**Backwell Residents’ Association Report to Backwell Parish Council Annual Meeting of Electors – 27 April 2017**

BRA currently represents some 330 paid up households comprising more than 600 members. The Association’s objectives are to work to safeguard and promote the collective interests of residents in matters concerning social, economic and community life and the character of the village. Furthermore, we will continue to support or oppose development affecting Backwell having regard to residents’ interests and the local environment.

This has been another very busy year for the Association. The full Committee met monthly throughout the year and the Executive Committee held many additional meetings. We have fifteen Committee members who live in various parts of the village and we have good links with other groups and organisations.

A representative of the BRA Committee has attended every Parish Council Meeting and Planning Committee Meeting, and BRA has registered comments on numerous planning applications made to North Somerset Council.

Among the issues which BRA has addressed in the past year are the following:-

**Farleigh Fields Planning Application** The over-riding issue in the past twelve months and the most demanding upon our resources has been the Appeal by Charles Church against North Somerset Council’s refusal of planning consent for 220 houses on Farleigh Fields, culminating in the Inquiry last month.

We have been pleased to support the Parish Council in their opposition to this appeal and to contribute to the costs. Our Committee Member Mike Rose has put a great deal of time and effort into this with Bob Taylor, Chris Perry and many others, and we greatly appreciate their efforts. We are also grateful to our network of volunteers who assisted in the distribution, last October, of a leaflet to every household in the village encouraging opposition to the Appeal which resulted in over 300 letters of objection being submitted within the limited time-scale available. We hope that the Secretary of State will refuse the Appeal.

**Coles Quarry Planning Application** BRA has continued to monitor this controversial application and we still await North Somerset Council’s decision on the revised application to which we objected. The over-riding concern is increased traffic along Dark Lane.

**Moor Lane Planning Application** We continue to await the final planning consent on this proposed development. We support the view that the mix of properties should include some bungalows and smaller properties for first time purchasers and downsizers. We remain concerned about the impact of additional traffic which will arise in Moor Lane and at the junction with Station Road.

**Stancombe Quarry Liaison** We have continued to be represented at Liaison Meetings with the owners and we thank the Parish Council for agreeing to share with this Association Backwell’s voting powers on the distribution of monies from the Community Fund. We feel that the administration of this fund has now been satisfactorily established and it is pleasing that several Backwell projects have been supported, namely, the Parish Hall, the Infants & Junior School, the Playing Fields Charity, the WI Hall and the Junior Football Club.

**West of England Joint Spatial Strategy and Joint Transport Studies** Regardless of the outcome of the Farleigh Fields Inquiry, we see the next major threat to our village coming from these studies. We submitted comments on both these consultations and have studied the interim findings. We still feel that there is a risk that major development to the West of Backwell (and around Nailsea) will be proposed without the major infrastructure and highways improvements required, leading to a huge increase in out-commuting and worse congestion on our already over-crowded roads. Development on the scale currently proposed would certainly change the character of the village beyond recognition. We are strongly of the view that major development at Ashton Vale would be far more sensible because of its proximity and access to Bristol.

Finally, BRA thanks the Parish Council, its Chairman Bob Taylor and our District Councillor, Karen Barclay for all their hard work on behalf of the village.

Keith Riches Chairman, Backwell Residents Association