

BACKWELL RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 17 November 2015 held in the Sixth Form Lecture Theatre at Backwell School at 7.00 pm

Present: The following Committee Members were present: Keith Riches (Chair), Richard Barclay, Gill Collinson, Chris Elliott, Margaret Kemp, Terry Merrett-Smith, Angela Ribbon-Miles, Mike Rose, Ian Tapping, Mike Veal, Sue Veal, Geoff Wells and Valerie Wells. A further 70 BRA Members attended and one new member.

1. Apologies for Absence: Apologies were received from Committee Members Kevin Crawford, Bruce Stewart and 16 other member households, together with Bob Taylor, Chair BPC and Vicky Angear (Press)
2. Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 11 November 2014: No points were raised and the Minutes were adopted.

3. Chairman's Report:

Chairman Keith Riches gave the following report:

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, thank you for coming to our AGM, and our thanks also to the school for allowing us to use this splendid lecture theatre. Last year some folk had difficulty hearing what was being said - I hope things will be better this year. I will start this report as usual by re-stating the objectives of the Association as set out in our Constitution. "BRA will work to safeguard and promote the collective interests of Backwell Residents in matters concerning social, economic and community life and the character of the village. The Association will support or oppose development affecting Backwell having regard to residents' interests and the local environment."

The Officers and Committee of the Association, as elected at the last AGM, have remained largely unchanged throughout the year except that our Treasurer, Richard Barclay, switched to the role of Membership Secretary and was replaced by Kevin Crawford who was co-opted in January and has done an excellent job in maintaining our financial records despite having a busy work schedule abroad. Bruce Stewart, the former Chairman and Secretary, was co-opted for the benefit of his enormous experience in Backwell planning matters and once again Sue Veal was co-opted as Minutes Secretary. Two further members were co-opted onto the Committee during the year. Margaret Kemp joined us in February and has now agreed to take over as Membership Secretary from Richard Barclay who has asked to move to the "backbenches" for the time being because of other commitments in the coming year. Angela Ribbon-Miles joined us in March and is managing our social media connections. The full Committee met monthly throughout the year and in addition, the smaller Executive Committee met many times to address more pressing issues. Committee members live in various parts of the village and have good links with many other groups and organisations and we maintain a close liaison with Backwell Parish Council to whom we lend our support whenever appropriate to our objectives. A rota of BRA Committee Members ensures attendance as observers at all BPC Full Council and Planning Meetings. We frequently make statements during Public Participation.

We have given great priority this year to keeping our members informed of topical issues and for this we are grateful particularly to Geoff and Val Wells who are both active members

of the Executive Committee. In particular, Geoff has been the principle architect of our e-mail Bulletins and printed Newsletters and has maintained regular contact with the local press. Val, with Gillian Collinson has been responsible for membership recruitment and distribution of leaflets and bulletins throughout the year. In addition to our newsletters we have delivered three leaflets to the whole village - this is a considerable task and my thanks go to all the distributors and deliverers.

I would also like to thank all the other members of our committee for their unfailing support and hard work throughout the year. Mike and Sue Veal have done a great job with various administrative aspects of running the Association and Mike has now agreed to become BRA's representative on the Stancombe Quarry Community Fund Committee which will consider applications for funding from deserving organisations in the three Parishes of Backwell, Flax Bourton and Barrow Gurney. This fund is likely to be up to £30,000 per year. Probably the busiest member of the Committee has again been our Planning Expert Mike Rose who was a member of the Steering Group which developed the Backwell Neighbourhood Plan. Their hard work was rewarded with a good turnout at the referendum and a thumping majority in favour, so the plan was made by North Somerset Council in April. We hope this will be a strong weapon in our armoury to prevent over-development in the village, but it has yet to be fully tested. There is also outstanding business in relation to the village's proposals for Local Green Space which the Examiner removed from the Neighbourhood Plan. This year Mike has been heavily involved in monitoring and commenting on some important planning applications, both for and against, and has been involved in meetings with Taylor Wimpey and Backwell Parish Council on proposals for a development at Moor Lane and also a recent meeting with North Somerset Council and the Parish Council regarding the revised proposals for Farleigh Fields. Mike will be reporting on these issues later this evening, as well as giving you a flavour of the higher level strategy documents which affect Backwell. Finally, he is also responsible for maintaining our link with Liam Fox MP.

Thanks are also due to our stalwart Assistant Treasurer, Terry Merrett-Smith, who looks after the day to day running of our finances and frequently expresses forthright and entertaining comments at our monthly meetings. Our Archivist, Ian Tapping, has continued excellent work filing and indexing a garage full of documents and has retrieved specific items when required. Chris Elliott has been responsible for the maintenance of our web site from the beginning of the year.

Other issues in which we have been involved during the year include the extended use of floodlights at the Football Club, which we resisted. A final decision has not been announced by North Somerset Council on this issue but we fear that our protests have fallen on deaf ears. We have been involved in the liaison committee for the Recycling Centre where we have previously made representations about noise levels and this year we have made representations about the presence of heavy vehicles during school start and finish times as there is a perceived danger to children.

We have been monitoring the impact of commuter parking in roads near the railway station car park following the introduction of charges at the enlarged Station car park. This remains a problem and we have made further representations to North Somerset Council in our comments on the planning application for development at Moor Lane.

The BRA Committee remain committed to preventing the over-development of Backwell but we do need to hear the views of our members and I hope that you will feel free to join in the open forum session to follow.

4. Membership Report:

Richard Barclay reported that during the year the membership had increased from 274 to 315 households. He announced the proposal to change the Financial and Membership year ends from the 30 September to 31 December. The Association's Membership period and Accounting period will, therefore, on this occasion run for the 15 month period from 30 September 2015 to 31 December 2016 and the next Annual General Meeting will be held early in 2017. This proposed change is to avoid confusion which has previously arisen regarding the due date for renewal of subscriptions which will from 2017 be the 1 January.

5. Amendments to the Constitution:

It was proposed by K Crawford and seconded by M Veal that the following changes be made to the Constitution:

- (i) In Section 4 of the Constitution "Management Committee", in line 1 the word "not" shall be inserted between the words "members" and "including".
- (ii) In Section 7 of the Constitution "Assets", in the final line, one of the erroneously repeated phrases "in advancing" shall be deleted.
- (iii) In Section 9 of the Constitution "Accounts", the first sentence shall be deleted and replaced by "The Accounting Year of BRA shall run from the 1 January in each year to the next following 31 December inclusive, except that from the 1 October 2015 the Accounting Period shall run to 31 December 2016 inclusive.
- (iv) In Section 14 of the Constitution "Annual General Meeting", in line 1, "in November" shall be deleted and "by 31 March in every year (except that no AGM shall be held in 2016)" inserted in its place in line 4, "30 September" shall be deleted and the following inserted in its place: "31 December except that in 2017 the Meeting will receive Accounts for the 15 month period from 1 October 2015 to 31 December 2016 in line 7, "1 October" shall be deleted and "1 January" inserted in its place.

The proposal was unanimously agreed.

6. Hon Treasurer's Report and Audited Accounts for 2014/2015:

Assistant Treasurer, Terry Merrett-Smith exhibited a summary of the audited Accounts. The full audited Accounts were available for inspection. M Veal proposed that they be approved, seconded by R Barclay. This proposal was unanimously agreed. A copy of the audited Accounts is available to BRA members upon application to the Honorary Secretary.

7. Election of Officers:

Secretary, Mike Veal paid tribute to the hard work throughout the year of Chairman Keith Riches and thanked him for his kind words of praise for the Committee members.

7.1: Hon Secretary – there was one nomination for this post – Mike Veal.

Proposed: K Riches and Seconded: G Wells. Mike Veal was elected unopposed.

7.2: Hon Treasurer: There was one nomination for this post – Kevin Crawford.

Proposed: R Barclay and Seconded: M Veal. Kevin Crawford was elected unopposed.

7.3: Committee Members:

The following Committee Members were co-opted during the year and offered themselves for election to serve on the Committee for a period of three years.

Margaret Kemp	Proposed: K Riches	Seconded: R Barclay
Angela Ribbon-Miles	Proposed: V Wells	Seconded: K Riches

The following Committee Members, having served three years, retired at this Meeting and offered themselves for re-election to serve for a further three years.

Richard Barclay	Proposed: T M-Smith	Seconded: V Wells
Terry Merrett-Smith	Proposed: M Veal	Seconded: M Rose
Ian Tapping	Proposed: K Riches	Seconded: M Veal
Keith Riches	Proposed: M Rose	Seconded: V Wells
Mike Rose	Proposed: G Wells	Seconded: C Elliott
Geoff Wells	Proposed: G Collinson	Seconded: K Riches
Val Wells	Proposed: R Barclay	Seconded: M Rose

Although one further vacancy was available on the elected Committee no nominations to fill this were received. All nine of the above proposed Committee Members were unanimously elected.

8. Appointment of Auditor:

Richard Gaunt, who was thanked for fulfilling the role of Auditor, agreed to continue in 2015/16. His appointment was proposed by K Riches, seconded by M Veal and he was elected unopposed.

9. Any Other Formal Business: There was none.

The formal proceedings of the Meeting were concluded at this point at 7.30 pm and Presentations with slides were given and an Open Forum held to discuss a range of current issues.

The notes of these informal discussions which are attached at Appendix 3 do not form part of the formal Minutes of the Annual General Meeting.

APPENDIX 3 – OPEN FORUM

Mike Rose gave a presentation on the specific larger planning applications currently under consideration by North Somerset Council.

1. Coles Quarry:

“An update. The developers finally received, back in February, a Planning Consent for 15 industrial units, subject to compliance with a number of conditions before work could start. There then followed months of very little activity!

Only in the last few weeks have the developers begun survey work etc to comply with these conditions. However they tell us they expect to have met the Planners requirements within the next few weeks, after which they will immediately carry out demolition of the old bagging plant, which, as many of you will be well aware, contains asbestos.

They are currently in consultation with the Environment Agency about the precise details of this removal, which can only be done by a specialist licensed contractor.

Many of you will also have noticed the developers are currently refurbishing the old Weighbridge House at the front of the site, which they are able to do without Planning Consent. They plan to rent this out as office space. We have a regular dialogue with the developer’s agent, and will continue to monitor activity very closely. This monitoring also relates to the rest of the site where the future is still a big unknown. We do, also have concerns that the industrial unit consent may never be implemented in its current form, on cost grounds.”

Q. Paul Herbert asked if there was a list of NSC conditions that Bristol and South West Developments have to abide by and how it was being monitored? He could not find it on the web site.

A. Mike Rose replied that an Officer from NSC will check that they have complied with the conditions. It is possible to go for freedom of information but one would hope that this would not be necessary.

Q. Hugh Dale asked if part of the weighbridge building is going to be used as an office for the Police to use?

A. Mike Rose said that the Police have an Office in Rodney Road where officers can go and do admin work and felt it unlikely that the Police will move to the weighbridge building.

Q. Sarah Rees asked about asbestos clearance. She said it was important that this is dealt with correctly and that checks should be carried out to make sure the Contractors clearing the asbestos have the right licence.

A. Mike Rose stated that he would find out. MR stated that Bristol and South West Developments are fully aware of the risks and want it to be handled properly. KR asked if Sarah Rees could let us know if she hears that it is being started. The contractors have to give 14 days’ notice before commencement.

Mrs Kemp commented that apparently a contractor from Lancer Scott had been in and surveyed the demolishing of a building alongside the weighbridge house. This has an asbestos roof and there are fears this has been dumped on site. Mrs Kemp hasn’t seen lorries leaving the site. She reported that work had commenced on the road which is going up to the new units. She said that as part of the planning application it was recommended that hoardings should have been put up to protect residents and this has not been done but the fencing near the entrance has been moved forward.

A. Mike Rose said he will look into all these concerns and take them up with Lancer Scott and Bristol and South West Developments.

David Glasson said that on the 16 November he watched the canteen and old office being knocked down and put on tipper trucks and carried away but he did not know to where and they could have been carried up into the quarry and buried. These buildings had asbestos

roofs. (He later spoke to Mike Rose and said that the asbestos was a very small amount and probably of the non-hazardous kind.)

Q. Julie Logan was concerned that the children at the local school near Coles Quarry could be in danger if asbestos is moved and we need to make a fuss and make sure that it is done properly. The health of the young people is more important than housing issues.

A. Mike Rose suggested that if residents near the site witness any activity which they feel might be dangerous they could use their cameras and take some photos.

Graham Bowerman stated that if asbestos is moved without a licence the offender can be sent to prison. It is a very serious offence and may have already been committed.

James Harwood later suggested that if it was thought the asbestos had been moved illegally the Police could be called.

2. Moor Lane:

“Identified in NP (and for 20 years previously) for commercial development and c. 40 houses. The NP also said if PP granted at Coles Quarry, this would meet Backwell’s employment requirement, and the whole site could go for housing.

Taylor Wimpey now owns the whole site, and has submitted an outline application for 65 houses, which would include about 20 affordable properties. Their original proposal was a series of standard 3 and 4 bedroom “boxes”, but after consultation with BPC, which included BRA representation, TW has agreed to increase the number of smaller properties.

Although, currently, they are not proposing any bungalows, and fewer smaller houses than we would like, and they want to build all the houses in one go, BRA’s view has been to support the proposal, **in principle** – largely because it conforms with the NP.

Our biggest concern, however, relates to traffic congestion in Moor Lane, its junction with Station Road and some other surrounding roads, much of which arises because of on-street parking by station commuters. We believe NSC will insist on some junction improvements and some parking restrictions, and BRA continues to provide input into these negotiations. However, our view, and I know this is NOT supported by some of the neighbours, is that this is the best use for the site and, subject to conditions, should be supported.“

There were no questions from the floor.

3. Farleigh Fields:

“The saga continues! Most of you will be familiar with the outline planning application submitted by Charles Church in February. This was for 340 houses serviced off a single junction on Farleigh Road. There was an enormous response from local residents –over 450 – almost exclusively objecting – and many thanks to all those here who made their objection. BRA remain strongly opposed – it is just far too much for the village, and is also contrary to the NP - and decided to employ a planning lawyer and a traffic consultant who also wrote strong objections on our behalf.

Some of the statutory consultees were also opposed – notably the NS Highways Officer, and the application was due to be turned down in the summer. However, CC then submitted a revised scheme, reducing house numbers to 220.

Again, a massive number of further objections were made, but to our surprise the Highways Department made an about turn and decided to withdraw their objection. BRA and our consultant managed to get a meeting with these officers 2 weeks ago (and we need to thank Karen Barclay for arranging this), and managed to at least get the officers to further review their advice. We await their final views!

In the meantime, the application has got bogged down in the NSC system – they currently still have 15 major applications to resolve and quite honestly I don’t think they know what to do about it! It now seems likely to go to Committee in January. The Planning Officer’s recommendation is still unclear, but, in any event, there is a strong suspicion that the decision may be made on political rather than technical grounds – it could still go either way BUT if

the application is rejected, it seems highly likely CC will take it to Appeal –so the saga is likely to continue all through next year I’m afraid!”

Q. Rachel Beckingsale reported that she has been in touch with NSC and she has been told that the planning application is going to Committee on the 9 December.

A. Mike Rose thought this was unlikely but he would check.

Q. Chris Perry asked whether if the present planning application was to be approved would BRA think they would want to go down the road of judicial review.

A. Mike Rose replied that if NSC give consent BRA could only Appeal on points of law. We would need to employ top quality lawyers. Non-compliance with the Neighbourhood Plan might be a suitable avenue. The decision will be partly political and the Neighbourhood Plan is not 100% watertight. We would need to have discussion with BPC and possibly have a meeting here of BRA members. We would have to review as and when it happened.

Charles Church, if they are turned down, might go to Appeal or wait until 2018

Q. Mike Timms suggested that the builders could reduce the number of houses down to 50-100 houses or until it gets through. In this case, would it be difficult to refuse?

A. Keith Riches replied that the last time Charles Church had put in a planning application to build 140 houses on Farleigh Fields was in 2000. This went to Appeal and was turned down by the Secretary of State. KR went on to say that once developers get a toe hold with a small number of houses they could possibly get approval to build on the rest of the land.

4. Ettrick Garage/Red Cross Hall sites:

“These two sites are in the same ownership –a local landowner - and were identified in the NP for the development of up to 10 new dwellings. For the last couple of years the site has been used for used-car sales, but I am pleased to be able to say that a new planning application is imminent. This will be for 8 small houses, 2 semis and 6 detached. It is likely BRA will support this application, at least in principle – compliant with the NP and exactly what many local residents have asked for – although, sadly perhaps, no affordable housing content as it is under the threshold of an obligatory percentage of affordable housing.

N.B. – this is one of the sites already “allocated” for development by NSC, so any houses here will NOT contribute to the 1715 shortfall!”

There were no questions or comments from the floor.

5. New Inn/Rising Sun Pub sites:

“The New Inn has been closed for over a year now. It is owned by Enterprise Inns who say they have tried to sell it or find a tenant, to continue as a pub- without success –probably because they are being too greedy!

They have also attempted to get someone to open it a shop, and also to get planning consent for 2 houses at the rear of the site – both also without success.

The site is in a conservation area, and also is on a dangerous bend.

Sadly, it doesn’t seem it can continue as a pub, so a carefully designed scheme for up to 6 or so houses, with a decent junction onto A370 seems the best bet.

One avenue which some communities have looked at for redundant pubs is an application for it to become an ACV – an Asset of Community Value – which gives a community group the opportunity to purchase the pub and run it as a going concern. We have briefly investigated this, but we think it is unlikely to be successful, but we would be interested in any views from the audience.

Sadly, the Rising Sun seems destined for the same. It is owned by the other big national pub owner – Punch Taverns – who clearly believe the site, with planning permission for housing, is more valuable than its existing use. And if we residents aren’t prepared to frequent the pub –how can we object!

The property has just been put on the market – for sale as a going concern – probably with the intention of seeking to prove to the Planners that there is no demand and therefore housing should be accepted.

This site is NOT in a conservation area and is on the safer side of the bend. Realistically, it could take a well designed residential scheme and BPC, plus BRA representation, are already in discussion seeking a development of small properties.

Clearly 2016 could be very interesting for these two sites!”

Q. Stuart Williams said that The New Inn had been bought by a developer and sold to South East Developments. The Land Registry entry for this Company has an address in British Virgin Islands.

A. Mike Rose said that he will follow this up.

Q. Peter Lamb asked whether The New Inn had any historical significance.

A. Mike Rose said unfortunately not. It looks likely that the Pub will be converted into housing with some more houses being built behind.

Q. James Harwood asked whether The New Inn could remain as a Pub and The Rising Sun being bigger could be developed and converted to a community venue?

A. Mike Rose stated that BRA had discussed the possibility of turning The New Inn into a community Pub but that this probably would not work in Backwell. It tends to work very well in small villages where there are no shops and the Pub is the focal point for the village. He will make contact with the new owners for the Pub being maintained and building at the rear.

Julie Logan said there was support for The New Inn as a Pub and there had been a planning application at one time to build at the back of the Pub to make a bigger restaurant.

Mike Rose then went on to give a presentation on the wider planning picture.

National Government Housing Policy:

Currently a shambles! There is a desperate housing shortage in many areas of the country including the South West caused by:

- population growth
- immigration
- changed culture with more people wanting/forced to live alone

The Government has not yet got any real answers but in the meantime there is a strong presumption in favour of development and sometimes this will be on green field sites.

Implications for Backwell:

North Somerset’s Core Strategy (for the period to 2026) is adopted but several key policies are still excluded from this adoption, following an Appeal in 2013 – notable those policies affected by the total number of house plots required to be identified.

This number has now been imposed by the Secretary of State (in September) – 20,985 instead of the original proposal of 14,000 by 2026. NSC has identified all except 1,715 of these, and is still looking for this shortfall.

At the Neighbourhood Plan Enquiry, NS Officers publicly stated they could find this shortfall without recourse to Backwell but matters have moved on and NSC are now saying they may need to find some of these plots in some of the service villages.

Backwell is one of nine of these “service villages”. Policy CS32 of the Core Strategy specifically refers to them and the relevant quote is as follows:-

“Proposals for small scale development appropriate to the size and character of the village, which respects its character and enhances the role as a local hub for community facilities etc., will be supported.”

In theory, none of the possible Backwell sites and notably Farleigh Fields falls into this category but we may still be vulnerable. NSC are currently asking for yet more comments, but with the intention of getting all outstanding policies by this coming Spring.

The Neighbourhood Plan is now an adopted Policy, and does carry some weight, but the final version approved by the Examiner was watered down and whilst it contains the paragraph above, does not give us complete protection by any means.

Backwell is protected by green belt and this Policy remains pretty strong. Basically the whole of the east and south of the village is in green belt. The land to the west, and also Farleigh Fields is not in green belt.

Whilst almost all unbuilt areas of any size are outside the Settlement Boundary, the Core Strategy makes it clear amendments may have to be made to the Settlement Boundaries which means some sites may become vulnerable.

Now, to make life more uncertain still –

- The Core Strategy and also the Neighbourhood Plan are due for a further review in 2018.
- A new strategy has been introduced by the Government – the concept of more regional government – and thereby preparing a **Joint Spatial Strategy** for the whole of the West of England – which of course includes both Bristol and North Somerset.
- Included in this Plan will be housing numbers up to **2036**. They are looking for an enormous further **85,000 plots** (30,000 more than originally suggested). NSC will have to bear a fair share of this, and the strong likelihood is the Service Villages will also have to accept a share (and recent reports suggest this could be up to 1,800 plots across the nine villages).
- Comments on these proposals are invited (up to the end of January). One of BRA's exercises over the next few months may be to evaluate which are the "least worst" sites for development to take place within the village.

Your input to this will be invited!

Future possible development locations?

(thinking ahead to the Joint Spatial Strategy)

Farleigh Fields?

End of Rodney Road, next to Westleigh School?

Grove Farm, land off Chelvey Lane?

Land at top of Dark Lane (currently green belt)?

Land at end of Moor Lane?

BRA would welcome the views of its members."

Q. Julie Logan expressed concern about infrastructure. Westleigh School can take 180 pupils maximum and at the moment there are 170. When parents are invited to School assemblies they are crammed into a too small Hall.

Q. Chris Perry felt that NS should be asked whether more School places would be made available and felt that the Highways situation is also very important.

Bill Lee said that infrastructure needs to be in place at the time of building new developments of houses or before. The old NSC brought in a Highways Plan in 1972 that nothing should happen until road improvements are in place. This has been left out of the Core Strategy.

A. Keith Riches agreed the highway situation is very serious across North Somerset.

James Harwood commented that groups like BPC and BRA have not the clout to sort this out. Individuals need to write and keep on arguing until something is done.

Geoff Wells then spoke about the smaller applications.

Station car Park As mentioned in the latest Newsletter, the recently expanded car park is not used to capacity. In September I counted 72 and 110 spaces on two mid week, midday, one wet one dry occasion, and today I counted only 26 free spaces, as I walked round in the rain at 11am. The capacity of the car park is 285 spaces. So, even though it is not at capacity today, it is not that far short.

If we now look at the nearby Moor Lane, we see the congestion caused by cars parked in this narrow road – many of which are those of commuters. Only one lane is available, and the photo shows a total blockage when cars cannot get out of Moor Lane to enter Station Road. So, we have a brand new well designed car park operating under capacity, and local roads clogged up with parked cars left by commuters saving their £1.50 parking charge a day. The annoying aspect of this is that the congestion is caused by only a dozen or so cars in Moor Lane, with possibly a maximum of 30 if one includes other cars parked in nearby roads. These could all fit comfortably in the station car park. Just a few cars are causing all the problems.

We raise this topic as we know it is very important to those who use Moor Lane – and any new housing development will make it even worse ! Consultation by North Somerset and Backwell Parish Councils with residents is essential. Possible changes are unlikely to please everyone:

Free station parking – loss of revenue for NSC

Yellow lines (double or single) in Moor lane – prevents locals parking outside own houses

Short time parking restriction eg noon till 1pm. This would prevent day long commuters, and be less of a problem for residents but needs policing .

Resident permits - cost of administration/checking and is often not popular

We trust that the decision makers will take into account the views of those living in the area, and not impose something without consultation. There are several BRA members in Moor Lane, and Backwell Vale – we would welcome any suggestions.

Football Floodlights Permission for these was granted in 1991 – along with strict conditions on their use. There are 4 poles in the corners, each being 16 metres high. Conditions were placed on the number of games that could be played under floodlight, how long they could be lit before and after a game and most importantly the poles had to be lowered to ground level for 5 months in the summer. In 2010, Backwell United merged with teams from Ashton in Bristol to form Ashton & Backwell United, increasing the number of teams, and the field was renamed the Lancer Scott stadium. In 2013, the Club applied to have these conditions hugely relaxed, and North Somerset agreed to this for a trial period of one year. The Club has now applied to have these made permanent. Some 20 residents have lodged strong objections,, along with BPC and BRA. Individual footballers, almost exclusively from Bristol, have supported the application !!

The planning application asks for the poles to remain up during August and September, with only a 3 month respite rather than the current 5 months. And for a 33% increase in total number of floodlit games allowed. North Somerset planners have suggested that this “essential” demand from the footballers should be allowed, and that there will be no significant impact on the residents – despite all our protests over the years, and objections

from our Parish council and BRA. Our small field is not designed for the intense use of a city "stadium".

I need to declare an interest. This is my garden ! The field has been fine when used for village football on a Saturday afternoons, even after the floodlights were installed in 1991, and being used for training sessions and some mid week games. It is intensity of use and change in conditions that we object to. I must emphasise that BRA takes conflict of interest very seriously, and I took no part in the decision to make the BRA objection.

The main complaints are:

Visual intrusion of the 16 metre poles (this affects our house most as you can see)

Glare from the lights into many house windows nearby, and visible from a fair distance away
Bad language from footballers shouting to each other, and from spectators.

(goal keepers for example are regularly shouting advice across the field to team mates, and the referee)

The back gardens of houses against the field are the quiet part of our properties. Several residents enjoy sitting out with friends as the sun sets on a warm summer evening find the noise from shouting footballers so intrusive that they have to go inside for the evening. A decision is awaited. We are concerned that we could be badly let down by North Somerset.

Backwell Hill – Long Lane

I would like to mention 2 planning applications which many people will not have heard about. They are at either end of Long Lane on Backwell Hill, as shown on the map. Both have planning complexities.

The old BT research station is only known to walkers, but the mast is clearly visible from most of the village. The site has not been used for some 20 years, and is being sold by the estate of a Backwell resident who died some time ago. Access to the site is along a track off the end of Long Lane, used mainly by cattle belonging to Home Farm. It is a very remote site. The whole area is in Green Belt, but special permission was granted for the mast to provide good transmission. BRA suggests that with the mast no longer in use, the site now reverts back to Green belt, whereas the developer argues that it is a brown field site. The proposal is for 4 houses, probably 4 bedroomed, to be built on the site. BRA has opposed the application as it is not in the NP, and has difficult access to the centre of Backwell. There are also problems in that the site has no water supply, and it shares the farm track with the twice daily cow traffic from the farm, which regularly gets excessively muddy. Not ideal for housing!. Amazingly, BPC had no objection.

The second application on the map is at the junction of Long Lane with Backwell Hill Road, and I am surprised that it has received little publicity. It is as follows:

Change of use to a circus yard and associated works comprising 5 plots including 8 mobile homes, 5 touring caravans, 8 storage containers, 1 utility container, septic tank and hardstanding (Retrospective)

The site is very well fenced off, but I managed to get my camera into a small hole near the lock on the gate, and take this inside shot.

There is a very professionally produced application for this work, citing several legal cases, involving human rights and other legal matters. There is 28 page letter on the website, which I commend to anyone wishing to understand the application Here is an extract

In order to do this, Planning Policy for Traveller

Sites sets out a number of aims, the relevant ones to this application are:

- to increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply*
- to enable provision of suitable accommodation from which travellers can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure*

BPC objected as it is in the Green Belt., but with no further comment.

BRA has not yet lodged a formal comment but will do so on several grounds . The site is in the green belt and would create substantial traffic on narrow lanes, in particular with caravans, and with children being driven to school down Cheston Combe. North Somerset will have many factors to consider in making a judgement on this application, perhaps including the horse drawn traffic problem !!!

Finally some good news, and a change that we will all no doubt think is one for the better. The HSBC bank site near the SPAR will no longer continue to deteriorate, as it has been taken by Thomas Davis, funeral directors, from Bristol. After fitting out and having had some admin hold ups, I spoke with the company who said they hope to have it open in January. We are glad to welcome them!!

Keith Riches then spoke about flooding in Farleigh Road. He reported that Councillor Steve Mitchell, BPC had done a great job in getting NSC to carry out the long planned drainage work. The rain we have had recently has not been as bad as we had in the previous two years and the work they have done has, therefore, not yet been tested.

Chris Reed said that members should read the two Veale Wasbrough letters written on our behalf regarding development of houses on Farleigh Fields. Keith Riches also said that reports, written on our behalf by Colin Jones, a Highways expert of some 20/30 years, showing the impact of this development on the A370 were well worth a read.

Peter Soothill said there might be a case for people to argue that once the new ring road was built Backwell would see less traffic and therefore more houses could be built here.

Bill Lee stated that a study for the Bristol Link Road indicated that there would be a relief of traffic from the A370. On this evidence, NS allowed the Inspector to dismiss all the arguments we put forward on the Neighbourhood Plan.

Q. John Leggett asked whether there were authoritative figures on the traffic going through Backwell.

A. Keith Riches replied that BRA has carried out a traffic survey in Dark Lane. A survey for the centre of the village was done last year and perhaps it needs to be done again as the survey was carried out when the water mains were being done. Other surveys were possibly done during this period by the developer Charles Church. The traffic appears to have returned to normal over the past two/three months.

Keith Riches thanked everyone for coming and commented that Coles Quarry had provoked the most questions and concerns and that we will now be urgently giving further attention to this issue.

An unidentified member at the back of the room expressed thanks to the Committee for their hard work and there was general approval by the membership in the usual way.

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.