

**Long Ashton Annual Parish Meeting**  
**Held in the Village Hall on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016**  
**Chairman - Councillor Rod Sterland**  
**The meeting was attended by 45 electors**

**1. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2015**

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2015, copies having been circulated to those present, were signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

**2. Chairman's report**

The Chairman, Cllr Rod Sterland, welcomed everyone and gave his report:

"All stages of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) were finally completed by the referendum last September and North Somerset Council (NSC) then brought the plan into operation by making it part of its planning policy.

Our NDP has equal status with all other NSC policies. The preparation represented a lot of work over a period of three years from members of the council and the wider community and of course your participation in consultation and finally in voting in the referendum. Incidentally, the result was overwhelming with 95% in favour and a 34% turnout, which I felt was a good result and thank you to those who did vote.

A spin off from the NDP is the village enhancement scheme, which aims to improve the centre of the village and reduce traffic speeds on the main road. We are at an early stage of setting down a number of ideas based on our survey of the village. We will be discussing these with NSC and getting detailed plans drawn up. Given financial constraints, the implementation is likely to be in small steps over a long period. We will be consulting as widely as possible, but we know from the NDP consultation that in principle this has wide support.

The resurfacing of the main road has had good and bad effects. The smoother surface is more pleasant to drive on but encourages higher speeds, which we knew would happen. The four areas of textured surface have had to be removed. These were not laid level with the tarmac and caused considerable annoyance to residents living close to them. We investigated various solutions with NSC but the only viable one was to replace with black tarmac. Of course, we have had complaints that they were a good thing and should not be removed.

You may have noticed our new speed sign, which has been located in three places in the village. Not only does this help to reduce speeds and make drivers more aware of the limit but it gives us valuable information on driver speeds at different locations and over time we can build up a picture of where the problem areas are. Our old sign failed some time ago and spent months in Newport awaiting repair and has now been sent to Germany, but should soon be back in use. There is quite a lot of effort required in changing the batteries, moving the signs around the village and dealing with the data.

The SBL (South Bristol Link) and AVTM (Ashton Vale to Temple Meads) are under construction, as you know. Completion of the SBL is due for the end of the year. As you might expect we have been in discussions with NSC to try to mitigate the problems that we expect from it. Our speed signs will tell us if there is a change in traffic through the village.

We were pleased to support the recent WI organised 'Clean for the Queen', which was a great success, with community support including the schools the cubs and scouts and even a visit from our MP Dr Liam Fox. Unfortunately, the litter starts to collect very quickly. It is really an ongoing problem. We know some residents pick up in their neighbourhood, but it would help greatly if everyone picked up rubbish close to their own house. The PC has litter pickers and gloves available for anyone who wants to do this.

Finally development. As you know NSC has been forced to plan for more housing development than it wanted for the period up to 2026 and will be under further pressure in the period beyond then. We did what we could in the NDP to support retention of the green belt and while the green belt is supposed to be protected this can always be changed. We have recently become aware of plans by Taylor Wimpey for 4500 homes in the valley, similar to the Regional Spatial Strategy. We suspect that this is preparing the ground for a review of the green belt. We continue to be vigilant.

The council is a team and each member brings particular skills. After the elections last May we welcomed several new members to the council with a new mix of skills and opinions which are valued. I thank all councillors for their contribution and in particular the chairs of the subcommittees. The council also employs a number of people, most important of whom is our clerk, Janet Turp, without whom things would just not work. We also have an assistant Vicky Lacey who ably takes the minutes of the meetings. In addition, we have the village orderlies. So my thanks to all the team."

### **Planning Committee report**

The vice Chair of the Planning Committee, Cllr David Johnson, gave a report on behalf of the Chair of Planning, Cllr Miss Uppington.

"The Planning Committee has had another busy year and has considered a wide range of applications at its monthly meetings.

Extensions to existing properties are still the most frequent request and made up 58% of all the applications.

Although, as a Parish Council, we are only able to make recommendations we always aim to take into account how any alterations will affect neighbours and the character of the area before giving North Somerset Council (NSC) constructive comments.

The current Planning Guidelines indicate certain extensions or alterations are allowed under Permitted Development but it is always wise to consult NSC at an early stage when residents wish to make any alterations to their property.

With our Neighbourhood Development Plan now officially in place it is good to see that NSC is taking its contents into consideration when it deals with planning applications.

In August 2015 Audley Retirement received permission to develop Redwood Retirement Village, on the previous hotel site, and work is now in progress. A good deal of interest has been shown and we understand a fair number of apartments have already been purchased. The Parish Council has been asked to suggest names for the buildings and roads on the site so, in doing this, we followed our policy of putting forward names which are connected to previous local residents or areas in the district. We hope that all, or the large majority of, our suggestions will be used. The first block is due to be available in the autumn of 2017 when we understand viewing of the completed apartments will be available.

The other area being discussed for development is the Barrow Hospital site off Wild Country Lane. This site is in Barrow Gurney parish but, as it lies on the boundary with Long Ashton, we have taken a keen interest in plans for this area because we realise our village facilities and residents will feel the impact of any development here.

Current permission exists for a Care Village, which would be very suitable, but an amended application was made in November for 110 residential dwellings instead. The final number is being discussed with the applicant and NSC - both parishes feel the proposed number is too high.

In October, Flower and Hayes applied for sheltered housing to be erected on its land at Estune Business Park in Wild Country Lane. This has been refused by NSC as it considers its use should be business development, as originally granted, because evidence has not been given to show the land has been marketed sufficiently for business use.

Last year we were pleased that the Secretary of State for Media and Sport had decided Bridgeman's Field at Gatcombe should be added to the Schedule of Monuments. However, following this, a challenge was made with a request for the decision to be reviewed. This was duly done and we were delighted when we heard that the original decision will stand and no alterations will be made. This should ensure that this good agricultural land, in the green belt, will remain in its present state.

Having been given the final number of 20,985 dwellings which NSC is to build by 2026, the District Council has produced a Site Allocations Plan for consultation. It shows it plans for the majority of dwellings to be constructed in Weston, Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead, where vital facilities already exist. At this stage Long Ashton is not included in the number allocated for Service Villages but our open spaces at the Community Centre, Birdwell, Peel Park, cricket ground and land North East of Long Ashton, including Ashton Court, have all been protected.

We are well aware that after 2026 there will be pressure for more building to the South of Bristol and at this time the green belt boundaries will most likely be challenged. However, the Parish Council will still continue to defend the green belt which surrounds our village - particularly the area of green land between the eastern end of the village and our boundary with Bristol.

Trees and hedges are regularly needing attention and those residents who have trees designated with a TPO (Tree Protection Order) or live in a Conservation Area have to apply to NSC for permission when they wish to do work on their trees. Any requests are usually dealt with quickly by the North Somerset Tree Officer and his help and advice is very valuable. It is always essential that hedges are kept under control so that footpaths and pavements are not obstructed by overhanging foliage.

Thanks must be given to certain people. Firstly, to our District Councillor, Charles Cave, who is also a Parish Councillor. Once again he has worked hard for our parish and is always ready to take any contentious issues to the appropriate officer or department at North Somerset Council.

Secondly, to members of the Planning Committee who have made valuable contributions to our discussions.

And then to Vicky Lacey, our assistant clerk, who has minuted our meetings and to Janet, our clerk, whose help and advice is very much appreciated."

## **Highways and Burial Ground Committee Report**

The Chairman, Cllr Mrs Mackwood, gave her report:

"The year has seen the start of construction of the South Bristol Link Road (SBLR). Councillors were given an escorted tour of the length of the new road which was very interesting. They have made bat corridors and moved badgers to a new set in the area of the lime kilns which is being featured in the centre of the roundabout where the SBLR crosses the A38. The original plans for the roundabout at the A370 join have been changed from the original plans so that there is no longer a 'straight through' lane for the A370 traffic. Currently there are traffic lights at that point and traffic through the village of Long Ashton is markedly increased. We were told that all flow models refute this. We shall see. We hope that they are more correct than when they stated in 1967 that traffic would never be sufficient to warrant either a junction at Wild Country Lane or a dual carriage way through to Cumberland basin.

We have had interesting presentations from Griffiths, who are constructing the SBLR, Balfour Beatty who are constructing the Metrobus route and Network Rail constructing the bridge which disturbed some parishioners over Christmas. They all stated that they were on time and on budget! We also had a session with a member of the coordinating team from North Somerset Highway planners.

The building work has led to temporary closure or rerouting of several footpaths which were not well signed, I hope that everyone has managed to find their way. We continue to maintain our footpaths and defend their erosion despite new roads and bus routes. We would like to thank the footpath group for all their work. The footpaths are used by many people often from outside the Parish. In particular a Nailsea group has a run in March which covers a great many of our footpaths. Many thanks to Councillor Stuart McQuillan who has coordinated the footpath group this year.

Much time has been spent trying to improve safety at the Festival Way crossing of Yanley Road. Meetings have been held with the school, NSC, councillors and interested parties. Having agreed a scheme NS then they put in place something different, so rather like the textured tarmac we don't always get what we expect! As a result the hope now is to carry out some improvements to the bridge over the Ashton Brook, which will also assist in pedestrians crossing the bridge to footpaths and the cricket ground. A yellow line order has been compiled for several places in the village and we are hoping that the work will be done soon particularly between the Community Centre down Rayen's Cross to Weston Road and but we are dependent on NS to do the work.

The burial ground has a few more cremated remains plots and work is being done on the path from the bier shed to the kissing gate where there are wet muddy patches which is not so good for children making the trip from school to church or for anyone else walking that route. We hope that the work will be completed in the next couple of months. A tree survey has been carried out and some work has had to be done on some of the trees in the churchyard. When this is complete it will give us health and safety cover for 5 years.

The Heaven Scent garden has progressed and soft fruit were available and enjoyed by those visiting the burial ground. The wild flower area progresses and improves every year. We hope everyone visiting has enjoyed it and thank the group for all the work that they have put into making this area an interesting and tranquil place to visit.

I would like to thank Janet Turp for her support and Victoria Lacey for her amazing speed at keeping up with the minute taking."

## **Finance and General Purposes Committee Report**

The Chairman, Cllr Hardingham, gave her report: "It's not often that parish council finances hit international headlines, but Stoke Gifford has certainly achieved that, in its attempts to charge Parkrun. Our only recent brush with the media was when the North Somerset Times mixed up the figures for Long Ashton and Locking; you may not have noticed their correction as they made it as small as they possibly could.

The largest grant that the Parish Council makes is to the Community Association for the running of this Community Centre. Last year the grant was £27,617, which is equivalent to £10.78 a year for each Band D household in the village. That is under £5 a head for the year; and as I said last year, this is very good value for the wide range of facilities and events here. I believe this contributes greatly to our village being a real and busy community with its own distinct identity.

A public facility such as this is always going to be vulnerable to vandalism and the police strongly advised the use of CCTV. The Parish Council therefore made a grant to enable this to be installed and already the police have found the results very useful.

The Parish Council also makes a sizeable grant to the Youth Club which has managed to maintain three sessions a week despite having a challenging year. Please do remember its 500 club as it is difficult to raise funds for small local causes like this. I declare an interest as I am on the management committee and my heart sinks each time we get to the fundraising item on the agenda.

The community grant this year of £1500 was won by the LA Cinema Club for a new screen. Disappointingly only two projects applied for the community grant this time so the council is going to review how best to structure it in the future.

Through the year, small grants were made to the junior Football Club, the Scouts, Light Up Long Ashton for Christmas lights, Nailsea Community Transport, the Chicken Share Group, the Disability Information Advice Line, MS Therapy Centre, Nailsea Citizens Advice Bureau and the Long Ashton Children's Centre. I have listed them to show that there is a wide spread of ways that your council tax is used to benefit residents of the village.

Over the last few years, I have mentioned our continuing disagreement with Taylor Wimpey about the public art to be provided in Kings Croft and Chancellors Park. The good news is that Taylor Wimpey has last year actually come to two meetings to discuss the public art. The bad news is that its proposals are very disappointing. We have stressed our desire to commemorate the work at Long Ashton Research station, which is after all where the new homes were built. Taylor Wimpey is attached to the history of the land a little distance away, namely the Roman settlement at Gatcombe. Discussions continue.

North Somerset Council has received funding for a Parish Recycling Scheme which is all about raising public awareness of how we might recycle more and waste less. There will be opportunities to look at what people throw out that could be recycled. We aim to have information at events and meetings and perhaps a questionnaire as to what would help to recycle more. It's not just councillors who will be doing this so if you are interested in taking this forward or have some ideas of how this can be done, please do get in touch.

Turning to the new financial year, the precept is the part of council tax that comes to the parish council and is £147,400 for 2016/17; that is a rise for a Band D property to £57 for the year, an increase less than 1%; 0.71% to be precise. The fighting fund for the threats to the green belt and other development issues is now at just below £85,000.

F&GP is responsible for the accounts, statutory compliance and council policies so includes the new pension requirements, staff matters, risk assessment and all the rest of the

paperwork that is an essential part of running an organisation such as this. Many thanks to Janet our clerk for helping us so thoroughly and professionally on these matters; being a parish clerk can be a fascinating job as you never know whether you'll have to fix a hinge on a noticeboard, or plough your way through the latest planning consultation; or indeed deal with an exploding cable. Thanks for mostly managing good humour when dealing with all that comes your way. Janet is ably assisted by Vicky and thanks to her as well.

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

### **3. Parochial Charity Accounts**

The accounts of the trustees to the Parochial Charity for 2014-15 were displayed on the noticeboard at the end of the room.

### **4. Resolutions of which written notice has been given to the Clerk of the Parish Council**

None.

### **5. Question & Answer session:**

Harry Williams Q: "Can you tell me what's going on with the footpath, where the cycle track goes over the bridge? There's a fence that's fallen down there and it's only a matter of time before a child or a cyclist falls into the pond."

A: "The area is the responsibility of Green Belt Services. We've contacted them on numerous occasions and we've asked North Somerset Council (NSC) to escalate. We are continually harassing them over this matter, and about the bund and the drainage of the Flood Attenuation System. They're poor custodians of the land that was given to them by Barratts. They've been given a lot of money to maintain the land, and they're not doing it."

Harry Williams Q: "Can we deal with the issue under Health & Safety legislation?"

A: "We have tried to, but we have heard nothing from NSC about it."

Harry Williams Q: "Who maintains the area?"

A: "The cycle path is owned by Sustrans from the B3128 through to Yanley Lane but pay NSC to maintain it."

Angela Neale A: "On that issue. The cycle forum was informed that the broken fence was going to be dealt with at the same time as the cycle ride from Birdwell School. You could talk to the people at NSC who organised it."

Stafford Gundry Q: "Time moves slowly on the clock at Northleaze. Can we have an update please?"

A: "We keep reminding Knightstone housing about the clock, and apparently it's still with the clock repairers. There's been no recent update, but it seems that it's not happening, in spite of us hassling them."

Angela Neale Q: "What is the PC doing about parking in Rayens Cross Road. It's become more inaccessible, and this is now spreading up into Ridgeway Road. Travelling up has become impossible."

A: "Civil parking enforcement is being developed by NSC - and is due to come into effect in October this year. This will give NSC the right to police our roads - in terms of yellow line parking infringements and parking on the zebra crossing outside the Co-op. The police

won't act on photographs; until we get civil parking enforcement, there's not a lot we can do."

Amanda Barratt Q: "Have there been any speed restrictions on Yanley Lane discussed with North Somerset Council?"

A: "We're hoping to put a pavement across the bridge, which will calm and slow traffic, and a footpath on the eastern side towards the cricket ground."

Amanda Barratt Q: "The problem's actually further up the lane, where the road narrows by the houses."

A: "We're hoping that the problem will get better when the SBLR opens, and there's less traffic. We're hoping to put a priority system in too, which will mean that vehicles come to stop by Lower Court Farm and give priority to vehicles exiting the village. You can't legislate for idiots that drive too fast, however. As a PC, we can only make recommendations to NSC, and as such, we're awaiting the response to our latest idea. However, we didn't get what we expected when the work was done at the exit to the cycle path on to Yanley Lane."

Robin Ellison Q: "We have a friend who's blind, and she's told us that she repeatedly walks into a car parked across the pavement. Can anything be done?"

A: "I've brought this to the attention of the police. It's not illegal to park on the pavement, as long as there's room for people to pass. However, the Government is apparently thinking about making it illegal."

Thomas Gardiner Q: "The same resident has talked to me about her problem with brambles and branches on the pavement opposite the Post Office; that they overhang and scratch her face."

A: "It's very important that local residents keep their gardens in order."

Mary Magro Q: "I'd like to know about Himalayan Balsam in the stream. I think we should have a community effort to move it; it's an invasive species and takes over from indigenous species. Who's responsible for this area?"

A: "The problem with Himalayan Balsam is that it can flower after spring, so it's necessary to keep removing throughout the year. It's like a cancer that keeps spreading - throughout watercourses and down roads, where the seeds are dragged down by cars. I spent a lot of time last year on the riverbank removing it, and within weeks, it was back again. Unless clearance takes place upstream, there's nothing that can be done - it's invasive and difficult to eradicate. If people can pull out the semi-mature plants before their seeds pop, it'd be good. I would also endorse a community scheme to remove it, and would write a piece for the newsletter with you too. The problem is that some landowners remove the plant from their riverbanks, others don't."

David Neale Q: "Isn't Himalayan Balsam a wild flower? What are the rules about picking wild flowers?"

A: "Himalayan Balsam is not indigenous and is therefore not protected. It's listed as an invasive species."

## **The Chairman welcomed Andrew Garrad, the Chair of Bristol Green Capital 2015, and a Long Ashton resident who gave the following presentation.**

### Vision

"Our vision was three-fold: local empowerment; emphasizing Bristol's leading position in the field; and economic gain - we wanted to make people aware of Bristol.

We started the year by turning Clifton Suspension Bridge green on New Year's Eve. Our predecessor, Copenhagen, has suggested we do something spectacular to mark the beginning of the year. In the middle of January, we held 'Bridging the gap' between the two bonded warehouses - with a unicyclist riding across a rope between the buildings, with his wife below as a counterbalance. The event here represented where we were then, compared to where we aspired to be.

### 204 Projects

Also, 204 local projects were being run across the city during the year. Our idea was not to preach to the converted, but to get people involved who were not usually involved in the green agenda. The first event was a faith leaders' breakfast hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury; another, a programme - 91 Ways - which represented the number of languages spoken across the city, and which emphasised the communication challenges facing us. This programme used food as a communications medium; people from different backgrounds came together to talk and cook for one another, joined together by food.

### Go Green

We also had a good transport plan - easier to think up than to execute. So, at one end of the spectrum, we had allotments for primary schools, at the other, a strategic transport plan. We also organised 'Go green' to reach industry - and to explore practical ways of making their activities greener; 1,000 businesses joined up.

### Ambassadors

As the year went on, we realised that engagement was vital and that any changes we were likely to see would be produced from a large number of people doing small things - whether it was eating less meat, planting vegetables, using a bicycle instead of a car - aggregation was important. We used celebrities such as Kevin McCloud and the captains of Bristol's sports teams as our ambassadors, to get the message out. Bristol Sport was a key sponsor.

### Youth engagement

We also had a Green Youth Day at Colston Hall to discuss green issues and to help pass the message to political leaders. We had two Youth Mayors who played a big role throughout the year.

### The Bristol Method

We also created the Bristol Method - a compilation of 40 to 50 short reports on our learnings from the year - what we did well, what we did badly; to help future Green Capitals to learn from us - it's been very well received.

### Avon Wildlife Trust

With the help of Avon Wildlife Trust, we distributed 2015 bird boxes around the city, and created 'My Wild City' - an interactive map of Bristol of the green corridors and green spaces around our city. Our informal goal was to pass on the serious message about green issues in an entertaining way - otherwise, there's an equally serious risk that the message won't get across.

### Sustainable Transport

With this goal in mind, we developed the poo bus - with GenEco - a subsidiary of Wessex Water. Its website has had a billion hits so far and we have been shortlisted for funding for 130 more poo buses.

The public transport message was key - and we used a train to emphasise this; we also did things like encouraging children to walk to school, by developing a new app - Crocodile - that's being used in four Bristol schools and also in Northampton.

### Innovation

We held Venturefest - to showcase Bristol's innovation and to encourage Green entrepreneurship; it was attended by 1,600 people: including investors and entrepreneurs. Airbus sponsored this event; which really showed people that industry will have to be part of any change that happens - and that if it's not involved, that any changes will not work. An Airbus team of young engineers is now building the first ever electric plane at Filton - the first complete plane to be built there in 30 years. Although it'll only fly for an hour and take just two passengers - it's an important first step in low carbon aviation.

### Putting Bristol on the map

Bristol Green Capital attracted numerous events to the city - the world's faith leaders came to the city to discuss 17 global development goals, for example.

### Working with partners

Both universities were heavily involved throughout the year - with one building at Bristol University permanently green for the duration. We have identified primary school children as being an essential audience - they're liberal in their views, talking to their parents and assimilating a huge amount of information. We developed 'Sustainable Shaun' with Aardman specifically for this audience - a game which helped us to communicate a serious message to this new audience in a new and engaging way. It's now being played in 145 countries and has really put Bristol on the map.

### Art

I was initially skeptical about the role of art, but I've started to realise its power as a communication medium. We were given £750,000 by the Arts Council, and the resultant art work - wicker whales in Millennium Square, surrounded by a sea of 70,000 plastic bottles - prompted lots of publicity and started the Refill movement in the city and elsewhere - look out for stickers on shop and cafe windows. Where there's a sticker, you can take your empty plastic bottle in and have it refilled. Specsavers for example has adopted this initiative with real enthusiasm.

### The Legacy

Avon Wildlife Trust has been a very important partner - in helping to plant trees and create a nature reserve on the beautiful playing field next to the Portway. There's a wicker whale there now too - which is particularly meaningful considering there used to be a whaling station on the other side of the Portway. This is a permanent feature, and an important legacy of our year as Green Capital.

### Innovation

The first ever solar powered balloon had its first flight at the International Balloon Fiesta - using just 5% of the fuel of the other balloons. It too helped to get Bristol's name - as innovative, interesting and fun - known internationally.

This publicity for the city has helped to bring commercial investment into Bristol, and is helping encourage green investors to come to our city, rather than to London or somewhere else in Europe.

Arcadia Spectacular - an extravagant event held in Queens Square helped further raise our profile. A huge mechanical spider - built in Bristol from 50 tonnes of recycled material was accompanied by the world's first recycled biofuel pyrotechnics system. This again put us in front of a whole new audience.

Green Capital amassed 100,000 volunteer hours during the year - volunteers from Burgess Salmon, for example, helped to turn a street in Easton green. Over the decades, where gardens had given way to hard standing and patios, our volunteers brought back the green to a small part of the city.

#### An international presence

Bristol's presence at COP21 (The United Nations' Climate Change Conference) was particularly important, given the notable absence of our Government representatives. We co-hosted the 'City's Pavilion' with Paris, and all attendees found themselves in our pavilion at some point - further raising our profile in the 196 countries involved.

#### The future

Even though 2015 is now over, there remains a lot of interest in what we're doing. JC Decaut is sponsoring posters to profile the ongoing activity in 2016, and Bristol University has produced a mini version of the Stern report - a serious economic and scientific work - which helps to identify the cost of inactivity and activity around climate change. All the mayoral candidates have signed up to the underlying aims of the report.

In terms of commercial investment into the city - there's approximately £10-£15 million coming to Bristol - £1 million of which is due directly to the Green Capital year. £9 million more of that investment would never have come to Bristol if we hadn't been European Green Capital.

The year's logo lives on in the city's own energy and waste companies, launched in 2015."

Angela Neale Q: How can we get the Refill message out?

A: It's very simple - get hold of some stickers and put them in your shops, and maybe put a piece in the Parish magazine. It does seem to be working - as long as the premises have a tap.

Q: How will the airplane be refuelled?

A: I'm not suggesting that the electric plane will be something we see in the next few years, but it's a small step on the path towards low carbon aviation.

Liz Lansley Q: How would I access the Avon Wildlife Interactive Map?

A: Through the website - Avon Wildlife's 'My Wild City'

The Chairman thanked Mr Garrad for his presentation, which concluded the Annual Parish Meeting.