Welcome to our latest newsletter, which summarises some of the recent hectic activity on developments in our village. We will cover these more fully at our AGM. We look forward to welcoming our members, and non-members are also very welcome to join us. It is renewal time for the membership subscription of £10 per household, and we hope to boost our numbers at this crucial time. Details on our website on www.backwellresidents.org.uk

The AGM will be held at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 11 November 2014 in the Sixth Form Lecture Theatre at Backwell School

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of 2013 AGM Minutes (available on website or on request to Hon Sec)
3. Chairman’s Report
4. Membership Report
5. Honorary Treasurer’s Report and audited Accounts for 2013-14
6. Election of Officers*: Hon Secretary, Hon Treasurer and two Committee Members
   The following nominations have been made at the date of this Notice:-
   6.1: Hon Secretary: Mike Veal Proposed: G. Wells Seconded: M. Rose
   6.2: Hon Treasurer: Richard Barclay Proposed: K. Riches Seconded: M. Veal
7. Appointment of Auditor: Richard Gaunt
8. Any other formal Business
9. Open Forum

N.B. The meeting is open to all villagers, but only paid up members may vote or make nominations.

*Nominees for the Committee vacancies should be made in advance to the Honorary Secretary, 36 Long-Thorn, Backwell BS48 3GY, at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. Nominations should be proposed and seconded by members and signify the nominee’s willingness to serve. Members are reminded that the Committee has authority to co-opt additional members, as necessary, to undertake specific roles.

The formal aspects of the AGM will be kept to a minimum, so that we can devote most of the time to the planning matters covered in this newsletter.

The BRA committee is mindful of the fact that we are a membership organisation, and that often a planning application will have both positive and negative aspects. Residents will apply different weights to these aspects. We welcome comments on these at any time. We will always consider carrying out surveys to ensure that the Association is aware of the views of as many Backwell residents as possible.
Backwell Neighbourhood Plan (BNP)

Backwell’s Neighbourhood Plan is designed to set out how the village would like to develop, and what key facilities should be provided, over the next 12 years. It identifies sites for 60+ houses to be built in Backwell by 2026. These aspirations must conform to national and regional frameworks and criteria.

After 3 or 4 years of preparation the Plan finally reached the stage of an Examination in Public on 25th Sept. in the Parish Hall, and a good cross section of residents attended. The Examiner’s draft report is being processed and will become public near the end of October. We understand it will then be published on the North Somerset Council and Backwell Parish Council web-sites.

The current programme is for the Report to be formally considered by the Parish Council and North Somerset Council during November, and if approved, be taken to Referendum (by the Backwell Parish electorate) probably in early February.

There will be an opportunity to discuss its contents at the AGM, although it will not be possible for any elements of the Plan to be amended or changed.

The importance of having an approved Neighbourhood Plan in place is becoming increasingly more relevant with developers seeking opportunities to skirt around the still unadopted North Somerset Core Strategy. It will give Backwell a significant advantage in defending unwanted or over-large development applications.

The yellow areas show the designation for local green spaces in the Neighbourhood Plan. The red area off Moor Lane is an area already designated for residential and light industrial development (its former use some 30 years ago).
Development on Coles Quarry Site (adjacent to Backwell Recycling Centre)

Members will be well aware of the Planning Application to develop part of this site, which was originally submitted in February, and which now, in amended form, has just received consent.

The latest application had both advantages and disadvantages, so your Committee canvassed members for their views, and agonized for some time over what stance to take, knowing there were very strong objections held by many of the residents living in close proximity to the site. This position was not helped by the Applicants changing their plans and details in an unorthodox way, and the Planning Authority processing the application in a highly misleading manner.

Your Committee finally decided the revised application (for 15 small light industrial units) was probably the "least worst" outcome, as we understand the site owner still has a live option of re-opening the existing buildings for a heavy industrial use, and the value of providing more employment opportunities in the village. We formally supported the application in principle, but sought to beef up a number of conditions, in particular relating to the approach roads and traffic movements. We were partially successful in persuading the Planning Authority to improve the extent of highway works, and to introduce a 20mph speed limit on Dark Lane.

There will be further opportunities over the next few weeks to consult with the site owners on other minor improvements. The future of the rest of the quarry is, of course, still unclear, but your Committee will keep close links with the owners to monitor their activities and ideas for dealing with this site which still has so many uncertainties. Once again, views and ideas from members would be welcome at the AGM.
Farleigh Fields

Members, together with all households in Backwell, recently received an alluring mailing from developers Charles Church (who, along with Beazer, are part of the Persimmon Group). They have been seeking local support for a planning application for the development of up to 340 new dwellings on Farleigh Fields.

This is their latest attempt, over a 30 year period, at obtaining consent for development. So far they have been successfully thwarted by residents, including a vast input (of time and expense) from BRA members, Backwell Parish Council, and three public inquiries.

The BRA Committee believes this latest attempt, at first glance quite seductive, would be extremely damaging to the village. It fails to comply with the Neighbourhood Plan and North Somerset’s policies, but equally importantly, would cause enormous problems locally, overcrowding our schools and medical services, and pouring more traffic onto the overloaded A370. BRA contributed towards the subsequent letter circulated to all residents from the Parish Council which sought to provide more balance to the somewhat one-sided news sheet from Charles Church.

It seems that, whatever objections local residents may make, Charles Church will submit a planning application very shortly. Your Committee will aim to respond accordingly, but would like to use the AGM to gauge reactions, and the possibility of building up a fighting fund to employ professional advisors again on our response to an unwanted application.

Station Car Park

The expansion from 123 to 285 spaces was completed earlier in the year. It was hoped that this would relieve the congestion in adjacent streets caused by commuter parking but unfortunately the opening of the larger facility was coupled with the introduction of a daily parking charge of £1.50. Although since opening, the usage of the car park has increased, some commuters continue to park in Moor Lane, Long-Thorn and Waverley Road to avoid the daily charge. There has, therefore, been no perceptible improvement in the congestion, particularly in Moor Lane near the junction with Station Road where it is quite common for traffic to be unable to turn into Moor Lane due to oncoming vehicles exiting into Station Road.

At present North Somerset Council has no plans to introduce any sort of “residents only” restrictions, as they say that they do not have the resources to police it. They also say that if such a scheme were introduced residents would have to pay for permits to park outside their own
homes. BRA will continue to monitor this situation which will be greatly exacerbated if any further development takes place in Moor Lane fields.

**Boundary Changes**

At present the Backwell Ward of North Somerset Council includes the Parishes of Backwell and Flax Bourton and is represented by two District Councillors, Karen Barclay and Geoff Coombs. After much discussion, it has been decided that the Backwell Ward will be reduced in size to include only the Parish of Backwell and be represented by only one District Councillor. These changes take effect at the time of the Local Government Elections next May. We understand that Karen Barclay, who we feel has served our community very well, will stand for re-election next year in the Backwell Ward.

**Ex -Ettrick Garage/ Red Cross Hall sites.**

These two sites (now under common ownership) are identified in the Neighbourhood Plan as being suitable for the development of small or sheltered dwellings. The current owner is temporarily permitting a continuing car sales operation, but it is understood a residential planning application on at least part of the site can be anticipated.

**Stancome Quarry**

The owners of this large quarry, which is entirely located in Backwell Parish on Backwell Hill, are seeking planning consent to extend the quarry towards the A38, and thus continue the working life of the quarry until 2043. The application, which has been very professionally prepared, is still being processed. BRA is represented on the Local Consultative Advisory Group, which is working with the Planning Authority to ensure adequate safeguarding conditions are put in place and a fair and reasonable contribution to the local community is provided by the Applicants.

**Access to Nailsea & Backwell Station and Backwell Lake**

BRA has supported the campaign, vigorously led by Alison Morgan, to provide ramps for both platforms at Nailsea & Backwell Station. First Great Western have set this as a "highest priority" project, and will apply for funding from the Dept of Transport, once the Government's Autumn Statement is released in December. If this proves successful, Alison hopes that the project will be finished in 2015. Congratulations and many thanks to Alison for her persistent efforts.

A long awaited and very useful project has been finished recently, to complete the footpath around Backwell Lake. It will give easy access for wheelchair and pushchair users of this increasingly popular facility.
**BRA Membership**

Many thanks to all those who have renewed their membership in recent months, or have joined us for the first time. We now represent almost 300 Backwell households with some 500 adult members. A large membership helps to provide the finance already mentioned, and also, the greater the membership, the louder our voice. We are very grateful for your support. Any encouragement that current members can give to persuade others to join would be hugely appreciated. For those of you with an email address, please provide it to us if you have not already done so. This cuts our admin costs and provides a rapid means of communication, including our bulletins. Membership forms are available on our website, www.backwellresidents.org.uk, from any member of the committee, or at the BRA drop box in the Post Office (near the photocopier).

**Current BRA committee**

* Indicates that Bill Charnock and Colin Stone will retire at the AGM. We thank them very much for all they have contributed to BRA while on the committee

BARCLAY Richard (Treasurer) – 462566
*CHARNOCK Bill (Membership Secretary) – 462083 bill.charnock@btinternet.com
COLLINSON Gill (Recruitment) – 462626
ELLIOTT Chris – 463269
MERRETT-SMITH Terry (Asst. Treasurer & Membership) – 462069
RICHES Keith (Chair) – 462908 keithmriches@googlemail.com
ROSE Mike (Planning Specialist) – 462176
*STONE Colin (Web Manager) – 463158
TAPPING Ian (Archivist) – 462090
VEAL Mike (Secretary) – 461187 smveal@talktalk.net
WELLS Geoff (Publicity Manager) – 462627 geoffwells8@yahoo.com
WELLS Valerie (Recruitment) – 462627

**Co-opted Committee Members:**

STEWART Bruce (Former Chair & Secretary)
VEAL Sue (Minutes Secretary)

Note: The more urgent aspects of BRA are managed by a small **executive committee**. (email contact as above). A key advantage of the full committee is that we cover the village geographically, and have members with an involvement in most of the village clubs and societies.

We are hoping to replace our 2 retiring committee members, and would welcome anyone with a keen interest in the future of the village, particularly someone with IT skills. Please contact one of the committee if you would like to discuss the possibility.