

LONG ASHTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Held in the Village Hall on Monday 23rd April 2012
Chairman – Councillor Nigel Moorcroft
The meeting was attended by 41 electors

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18th April 2011, copies having been circulated to those present were signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

Chairman's report

The Chairman, Cllr Nigel Moorcroft welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave his report. This year has seen the retirement of our long serving clerk Marilyn Addis. Marilyn and her husband Dave have both been tireless workers for the benefit of our village and will both be missed. We owe them both a huge debt of gratitude and I ask that we all show them our appreciation in the usual way. Thank you.

I would also like at this point to introduce our new clerk Dr Janet Turp who took up the post very recently and I am sure we all wish her success in the future.

It has been a difficult and very challenging year and the continual threats to our green belt are still a serious challenge.

These have come through the Rapid Transit route, the South Bristol Link Road, the stadium development and the sale of the land and options held by Lloyds Bank to the south and east of the village.

The last threat seemed to disappear with the North Somerset Core strategy but reappeared when the inspector said that a review of land suitable for development should be reappraised after 5 years so we should be very aware of this re-manifesting itself.

We are also attempting to engage fully with the Localism Bill but this seems to be a constantly evolving role and we follow it as closely as possible and there will be more about the implications in a presentation by our neighbourhood planning group later this evening. You may wish to join in future meetings of this group to help in evolving our village strategy for the future.

I would like to ask everyone here to attend the meeting at this venue on the 9th May to express your view and comment in regard to the New South Bristol Link Road. It starts at 2pm and ends at 8pm, please feel free to express your feelings or reservations. I for one would see it as a disaster cutting a swathe through North Somerset Council's highest value area of green belt. It would join the A370 west of the church and add immeasurably to the existing traffic chaos bringing traffic from the North and East Bristol as well as south Bristol and the A38.

This year has also brought a catastrophic reduction in North Somerset's local funding and none more so than the virtual elimination of Youth Funding throughout North Somerset.

As your parish council we have more than doubled our contribution to youth provision in Long Ashton but we will need help and Councillor Mrs Neale will be addressing you later.

We would also like you to note the opportunity to sign the Jubilee signature sheet at the forthcoming festivities, more details can be obtained from our clerk.

I would now like to hand you over to the Chairpersons of each of our sub-committees for their yearly reports. Thank you.

Planning report

The Chairman, Cllr Miss Mary Uppington gave her report. The Planning Committee has continued to meet monthly and has looked at a wide range of interesting requests.

Once again, of the applications we have considered, almost 50% have been for an extension to existing properties.

We have made recommendations on every application and it is encouraging to see that 90% of the decisions made by NS have agreed with our suggestions.

During the year the extensions to Birdwell Primary School and the Children's Centre have been completed and the work done there is proving to be very beneficial.

Land off Yanley Lane, to be used for an extension to the Cycle Way has been agreed and this should bring a welcome route for cyclists.

Last year I explained about proposals for a Care Village, on the former Barrow Hospital site, which had been deposited with NS. These plans had been enthusiastically received by the general public so we were so we were delighted to hear in February that NS Councillors had given their approval. The site in Barrow Gurney borders our parish boundary so our District Councillors from both parishes worked very hard to help towards this decision being made and we naturally hope work will be able to start soon.

The Local Equipped Area for Play, at the junction of Perry Road and Pear Tree Avenue and the Sports pitch off Keeds Lane are at the last stages of completion so that these areas can soon be handed over officially to the Parish Council. It has been a long and often frustrating battle to get all the necessary work completed and thanks are particularly due to Ivor Scoones and Charles Cave who have kept up the pressure on Wimpey.

In the last 12 months there have been three appeals on decisions taken by the District Council:-

- 9 Elderly persons apartments at 14 Long Ashton Road were approved
- A dwelling in the rear garden of 20 Lyvedon Way and
- Residential accommodation instead of an office block at Estune Business Park, Pear Tree Avenue are now awaiting the Inspector's decision.

The residents who live in the Leigh Woods area of our parish are experiencing a good deal of mess and inconvenience, especially in North Road where work is progressing on 6 new dwellings at Bracken Hill.

Bracken Hill House has been given permission to remain as one dwelling instead of the six flats which had previously been approved.

The portakabin, which houses the Visitor Centre, close to the western entrance to the Suspension Bridge, has had its temporary permission extended for 2 years and we are expecting to receive an application for a permanent Visitor Centre to be erected on the north side as you approach the bridge from Leigh Woods.

We have received a number of requests for work to be done on Trees and we hope residents will, once again, undertake any work which needs doing on hedges so that they do not obstruct footpaths or pavements with overgrown foliage.

The Inspector's Report on the NS Core Strategy was received in February and the District Council has accepted the modifications which were proposed. The final document should be published shortly and indicated the Green Belt boundaries in NS will remain unchanged.

The Localism Bill received final approval by the Government in November 2011 and it now remains to be seen how the various policies and plans will really work out in practice. Neighbourhood Development Plans are being produced – you will hear more about this later in the meeting.

Our District Councillors – Bob Cook and Charles Cave, who are also Parish Councillors, have worked so hard for our parish, given us valuable advice and been ready to take any contentious issues either to officers or the North Area Planning Committee. Any resident who has a concern can always contact them and their support is greatly appreciated.

The Planning Committee has been a very helpful team and their observations and suggestions have led to constructive comments being sent to NS.

Thanks also to Charles Cave who has been a supportive Vice-Chairman, to Liz Smith who has minuted our meetings and to Marilyn who was our clerk until she retired in March. She did so much to keep our planning system running smoothly and her husband, Dave, who gave so much assistance. They will both be missed but it is a pleasure to have Janet as our new clerk and everything is continuing in an efficient way.

This concludes my report for 2011/2012 as we look forward to another interesting and busy year.

Highways and Burial Ground Committee Report

The Chairman, Cllr Mrs Jean Pullin gave her report. When looking back over the year to put together this report, I became aware of the huge remit this committee has.

A few years ago the Highways & Burial Ground committees amalgamated and as a result this committee now has responsibility for Highways, Footpaths, litter bins, dog bins, Churchyard, Burial Ground, Garden of Remembrance, Grassed open spaces and in future will add the Festival Way.

Beginning with Footpaths

Firstly, Harry Williams has for countless years taken charge of footpath matters but recent health problems meant that he relinquished this role and while still on hand for

much sought advice will no longer be overseeing this work. A huge thank you goes to him for his sterling work. Tony Butcher has agreed to take his place.

Monthly walks continue to be popular and are now led by a team of volunteers to whom we offer thanks.

Harry's working party cleared an area opposite the Co-op and the Community Payback scheme were engaged to clear vegetation on the traffic islands and other areas.

Several volunteers responded to notices in the newsletter and on the footpaths to help with minor maintenance. A start has been made with work completed on a Golf Course path.

The group is currently undertaking a survey of all the footpaths and when complete a schedule of work will be compiled by the parish council which we hope will be carried out by them. Again we are very appreciative of the time and effort put in to keep our paths recognised as among the best in North Somerset.

Highways

We have dealt with various highway matters

A meeting was held with a North Somerset Council officer and options discussed for the Zebra crossing near the old Northleaze School. It is known that North Somerset Council are to upgrade the lighting poles at some time and we are awaiting information on whether it will be included in this year's schedule before making a decision which could involve the parish in quite large expenditure. The suggested removal of the railings when queried on the web site resulted in 50/50 for and against.

Various walls have needed attention and have been dealt with by the landowners or North Somerset Council when contacted by the Parish Council.

Festival Way

Work to complete the Long Ashton section of this path from Yanley Lane to the B3128 began, belatedly, last week. A lot of time has been spent in discussion at committee and also with North Somerset Council on the crossing of Yanley Lane. A scheme is in place to help slow traffic between Glebe Road and the railway bridge, with pinch points and minimally raised platforms.

A diversion order is being prepared for the very muddy path across the field from Yanley to the churchyard to be diverted on to the new cycle track/footpath/bridleway. This will enable those attending church and especially the children of Northleaze School to walk on a dry path away from the traffic on the main road.

This order will also ask that path 12/12a be regularised to run through the Burial Ground instead of as at present, down the very muddy field parallel to the wall. This will necessitate a break in the south wall.

With the cycle path currently going across the entrance to the Dovecote and in anticipation of heavier cycle traffic, we are in negotiation with North Somerset to improve signage at this point so that cars exiting the car park will be more aware.

Phase 3 of North Somerset's Part-night lighting scheme came into operation at the beginning of April which will see all street lights turned off from midnight in winter or

1am in summer. This covers all side roads in the parish and will be implemented when work to columns is complete.

Bristol Rapid Transit

There is some opposition to this scheme not least from this council. It will impact upon Long Ashton parish, with amongst other things, the compulsory purchase and exchange of land in lieu which we refute. Cllr. Sterland has worked extremely hard to produce a report which he will deliver at an inquiry to be held in May.

Burial Ground & Garden of Remembrance

A survey was commissioned which showed many headstones to be unsafe and some were laid down. Work is on-going to make these safe and the cost is estimated to be in the region of £20,000. Efforts will be made to find the owners of the graves and to obtain recompense where possible. Some owners have already carried out the necessary work at their own expense. The newer land of the burial ground is designated an open grassed area with tributes kept within the shelf on the headstone to allow for ease of maintenance. Unfortunately some owners continue to place objects beyond the headstone which need to be removed. The compost bins and the bier shed were repaired and trees and shrubs given the necessary attention.

When the Garden of Remembrance was made approximately 20 years ago it was also stated that it should be clear of all plants and flowers and with plaques fixed to the back wall and small floral tributes placed thereon. All purchasers of the plots signed an agreement to abide by this rule. Over the years, bulbs, shrubs and plants appeared on some plots and others were marked out with stones.

A small band of volunteers worked to keep the area tidy but advancing years meant they disbanded a few years ago. Maintenance by our contractors was difficult and the area became overgrown with some plaques hidden from view. The committee took the decision, after much discussion, to remove all extraneous material and grass over the area. All plot owners who could be traced were contacted and an explanatory article was placed in the newsletter.

There appears to be an expanse of grass land without any purpose but it has concrete plinths laid out to mark future graves and whilst bare is kept tidy at minimum expense.

After many years of trying to repair them, the Clockstones in the newest area have been replaced, with the cost borne by an anonymous donor.

All Saints Churchyard Wildlife Conservation Area

Report given by Mrs Jill Watkins read by Cllr Mrs Pullin.

This area, adjacent to the Vicarage wall and south of the oil tank, has continued to be managed by not mowing between March and August thus allowing plants to set seed. When the area is mown, the mowings are removed to prevent them from enriching the soil. It was sad to see that the orchids did not return this year where they were before but a new plant occurred elsewhere. Orchids often behave like this so the wanderers may return next year. Moon daisies also appeared for the first time. The primroses, cowslips and fox and cubs all spread cheering the heart with their colour.

I would still be very pleased if someone could offer to record birds, insects and mammals visiting as this is not my area of expertise. This would not be an onerous

job – just come down occasionally and see what you can find. Please let me know if you can help.

Our thanks are due to the Parish Council for supporting this endeavour and to Jason Collins for organising the mowing regime. Without them this project could not happen. End of report.

Cllr Mrs Jean Pullin then said, before I conclude there are a few problems which need to be aired.

Litter bins which were being used for household rubbish – perpetrators were found and admonished and thanks must go to Dave Addis who adapted these bins so that no large items can now be put in.

Dog bins - despite the presence of 20 bins in the parish mess is still a problem on the pavements and especially on the Dawson Walk and the footpath between Paulman Gardens and Wild Country Lane.

The cost of emptying these bins (full or ½ empty) amounted to £1500 during the last year and the company have just informed us this will double to £3,000 for the coming year.

Parking – this is inconsiderate over the whole village with parking close to junctions or with cars double parked. Pavement parking is especially bad making life difficult for wheelchair users and mothers with pushchairs and accompanying small children who often have to go into the road.

Lastly our excellent Village Orderly resigned in March but to replace him we have engaged 2 young ladies who will job share, so do give them a few words of encouragement if you come across them.

This afternoon I received notice that the closure of Wild Country Lane will continue until 27th July as Bristol Water have brought forward some work that would have necessitated a future second closure.

Finally I wish to thank the committee, the District Councillors, Janet our new clerk and Liz our minute secretary for all their help and advice. Special thanks must go to Marilyn Addis and her husband Dave, in particular, for all the practical work he has done on the streets and in the Burial Ground over the years.

Finance and General Purposes Report

Cllr Ms Sheila Hardingham gave her report. The Finance Committee has had a busy year. The Council has not had to recruit a parish clerk for many years, so it was a new experience for us but we were pleased to receive some excellent applications and to welcome Janet as our new parish clerk in March. As Marilyn had worked from home, this was also the opportunity to set up the new parish office in the Pavilion. Thanks to my predecessor as chairman of F&GP, Jonathan Skeeles, the Council had built up a fund to cover this cost and the transition is almost complete. I hope Janet will enjoy working with us as it is such a varied and interesting job; albeit she must put up with the demands of 21 different councillors! I must thank my fellow members of the Employment Subcommittee as the recruitment process has taken considerable time and care to see it through.

In this age of austerity, we have been careful to keep an eye on our administrative expenditure, such as trying to keep our postage and stationery expenses to a minimum and using email wherever possible. However, we can see that North Somerset Council is also doing all that they can to keep their costs down and so inevitably some additional costs will fall upon the Parish Council. One can welcome this as part of increased localism but it does have implications for our budget. The Parish Council therefore decided to increase the precept by 3% for the new financial year, an increase which is still below the rate of inflation.

The Youth Club is a high priority for the Parish Council. It is a thriving club, held on 3 evenings a week with over 70 members. So the removal of funding by North Somerset Council was devastating. A Community Interest Company has been set up by 2 youth workers and the youth club reopened last week. The Youth Club Management committee has been put in the unenviable position of trying to work out what is needed to manage the CIC. The Parish Council has promised substantial financial support but the Club still needs to raise at least £6,000 in the coming year. As you leave please do pick up an application for their fundraising 500 club and take one to any of your friends and neighbours who may be interested. It is vital for the village that the young people have this club available to them: it is professionally run with a wide range of positive activities to keep them busy so please do give your support.

One of the main expenses to village taxpayers is the running of this Community Centre. About 18% of Parish Council expenditure goes to this, so it is good to see all the facilities here being well used. Thanks to the Community Association and to the manager Sarah Leong for continuing to maintain and widen its use.

During the year, the Parish Council took over responsibility for the play area on the north side of the Taylor Wimpey estate. Payment was received from the developers for 15 years' maintenance. In the coming year, we are expecting to take over the southern play area and public open space as well as the sports pitch and amenity area alongside the Rec. It has been extremely frustrating for the Council that the developers have dragged their feet in finishing off the preparation work. Thanks to Ivor Scoones and Charles Cave for continuing to keep the pressure on Taylor Wimpey.

Some residents have felt understandably impatient but the Council cannot take the risk of assuming management of these areas when we know that repair work is outstanding. It would be wrong for the residents of Long Ashton to have to pay for work that the developers are obliged to do.

We will want to set up a residents' committee to oversee these areas so if anyone here lives on the new estates please do come and have a word with me afterwards.

We know that the vast majority of Long Ashton residents oppose any encroachment on the green belt. The Council has therefore been careful to build up a reserve towards the cost of the likely battles over this. Concern so far has focussed on the traffic and parking implications of the football stadium and Rapid Transit Bus proposals. Seed-funding has been provided by the Council for opposing these developments.

Finally I would like to thank Marilyn Addis for her help and hard work throughout the last year and wish her a very happy retirement; and also thanks to the members of

the F&GP committee for the time they have spent on so many different issues that have come up in the last year.

Youth Report

Cllr Mrs Angela Neale gave an update on funding for youth work in the parish. North Somerset have cut all funding to Youth Clubs. Long Ashton Youth Project has formed a Community Interest Company to take forward youth work and project is now called 'Epic Youth'. The Parish Council are buying in their services. The Parish Council has doubled the funding provided however even with an increase in subs the project will have a shortfall and in order to address this have formed a '500 Club' to raise further funds. The Club is appealing for people to pay £12 per year to be a member of the Club and for that they will be supporting Epic Youth and also have the potential to win a prize (30% of funds raised will go into a prize fund).

There are currently 70 young people utilising Epic Youth's services.

Cllr Charles Cave provided further details on youth funding. NS have provided transitional funding for Youth Clubs to enable them to continue and Epic Youth's future is now secure for the next three years.

Parochial Charity Accounts

The accounts of the trustees to the Parochial Charity for 2010 were displayed on the notice board at the end of the room.

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

None received.

Presentation – The Neighbourhood Development Plan

Cllr Mrs Henny Fordham gave a presentation on The Neighbourhood Development Plan – see attached.

Question and Answer session

Q: Is the 500 Club registered?

A: The 500 Club is registered with NS but is not yet a registered charity.

Q: Is the ancient wood at Barrow Hospital threatened by the proposed development?

A: Cllr Cook said the permission has been given only for development of the existing footprint of the building so the wood is under no threat.

Q: What is the new amenity area and football pitch for alongside Keeds Lane?

A: It is a sports pitch and amenity area and will remain as open grassland.

Q: What has happened to the funds that were designated for public art on the Chancellors' park estate?

A: No specific funding has been designated in the s106 agreement. The Parish Council is still in discussion to secure these funds.

Q: Is there a time limit as to how long these funds are available?

A: Yes, 10 years.

Q: Is the building on the grounds going to be within the Barrow Hospital building?

A: Yes it will be within the same footprint.

Q: Are there any Cllrs that have the management of Ashton Brook and any other exposed streams or open water on their agenda?

A: Yes Cllr Moorcroft and Cllr Williams. There is a pond at the western end of Ashton Brook which has been emptied – the Neighbourhood Development Plan will highlight this in order to possibly refill it.

Coffee and biscuits were then served.

Long Ashton Neighbourhood Development Plan



Big government transferring power and responsibility to big society

- decentralising power as far as possible
- meeting people's housing aspirations
- putting communities in charge of planning
- increasing accountability
- letting people see how their money is being spent.

What we've been doing

- Looking at what makes Long Ashton what it is
- A village surrounded by green fields, a green corridor for Bristol to access the countryside
- Identifying our community, our demographics, assets, clubs, societies
- Looking ahead to see what our community needs

Making it even better

- Better facilities for businesses to start up and grow
- Ensuring health facilities meet our needs
- Looking after our resources
- Protecting our housing stock
- Keeping our energy costs down
- More things to do for young people
- Meeting the needs of the older generation

Our ideas

- We've had several ideas that are captured in the Development Plan
- We're want you to look at these ideas and help us develop them further
- If you have any ideas please bring them to us
- If you are a member of groups such as Scouts or Bowling club please talk with them about the NDP to get their input

What next

- We are holding three consultation events on
 - 12 June evening
 - 11 July morning
 - 12 September afternoon
- Times on the new Long Ashton website
- www.lalife.org.uk