

Bathampton Parish Council, 19 September 2019

## **Current action to further protect the Meadows from inappropriate development**

Report by Bathampton Meadows Alliance (BMA) Working Group

The Bathampton Meadows Alliance was formed in 2015 with the aim of protecting the Meadows from inappropriate development. We are a broad Alliance of individuals and other bodies including Parish Councils and pressure groups with similar aims. Our work is steered by a Working Group comprised of volunteers from the three villages surrounding the Meadows who then engage with the wider community through community meetings, our website and newsletters.

Earlier this Summer the Bathampton Meadows Alliance (BMA) Working Group resumed discussions with the Council and the National Trust to suggest ways of securing long term protection for the Meadows as we know them. It was concerned to capitalise on the Council's earlier decision not to proceed with a 1400 space Park & Ride site. This latest approach to the Council followed pledges to safeguard the future of the Meadows received from the Party Groups prior to the local elections.

The pledge made by the Liberal Democrats, who now make-up the Cabinet of the Council, was to 'instruct Council Officers to negotiate with the National Trust for the transfer to them of all council-owned land on the Meadows'

Having secured this pledge, the BMA Working Group is now keen to offer skills and volunteer time to facilitate the next steps. Given our previous track record and wide community reach we believe the BMA are well placed to help deliver the public and stakeholder consultation required to underpin any agreement between the National Trust and Council.

The BMA Working Group has worked through the Summer to produce draft proposals to engage with and support the Council and National Trust and to undertake wide public and stakeholder engagement and consultation early in the Autumn. These drafts include:

- Vision & Aims for the protection of the Meadows (attached)
- Initial mapping of the Vision for the Meadows
- Principles to ensure a balance between the protection of the Meadows and extending the public benefit they provide
- Measures to be considered and the outcomes they would deliver

Our proposals also include a Work Plan setting-out actions to secure effective collaboration between the Council, National Trust & BMA Working Group, and effective public and stakeholder engagement and consultation.

In summary the draft Vision envisages:

- Protecting the Meadows from inappropriate development, including by land transfers and acquisitions
- Protecting, supporting and strengthening the present natural environment
- Sympathetically extending the public benefit the Meadows provides

The outcomes envisaged are:

- Secure the Meadows green setting to the World Heritage Site, as recognised by UNESCO
- Continue to preserve its historical context and use as Meadows
- Protect, support and enhance its natural features, habitats & wildlife; breathe life into its river setting
- Improve access & connectivity across the Meadows for walkers and cyclists
- Improve the safety and health of children travelling to school
- Contribute further to the physical and mental health & well-being of local people
- Reduce the use of cars for journeys into the City & to schools
- Assist in slowing & managing Climate Change, and improving air quality.

**Recommendation:**

That the Parish Council notes the progress being made, and gives its views and support.

**Bathampton Meadows Alliance Working Group  
September 2019**