

BACKWELL RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION AGM – 20 February 2018

PRESENTATIONS

Keith Riches introduced **Lucy White** who acted for BRA in the preparation and submission of comments in the Consultation on the West of England Joint Spatial Plan.

“BRA became aware of Lucy White as a direct result of the Backwell Resistance movement, so our thanks go to Lorraine.

Lucy is a qualified town planner with a degree in City & Regional Planning and a post graduate Diploma in Town Planning. She graduated in 1999 and became a Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute in 2001.

From 1999 until the end of last year, she was continuously employed in a number of private planning consultancies in Bristol, focusing mainly on residential development.

At the start of this year, Lucy started her own business, ‘Lucy White Planning’ and so she now works from home here in Backwell where she has lived for almost two years. I believe she has spent today in Reading, so am grateful that she is back in time to join us. I have much pleasure in asking Lucy to introduce us to the murky world of planning, as it currently affects us here in Backwell.”

Lucy then gave a presentation on “**Joint Spatial Plan and Taylor Wimpey**” which is summarised in the following extract from the slides exhibited.

WHERE ARE WE?

LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES 2006 - 2026

- CORE STRATEGY – IT HAS HAD A BUMPY RIDE...
 - Adopted 2012
 - Challenged in high court
 - Housing requirement increased
 - Adopted again in 2017
 - But....
 - The plan should be replaced by 2018!

- SITE ALLOCATIONS PLAN:
 - Prepared
 - Examined 2017
 - Unsound without more houses
 - Modified
 - Inspector deliberating....

BACKWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- Adopted March 2015
- Limits growth to 2026
- Government's ministerial statement on neighbourhood plans endorsed by High Court
- SO...HAPPY DAYS!??

- NOT QUITE...
 - Farleigh Fields decision is still awaited
 - Will 220 homes be approved?
 - Will the Secretary of State endorse the Neighbourhood Plan?

- AND WHAT HAPPENS AFTER 2018?
 - Ministerial statement expires
 - Neighbourhood plans then at risk?
 - Core strategy interim policy beyond its shelf life
 - Vulnerable to speculative planning applications?

WHAT IS BACKWELL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION DOING ABOUT IT?

- REPRESENTATIONS SUBMITTED IN JANUARY

- OBJECTIONS MADE TO:
 - Strategic scale of growth
 - Impact on community infrastructure, roads, environment
 - Deliverability
 - No consideration of reasonable alternatives in the Green Belt

- WHAT'S AHEAD?
 - JSP examination – Summer 2018
 - Local plan consultation – Summer 2018
 - Planning application for Grove Farm??

- WHAT WILL BACKWELL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION DO NEXT?
 - Continue to collaborate with Backwell Parish Council and Backwell Resistance
 - Appoint specialist consultants
 - Participate in the examination, if invited (request submitted to participate)
 - Present our case verbally to the inspector
 - OBJECT TO THE PLANNING APPLICATION:
 - Demonstrate prematurity to JSP and Neighbourhood Plan;

- o Negotiate on community benefits without prejudice to in-principle objection.
- WHAT CAN YOU DO?
 - Join Backwell Residents Association – we need your support!
 - Donate funds
 - Keep an eye out for updates
 - Comment on the planning application – (we will give guidance on points to make)

Mike Rose then gave a presentation on other planning issues as follows: -

FARLEIGH FIELDS

What a mess? The Appeal made by Charles Church against refusal of their planning application to build 220 homes was held last March. The Inspector submitted his decision to the Secretary of State for ratification in July. The promised decision date has now been deferred 4 times, the last one being from last week – 15 February – to 28 March.

Each time there has been an excuse of sorts – either a Ministerial statement or a relevant Appeal decision issued elsewhere in the country, which might, in theory, dictate a change of view and influence the FF decision- and the relevant parties are given time to make representations.

It is easy to believe some sort of deliberate delaying tactics are going on here. We cannot prove this and it may be an unfair criticism, but it is strange, to say the least, as well as being very annoying. Our legal advice is there is little we can do about this and we just have to wait for another few weeks.

The implications are considerable. If the Appeal is rejected, this will demonstrate real continued strength in our NP. If the Appeal is accepted, the opposite is true, it will suggest our NP is deemed invalid and out of date, and will potentially encourage other developers to look at other sites in the village. We shall just have to wait the final decision and then act accordingly.

However, it would be remiss of me not to give another and rather belated thanks to the members and other residents who came and spoke at the Inquiry, and the many hundreds of you who wrote in with objections and donated towards the Appeal costs. We know they did make the inspector think long and hard. Just how hard it remains to be seen!!

And now an update on the other 3 or 4 substantial development sites in the village:

MOOR LANE

This application has been hanging around now for 18 months. North Somerset has now granted outline consent for the new development of 65 houses although there is still an ongoing negotiation on the precise details of the S. 106 Agreement and the site layout. There is a good mix of house sizes and types, including 22 affordable houses and 6 modest size bungalows. NSC has also finally accepted the need to try and improve parking near the Station Road junction, and although they haven't gone nearly as far as we would have liked, we believe there will be some more double yellow lines, reduced on-street parking and an upgraded box junction on Station Road.

COLES QUARRY

This seems to be a rather confusing situation. You will recall that the owners obtained planning consent in 2015 for a development of 15 small industrial and business units

However, they fairly quickly decided this scheme wasn't financially viable, and submitted a second application for a different and somewhat larger layout of units.

This application has now lain dormant in NSC' offices for nearly 2 years, and little progress has been made. No second consent has been granted.

Meanwhile, the original consent enabled the owners to refurbish the old weighbridge house and some adjoining outbuildings at the front of the site. This work has been very slowly undertaken, but is now virtually completed and I think you will all agree is a massive improvement aesthetically.

Over the last few months quite a lot of work has also been carried out constructing an improved roadway up to the quarry's next level. This is a bit strange – who and why is putting money into this work? We are having great difficulty contacting the present owners, and the professional team involved with the earlier planning applications have all been stood down.

We will continue to monitor events here as closely as possible over the next few months.

ETTRICK GARAGE / RED CROSS HALL SITES

The owners of these combined sites obtained planning consent last years for nine, mainly 3 bed, houses, which complied with our Neighbourhood Plan, will be very convenient for central area facilities and should be a real asset for the village. Anyone passing the site over the last few weeks will have seen serious activity, with demolition, removal of underground fuel tanks and site preparation. The new houses should be ready for occupation by about the end of this year.

NEW INN SITE

The New Inn building has been looking desperately shabby over the last year or so, and it became clear that in the current market a small pub such as this can no longer survive commercially. We were therefore pleased that the new owner has managed to put together a viable scheme by combining the New Inn site with the site immediately behind it. Planning consent has now been granted for a total of 7 houses. The existing pub will be converted into two attached dwellings, and a further five houses will be built, three with access off The Green, the roadway at the rear, which will minimize the traffic emerging from the site at a bend on the busy main road. In addition there will be a small office suite on the site of the old skittle alley. This scheme also largely complies with the Neighbourhood Plan, although BRA would have preferred to see a mix of smaller houses than the proposed 4 and 5 bed ones consented. We understand development on this site is due to start before the middle of the year.

That is a brief summary of current planning activities. Your Committee will continue to actively monitor any further larger development proposals, give our comment to the Planning Authority and, if relevant, advise members accordingly.

Keith Riches then made statements on the following topics:-

Station Road – Safety:

During 2017 it was recognised that Station Road is becoming increasingly dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists due to ever increasing volumes of traffic. Mr Nick Hewitt started a campaign and the Parish Council established a Working Party involving Councillors and concerned residents. North Somerset Council Highways Department investigated in the autumn and a list of improvements was approved, which will cost just over £7000, to be funded by the Bristol Airport Community Fund for which we are grateful. Scheduled to be done this year, this work includes additional dropped-kerbs, more warning signs, edge of carriageway white lines, hedge trimming and a footpath to the bus stop opposite Backwell Motors. We welcome these measures, which should reduced risks somewhat. However, the main issue remains – ever increasing traffic on a road which is too narrow and lacking adequate pavements.

We also note that the proposal for a pedestrian crossing at Waverley Road was not accepted, following a limited pedestrian survey which concluded that the number of pedestrians crossing the road did not justify any further measures.

We will obviously continue to monitor the situation after the improvements are made. What else could be done? I'm not sure, but I do think at some stage there will have to be further consideration to a permanent 20 mph speed limit in Station Rd, Dark Lane, Rodney Road and elsewhere.

Finally, on this topic, I would like to emphasise two aspects.

- Firstly, when residents get together and raise concerns, the Parish Council does listen, and act within its powers.

- Secondly, all these safety concerns, whether it be in Station Road, Dark Lane or elsewhere, are caused by the remorseless increase in traffic volumes. Therefore, it is a major ongoing reason to examine the impact of all proposed, inappropriately large developments, and the infrastructure improvements they would need.

Nailsea & Backwell Train Station – Accessibility:

This is another very long running saga. BRA has not been closely involved, but we have maintained contact with Alison Morgan who has tenaciously spearheaded the campaign for more than ten years. We have also met with another wheelchair user, Steve Ledbrook and this discussion highlighted an additional problem - the lack of evening X8 bus services past the station.

This update is based on a recent article in the North Somerset Times. Originally it was proposed that a new ramp would be built up to the south side platform but this has been abandoned, apparently due to the condition of the embankment.

Great Western Railway (GWR) has more recently carried out a feasibility study to install lifts up to both platforms. Engineers from GWR's consultants have met with interested parties to discuss the different options and two proposals have now been agreed, one for each platform.

Alison has commented as follows:

“It was a very positive meeting but there is still a long way to go. We now have to wait for these options to be confirmed, final plans drawn up, the tender process and contractors to be appointed, the final costings to be agreed, any extra funding needed sourced and Network Rail's agreement. I am cautiously optimistic that things are moving forward at last, but after 10 years of campaigning and having had my hopes dashed in the past I won't be celebrating just yet. There are still a number of factors which could halt the project again, as yet we don't know how much the lifts will cost and if GWR will have set aside sufficient funds to cover the project.”

BRA will certainly support Alison's ongoing campaign in any way that helps.

Geoff Wells then gave a presentation on proposals for **The Expansion of Bristol Airport** which is summarised in the following extract from the slides exhibited: -

Growth in Passenger numbers

- In 2008, 6 million passengers used the Airport and this increased to 8.1 million by 2017. Growth is projected to 12 million by 2025, 15 million by 2035 and 19 million by 2045.

Privately owned

They are hoping to expand flights and employment/hotels on site

The Airport owners are carrying out a consultation

They will publish a “Master Plan” for further consultation in “Spring 2018”

They put forward 3 scenarios for the mid 2040’s

- **A** Gradual evolution over time
- **B** Replacement larger terminal near current site.
- **C** Second terminal on the far (south) side of the runway

Backwell Parish Council has considered the above and has posted a preference for Option C, which has a much smaller impact on Downside.

No need for any action until the Master Plan comes out

The airport is in a rural, hilly location with rural roads and no rail service

The A38 is not adequate for the current traffic

Any proposals will need close collaboration with highways/metro/rail – none of which the airport control

With no infrastructure improvements, should the airport plateau at present level?

How would any changes affect Backwell?

The Presentations ended at this point and were followed by an Open Forum and Questions.