**Backwell Residents’ Association Report to BPC Annual Meeting of Electors – 25 April 2019**

BRA currently represents over 400 households. 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 smaller Executive Meeting held many additional meetings. We have 14 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 most Planning Committee Meetings and BRA has registered comments on a number of important Planning Applications submitted to North Somerset Council.

Among the issues with which BRA has concerned itself in the past year are the following:-

West of England Joint Spatial Plan

The Joint Spatial Plan designates land to the west of Backwell, at Grove Farm, as a Strategic Development Location for 700 homes, creation of a Transport Hub at the Train Station and a new road across Backwell Common. BRA is strongly opposed to these proposals and is pleased to have joined forces with the Parish Council and Backwell Resistance. One of our Committee Members, Mike Rose, is a member of the PC Working Party and BRA is contributing to the cost of employing Planning, Transport and Ecology experts. BRA has contributed £3,500 towards these professional costs and has set aside a further £4,000 if required later this year on a fund-matched basis with the Parish Council.

In the next few months we expect the JSP Hearings to take place, Taylor Wimpey to submit a planning application on the Grove Farm site and NSC to issue its new draft Local Plan. All these could have massive implications for the future of Backwell. We will aim to monitor their progress and react accordingly, working alongside the Parish Council whenever appropriate.

Coles Quarry

We are concerned by the revised Planning Application for an increased number of business units on this site. Residents living in Dark Lane and Church Lane are already inconvenienced by increased traffic associated with the school, the airport and in particular, when it is open, the Recycling Centre. Residents have yet to experience the effect of the business units which have already been approved. So far, the NSC Highways Department has down-played the current traffic situation and has not done a survey in recent times.

We know that on an average day 350 vehicles per day use the Recycling Centre, adding considerably to congestion on our inadequate roads including Station Road. Rather than improving the current site as proposed, BRA considers that the Recycling Centre should be moved to a more sustainable location, nearer the majority of users, which would not be in Backwell.

BRA has objected to the latest Coles Quarry Planning Application and has requested that, if NSC does approve it, restrictions on the opening hours of the site should be imposed and speed restrictions in Dark Lane and Church Lane should be introduced.

Bristol Airport

BRA awaits with interest the decision by North Somerset Council on the Planning Application by the Airport owners to increase the capacity of the Airport to 12 million passengers per annum. There is clearly a great deal of concern in the communities which are more directly affected, particularly with regard to noise, air pollution, traffic issues and the proposals for increased night flights. BRA considers the proposed expansion would lead to increasing issues for Backwell, especially traffic on inadequate local roads. Therefore BRA decided not to support the application.

BRA also wrote to Liam Fox expressing concerns and has recently received copies of two letters which he wrote on the 18th and 25th March to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government as a result of contact by BRA and others. In his letters he draws attention to the concerns to which BRA referred and states that if NSC do not deal satisfactorily with these issues he may ask the Secretary of State to consider calling in the Application at a later stage.

20 mph Speed Limits

BRA is aware that the Parish Council is examining the cost and desirability of imposing a 20 mph speed limit throughout Backwell, excluding the A370. At the BRA AGM in February we sought the views of members present by a show of hands; 70% were in favour of this reduced speed limit.

Stancombe Quarry Liaison and Community Fund

BRA has continued to be represented at Liaison Meetings with the Quarry owners and we thank the Parish Council for sharing with us Backwell’s voting powers on the distribution of monies from the Community Fund. We feel that the administration of this Fund is working well and it is pleasing that, to date, several deserving projects in Backwell have received over 50% of the allocated Funds.

In Conclusion

The BRA Committee continues to do its best for the village, mostly working with the Parish Council. BRA has a comprehensive website and facebook page which we encourage residents to visit. The annual subscription to BRA is only £10 per household and the more members we have the more we can do for the village. Busy times ahead!

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

Keith Riches

Chairman

Backwell Residents’ Association