

# LONG ASHTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Held in the Village Hall on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2008

Chairman - Councillor Charles Cave

The meeting was attended by approximately 120 electors

## **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2007, copies having been circulated to those present were signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

## **Planning Committee Report**

The Chairman, Cllr. Miss Mary Uppington said the last year has been busier than usual for the Planning Committee with recommendations made on 114 applications. Extensions or alterations to existing properties are still in the majority and accounted for 60% of the total considered.

Fewer appeals have been made against North Somerset decisions, the most important one was the appeal made by George Wimpey against North Somerset's decision not to approve their revised application for 18 dwellings at the eastern end of the Research Station site – immediately behind Fenshurst Gardens and Lampton Road.

The Parish Council put together more information and photographs to support their original objections and residents in Fenshurst Gardens and Lampton Road again gave superb support by organising petitions and writing individual letters.

The Inspector dismissed the appeal and once again her report made interesting reading – she had visited 4 dwellings in Fenshurst Gardens and many of her comments confirmed those already made by local people and the Parish Council. She expressed concern “that the proximity of units at a much higher level would be overbearing on outlook from the adjacent dwellings” and concluded “the scheme would harm the living conditions of the occupiers of some of the adjacent properties”.

This result was worth all the hard work and everyone who was involved must have felt pleased at this result.

It is the second time that an Inspector has refused the proposed dwellings put forward by Wimpey so let us hope that next time the plans will show all single storey properties on this site. If they do not then you can be sure the Parish Council will strongly oppose the plans.

Another application which is currently being considered by an Inspector is the plan to demolish “Bowman's Lodge” – 14 Long Ashton Road and replace it with 3 1-bed flats and 6 2-bed flats together with associated office space, parking for 10 cars and repositioning of the vehicular access.

These plans brought strong opposition from the Parish Council.

This architect designed bungalow built in the 1970's is perfectly habitable so we saw no good reason for it to be demolished. We had earlier made a request for it to be listed but, unfortunately, English Heritage did not agree. What is more, the proposed building to replace it would be quite out of character in this Conservation Area and would in no way blend in with the surrounding landscape.

When this application came before the North Somerset Central Area Planning Committee a local resident used the opportunity to speak against the proposal and I like to think this must have helped the Committee to determine a refusal.

We now await the Inspector's verdict.

The land off Keeds Lane finally received permission from North Somerset to be developed as public open space with a Sports pitch area and we hope work on this will commence during the next few months.

With a number of other applications, which have been brought before the Central Area Planning Committee, site meetings have been arranged before Councillors have had to make a decision. I am sure this is a good idea as it certainly helps to give Councillors a clear picture of the area under consideration.

Leigh Woods is an important part of our parish and must not be forgotten. 17 applications have been made to alter or extend properties in that area and plans are currently being put forward for development on the Bracken Hill House site in North Road.

You will, no doubt, remember that a previous application for a retirement home was strongly opposed and did not materialise.

Kingerlee Homes, from Oxfordshire, have consulted with residents, the Leigh Woods Society and Long Ashton Parish Council before submitting their final plans to North Somerset. They show renovating and converting the existing properties and building 7 new eco-homes and we expect to receive these plans very soon. An article in the Evening Post, last Thursday, gave details and first thoughts about the scheme seem to be favourable.

The Committee has considered various planning documents whenever appropriate.

Of greatest concern is the Government proposal for 9,000 homes to be built in an area south of Bristol, involving land in North Somerset.

A tremendous amount of thought and discussion has taken place about this. Councillors have attended meetings and workshops and are aiming to keep up with the proposals being made.

Bearing in mind it will happen we want to achieve the best deal for the village and above all preserve the Green Belt area between Bristol and Long Ashton – under no circumstance do we wish to be part of Bristol and wish to see the District boundary remain unchanged.

This village has had 2,582 new dwellings built in the last 60 years so we think it very unreasonable to swamp us with hundreds more! We realise what a detrimental effect such a development will have on our rural environment.

Trees and hedges are producing their yearly growth so we hope residents will take action to ensure the pavements and footpaths are not obstructed by overgrown foliage and branches.

If specific work is to be done on trees application needs to be made to North Somerset and these details are sent to our clerk so that we can comment if we think it appropriate.

District Councillors Bob Cook and Howard Roberts, who are also Parish Councillors, have again worked on our behalf and given useful help when applications have reached the Central Area Planning Committee. They are always ready and willing to talk and listen to any concerns which residents have about planning matters and this support is really appreciated.

The third District Councillor, for this area, is Carl Francis-Pester who covers the Leigh Woods part of our parish and is a member of the North Area Planning Committee. I wish to thank all three of them for the time and help they have given.

Our Planning Committee have attended some long and involved meetings and I do thank them for their patience and advice in looking at a wide range of applications and helping to construct appropriate recommendations to be sent to North Somerset. And thanks also to Sharon Baker and Val Bond who have minuted a number of our meetings and to our clerk, Marilyn Addis, for the input she has given to ensure our planning system runs smoothly. This help is very much appreciated as is that of her husband, Dave, who assists so readily with anything that needs doing.

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

The Chairman, Councillor Dr. Phil Jackson started with the **Churchyard and Burial Ground**. In times of much discussion around new roads, 1000's of new houses and increasing population in this community, I was pleased to receive a proposal to turn an area of the church yard back to nature through a bio-diversity project. The proposal was approved and I look forward to seeing this project develop. I'm also keen to explore how we can use this for education with visits from school and youth groups.

Within the churchyard, the clockstones were replaced although the stonemasons involved managed to forget one of them. Number 10 you will be aware is missing. We are chasing up on this and hope to have this stone replaced soon.

### Turning to **Footpaths.**

We continue to focus on ensuring that our footpaths are maintained and accessible. During the year, the Footpath Users Group were successful in bidding for a grant to carry out further maintenance and to reduce further the number of stiles in the parish to increase accessibility for the footpath network. Significant progress has been made in turning our footpath network into one we can be proud of. And for this, thanks to the Footpath User Group, under the chairmanship of Nigel Moorcroft, in their efforts, and a special mention to Harry Williams with his energy and working with NS and landowners. In the main, footpath users have supported this venture, although I was disappointed to see the vandalism to the motorcycle inhibitor on the footpath just off Providence Lane which incurred immediately after installation.

Cllr Harry Williams was invited to give the footpath walk report. He said we have had between 3 and 28 people on our walks, one walk was cancelled because of heavy rain and when only 3 turned up on another wet afternoon we walked the cycle track then up Glebe Road, back along the main road pointing out uses of houses and their Listing.

I thank Ann and Mary for taking the February walk. Remember all walks take place on the first Sunday of the month 2.30pm at Humbert's Estate Agents.

Dog owners please keep your dogs under control especially near sheep as they easily panic. We have had two cases of sheep worrying on Gatcombe Farm. A farmer is entitled to shoot dogs caught doing this but no farmer would wish this to happen. Also clear up after your dog, you would not leave the mess on your lawn so why leave it in the farmers' field?

Back to Cllr Jackson, who said, turning to **Highways.**

This area continues to focus our minds on many issues including traffic speed, parking, alterations to junctions, new roads, and the needs of the pedestrians and cyclists.

I'll start with speeding; this continues to be a problem in the village with some people choosing to race through the village at high speeds, in anything the problem getting worse with some drivers dashing around parked cars to get through a space. You are urged to keep to the speed limit, especially recognising the growth in the numbers of children in the village. After many months of discussions with the local police we are now close to having speed warning signs as a constant reminder to keep your speed low for safety.

With the increase in house and car numbers, parking continues to be an issue. You can help; many of us have garages and yet refuse to use them, parking on the streets and roads instead. We have an activity underway to review where yellow lines should be used with access and safety in mind and this will be completing shortly with a view of advising NS. This is not an easy matter recognising the needs of say local businesses that need local parking to survive.

Parking on the pavements reduces pedestrian access and can often be dangerous especially to those with limited sight and using wheelchairs. Our local police are aware of this issue and are taking steps where such parking takes place.

On the local roads, one of most contentious schemes for many years is the changing the junction of the B3128 at it goes up past the Dovecote and joins the Bypass. We believe this is both an unnecessary expense and dangerous at the same time. You will have noted the pavement has been substantially widened on the B3128; it remains unclear whether parking will be permitted along this stretch recognising that this is widely used when Bristol City are playing at home; losing this stretch for parking is only likely to encourage football supporters to park in the village. We have written to NS at all levels expressing our concerns that the junction scheme is in our view likely to result in significant and dangerous collisions. NS seem intent to proceeding with this scheme. Thus far we have been successful in moving the junction trial to a period of two weeks which started today. Can I please urge anyone that has a view or a concern around this junction to access the Parish Website so that we can collect views and discuss them with NS. The Chairman will talk further about our concerns over this junction.

You will be aware that Bristol City Football Club has bought the land next to David Lloyd Leisure in order to build a new stadium with use starting in 2012. We will be working closely with Bristol and NS Councils to ensure that adequate parking is put in place next to the new stadium to avoid spillage of parking in the village.

Looking ahead the South Bristol ringroad is likely to have a significant impact on this area. A full public consultation is likely to take place later this year and the Parish Council will advertise this so that you can express your views on the options.

Turning to drainage, the year has seen significant flooding in the village, exacerbated by new houses. We have ongoing discussions including with the new house developers to make sure that they fulfil their obligations with regard to drainage provision.

The last year has also seen a successful Lottery campaign for Sustrans at national level, some of this will be used to complete the Nailsea to Bristol cycle path, and we will take close attention on discussions particularly related to the path as it passes through LA

I would like to thank all the Committee members in working, what it often a long agenda of urgent business, in particular thanks to Marilyn and Sharon for their tireless efforts for the Committee. Finally I would like to thank Dave Addis and John Hewer for their work around the village in ensuring this is a place that's good to live in.

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

The Chairman, Cllr. Jonathan Skeeles said the Committee met in December 2006 to propose a budget for the year 2007/2008 and this proposal was approved by the Council at the January meeting.

The agreed precept enabled the council to meet all its statutory obligations and to carry out all necessary work at the Burial Ground.

A number of grants were made to local organisations and as usual the main one being to the Community Association to enable them to continue to provide facilities at this complex.

It is with regret that I have to repeat what I said a few years ago regarding the cost of vandalism at the Community Centre. This last year £3,000 has been spent on repairing damage caused by vandals, which is 20% of the grant given. I urge you to please report any incidents to the Clerk and to the police.

The Committee met on 7 occasions during the year and reviewed many new pieces of legislation relating to Parish Councils. Indeed, in July we adopted the Revised Model Code of Conduct for Parish Councils.

The Committee oversees the spending of the Section 106 money, money we receive for the improvements to this Centre. The administration for this work is carried out by LAMPRO in association with the Community Association.

The Children's play area and arena have now been completed and next Saturday will see the official opening of the Tennis Pavilion.

Work is currently being carried out on the new Kitchen and later this summer work will start on the major refurbishment of this hall. The intention is to have all major works completed by Christmas 2008.

Thanks to the LAMPRO team, to Dave Addis and Sarah Taylor.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the members of the Committee for giving up their valuable time to attend our meetings.

A particular thank you must go to our Clerk, Mrs. Marilyn Addis, we are very lucky to have such a knowledgeable person as our clerk and I do value her guidance and support in all matters relating to the working of this committee.

A copy of the audited accounts, for the year ending 31st March 1998, were on the notice board at the back of the room.

### **Chairman's Report and Overview**

The Chairman, Cllr Charles Cave said **Thanks** - I wish to express my thanks to all on the Council, for the time and effort that they invest in this village, our community. In particular I thank the Chairmen of Committees; theirs is without doubt the heavier load. The busiest committee is planning and I think special thanks are due to Mary Uppington, who without fail

visits each and every site and is able to answer all of our questions regarding an application. Whilst we can only recommend to North Somerset approval or refusal, the value of local knowledge is, I believe, invaluable. Thank you Mary.

This Council has 'Quality Council' status due in no small part to our Clerk Marilyn Addis, who attempts to keep us on the straight and narrow so I would like to add **my** thanks to her and to Dave Addis who apart from all the other things that he involves himself in around the village is of great support to Marilyn.

John Hewer Village Orderly and Sharon Baker taking minutes

Last but not least my thanks to our district Councillors Bob Cook, Howard Roberts and Carl Francis Pester for their support to us all and their hard work.

**North Somerset Council Budget considerations** - At the beginning of the year we had great concern about the future of both our Library and the funding from North Somerset for youth. I am pleased to report that our campaign to retain both was successful. There was a great deal of background work by this Council in particular Jean Pullin regarding the Library and Phil Jackson for the Youth, and our District Councillors.

**Community Association** - The work of the Community Association has increased over the years and of course the issues of 'health and safety' have had their impact. The bulk of the work, certainly in recent years, has been undertaken by Sara Taylor as well as Jane Coleman as secretary. We have recognised that it was time to employ a part time manager in order to promote the facilities and tighten up on the every day running of the complex. We welcome Sarah Leong to that position. She is now the person to contact for bookings and the general running of the complex. Tel: 393570 Email [laca@btconnect.com](mailto:laca@btconnect.com).

**Lack of Primary School Places** - This is an issue that this Council was concerned about when plans were first mooted for developing the Research Station site, and again when the old school was sold, and we have made a number of representations to North Somerset. Dr Tabetha Newman spoke to us at our last Council meeting and we understand there is a possibility that next year there could be as many as fifty local children who will not find a place in the village school, with this figure increasing the following year. I have asked for verification of these figures and have arranged a meeting with the central area committee to speak to District Councillors under the Parish Voice scheme on this subject on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May.

**Local Action Team** - This group is made up of Councillors and members of the village, meeting regularly and they are involved in many aspects of the village, which includes the following.

**Policing** - We have long been fighting for increased policing in the village, and there was a prospect about a year ago that we may be reduced to one Local Bobby. We are now up to strength with two - Trevor Byford and Matt Christie and in addition two P.C.S.O.'s Support Officer's Laura Wheeler and Laura Richards. The bad news is that Laura Richards is at present part time, having recently had a child, and Matt Christie is on paternity leave. Trevor would be here were it not for the terrorism problem in Bristol. Nevertheless generally there is always one on duty. Do help yourself and the police by reporting incidents. The number is in the Parish magazine 0845 456700

**Speeding** - The Police are placing a speed sign in various locations in and around the village from time to time, and Speed watch is operating at designated locations.

**Variable Speed Sign** - This Council budgeted, for a variable speed sign **nearly three years ago**, which will be able to be placed at different locations in the village. N.S. have delayed this initiative for one reason or another, the most recent being Health and Safety. We have however installed four posts for the sign, two on the road through the village, one in Glebe Road and one in Yanley Lane.

I am today assured by N.S. that we will be able to go ahead in the summer.

**Parking** - The Police are now targeting illegal parking and issuing tickets. Those parking on a zebra crossing will for their selfishness, obtain three points on their licence.

**Yellow lines.** - Ivor Scoones is heading up a survey in the village of the yellow lines many of which have not been replaced after tarmacing. It is planned that these will be replaced without undue delay.

**New junction layout A370/B3128** - As you have heard we are 100% against this realignment, and we have with the help of our District Councillors achieved this trial period. We summarise our views and there is a brief questionnaire on the Council website. This is [www.longashtonparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.longashtonparishcouncil.gov.uk) navigate to 'home page' --'have your say' Please comment and please encourage others to do so.

The prospect of 9,000 houses on our doorstep with a link road attracting even more traffic onto the A370, dwarf in importance anything that we have experienced in this village for a long time. This Council is wholeheartedly against development on this scale. I am delighted that Georgie Bigg from CPRE is able to be with us this evening to give you a better understanding of the issues on this hot topic. We shall hear from her shortly. That concludes my report. Thank you for bearing with me.

**Parochial Charity Accounts.**

The accounts of the trustees to the Parochial Charity for 2007/2008 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**

The following resolution was received and proposed by Ted Baker as follows: "This meeting applauds the decision of the Parish Council to oppose the South Bristol Ring Road proposals. The meeting encourages the Council to continue to monitor the progress of these proposals and to take any action considered appropriate". The resolution was seconded by Penny Bennett and all at the meeting (excepting 1 abstention) were in favour to accept the resolution.

Cllr Ms Hardingham gave a short report on the Parish Plan and thanked all those who completed the questionnaire.

There was a presentation by Georgie Bigg, Severnside region Chairman, Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) on the South West Bristol Urban Extension.

Coffee and biscuits were then served.

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