**APPENDIX 1**

**BACKWELL RESIDENTS’ ASSOCIATION AGM – 12 February 2019**

**NOTES ON PRESENTATIONS**

**Mike Rose** gave the following introduction

“As Keith has intimated earlier town planning has again been a major focus this year. In 2017 the Parish Council decided to re-constitute their planning Working Party, to study all aspects and implications of the JSP, the JTS, the emerging new Local Plan and what to do about Backwell’s, now somewhat historic, Neighbourhood Plan, as well as the prospective application to develop the Grove farm site.

I have been privileged to be asked to join this group which has met regularly throughout the year, as the BRA representative. Also asked to join was Lucy White, a professional planner living and working in the village, and a BRA member.

During the year Lucy has been commissioned to do work for both the Working Party – and therefore the Parish Council – and also directly for BRA. She has authored extensive responses for both parties.

We have invited Lucy to explain – hopefully in as palatable way as possible – what has been going on in the last year, obviously mainly as it affects Backwell, and the likely activities and actions in the next 12 months or so.”

Mike Rose then handed over to **Lucy White** who gave a Presentation which is summarised in the following extract from the slides which she exhibited.

**Where were we at the last AGM?**

Concern Farleigh Fields would be approved.

Grove Farm Application awaited.

JSP examination expected Summer 2018

Draft Local Plan expected Summer 2018

**What actually happened?**

Farleigh Fields rejected by Secretary of State, backing given to our Neighbourhood Plan.

Grove Farm – no application submitted – now due Spring 2019.

JSP delayed

Additional Technical evidence – consultation Winter 2018

Hearings – May/June 2019?

**Infrastructure Plans diluted**

Disconnect between infrastructure and housing

1. “Backwell and Flax Bourton Bypass” deleted.
2. Road link from Nailsea to Clevedon/J20 deleted.
3. Road link west of Backwell to Nailsea deleted.
4. Transport hub at Station retained.
5. Decked Car Park
6. Park and Ride encouraged
7. Metro bus services
8. Rail Services improved (longer trains)
9. Station Road – potential closure!!!

**Implications?**

1. Congestion exacerbated on A370
2. Severed links between Backwell and Nailsea
3. Rural lanes – rat runs
4. More traffic through Flax Bourton
5. More congestion around Backwell Farleigh
6. Green belt at Farleigh vulnerable to future development.

**What else?**

We are not alone

Fundamental concerns raised by others to the JSP Plans, including Backwell and Nailsea SDL’s.

Town and Parish Councils

Stage Coach

Avon Wildlife Trust

Failure to explore alternative locations for growth

**What’s next?**

Inspector’s response to Technical Evidence Consultation awaited

Preliminary Hearing Timetable awaited

Grove Farm Application anticipated – Spring 2019

BRA /BPC and BR to be jointly represented (if invited)

Local Plan – late 2019?

**What to do**

Submit comments on Grove Farm Planning Application

Consider your vote in the May elections

Support BRA’s efforts at JSP

Submit comments on Local Plan

Read the newsletters!

**Mike Rose** then gave a Presentation on other Planning Issues as follows:-

**FARLEIGH FIELDS**

We finally heard at the end of last March that the appeal by Persimmon had been rejected by the Secretary of State and the Planning Inspectorate.

This was the fourth time the village had successfully defended this site and was welcomed with great acclaim – Thank you again to all members who supported the defence in one way or another.

It should be pointed out, however, this does not prevent the developers coming back at some future date – when the planning climate may be somewhat different.

The other good news about this land, though, is the grant by North Somerset of the status of two of the large fields as **Local Green Space**. The two fields in question form a T shape through the middle of the site and are the ones which have footpaths coming across them. This status effectively prevents any future development. However this would not, in principle, prevent a developer getting consent on the field behind the Dark Lane houses or the field below Fairfield school.

For information - The other site in Backwell granted LGS status at the same time was Backwell Lake.

**MOOR LANE**

Obtaining planning consent on this site has been a very protracted affair. The principle of developing 65 houses was approved long ago, but agreeing the fine detail has been endless so that consent was only finally granted in mid January.

The last details concerned some further parking controls which will help with traffic congestion near the Station Road junction.

These controls are not nearly as extensive as sought by BRA and many residents – but certainly an improvement on the current situation.

We expect the development to start later this Spring

It comprises 65 dwellings, including 22 affordable ones and a number of bungalows which provides a reasonable amount of variety - bur NO “small” houses!

**ETTRICK GARAGE SITE**

Lots of activity here – on this prominent site next to the village centre. The 8 small houses are nearing completion and will be available for occupation by early summer.

Certainly a big improvement on what had become an eyesore for 2 or 3 years.

**NEW INN SITE**

This site, together with more land at the rear has consent for 9 dwellings. After a hiatus, development is now underway. The land fronting the main road will comprise two new semi-detached houses and the New Inn building itself is being converted into two houses and an office. A further 5 large houses at the rear will all be accessed off The Green, the adjoining cul de sac. BRA had proposed at least some of the houses should be small but this was not accepted by the Planners.

**OTHER HOUSING SITES**

Two new small houses are nearing completion on the old Chorley’s Yard in Dark Lane.

Consent has also been granted for 4 “eco-houses” on the old BT research station at the top of Backwell Hill. Although in Green Belt and remote from village facilities, the site was deemed to be “brownfield” and hence granted consent. There is no sign of activity on site to date.

It is interesting to note that, although the adopted 2016 Neighbourhood Plan did not precisely specify a number of dwellings which should be developed in the period to 2026, the original number proposed was about 100. Taking the sites I have referred to tonight, plus a couple of other windfall plots, this takes the number to about 88 –already well on the way to, but not far off the 100 target.

**COLES QUARRY**

I have saved this to last as it is probably the most contentious!

I won’t bore you by going again into the long history of planning applications over the last few years. However we are now reliably informed the current position is as follows:

The old weighbridge house (which did not need planning consent to refurbish) has now been attractively completed and is available for letting as offices. We understand there is considerable interest from occupiers, and it does dramatically improve the entrance to the site.

Planning consent was granted on the first quarry plateau for industrial units in 2014. Significant preparatory ground works have recently been carried out to enable implementation of this scheme or something similar.

A revised application for 16 industrial units was submitted in 2016, creating a large number of objections from local residents. This application has been sitting on file in the North Somerset Planners office awaiting more information from the Applicants, with very little happening for over two years.

Literally at the end of last week, there has been more positive action. The applicants have finally submitted their transport study, and have also submitted revised plans .

This includes 15 small units – a very similar layout to the 2016 plan, but

importantly, only requesting B1 usage – i.e. light industrial or office. AND

A revised layout of the adjoining recycling centre – so that users will drive to the far end of the site, do a U turn, and drive back with the skips on their left (rather than on their right as currently). This will considerably help the current problem seen quite regularly of cars queuing back down Dark Lane.

We understand the North Somerset planners are seriously considering the merits of these revisions.

We have only seen these changes in the last 48 hours and BRA has yet to come to a decision as to how to respond. We have until **14 April** to comment.

Again we have a dilemma:  
 - the scheme would provide badly needed local employment units

- and the proposals SHOULD improve access to the recycling centre BUT

- there is a danger of more traffic in Dark Lane and more traffic congestion all in the vicinity of the Junior school.

- and – the revised scheme does project into the Green Belt, beyond the original Quarry plant footprint.

It would be helpful to take a straw poll in favour or NOT in favour of 15 new industrial units on this site. **A show of hands indicated that there was support for both sides of the argument but no clear majority either way.**

**Keith Riches** then gave the following Presentation on other current topics.

**Station Road Safety Measures**

BRA was not directly involved in the Parish Council Working Party which considered this matter but we did lobby hard for something to be done to improve safety, especially for pedestrians and cyclists in Station Road. I think we were all surprised when North Somerset Council found the funds last summer and cracked on with the changes with which we have all become familiar. The speed bumps do not meet with universal approval although only a very small number of members have contacted us to complain. On the other hand, a much larger number of members have said they feel much safer walking along the Station Road pavement and most cyclists say they also feel safer. The BRA committee was not unanimously in favour of the measures but we have all agreed that now they have been implemented they must be given a fair trial. There will be a chance to comment later, but I would like to have a quick straw poll – please raise your hand if you do NOT agree with the measures now in place **(40% show of hands)**.Now, those who DO agree with the measures now in place **(60% show of hands)**. Many thanks.

**Speed Limits elsewhere in the village**

Now, it seems one of the repercussions of the Station Road 20 limit has been increased use of alternative routes such as Rodney Road, and many vehicles travelling too fast along such roads. We understand the Parish Council is considering what to do next, and whether a 20 limit on other village roads, apart from the A370, might be a viable way to improve road safety. The BRA committee is aware of safety concerns along Dark Lane and near the schools, but is NOT unanimously in favour of a ‘blanket’ 20 limit. What we do know is that funds are not likely to be available to replicate the Station Road measures elsewhere and without such measures it is very difficult to enforce a 20 limit. Indeed, NSC turned down the idea of a 20 limit along Dark Lane some time ago.

Again, feel free to comment later, but another straw poll might be helpful – please raise your hand if you would NOT like to see a 20 limit throughout the village apart from the A370 **(30%** **show of hands)**. Now, those in favour of such a measure **(70% show of hands)**. Many thanks.

**Bristol Airport Expansion**

We have all had plenty of opportunity to comment through the airport’s consultation process and we knew a planning application for airport expansion would be with North Somerset Council before the end of 2018. With the benefit of hindsight, I wish we had canvassed members’ views during the autumn – my apologies for not doing that. The committee was mostly in favour of objecting but this was not unanimous. In any case we did not feel we had a strong enough mandate to object on your behalf, although our bulletins did result in a few members copying their objection letters to us. As a result, we did slightly fudge the issue by stating our five main concerns but then saying we could not support the

application. I looked at the web site on Saturday – there were 1909 objections and 335 supporting. Remarkably few of those came from Backwell despite publicity by BPC and BRA. We will now have to see what North Somerset Council does – they certainly have plenty of reading to do!

These Presentations were followed by an Open Forum with Questions and Answers after which **Keith Riches** rounded off the Meeting with some personal comments. He said that sometimes it must sound like we are against development but we have supported housing in the Neighbourhood Plan. We try to focus on the right type of development. Building all these houses at Grove Farm is going to create more traffic. We need truly affordable housing. People are going to get into their cars to go to work and they won’t be adaptable!

He also commented that the vast majority of the traffic issues stem back to the 1950’s when it was decided to develop Nailsea from a village to a town. Bill Lee, a former NSC Highways Executive put forward a scheme many years ago for a brand new road for Nailsea. This never happened leaving Nailsea to be serviced only by the roads through Wraxall, Tickenham and under the railway bridge in Station Road, Backwell.

Keith thanked everyone for their attendance and participation and the Meeting closed at 9.00 pm.