

LONG ASHTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Held in the Village Hall on Monday 18th April 2011
Chairman – Councillor Nigel Moorcroft
The meeting was attended by approximately 50 electors

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 19th April 2010, copies having been circulated to those present were signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman, Cllr Nigel Moorcroft said "good evening ladies and gentlemen, firstly may I thank you all for taking the time to attend the Annual Parish Meeting". For those of you who don't know me, my name is Nigel Moorcroft your Parish Council Chairperson and I shall be brief in my address.

It has been an interesting and challenging year in which Long Ashton has fared quite well, Birdwell School is nearing completion which will upon opening give us two of the top schools on North Somerset, indeed two of the best in the wider area, for whom we should thank Cllr Bob Cook, Cllr Howard Roberts our retiring North Somerset Councillor as well as my fellow parish councillors assisted by some very effective parental lobbying.

I wish at this point to thank Howard Roberts for his sterling service to the community on the NS council and hope to see him re-elected to the Parish Council.

Infrastructure

This winter has taken a huge toll on the infrastructure and with the new restrictions on budgets by central government it may take time for the roads to be fully repaired.

Finances

I think both the Parish Council and North Somerset have done very well to keep the domestic rates increase at zero, something that we all appreciate in these difficult times, at this point I would like to thank Cllr. Jonathan Skeeles for his excellent chairing of the parish finances a position from which he is now standing down.

Refuse and recycling

The refuse and recycling has taken some time to bed in but now appears to be functioning quite well, but if there are any hiccups please let us know as well as North Somerset.

Ashton Gate Stadium

The new Ashton Gate Stadium is still hanging over us, with negotiations still going on the successful applicants of the town green application and stadium management and we can only hope the town green applicants resolve stands firm and the development is shelved. Cllr Charles Cave will give you more information.

Housing development

Do not believe that the housing threat has gone away, it is simply delayed and we have to hope that North Somerset maintains its stance in opposing green belt development, political change at central government could not have come at a better moment and we can only hope this resistance stands for some time.

Cycle track

We continue with the cycle track development and are in negotiation in regard to the route from Yanley Lane to the B3128 at Ashton Court, more information will be given by Highways Chairman Phil Jackson.

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Crime

Crime continues to decline but we have had a spate of drain covers being stolen and I have to report that we have lost one of our dedicated police officers due to budget reallocations, I hope this is not followed with an increase in crime.

I would at this point like to thank Marilyn our clerk and her team for their efforts in the last year, and a special thanks to Dave Addis for his unstinting effort and largely unrecognised work for the community. I would also like to thank members of the Community Association and their team for their tireless efforts, and extend the communities thanks for the parish council members who have not looked for re-election, especially Suzanne Morgan who has done such excellent work in conjunction with John Ives to improve our footpaths.

Bristol Airport

Finally we notice an increase in airport traffic both on our roads and air movements as the airport has gained its permission for huge increase in passenger numbers and I hope we will not all suffer too much from this unfortunate decision.

I will now hand on to Cllr Mary Uppington, Chairperson for Planning, followed by Cllr Charles Cave on building developments affecting our community. who will hand on to Cllr Dr Phil Jackson for his report on Highways, followed by Cllr. Jonathan Skeeles who will report on our Finances. Finally a report on North Somerset Council by Cllr Bob Cook, after which we will have an interesting talk by Georgie Bigg of CPRE on Localism and Planning.

Planning Committee Report

The Chairman, Cllr. Miss Mary Uppington said “the Planning Committee has had another interesting year and continued to meet at monthly intervals”. Of the applications considered 40% have been for extensions and many of these have brought an improvement to the facilities at existing properties.

It must be remembered that the Committee are only able to make recommendations – it is the Planning Officers at North Somerset who make their comments and decisions and our District Councillors who make final decisions about applications which are referred to them.

It is pleasing to see that work on the extensions at Birdwell School is progressing well – along with the new Children’s Centre, which is being built adjoining the Nursery – and we look forward to all this accommodation being brought into use later this year.

In Leigh Woods, which is such a lovely area of our parish, plans for development at bracken Hill, in North Road, are now at the hands of Devonshire Homes who have taken over the site from Kingerlee Homes. They are wanting to make some amendments to the original plans which were given permission and have discussed their suggestions with the Leigh Woods Society, arranged for an exhibition for residents and invited comments from them and our Parish Council before making their application to North Somerset.

This time last year I explained about 4 major planning applications which had been received – of these:-

- The proposal to build 500 dwellings at Failand was refused after a public enquiry.
- Bristol City Football Stadium eventually obtained permission for their access which will be in our parish, at Ashton Gate. Ashton Vale residents received support from the Inspector for the land earmarked for the stadium to be given Town Green status and we have supported all their efforts. So this obstacle has

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to be overcome before the stadium can be built and we understand talks between the relevant parties are still taking place.

- The other 2 applications were made for development on Green Belt land – 9,500 dwellings on land south of Bristol and 1,000 dwellings on land to the East side of Wild Country Lane. No decisions have yet been made by North Somerset but since the applications were made the Government has brought out the Localism Bill, which is in the process of going through Parliament. This will replace the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) which we understand will be disbanded. In their Core Strategy publication version, North Somerset indicate the Green Belt will remain so we anticipate both these applications will eventually be refused by North Somerset.

During the year there has been other appeals on decisions taken by our District Councillors and Inspectors decided as follows:-

- 12 retirement dwellings at Warren Lane and an
- extension at 47 Glebe Road were approved
- 9 elderly persons apartments proposed at 14 Long Ashton Road is awaiting a decision from the Inspector.

The most recent new housing, south of Weston Road on Research Station land has been completed and we are waiting for the Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAPS) to be completed together with the final stages of the new Sports Pitch and area off Keeds Lane.

The proposals for a Care Village, on the Barrow Hospital site have been deposited with North Somerset. The scheme has really been welcomed and feedback from the community follows the exhibitions held here in October, showed great support. Although the site is officially in Barrow Gurney parish it borders our boundary so we have had meetings with Barrow Gurney Councillors and both Councils are in favour of the plans.

Trees and hedges are producing their usual growth and we hope residents will again undertake the necessary work to see that pavements and footpaths are not obstructed by overgrown foliage and branches.

Our District Councillors – Bob Cook and Howard Roberts who are also Parish Councillors have, once again, worked hard for our parish, given us helpful advice and been ready to take any contentions applications to the Central Area Planning Committee. They are always ready to take to any resident who has a concern and their support is greatly appreciated.

Our Planning Committee has dealt with a variety of applications and their helpful observations and thoughts have led to constructive comments being sent to North Somerset.

Thanks must go also to Charles Cave who has been a supportive Vice-Chairman, to Liz Smith who has minuted our meetings and to Marilyn, our clerk, for all she does to keep our planning system running smoothly. This help is always appreciated along with that given by her husband, Dave, who provides so much assistance.

This concludes my report for 2010/11 as we look forward to another busy year ahead.

Building Developments Report

Cllr. Charles Cave gave a report on building developments affecting the parish. Regarding the Regional Spatial Strategy he reported that this became delayed by the General Election. He advised that the threat to the parish by the large developments has

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not entirely disappeared, even though North Somerset's Core Strategy state there should be no building in green belt, the Ashton Park development will return. Long Ashton Parish Council has also formed a joint parish collaboration with Barrow Gurney and Dundry Parish Councils to have as much influence as possible with North Somerset. The joint parishes also have joint fund which is to be used to fight applications.

The Barrow Hospital application is the latest large application for the parish, divided into a Care Home, which is viewed favourably by Long Ashton and Barrow Gurney Parish Councils, and an application for 43 dwellings.

The Bristol City Football Stadium is also a current issue, however the Inspector came out in favour of the Town Green status for the land. The Parish Council very much supports Ashton Green Heritage Group in their work.

Highways and Burial Ground Committee Report

The Chairman, Cllr. Dr Phil Jackson said "Let me start with **Footpaths**".

In previous years as a Parish Council we have worked to replace the old fashion stiles with kissing gates which provide easier access to all. Our footpath network is now a good one. We have been conscious though that with the wet winter, we do have a number of areas where water collects and footpaths have become muddy. We have been addressing the worse areas this past year, in particular footpaths near Yanley Lane where drainage has been improved in conjunction with the landowner. A huge thanks to Suzanne Morgan who has worked hard with NS and landowners to improve footpath maintenance. Thanks also to Harry Williams, Charles Cave and Nigel Moorcroft for their support in ensuring our footpaths remain open and usable. And thanks also to John Ives for his support on all matters footpaths.

The monthly footpath walks have continued to run and be well supported and thanks to Suzanne for organising these walks and often leading them.

On the **Churchyard and Burial Ground**, the main issues for the Parish Council are those of maintenance, and we recognise that tree maintenance together with fallen headstones will be topics for focus over the coming year.

Turning to Highways

The past year continues to be a focus on the issues including traffic speed, parking, alterations to junctions, new roads together with continuing to address the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.

We have had another hard winter this year with several prolonged periods of snow on our local roads. I was generally content that North Somerset responded well to gritting of highways together with keeping the grit bins filled up for residents use on the minor roads. Beyond that, however, the icy weather has taken its toll on some of our roads and opened up a number of potholes that are a potential hazard to cyclists and motorcyclists in particular.

On speeding we continue to make use of the speed warning sign. This continues to be a valuable tool in reducing speed. Providence Lane continues to be a concern for both residents and Parish Council alike. This has been a long ongoing issue, North Somerset have repeated that they will not support a 20 mph speed restriction – we are now exploring painting a white line down one side of the road to give the appearance of a narrowed highway.

Having assessed where double yellow lines would ease the parking problem, particularly where this could create a safety problems, yellow lines have been added in a

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number of areas around the area. Thanks to Ivor for co-ordinating efforts on the parking issue.

The development of Ashton Vale for the new Bristol City football club stadium remains is a concern, not least due to the impact this will have on cars parking for match days and for other events. We await the outcome of the BCC decision on granting Ashton Vale Town Green status. This looks like a nightmare about to happen, we hope that some measures can be taken to reduce the impact of the new stadium and its impact on our village.

Over the past year the junction of the B3218 as it goes up past the Dovecote and joins the Bypass has been made permanent. We believe that the decision was wrong, and are unhappy that the Parish Council has had no part in the decision and the views of local residents were not been taken into account.

The preparations and plans for the Festival Way continue to be developed, and we continue to pay attention to the detail of this programme as it proceeds to provide a cycle and footpath through the village. Thanks in particular to Angela and Nigel in keeping the Committee fully aware of Festival Way developments.

In closing I would like to thank all the Committee members in working through a busy year of business for the Highways Committee, in particular Suzanne as my Deputy Chairman.

A huge thanks to our Clerk Marilyn Addis for her tireless effort for the Committee and Liz Smith our minute secretary. I would also like to thank Richard Luton, Jason Collins, Dave Addis, John Cowley and Stafford Gundry for their work around the village and continuing to ensure it remains a tidy and well kept village.

Finance and General Purposes Committee Report

The Chairman, Cllr. Jonathan Skeeles said “the Committee met in December 09 to propose a budget which was subsequently approved by the full Council in the January meeting.

The agreed precept enabled the Council to meet all its statutory obligations and carry out all necessary work at the Burial Ground and also to cover administration and village orderly costs, dog bin emptying and the like. A number of grants were made to local organisations, again the main one being to the Community Association to help them with the running costs of this centre.

The Committee met on several occasions during the year and reviewed legislation relating to Parish Councils.

As I mentioned earlier, the main grant was to the Community Association and I am pleased to say that in this current year, we have been able to continue our support for this vital village facility.

Due to the hard work and management skills of the Community Association team, there has been an increase in bookings and there is a plan of action to cover ongoing costs. I would like to express my thanks to Sarah Leong and all members of the Community Association for their work in preserving this valued village facility.

My thanks also, to all members of the F & G. P Committee, for giving up their time in attending our meetings and my particular thanks to our Clerk, Mrs. Marilyn Addis for her invaluable help and guidance.

Finally, may I say how pleased I am, that so many members of the Parish have put their names forward for the forthcoming Parish Council election.

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All Councillors give their time freely and I believe generally do their best for the benefit of the Parish. Of course, we do not always get it 100% right. A lot of time over these last few years has been given both by Councillors and more importantly by our Clerk, in dealing with queries and complaints. Time of course, is money, your money, if you have a grievance, stand for election and put your case across that way.

Good luck to all who seek election in May.

A copy of the audited accounts, for the year ending 31st March 2009 were displayed on the notice board at the back of the room.

Parochial Charity Accounts

The accounts of the trustees to the Parochial Charity for 2009 were displayed on the notice board at the end of the room.

North Somerset Council Report

Cllr Bob Cook addressed the audience on District Council matters.

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

None received.

Georgie Bigg of CPRE, gave presentation on Localism and Planning.

Coffee and biscuits were then served.