

AGM Report 2020-2021

Connecting Communities Forums

Bath and North East Somerset

Introduction

Our Connecting Communities programme is designed to help public services and local residents to work better together to address the areas of local concern in our communities.

The 'Connecting Communities' approach has been built around five key principles:

- listen
- prioritise
- join-up
- work with you
- share ideas

To achieve this, the council has worked with partners, parishes and communities over many years to establish Area Forums to streamline and simplify local engagement. In 2021, with the Bathavon North and Cam Valley Forums set to merge and Bath's Forum preparing to re-establish, the current Forums are:

- Bath Area Forum
- Bathavon Area Forum
- Chew Valley Area Forum
- Keynsham Area Forum
- Somer Valley Forum

The purpose of the Forums is to:

- identify local issues
- work together to address them
- give feedback on consultations to the council and other partners

The Forums are attended by Bath & North East Somerset ward councillors, parishes, local community groups and residents. All Forum meetings are open to anyone to attend at any time.

The agendas for Forum meetings generally include items the council and its partners want to share or would like feedback on; items the Forum members themselves wish to discuss and opportunities for local organisations to share information and best practice.

The Forums are inclusive and provide grass roots engagement with residents and community organisations, not only for the council but also its partners such as the Police, Curo, health care providers etc. The feedback the Forums provide plays a vital role in helping to shape local services. A 'one size fits all' approach does not always work in the diverse communities across our district which include very rural areas alongside a World Heritage City.

It's also important to recognise that the Forums are not defined by their meetings alone. The knowledge gained and shared, the contacts made and networks created all assist in strengthening our communities.

The Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Forums and the council's Community Engagement Team which supports the Forums, always welcome ideas for Agenda items and feedback on how to make the Forum as valuable to participants as possible (contact details for the team below).

2020-2021 Overview

Each of the Forums would normally meet at least four times a year but, as with many other aspects of our lives, this cycle was impacted by Covid-19. However, the incredible strength and resilience of our local communities shone when it mattered most and there is no question that the Forums played a significant role in the success of the local response to the pandemic.

A range of partners, including Virgin Care, the council and the BANES Third Sector Group (3SG), came together to create the Wellbeing Hub. This approach to health and social care was previously discussed at a number of Forum meetings by Virgin Care, the Primary Care Network and others. The Forums also played a pivotal role in the local Clinical Commissioning Group's 'Your Care, Your Way' consultations. It was this groundwork that paved the way for our area's formal and rapid response to the crisis.

Alongside this was the incredible contribution from parishes and community organisations, with an equally rapid response to ensuring residents across the district, particularly the most vulnerable, had access to food, medication, befriending and more. This response is testament to the strength and resilience of our local communities.

Meetings and Communications

During the pandemic most of us quickly became used to meeting online. It is recognised that this does exclude some people from participating but we know that Forum members do share information from the Forums verbally and in printed newsletters - we thank you for this.

Not having to travel to physical meetings and the ability to 'catch up' with Forum meetings via the council's [YouTube channel](#) has, in turn, made it easier for others to engage, generating a new and increased audience.

The council and its partners also increased the number of webinars being held on specific topics and this approach worked well for issues relating to the Bath Forum in particular. Links to available Forum meetings and the web link for council webinars are contained in Appendix 1.

The importance of receiving the latest information has never been more pertinent and we would encourage all Forum members to sign up to receive the [council's e-newsletter](#) to residents and the Connecting Communities Team's [Interagency e-bulletin](#) if they have not done so already. The council's [Newsroom](#) also contains its latest press releases.

Throughout the pandemic, Community Engagement Team has continued to hold regular [Interagency Meetings](#) which help community groups, charities and others to share information and to network. Again, these meetings are open to all and are currently virtual

The [Parish Liaison](#) meetings were also held, allowing parishes and council leaders to engage.

The key to the success of all the above are the people, like you, who participate and engage. We should like to thank you all for your valuable contributions to the Forums, your organisations and communities.

The Forum Chairs and Vice Chairs
and
B&NES Community Engagement Team

Connecting Communities Forum Meetings 2020 - 21

Forum	Dates	Main Theme/Topics	YouTube Link
Bath	25 th August 2020		https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PT8im78E9II
Bathavon North	21 st January 2020	Climate Emergency	
	17 th February 2020	Bathampton Meadows	
Cam Valley	13 th February 2020	Planning Issues	
	29 th July 2020	Response, Recovery and Resilience in our Communities	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pbXmvDksqwx
	13 th October 2020 (AGM)	Liveable Neighbourhoods, Rural Transport and Climate Emergency, Village Agents, Local Care in the Community	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dlcVt1yS2d0
Chew Valley Area	24 th February 2020 (AGM)	Climate Emergency	
	4 th August 2020	Response, Recovery and Resilient Communities	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3DHLZ0d14A
	2 nd November 2020	Climate Emergency	
Keynsham Area	27 th February 2020 (AGM)	Building Stronger Communities	
	22 nd July 2020	Response, Recovery and Resilient Communities	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRxf1yJlqPA
	11 th November 2020	Climate Emergency (joint meeting with Somer Valley)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p7-IUEltGcM
Somer Valley	19 th February 2020 (AGM)	Climate Emergency	
	21 st July 2020	Response, Recovery and Resilient Communities	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00eZ0fRBQFQ
	30 th September 2020	Climate Emergency Liveable Neighbourhoods and Planning	
	11 th November 2020	Climate Emergency (joint meeting with Keynsham Area)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p7-IUEltGcM

Webinars

The Council's website contains details of both forthcoming and archived [webinars](#).

There are 35 archived webinars dating from May 2020 onwards on a range of topics including:

- Liveable Neighbourhoods
- Green Skills
- Black Lives Matter
- Bath City Centre Security
- Green Homes
- Council Budget
- B&NES Local Plan
- Bath Transport Delivery Plan
- Holocaust Memorial Day
- Vaccination and Shielding Advice
- Infection Control
- Cleveland Bridge, Bath
- Bath River Line

Key Contacts

Forum	Chair and Vice Chair 2020-21	B&NES Officer Support
Bath Area	Cllr Dine Romero (Chair) Rosie Philips (Vice Chair)	<p>Mark Hayward – Community Engagement Officer Tel: (01225) 396975 Email: mark_hayward@bathnes.gov.uk</p> <p>Dave Dixon – Community Engagement Manager Tel: (01225) 396532 Email: dave_dixon@bathnes.gov.uk</p>
Bathavon North*	Cllr Kevin Guy (Chair) Vice Chair (Vacant)	<p>Mark Hayward – Community Engagement Officer Tel: (01225) 396975 Email: mark_hayward@bathnes.gov.uk</p> <p>Dave Dixon – Community Engagement Manager Tel: (01225) 396532 Email: dave_dixon@bathnes.gov.uk</p>
Cam Valley*	Cllr John Adler (Chair) Vice Chair (Vacant)	<p>Mark Hayward – Community Engagement Officer Tel: (01225) 396975 Email: mark_hayward@bathnes.gov.uk</p> <p>Dave Dixon – Community Engagement Manager Tel: (01225) 396532 Email: dave_dixon@bathnes.gov.uk</p>
Chew Valley Area	Chris Head (Chair) Cllr Heather Clewett (Vice Chair)	<p>Alison Wells – Community Engagement Officer Tel: (01225) 396539 Email: alison_wells@bathnes.gov.uk</p> <p>Sara Dixon – Locality Manager Tel: (01225) 396594 Email: sara_dixon@bathnes.gov.uk</p>

Keynsham Area	Cllr Alan Hale (Chair) Adrian Inker (Vice Chair)	<p>Alison Wells – Community Engagement Officer Tel: (01225) 396539 Email: alison_wells@bathnes.gov.uk</p> <p>Sara Dixon – Locality Manager Tel: (01225) 396594 Email: sara_dixon@bathnes.gov.uk</p>
Somerset Valley	Lynda Robertson (Chair) Cllr Ron Hopkins (Vice Chair_	<p>Alison Wells – Community Engagement Officer Tel: (01225) 396539 Email: alison_wells@bathnes.gov.uk</p> <p>Sara Dixon – Locality Manager Tel: (01225) 396594 Email: sara_dixon@bathnes.gov.uk</p>

**Amalgamating in 2021*