo Competition this Summer. Residents were invited to send in photos taken in the parish with each entrant submitting up to 5 pictures.

Our three winners all contributed beautiful scenes – a view towards the River Avon, Kelston Round Hill in the snow and the area close to the Avon Valley Railway's Riverside area. The Council was delighted with the standard of entries received and held a presentation to the winners before the Full Parish Council meeting on the 10th July where our Chairman Councillor Jane Allinson presented a framed copy photograph and a voucher to the winners. Congratulations go to 1st prize to **Debbie Wright** (right), 2nd prize to **Alison Rigby** (left) and 3rd prize to **Scott Salter** (not pictured).

We will be running the competition again in 2019. Why not consider entering? When you are out and about in the coming months get shooting and capture the essence of the wonderful area in which we live, a notable building or something quirky that appeals to you.



New energy supplier

Two new energy tariffs have been launched recently offering a choice of green and affordable deals by supplier **Our Power** supported by Bath and North East Somerset Council and Bath & West Community Energy. It is also available to some residents in South Gloucestershire, including all addresses in the Parish of Bitton.

The new scheme, called Our Power In B&NES, offers locally-generated renewable energy through a collaboration with not-for-profit energy supplier Our Power and local community business Bath & West Community Energy. The 'Our Local Green Energy' tariff will provide 100% renewable electricity as part of a dual fuel offer with gas. Electricity will be locally sourced and community owned wherever possible, using green energy from Bath & North East Somerset and the surrounding area.

The scheme will also include the 'Our Fairer Energy' tariff from Our Power, which is currently one of the cheapest tariffs available on the market for dual fuel pre-payment meter customers. Around 14% of local households pay for energy by pre-payment meter.

Bath & North East Somerset Council is endorsing this scheme because it contributes to tackling fuel poverty and supporting renewable energy. Our Power was one of the first not-for-profit energy suppliers in the UK, and was founded by housing associations, community organisations and local authorities with the aim of making energy fairer and greener. Our Power will be working with Bath & West Community Energy which will support with community marketing and whose local community owned renewable energy generation projects will be among the first to power the scheme. Residents can sign up by calling Our Power on **0808 189 3085**.



Westcourt Drive **phone box library**

For as long as we can remember, there has been a dilapidated red telephone box by the shops in Westcourt Drive, Oldland Common. It was decommissioned some years ago and had become quite an eyesore, with a large buddleia growing around it.

Last year an article appeared in 'The Week In' about how old telephone boxes can be 'adopted' for £1 under BT's 'Adopt a Kiosk Scheme' – a scheme only available to organisations. Sarah Wookey, Deb Wright and Anne Thomson, three lovely ladies who work at Cadbury Heath Library, duly contacted Bitton Parish Council and asked if Councillors would adopt the kiosk on their behalf.

They had read of other telephone boxes that had been converted in to mini art galleries (Doynnton) and plant displays (central Bath) and decided, as Library Assistants, to turn our telephone box in to a mini community library. Progress was hampered by bad weather (snow in the winter then endless rain) but they have done a wonderful job of renovating the kiosk, sourcing the right paint and designing some shelving. There is now plenty of good quality stock filling the shelves.

A formal opening ceremony was held on Sunday 29 July. Lots of local people came along to take part and wish our intrepid volunteers well with their project. The ribbon was cut by famous author Susan Lewis who lives in South Gloucestershire and was delighted to perform her first telephone box opening ceremony! She congratulated the ladies on their success and hoped that many local people would use the mini library. Tea and cake was provided afterwards in the new Unity Methodist Church Hall in West Street.

You can use the library in one of two ways. Either, borrow a book and return it at a later date. Or else take the book away with you but donate one of your own to take its place. There are books on every subject and for all ages. Do go and have a look inside the telephone kiosk and be part of this wonderful project.



Our thanks also go to the customers of the Dolphin at High Street, Oldland Common. The proceeds from the New Years Eve event there have been donated to the project and have helped with purchases of the necessary materials, etc.

