

LONG ASHTON PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Parish Meeting Monday, 20th April, 2009
Approx 45 electors present, and one Guest Speaker
Chairman: Cllr Charles Cave

The Chairman, Mr Charles Cave opened the Meeting.

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 21st April, 2008, copies having been circulated to those present, on a proposal by Ms S Hardingham, seconded by R Schaefer, were accepted by those present as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

Planning Committee Report.

The Planning Committee Chairman, Miss Uppington, reported that the Planning Committee has continued to meet each month and has looked at a variety of applications. Although the number coming forward has decreased in recent months, 33 of the 72 considered have been for extensions to existing properties.

The Committee comment on every application and always try to visualise how each one will fit into the environment and to what extent it will affect neighbouring residents.

As you know we are only able to make recommendations and it is North Somerset Planning Officers and District Councillors who make final decisions. On the whole North Somerset Officers have agreed with our comments but sometimes permission has been given for an application which we were very much against and, in one particular case it saddened us to see the devastating effect this had on residents living in close proximity.

This time last year we were waiting for the result of the appeal on Bowman's Lodge, 14 Long Ashton Road where the request was to replace this dwelling with flats and associated office space. We were delighted when news came that the Inspector had dismissed the appeal – and it was interesting to see that some of his comments echoed those we had made when recommending refusal.

Once again George Wimpey have appealed against North Somerset' refusal of their plans for 18 dwellings at the eastern end of the Research Station's site – immediately behind Fenshurst Gardens and facing properties in Perry Road. This is their third appeal about applications for developing this land, and it is to take the form of a public inquiry. This is being held here in the Pavilion on Wednesday 6th May and Thursday 7th May and we anticipate and hope the Inspector will give anyone who wishes the opportunity to speak.

It is since 2002 that the Parish Council and neighbours have objected and made it quite clear it should be single-storey properties on this site and anything different will be opposed. Two Inspectors have already dismissed the previous appeals and you can be sure we shall continue to press for these latest plans to be refused.

Leigh Woods is an important and interesting part of our parish and applications have been made to extend and improve properties in this area. The plans for Bracken Hill site in

North Road have been approved and as soon as the S106 agreement has been completed we should see work being started.

Our greatest concern is still the outrageous proposals, made by the Government, for 9000 homes to be built in an area south of Bristol involving land on North Somerset which is designated as Green Belt. Parish Councillors and others have attended numerous meetings or workshops and are keeping in close contact with adjoining parishes. We shall be hearing more about this later this evening but you can be certain the Parish Council will do everything it can to oppose these unreasonable and unacceptable schemes.

Our trees and hedges have started to produced their yearly growth so we hope residents will continue to take action to ensure pavements and footpaths are not obstructed by overgrown foliage and branches. If particular work has to be done on trees applications must be made to North Somerset. Details are then publicised and send to our Clerk so that comments can be made if this is considered to be appropriate.

District Councillors , Bob Book and Howard Roberts, who are also Parish Councillors, have again worked hard on our behalf and given useful help and advise when applications have reached the Central Area Planning Committee. They are always willing to listen and talk to any resident who has a concern about planning matters and their support is very much appreciated. Our third District Councillors is Carl Francis-Pester who covers the Leigh Woods part of our parish and is a member of the North Area Planning Committee. Thanks go to all of them for the time they give to matters which involve our parish.

Tremendous thanks is due to our Planning Committee who has endured some tedious meetings. Their advice in dealing with a range of applications has been extremely helpful and resulted in appropriate comments being sent to North Somerset.

Thanks also go to all those who have minuted our meetings – particularly to Liz Smith who is now doing the job regularly – and of course to Marilyn, our Clerk, for all she does to see that our planning system runs smoothly. This help is always appreciated along with that given by her husband, who provides so much assistance with 101 other items!

So this concludes my report for 2008/09 and we shall look forward to another interesting year ahead.

Highways and Burial Ground Committee Report.

Dr Phil Jackson, Chairman of the Highways and Burial Ground Committee said
Let me start with the **Churchyard and Burial Ground.**

I mentioned last year that I was pleased about the proposal to turn an area of the church yard back to nature and wildflowers through a bio-diversity project. The proposal was approved for an initial two year period, and is progressing well being managed by Jill Watkins for the Parochial Church Council. We wish the project continued success.

Within the churchyard, you may have noticed that the clockstones are showing signs of wearing and ageing and we will consider over the next year how best to update or replace

Turning to **Footpaths**.

We continue to focus on ensuring that our footpaths are maintained and accessible. This is carried out through the Footpath Users Group we have funding through a grant to carry out further maintenance and to reduce further who monitor and manage the footpaths with ongoing maintenance and to ensure accessibility of the footpath network. I believe we now have within the parish a footpath network 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. Councillor Williams updated everyone about the footpaths.

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; on the subject of speeding we've had a growing problem in the parish with the increase in population. You'll be aware that we now have a speed warning sign in Long Ashton which we've used in Long Ashton Road and Glebe Road. I'm pleased to say that so far this has been a success; good evidence that most drivers are now slowing down – you can see this by the brake lights going on as cars approach the warning sign. You are urged and reminded to keep to the speed limit, especially recognising the growth in the numbers of children in the village.

One road I will highlight in the village that has a speed problem is Providence Lane with many drivers using this as a thoroughfare or rat run. We are looking at measures to reduce speed – this could include 20 mph speed limits, speed humps and chicanes or double yellow lines. We hope to conclude this in the coming months to make life easier and safer for those that live in this area.

With the increase in houses 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 continue to assess where additional double yellow lines would ease the problem. We recognise of course this is a balance recognising the needs of residents and local business and the problems caused by parking; we do expect to use further double yellow lines in the village particularly where there is a safety issue.

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 the most contentious schemes for many years is the changing the junction of the B3128 as it goes up past the Dovecote and joins the Bypass. We continue to believe this is both an unnecessary expense and dangerous at the same time.

Thanks to all those who have made their views known on the Parish Council website. There has been a considerable amount of discussions and lobbying into North Somerset Council over the past year. We are now on an extended second trial of the junction alignment. Whilst some progress has been made through extending the bus lane and adding a speed warning sign on the bypass, the re-aligned junction still represents a hazard. The Chairman will talk further about our concerns on 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 are now working closely with Bristol and NS Council to discuss s to ensure that adequate parking is put in place next to the new stadium to avoid spillage of parking in the village We currently see on match days that the Bristol end of the village is littered with cars from people using it to go to the football. We remain concerned that this problem could get worse unless adequate transport arrangements are put in place.

Looking ahead the South Bristol ringroad is likely to have a significant impact on this area. A consultation programme has started to asses various options for the ringroad. This Parish Council is opposed to the South Bristol ringroad extending out to Long Ashton; we believe that more can be done within Bristol City limits to improve transport around Winterstoke Road.

I mentioned last year that there was a successful Lottery campaign for Sustrans at national level, part of this being used to complete the Nailsea to Bristol path; this is to be known as Festival Way and the cyclepath and footpath will be delivered over a five year period. Agreements in principle are in place between Sustrans, NSC and BCC on to cover funding arrangement. Planning permission will be sought progressively starting this year and we'll pay particular attention to the route as it passes through Long Ashton. There is an independent steering committee, chaired by Alan Atkins, and supported by two Parish Councillors, if anyone has particular interest for further info.

I've touched on the Parish Council website as one means of communication around the village; additionally over the past year we've added three further noticeboards in Leigh Woods, Yanley Lane and Birdwell Rec.

I've touched on the Parish Council website as a means of communication within the parish; additionally within the past year we have added three further noticeboards in Leigh Woods, Yanley Lane and in Birdwell Rec.

I would like to thank all the Committee members in working, what it often a long agenda of urgent business, in particular thanks to our Clerk Marilyn Addis and Liz Smith our minute secretary for their tireless efforts for the Committee. I would also like to thank Roy Thomas, Jason Collins, 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 F&GP Committee Chairman, Jonathan Skeeles, said the Committee met in December 07 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. The Committee oversaw the spending of the 106 money, this being the money received for the improvements of this centre, the work being administered by LAMPRO in conjunction with the Community Association.

LAMPRO has now been wound up and the Final Report is now available and I hope to have it printed in the next Newsletter. Since LAMPRO's conception, some 12 years ago, it has achieved a considerable amount, I will list just a few of the successful projects below:

1. The Pavilion
2. The Children's Play Area
3. The Tennis Pavilion
4. The upgrading of the Village Hall

This has all happened due to the hard work and dedication by a number of people and I would like to thank all those who have helped by, donations, fund raising (especially the 500 Club), and by the donation of materials. A big thank you to the LAMPRO Committee, especially Sara Taylor who has served as a member right from the beginning, all we now ask is that you use and enjoy the facilities provided.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the members of the F and GP Committee for giving up their time to attend our meetings and for their interest in the well being of our Community. My particular thanks to our Clerk, Mrs. Marilyn Addis, we all value her knowledge, guidance and support relating to the workings of this Committee.

The Parish Council Accounts for 2007 2008 were on display at the end of the room.

Chairman's Report and Overview

Parish Council Chairman, Charles Cave, reported that **Primary School Places** has again thrown up anomalies, and shortage of places. On the 8th of May last year I spoke to North Somerset District Councillors under the Parish Voice Scheme about our concerns on this issue and I felt that they understood and were sympathetic.

It is clear however that the solution is not straight forward and is affected by a number of issues not least Govt. targets and funding regulations. Even without these complications whatever rules are adopted will inevitably disadvantage someone.

Communication and dialogue to promote understanding is in my view the way forward and the Parish Council has met with Sally Varley the admissions officer in North Somerset on a number of occasions. We have nominated Anna Oxenbury from the parent group to sit on the working group for Birdwell School, together with a member from the Parish Council.

Vehicle Activated Speed Sign.

Yes eventually we gained permission from the Highways Dep of North Somerset A few teething problems. We will extend the sites. A great deal of data can be obtained from the software. Over 90 MPH

Our further dealings with the Highways Dept. A370 & the B3128

The present trial is due to end about now. I have written to Rob Thompson of Highways at North Somerset, requesting a further meeting before decisions are taken.

Speed on the A370 is the problem and the speed sign now in place on the bypass has I believe helped a great deal to reduce speed. The current alignment is not acceptable; there is the risk of a serious accident.

Busses joining the A370 dangerous

Junction B3128 Providence & Longwood

In our dealings with North Somerset regarding the A370 junction we have repeatedly argued for new signage for this junction.

I am pleased to report that following a meeting on site late last year we now have a commitment for the new signage that we requested, probably in May this year.

Policing We now have a full compliment. PC Jock Cameron has joined PC Trevor Byford, and Penelopy ? joining Laura Wheeler the two PCSO's.

There are a number of issues that threaten, or will have an impact on, our community.

Lulsgate Airport (Bristol International Airport)

To date there has been expansion without any contribution to the transport infrastructure and airport traffic has grown enormously affecting our Parish, but manifesting itself most dramatically in Barrow Gurney. We oppose expansion without pro active transport funding.

The Barrow Hospital site There is already permission for substantial office accommodation, which itself could well create up to 3,500 journeys per day much of that through Long Ashton and Wild Country Lane
And they have aspirations for further expansion.

Link Road Proposals

We have objected to a link Rd in principle not least because it will, particularly if it is close to the Bristol boundary, act as a rat run and attract traffic onto the already busy A370.

We have however added that if there is to be a link road then we would suggest this be sited well to the west adjacent to the east boundary of Barrow Hospital where it would not be attractive as a rat run from South to North Bristol. Here it would at least provide relief for Long Ashton and Wild Country lane by providing access from the east to the Barrow Hospital site and additionally provide a bypass to Barrow Gurney village.

The Bristol City Stadium proposal.

They want the Stadium close to the existing one. But it is the wrong place.

Surely a Large Stadium such as is proposed should be sited close to a Railway Station or Motorway junction such as the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff and the Majeski Stadium near Reading. They are building in a problem right from the start and unfortunately the impact will be on our village. We therefore have two objections. The wrong place. Insufficient parking. It is unfortunate that it is North Somerset officers arguing for fewer spaces. We will continue to argue our case

Last but not least The Regional Spatial Strategy.

This is an innocuous title probably by design. Its impact upon our community and others nearby will, if its aspirations come to fruition, be enormous. When released by Hazel Blears, probably on June the 29th it will require Councils to release sufficient green belt land to accommodate the required development.

The building of 9,000 dwellings between Long Aston and Dundry and Bristol and Barrow is an horrific prospect.

All these – the Airport, Barrow Hospital, Link Road, Stadium, and 9,000 houses will have a dramatic impact on the Cumberland Basin system and Plimsol Bridge. There are no proposals or funding to improve the transport infrastructure.

We are firmly and strongly opposed to any development on this scale and we are working hard opposing it. One must appreciate that there is a however a great deal of pressure from Government and of course the developers for this to go ahead.

An example is a visit I made to the House of Commons with Ivor Scoones and Ted Baker last year. It was memorable for two reasons. One was it costing Ted Baker £1 to spend a penny. More importantly perhaps, a meeting had been arranged for five MP's and members of the community to meet a Minister after which they would report to a gathering in committee room 14. At the last minute the Minister refused to meet the members of the community and only reluctantly agreed to see the MP's. His name is Ian Wright and he is Minister for **Communities** & Local Government. This is a typical example of the callous attitude of this Government to democracy. The whole process has totally sidelined local democracy.

On the other hand there is strong cross party opposition to the RSS amongst M.P.'s

We have joined with Barrow Gurney and Dundry, to form a Joint Parishes Group. We are keeping in close touch with North Somerset who themselves are now strongly opposed to the RSS, together with other Councils in the South West.

Delay and timing is the name of the game. A general election will take place in about a year, and the Conservatives have promised to overturn the RSS should they form the next Government. We should not lose heart.

But the battle has to be fought and it will not be easily won. We shall do our utmost along with others to succeed in thwarting this Charter for developers.

It is proving to be a busy time.

Lastly I would like to add my thanks to those already expressed to all Parish Councillors for their support during the last year. They invest a great deal of time to the benefit of the Parish.

In particular I would like to thank the Chairmen of Committees Phil Jackson, Jonathan Skeeles, Mary Uppington. Mary in particular who puts in a huge effort in visiting all applications.

Thanks to our District Councillors Howard Roberts Bob Cook, and Carl Francis Pester who compliment and support our efforts.

Not least my thanks to Marilyn Addis our Clerk who stops us straying from the straight and narrow and provides enormous support. And Dave Addis who assists Marilyn in her work and does a lot of unseen work in and around the village.

My thanks also to Liz Smith our minute secretary who has recently joined us.

Parochial Charity Accounts.

These were not available for the meeting. The Chairman introduced Cllr Mrs Mountjoy and Cllr Mrs Pullin who are the Parish Council nominated Trustees.

Resolutions of which written notice has been given

None.

Presentation was given on CPRE by Georgie Bigg.

Mrs Sara Taylor asked for helpers to produce the next edition of the Directoy to see her after the meeting.

Coffee and biscuits were then served.
