

LONG ASHTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Held in the Village Hall on Monday 8th May 2006

Chairman - Councillor Ivor Scoones

The meeting was attended by approximately 50 electors

1. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 9th May 2005, copies having been circulated to those present were signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

2. Planning Committee Report

The Chairman, Councillor Miss Mary Uppington, said the number of planning applications continues to steadily increase and many applications are now quite involved and a good deal of time is needed to become familiar with all the details.

Just about 50%, of the 108 applications that were considered during the last year, have been for extensions or alterations to existing properties and she felt 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 she said the Committee were very annoyed about extra breaches which have been made in the stone wall on the south side of Weston Road. Residents were good enough to alert us, as soon as it happened, so we were able to contact North Somerset immediately. 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, I explained that Sunrise Senior Living had 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 we await further action for this site.

3. Highways and Burial Ground Committee Report.

The Chairman, Councillor Phil Jackson, said the Churchyard wall was in need of repair and the Committee has now agreed a local contractor to undertake this repair work and he was pleased to report this work will be completed by the end of June. We will continue to aim to keep the churchyard neat and tidy.

Dr Jackson said we are looking more and more 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 consequently now established a Footpath Users Group under the Chairmanship of Nigel Moorcroft.

It has been another busy year for Highways as the size of the village grows; issues too many to go through in detail but there are three I wanted to highlight.

Speed continues to a concern in particular along Long Ashton Road, Weston Road, Yanley Lane and down Providence Lane. We need to have 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 we can all 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 started last week and is expected to take 14 weeks.

He also talked about the travel plan associated with the movement of the Northleaze School. We've had a number of discussions with local residents and NS to address issues associated with cars and safety for parents taking/picking up from school. One of the most visible steps has been to refurbish the car park at the top of Theynes Croft to encourage parents to park there rather than in Brook Close. We have also been concerned 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.

He thanked Dave Addis and John Hewer for their work around the village, the members of the Highways and Burial Grounds Committee for their invaluable contributions over the past twelve months and the Clerk, Marilyn Addis, for her assistance and guidance over the past year.

During the report 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 also gave a brief description of the new circular footpath walk around the village.

4. Finance and General Purposes Committee Report.

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 mailers, 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.

We also paid our administration expenses and were able to award some minor grants 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.

However the main grant was to the Community Association (LACA) to help them with the running costs of the Village Hall Complex. I would like here to comment on the workings of the LACA Committee, who under difficult circumstances try to balance their books. 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.

I would therefore ask anyone who sees vandalism occurring or regrettably experiences intimidation, to report the facts firstly to the Parish Council and then to the Police.

It is not all doom and gloom, as LACA have acquired a number of new user groups.

5. 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.

A new path across Birdwell Recreation Ground in preparation for the "Walking Bus" to Birdwell School.

A new Police Officer joining the beat

Some villagers are working on a Parish Plan and new contributors would be welcome. Cllr. Sheila Hardingham would be pleased to hear from you. Leigh Woods are also preparing their part of the plan and Cllr. Martyn Harris can be contacted concerning that area.

He thanked fellow members of Long Ashton Parish Council and the clerk for their hard work throughout the year and in attending meetings which average at about one a week. Thanks also go to Cllrs. Cook and Roberts (Long Ashton) and Cllr. Francis-Pester (Leigh Woods) for the work they do on our behalf at North Somerset Council.

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

6. Parochial Charity Accounts.

The accounts of the trustees to the Parochial Charity for 2005/06 were displayed on the notice board at the end of the room.

7. Resolutions of which written notice has been given to the Clerk of the Parish Council

None received.

Those present heard more about the Long Ashton Circular Footpath and saw the latest LAMPRO proposals for Community Centre

Coffee and biscuits were then served.
