

Long Ashton Annual Parish Meeting, Long Ashton Village Hall

23rd April 2018 Chairman - Councillor Andrew Wilkinson

The meeting was attended by 69 electors

1. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th April 2017, copies having been circulated, were signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

2. Chairman's Report

The Chairman Cllr Andrew Wilkinson welcomed everyone and gave his report: "As a council, we are now back to full strength with the recent co-option of two new councillors, Andrew Batt and Ashley Cartman. The council can only function with people giving their time voluntarily. The same is true for other organisations in the village. LACA currently has trustee vacancies, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to find public-spirited people willing to fill these and other roles.

This brings me to the loss of our library. The council was very disappointed to find out through the press that the library was closing (although our district councillor, Charles Cave, had indicated it was a possibility). We are looking at options to maintain a library within the village, but these would rely on volunteers to make it viable. The potential costs are significant, so before the council could consider these, we would have to be confident that there were sufficient potential volunteers to take this forward. If you are interested, please register on the form on the table by the entrance.

The West of England Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) was submitted to the Secretary of State just over a week ago. This doesn't include any housing associated with Taylor Wimpey's The Vale. Taylor Wimpey has made clear that despite this they will be submitting a planning application for The Vale with 4500 new houses. The JSP has a number of stages to go through before final approval and implementation and Taylor Wimpey will be lobbying right through this process to promote The Vale. The PC is opposed to the Vale and will be engaging in the process to ensure our views on this development are heard. As a footnote, Bristol City council have announced they want to move the greenbelt boundary to what they consider to be the new logical position of the SBL. We will be carefully monitoring this.

The sale of the RBL building removed it from North Somerset's register of Assets of Community value. This was a surprise to us, as we thought some level of protection would continue. We have had a meeting with the developer who presented their initial thoughts on how they proposed to develop the site. The Chair of our planning committee will give some more details in her report.

Finally, on behalf of myself and all the chairs of our committees, I would like to thank our Clerk, Janet Turp, for her guidance, hard work and dedication. We also welcome a new assistant Clerk, Tracey Warren and wish all the best to her predecessor, Vicky Lacey, who has moved on to bigger and better things.

In addition to these, we also have the village orderlies and gardener. So, my thanks to all of them for their work for the council, it is much appreciated.

Finance and General Purposes Committee report

The Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, Cllr Hardingham, gave her report "The main responsibility of the Finance and General Purposes Committee is to oversee the fixing and spending of the precept, which is that part of council tax that is paid to the Parish Council. For the year 2017/18, the precept was £154,600. What do you get for that?"

The main grant was £31,830 to the Community Association for the upkeep of this Community Centre. It's amazing to see the range and popularity of activities here so thanks to the committee and staff as well as the cafe and other volunteers. It's great to come to an event like the Apple Day and see this place buzzing with activity and music, but parts of the complex are beginning to look tired so the Parish Council and LACA are looking jointly at a strategic plan to consider what is needed over the coming years.

Judy Bridges has been on LACA for 16 years and Chair of the Committee for a good part of that, but she retired in December. I would like to thank her for all her hard work and leadership to achieve what we have now as a thriving centre for the whole community, young and old and every age in between.

A grant of £17,000 to the Youth Club enabled sessions on three evenings a week to continue. The youth service provider EPIC has been flexible and started outreach work last autumn talking to the groups of young people who get together on the streets or on the Rec. The Youth Club also created the colourful mural on the side of the clubroom, celebrating the history of Long Ashton.

If you would be interested in joining the committees of either LACA or the youth club, do let us know. Although here in Long Ashton we may not have the pressing needs of some charities in Bristol, we still need the efforts, hearts and minds of our residents to keep these facilities running and it is very interesting to get involved in our own community.

Small grants were given to North Somerset Citizens Advice Bureau, Nailsea Community Transport, St Peters Hospice, the MS therapy centre, Wellspring Counselling and Somerset Storyfest. Also, grants to the Guides, the Scouts and the Junior Cricket club were given through the Youth Network. The Parish Council supports the PACT meetings by covering the room hire. A grant was also given to Light Up Long Ashton (LULA) for the Christmas lights and thanks to the families who organise a terrific display.

Last year the Community Grant was used to paint the buzzard on the side of the Co-op. There was only the one application so it was disappointing that no decision meeting was needed as this is at the heart of the process, giving residents a direct say on how some of the Parish Council's money is spent. This year again, one grant of £1,500 and one of £500 are available. The deadline to apply is Tuesday May 8th and the decision meeting will be in October. Please encourage any group with an interesting project to apply. If you have any queries about the process, please ask me or Janet, as we will be happy to assist.

We have been involved in the parish recycling scheme which aims to raise awareness of recycling. We have completed our part and will receive a grant of £1,050 for that. We intend to use it towards some seating in the central area of the village. I see my report last year specifically urged us all to send less plastic to landfill. I am therefore delighted that, quite independently, that the campaign for 'Plastic Free Long Ashton' has now been launched and hope this can achieve a real difference.

The Public Art for Chancellors Park and Kings Croft has seen no progress in the last 12 months as it is buried in the resolution of outstanding issues on the s106 agreement with Taylor Wimpey.

The Parish Council has taken a 99 year lease at a peppercorn rent, from NSC of the Theynes Croft car park, next to Church House. It can only be used as a car park, but it is no longer only for school use.

North Somerset Council has faced budget cuts from central government again, which inevitably means a reduction in some services as their costs increase on statutory services such as social care. Some of these services may have to be picked up by the Parish Council such as grit bins and weed control on verges and gutters; it is already the case for the youth club.

It is a truism that when taxpayers are asked what services they want, we all tick the boxes saying yes, but when asked if they are prepared to pay more tax, people are reluctant to agree. This is the dilemma we will have to face later this year. Are we prepared to pay more in Council Tax to the Parish Council to keep a library service here, and if so, how much?

It is almost impossible to find any funding from NSC for road improvements which are very costly, so we have been managing our reserves to reach figures to make projects viable - this applies to the parking problems in Leigh Woods and to the Village Enhancement Scheme. This will concentrate on the shopping area and strive to make this easier and safer for pedestrians, especially children and the elderly. If they cannot get around our village, then it is not a successful village.

For the new financial year 2018/19, the Precept is set at £158,000. This is a 2.8% increase on a Band D property, rising to £59.74 a year which is just less than £5 a month for the household. Our figure is pretty well spot on for the average Precept across all parishes in NS.

Long Ashton is classified as one of nine service villages in NS, so it is useful to compare our precept with the other eight; these are the large villages such as Backwell, Congresbury, Wrington and Yatton. The average Band D charge for the nine service villages is £69; ours at just below £60, is the second lowest. Only Pill is lower. The highest is Banwell at £80.

Considering the excellent Community Centre here, our precept gives very good value, but I suspect that we will need a noticeable increase next year, not only because of the library but with other pressures mounting.

F&GP is the only committee which is not open to all councillors. In August, for the first time any of us can remember, three of us arrived for a meeting that could not proceed as there was no quorum. There is a direct cost to our residents in the waste of time of the Parish Clerk and Assistant Clerk in preparing and turning up for the meeting, but F&GP deals with the essential running of the business of the Parish Council so that could not proceed. F&GP has the riveting task of dealing with financial regulations, risk assessments, GDPR, audits and staff matters, but these are all essential. The structure of F&GP will be discussed again.

Possibly we need to consider a radical overhaul of how we organise all our meetings. There are Parish Council elections in May 2019, and we want to encourage a wide spread and cross section of the demographic to be involved, so we need to have the discussion as to how we make our meetings truly accessible and useful.

So to conclude, thanks to those members of F&GP who have given their time in the last year.

The previous year's audited accounts are at the door of the hall.

Highways & Burial Ground Committee report

The Chairman of the Highways and Burial Committee, Cllr Mrs Mackwood, gave her report: "Liz Lansley has taken over footpaths from Stuart McQuillan and has had a busy year. The footpath group have laid bark on the footpath up to Providence piece, repaired signs and managed undergrowth. We have been communicating at length with Greenbelt services in an attempt to revitalise the tracks and walkways through Dawson Walk; this is ongoing.

Vice Chairman of Highways Nigel Moorcroft has been very active at the east end of the village, securing repairs and improvements to foot and cycle ways, and we are working with North Somerset to make Yanley Lane safer for the hamlet of Yanley and users of the Festival Way; currently, it can be rather like a racetrack at times.

We have also been concerned at the replanting to screen the village from the new Link road; the small stems that were planted have had a sad time and many need replacing. We hope to achieve a good screen as soon as possible.

Martin Harris has been working tirelessly on a parking scheme for Leigh Woods who have suffered from Clifton's parking schemes and from the popularity of cycling in Leigh Woods. We hope that the new arrangement will be an asset“.

We have had to cope with several failures in communication by North Somerset. This has led to the junction at Glebe Road being more difficult than before and to the installation of a new junction between the A370 and B3130 at Cambridge Batch, without the required consultation. We had assurances from North Somerset Council that they will do better in the future; there is no breath being held. The sad thing is that the money could have been so much better spent. There have been several accidents at the Gatcombe Farm junction and we are hoping for some new signage to make the turning more obvious.

Rod Sterland has been monitoring numbers and speeds of vehicles passing through the village and we have accumulating data which will help with traffic schemes in the future. The data is on our website if anyone wants to see them.

The Village Enhancement Scheme chaired by Cllr Hardingham has some interesting schemes from North Somerset to consider, and when they have, they will be having a full consultation with the village. We hope to improve Brocks Lane crossing. Councillors were very involved in Hollis Close where there was much consultation.

Burial Ground; Heaven scent has had another good year and it all looked very good when the Bishop of Bath and Wells representative came to consecrate another part of the burial ground. It was a sunny day and the short service was followed by refreshments in the Church. The trees in the graveyard have been surveyed and necessary work carried out to make them safe.

There is a long agenda for the Committee.

Thanks go to Vicky Lacey, the previous Assistant Clerk and to Janet, The Clerk and we welcome Tracy Warren as the new Assistant Clerk.

Planning Committee report

The Chairman of the Planning Committee, Cllr Miss Mary Uppington, gave her report: “Our monthly meetings of the Planning Committee have been as busy as usual with a steady number of applications being received. The majority are still for extensions to existing properties with requests for works to be done on trees showing a considerable increase. All applications are looked at in detail before any recommendations are made to North Somerset for final decisions. We are regularly pleased to see our Neighbourhood Development Plan is being recognised by North Somerset Planning Officers and our NDP policies are often quoted in their responses. You may have noticed that work has commenced at 14 Long Ashton Road where nine apartments are to be built and development is continuing at Audley Redwood, Beggar Bush Lane where a number of the properties are already occupied. Demolition of Cox's shop and the house behind, at 50 Long Ashton Road at 50 Long Ashton Road, is currently taking place as the buildings here were beyond repair. We understand an application will reach us shortly for five new properties to be built.

Application has been made to demolish the Royal British Legion buildings at 1 Providence Lane. So far no decision has been made but the Conservation Officer at North Somerset is

recommending refusal as se says “the building is a non-designated heritage asset in its own right”. A request for the buildings to be listed has been made so we await decisions.

Taylor Wimpey staged another exhibition in March showing their plans for ‘The Vale’. This was at Woodspring Golf Club and it did not please us that so little notice was given to Long Ashton residents. However, these latest plans were much the same as we saw in 2016 and you will remember the land they wish to develop is all in the Green Belt. North Somerset has not included this as an area for future development in their Joint Spatial Plan. The Parish Council is strongly opposed to any development in the Green Belt; it would be contrary not only to our Neighbourhood Development Plan, but to North Somerset and National Policy. We know there is likely to be pressure brought for building to the South of Bristol which could mean using Green Belt Land. This land between the city and Long Ashton makes an important contribution to the local character and is highly valued. It is intended that Green Belt is to be a long term designation and you can be sure we shall do all we can to protect this landscape between our village and the city.

It is easy to forget how Long Ashton has more than played its part in accepting new housing. In the last 70 years, 1586 properties have been built and this has included three main estates at Birdwell, Westleaze and Long Ashton Research Station, which together account for 877 properties.

Last year I told you that North Somerset’s review of Libraries and Children’s Centres showed it was planned to maintain our facilities at their present locations. However, it is now sad to learn the position has now changed and our library is scheduled to close; so it is very fortunate we have a speaker this evening who will explain the latest position.

In addition to looking at planning applications, the Committee has considered and commented on a number of National and North Somerset documents which have covered planning policies. Trees and hedges have needed their usual attention with residents who have trees designated with a TPO, or who are in a conservation area, needing to apply to North Somerset with details of the work they wish to do. The Tree Officer deals very efficiently with applications and his advice and decisions are very constructive. It is so helpful that the majority of residents are thoughtful about keeping hedges cut back so that overhanging foliage does not obstruct pavements and footpaths.

I do want to thank members of our Committee who make such a valuable input to our discussions and Charles Cave who, as our District Councillor, will readily follow up any planning issues with North Somerset Planning Officers.

For the greater part of last year, Vicky Lacey minuted our meetings with Liz Price in the interim period, and now it is Tracy Warren. Our thanks are due to each one of them together with Janet our Clerk, whose help and advice is readily given and appreciated“.

3. Parochial Charity Accounts for 2017

The accounts of the trustees to the Parochial Charity for 2017 were displayed during the meeting on the notice board.

4. Resolutions

The Clerk had not received written notice of any resolutions.

5. Question and Answer session

Question: I am a newcomer of four years. With regards to flooding at the top of Providence Lane and Beggargbush Lane, does the PC have any authority to deal with this?”

A: No but report this to NSC.

Q: It is a danger as it covers half the road, cars are at danger turning left.

A: Agreed, we will put it on the Highways Committee agenda.

Question: At the junction of Long Ashton Road and Chestnut Road, there is a very large puddle every time it rains. Mothers, children and the blind are in danger of getting splashed. The Highways were informed before resurfacing but the problem has worsened; they've been contacted a number of times and Dave has taken up the issue but there has been no response. Can this be raised for mothers, children and those with disabilities? It is due to the camber of the road not blocked drains.

A: We will put it on the agenda for the Highways Committee.

Question. I have a question on the Action Plan and the Community Grant, and the model of the PC's operation. Under the Power of Competence Cllrs can raise as much expenditure as they wish, and residents don't need to be consulted. In 2013 the PC was written to regarding the Community Grant. Participatory Budgeting is different to existing systems in that resident panels act as a board for example to agree the precept. In 2013 it was on the Action Plan and has been there since. Has the PC got any plans in moving away from Councillors deciding everything to community based decisions which are important in huge expenses? Hundreds of councils are rebranding as Community Councils. Is the grant (of £2,000) an addition to the budget?"

A: Yes it is an additional figure over and above the small grants budget.

Q: Is there a move or desire for a Participatory Budget going forward?

A: There is no current plan for a Participatory Budget but we are not ruling it out. If enough residents wish, then this can be considered. If Councillors wish to raise it they can do so.

Question: Regarding the condition of the pavement opposite the Doctor's surgery. An elderly resident fell in December 2017 after tripping. A number of residents contacted NSC and NSC erected bollards. The wind has blown down the bollards which are resting against the house owner's bamboo perimeter. There is an issue with the bamboo growing. Has the PC taken this up with NSC?"

A: Yes this has been taken up with NSC and we will raise it again.

Question: Further to the ideas for improving presentation at the PC, the arrangement here is much better than in the Jubilee Pavilion.; it is like Flax Bourton PC who sit in a long line and face the public. The hard of hearing can't hear in the Pavilion. If you keep the square format where you talk to each other, then there is a need for a microphone.

A: We are aware there is a need to improve this for the hard of hearing. There is a loop system which we are hoping to use to better effect. We will take the comments on board.

Question: Who is responsible for the tubs outside the Co-op and the Dentist?

A: A volunteer for the tub outside the co-op and the dental practice for the tub outside their premises.

MM: Is there a Village Orderly?"

A: Yes there are two who work 5 hours each per week. They do weekly litter picking clearing through the village and associated lanes, putting out the dog bags and some notice board maintenance.

Question: I live in one of the four properties in Brock Lane, what plans are there here?

A: We are very aware of this difficult junction and will consult on this and are awaiting drawings from NSC to see what is possible.

Q: As next door neighbour to RBL, do I sit and wait for positive news? We were not allowed to build beyond our present building line but this is going to be much closer to the road. We were not notified directly.

A: There is no official application, only for demolition and this has not been decided yet.

Q: There was a break-in to the RBL yesterday; 4 or 5 young lads about 16 years old were in the building. The police were rung. We don't know who to complain to.

A: Praelon Construction owns the building.

Question: I was on the Long Ashton Rural District Council once; I would like to respond to the comments made previously: we all live in a democracy. We have to vote for our Parish Council. It might help if we had a surgery. To what meetings can people come and speak apart from the annual Parish Council meeting?

A: People are welcome to come to all meetings and can talk informally before or after the meeting. If the subject is of particular interest, we can suspend the meeting for the public to talk. The agendas are in the library and twitter, the website and the noticeboard.

Q: We can only speak for three minutes every two months for items on the Agenda, there is never an interaction.

A: There is interaction available at all meetings.

Question: Taylor Wimpey's The Vale has a lot of propaganda to make it sound attractive and the support of Nailsea and Backwell strengthens The Vale's application against the Joint Spatial Plan The PC has a budget for fighting such developments and a specialist is needed; are there specific plans to engage a planning specialist for supporting opposition to The Vale.

A: There are no specific plans. We know that the North Somerset village alliance support The Vale - we are holding discussions with Barrow Gurney and Dundry parish Councils who are equally convinced The Vale should not go ahead to decide the way forward.

Resident: The money is there, are there any plans for a specialist?

A: The seminar given by Andrea Peligram, a planning expert gave pointers and included engaging a specialist. We have a reasonable fighting fund but it won't last long so we have to choose when to spend this money.

Question: Regarding Yeo Lane and the steps down from the Chinese. There is a lot of graffiti, including tags, on the side of the building. If left it increases. There are also overgrown bushes and trees making access difficult. Also in Birdwell Road, at the side of the Co-op, there are pot holes that in 30 years have never got fully sorted out.

A: There are other roads that NSC consider more important.

Question: Opposite the entrance to the car park on Keedwell Hill there are tall fir trees. This is a blind corner, at the kerb and entrance, can these be cut back?

A: Don't wait to raise issues until the annual meeting – we will put it on the Highways Committee agenda.

Question: Can the clock at the Old School be fixed?"

A: This is not the PC responsibility - we have tried to get it sorted a number of times, it is no longer an agenda item but we can try again.

Question: The Park and Ride bus was supposed to have a link to South Bristol Community Hospital. This hasn't happened and there have been no protests to NSC. Is s106 not to be used?"

A: MetroBus questions are probably better addressed by North Somerset Council, Colin Meadus is the person to direct questions to.

6. Presentation; Closure of the Library

Andy Brisley, Library Service Manager and Mandy Bishop Assistant Director (Operations) Development & Environment, both from North Somerset Council gave a presentation about the future Library options and the public consultation which is taking place about it. Mandy noted that the Council hasn't yet formally decided to shut the library but money savings were needed and alternative provisions were to be considered.

Andy Brisley confirmed that the library is regarded as a valuable service and explained its history and lease terms. Long Ashton Library was relocated from the Community Centre to its current location in 1972, the unit being formally a small Gateway supermarket. The library is leased with full repairing responsibilities. The previous 10 year lease expired in 2017; a new lease has not been signed and is being carried on on a short term basis with consent from the landlords and their agents. The cost of the lease is £14,000 per year plus services and utilities. In comparison, similar libraries are much cheaper. In Pill NSC pay no rent as the premises are provided by Alliance Housing and the cost at Winscombe is £10 per annum for ground rent, the building being provided by the Co-op who contribute as part of their community involvement. As the lease has come to an end it is appropriate to look at the provision given the high costs.

The library is open 16.5 hours per week operated as sub library of Nailsea. There is one part time officer who works the majority of their hours at the Long Ashton library and NSC supplies on average, a further 11.5 hours of staffing per week from within the Nailsea library team. This allows the library to be double staffed at busy times. There are a small number of volunteers who support the service through storytelling and craft event activities. It was intended to install a card system so that the library could be accessed out of staffed hours. Initial work to cost this solution has indicated a need to undertake significant additional property works. Although the library is in fair condition, considerable work to modernise and refurbish the premises to the standards required of a modern library is needed. The backlog of maintenance work is estimated at a minimum cost of £62,000, much of which is required to be carried out in the next year with an estimated cost of a further £60,000 for extended access. Given these costs it made sense to pause and have a discussion. For example what are the village willing to provide? Congresbury Library is in a PC owned building and run by volunteers.

The best options for library services are where they are combined with other services such as a children's centre such as Pill or where they are in prime retail locations. Long Ashton Children's centre is too remote from the hub of the village to relocate the library to this venue. Long Ashton library is the eighth (out of 12) busiest library in North Somerset and use is declining but not as fast as in other libraries. The number of registered users is 2309 and there are 1131 active users and it is well rated by its users.

In summary, the location of the current Long Ashton library premises is good and undoubtedly contributes to the success of the service and the use made of it. The premises have served the community well over the last 46 years but are non-compliant in many areas and now require significant capital investment to update them. With the end of the lease it is right that we consider the potential capital and revenue costs of continuing to deliver services from the current site. What is Long Ashton willing to provide? Whose building should the library be in? Other libraries such as Congresbury have active volunteers with PC support.

NSC are now looking to identify the best options for the provision of library services whilst continuing to seek to make financial savings required as a result of the financial strictures faced by local government. The 2018/2019 to 2019/2020 budget requires the service to achieve further savings totalling £260,000. For this reason, with £1.6 million revenue budget to deliver the same service to libraries in NSC this year, as against £3.1 million in 2007/2008, it is unwise to install new technology with £260,000 to come out of budget.

Options include:

1. Nuclear option, to close Long Ashton Library and cease provision from local premises, continuing to deliver limited outreach services to housebound and other key client groups. This is an option that NSC does not wish to follow and the authority recognised the need to maintain the

provision of library services to Long Ashton in line with the statutory requirement of the 1964 Public Library & Museum Act.

2. Close Long Ashton Library and cease provision from local premises, providing a weekly mobile library service, potentially at 2 half days per week. Continue to deliver local outreach series to housebound and other key client groups, including a regular pop up library at a local venue. It was noted that other communities only receive a fortnightly mobile library visit. The pop up library could include trolleys of books for a period of time once per week. A location such as the community centre could be considered. A pop up service could also be a temporary solution.

3. Co-locate the library at an alternative site with the central Long Ashton village area. Seek partners and premises willing to deliver library services within the Community in partnership with the local authority. It was noted that the Village Hall was unlikely to provide this space due to the negative impact on activities already taking place. Community consultation is required on constructive ideas in which kind of service can be including any space within the village, awareness of existing services, mobile library visits days, times and locations, pop up library; stock, activities, frequency and location and interest of the local community to do more to support the library such as volunteers to staff a service.

Question and answer session to NSC

Question: Clarification is needed on why we have to pay maintenance for the library at a cost of £10,500 when the rent is £14,000?

A: There is a legal duty in full repair on a lease, all repairs and maintenance has to be completed before the library is handed back to the landlord and a duty of care is in place. Rents are rising and the rent has been maintained by the landlord for the last 10 years at £14,000. Similar sums are being paid for smaller properties and the landlord has gone some way to accommodating us by offering to hold the rent for a further 10 years.

Question: There are three places of worship in Long Ashton not regularly used. Do we know of any combined services?

A: Yes some small libraries are in church halls i.e. rural villages where facilities are less used. We can agree outcomes with churches and places of worship.

Question: With regards to the capital cost of moving to another facility, with lower interest rates, would the PC or NSC consider borrowing the money?

A: We can't comment at this time but NSC loans are regularly restructured to gain the best interest rates.

Question: With regards to the Barrow Hospital /Linden homes site, there is provision for in the s10g agreement for books for Long Ashton; can we hang onto this money?"

A: There are changes to this development so it is not clear whether the present s106 agreement will stand. Under CIL we can make a bid for a contribution for library series and we have money for some stock for Audley Redwood and this would benefit the wider community. This would be a variation on s106. The trade-off is there are some contributions.

Question: If closing the site is a fait accompli, if the library is moved elsewhere, would you be prepared in long term savings to give a budget to ensure there is no gap in service so that user numbers don't decline.

A: The 01/04/2018 savings are already kicking in with natural turnover of staff instead of redundancies. A reduction in opening hours and a workable solution to re-jig the service for a long term solution would be considered, but could not go on indefinitely. If there is an emerging solution the Executive member will consider this.

Question: If an extra £20,000 was needed to give more time, where do we go to lobby to give more time? This has come quickly for Long Ashton.

A: More quantum savings are needed across NSC, including Nailsea, Long Ashton and Clevedon for example.

Question: What engagement is there from the PC to progress activities?

A: Chairman: There is already a working group set up. Please add your name to the list.

Question from resident: What are the timescales?

A: We need engagement in the next 3-6 months.

A: Chair: There is no budget for upfront costs. We need volunteers in the long term to run the service and we need to be confident that there are enough volunteers (in the Congresbury model 30-40 are needed to maintain the service) to support the upfront cost.

Resident comment: The library is important for young mums and pre-school children and access to computers; we need to leave this service available. The book club won't have any home if the library closes.

A: Information is needed including computer usage. 13% of library users went into the library to use computers from recent surveys. Sat in the library between 1-2p.m, the library was empty but between 3:30-4:00p.m the library was busy.

Question from resident: Will there be room for large print books and will a mobile library be accessible for disability including sticks and shopping trolleys?

A: Yes, any premises will include large print books and the mobile libraries have lifts for disabled access including large wheelchairs.

Question from resident: "Can we use RBL as a library if we keep it?"

A: NSC was approached but the building would need a lot of capital investment so this did not proceed. We are not saying no to any options.

A: Chairman: Initial discussions with developers raised the idea of provision for a library on site but they said that it would not be economically viable.

Question: Thank you for the support by NSC, books are not finished; the most likely users are children, young people and older people - those needs do not go away. Libraries are not services to go away; it is a catastrophic way to run our society. I hope that we will consider increasing the Precept in the village as the village should be willing to pay for things. What developments are there for a model library envisaged? Where is a new model of library to service the community and knowledge gaining appetite and what would the library of 10-20 years look like?

A: "Libraries are going through huge change; they can make a whole change to someone's life. It is not just the older generation, E-book sales and E-readers are on the decline with books making a resurgence. There is relative growth of small bookshops and increased growth in community bookshops. Digital technology means all work in libraries is IT based. Our role in society is to use IT in a positive way, not just for games but for on line transactions, business meetings etc. Many people don't have access to this level of technology at home. 'Fablabs' such as the one at Exeter library can take thoughts and ideas and turn them into real things using 3D printers. Technicians in libraries can take ideas of products into 3D to develop society. Libraries are street corner universities, they are non-judgemental, you can read, enjoy reading, and talk. Libraries should be a place you can talk and interact with people as a modern community centre.

Resident comment: Libraries need to be part of their time. They are a model for innovation and ideas that are central to community. We should be saying this to politicians setting budgets.

Question: In Winscombe the Co-op provide the site – there are offices below the shop here. Can we see if these could be used?

A: We will look into this; we have a relationship with the Co-op already.

Question from resident: "Does the library service have legal responsibility for any collections?"

A: "Yes we do. There is a specialised local studies library in Weston Super Mare, with a specialist hub for NS studies. The Frederick Wood library has lots of photographic material. If collections are left to NSC, they may be better suited to archive in Taunton where the majority (85%) are stored. We have a contract to deliver /store collections and maintain artefacts. We are interested in talking to people on the defining the best places for them to go, locally or Taunton and where they can be environmentally protected.

Comment from Mrs Jean Pullin: "The actual origin of the library was in 1944 when a small library was based in Church House.

The Chairman thanked Mandy and Andy for attending and their positive comments.

7. Presentation; Community Gardeners

Diana White gave a brief presentation explaining what the community gardeners would like to achieve and the volunteer help they would like. The group came together to represent different pockets of land and is volunteer run but is struggling to get more much needed volunteers. Land and projects include the community garden, Keedwell Church, the LACA garden, Peel Park Community Orchard, Heaven Scent Meadow at All Saints Church, and Dawson walk.

More people are needed to work on the land and word needs to be spread for people to enjoy and make the most of the spaces in the village. Outreach services to those who may benefit in a therapeutic way, especially to those who are isolated and may benefit, would like to be offered, with links to Mencap and Brandon House. There are plans to map the spaces, evening walks, community events, and to include groups such as elders, church, play groups etc. There is a list to sign up for volunteers. Display boards were at the meeting showing the work that has been carried on by the group.

Diane was available for any questions from the electors.

The meeting ended at 21:40 with refreshments.