

LONG ASHTON PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL STATEMENT 2006

Chairman's Overview

The Chairman, Councillor Ivor Scoones said the Parish Council always tries to put the village's best interest first but it is not always successful due to Government legislation and outside pressures. The Council tries to work in the best interests of the village but this can prove difficult due to external pressures and government legislation.

He said among the pleasant events of the past year were:-the opening of the new Northleaze School; Being chosen joint winners of the Avonside Village of the Year competition leading to representing Avonside in the National competition; creating a new path across Birdwell Recreation Ground in preparation for the "Walking Bus" to Birdwell School and a new Police Officer joining the beat

Some villagers are working on a Parish Plan with Leigh Woods preparing their part of the plan.

He felt the Committee Chairmen's reports showed how their work is varied and trusted it was also useful.

Planning Committee

The Chairman, Councillor Miss Mary Uppington, said the number of planning applications continues to steadily increase with just about 50%, of the 108 applications that were considered during the last year, for extensions or alterations to existing properties, this is understandable as the expense of moving to another property is often prohibitive when families wish to remain in the village.

Work at the former Research Station site is continuing. Detailed plans for the southern site have been submitted by 3 different developers - Flower & Hayes for construction of offices; Westbury Homes for the erection of 86 dwellings and Laings for the siting of 50 residential dwellings on the eastern area of this southern site.

On the Research Station site the Committee were very annoyed about extra breaches which have been made in the stone wall on the south side of Weston Road and this is being investigated by the Enforcement Officer a decision is awaited.

A large application, which proved controversial, was that for Bracken Hill in North Road. Leigh Woods. Last year Sunrise Senior Living purchased the site from Bristol University. They eventually made an application for an elderly persons home and conversion of the existing buildings. The erection of such a large new property created a good deal of opposition, particularly from the Leigh Woods Society, although refurbishment of the existing building was favourably received. The application was finally refused by North Somerset so further action for this site is awaited.

Highways and Burial Ground Committee

The Chairman, Councillor Phil Jackson, said the Churchyard wall was in need of repair and the Committee agreed a local contractor to undertake this repair work and this work will be completed by the end of June.

We aim to ensure our footpaths are maintained and accessible to all for all ages and for both the abled and those less abled. There has been an upsurge in interest in using footpaths. We have now established a Footpath Users Group under the Chairmanship of Nigel Moorcroft.

Speed continues to a concern in particular along Long Ashton Road, Weston Road, Yanley Lane and down Providence Lane. We plan further discussions with NS over the coming year to continue to address this issue and I expect us to be looking at further 20 mph areas and how we use mobile speed warning signs so everyone can get around the village safely.

As the new housing developments continue, much of the disturbance caused by works along Weston Road is now behind us. We do still have further disturbances ahead of us as the new surface water drainage system is installed. Letters have been sent by NS to local residents regarding the work and road closures. This work is started and is expected to take 14 weeks.

There is a travel plan associated with the movement of the Northleaze School and discussions with local residents and NS hope to address issues associated with cars and safety for parents taking/picking up from school. The car park at the top of Theynes Croft has been refurbished to encourage parents to park there rather than in Brook Close. Concern has been stated about vehicles using Yanley Road as the point for dropping/picking up. The footpath established from the school to the Yanley Lane is solely part of a walking link to Glebe Road. Signage has been put up to slow traffic down as it approaches the school from either Yanley Lane or Glebe Road.

The Vice Chairman, Harry Williams, reported on the successful monthly Footpath Walks, urged people to make more use of the footpaths, and asked dog walkers to pick up their dog's mess and dispose of it at home. He gave a brief description of the new circular footpath walk around the village.

Finance and General Purposes Committee

The Chairman, Councillor Skeeles, said in December 2004, a budget for the year 2005-06 was set and a precept of £94,000 was agreed by the Council.

The Committee met on 6 occasions last year and as well as financial matters, many of the statutory duties of the Parish Council were discussed. During this year, payments were made as in other years towards the upkeep of the Burial Ground, employing a Village Orderly, paying a Contractor to empty the dog bins and other incidental costs.

Some minor grants were paid to local organisations. The Cricket Club received £200, as did the Village Festival and we were able to donate funds to St John Ambulance and award Birdwell School £200 to help with the installation of CCTV. £3,000 was given over to youth provision.

The main grant was to the Community Association (LACA) to help them with the running costs of the Village Hall Complex. Their work is becoming increasingly difficult due to the behaviour of a small number of individuals. Vandalism is costing LACA over £3,000 a year, and regrettably intimidation of some of the user groups has resulted in them no longer using the facilities here. This results in a reduced room hire and is especially sad as one of these groups was raising funds for the continued improvement of this Complex.

Anyone seeing vandalism occurring or regrettably experiences intimidation, were encouraged to report the facts to the Parish Council and to the Police.

