Dear Member 4th December 2020

(this bulletin is also attached as a WORD file)

We hope you are coping with the continuing restrictions, and the uncertainty in planning for Christmas.

Unfortunately, several issues have come to the boil in the festive season. We hope that this bulletin allows you to follow the main points, and make any comments on those that you feel strongly about. BRA is preparing its responses to the first 3 topics in this bulletin, and these will be put on our website under the appropriate tabs before the deadlines.

**APPLICATION TO BUILD 65 HOUSES OFF RODNEY ROAD**

[20/P/1847/OUT | Outline application for residential development of up to 65 dwellings with matters of access for approval and all other matters of appearance, scale, layout and landscaping reserved for subsequent approval | Land West Of Rodney Road Backwell (n-somerset.gov.uk)](https://planning.n-somerset.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=QELJ7RLPGK700&activeTab=summary)

Comments on this application closed on September 9th, with 324 comments against the proposal. A decision has yet to be made by North Somerset Council (NSC). Its Highways Dept has produced a report which criticised some aspects of the access, and is shown as a **documen**t dated October 12th. Taylor Wimpey (TW) has responded to this with 3 diagrams of a revised access posted as **documents** on the NSC website on 23rd November. Two features of this are to make the slip road (on the left travelling from the shops) one way only, and to create a pavement on the island alongside Rodney Road. The island slopes quite steeply near here and works would be very close to the roots of the blossom tree with the Tree Preservation Order, and could compromise its future. In view of the original strength of opposition from residents, BRA has consulted transport specialists to give a view on the impact of these new documents.

Nothing in the revised proposals changes our view that the access is too tight to enable pedestrians to be safe. It is debatable whether the changes proposed are both feasible and an improvement on the original.

Points of concern are:

* The pedestrian routes around the Scout Hut area are inadequate and potentially hazardous.
* Many vehicles will leave the estate going towards the shops. This will require a sharp right turn to get onto Rodney Road near the bend.
* The possible danger to the protected blossom tree.
* There will be intrusive signage in this small area. It will need at least 4 No Entry / One-way signs and posts, all illuminated. Parking restrictions around the area will need to be introduced, inconveniencing local residents, to enable through traffic including refuse and emergency vehicles.
* The latest proposals by TW of course do nothing to change our view that the roads leading into the site (Rodney Road, Moorfield Road, Embercourt Drive, Westfield Road etc) would struggle to cope with the extra traffic from another 65 dwellings.

People have a right to respond to the TW revision using the “make a comment” button on the link above, even though the original deadline has passed. We believe brief comments from residents dismissing the revisions and confirming opposition to the development would be a benefit when NSC considers its decision in the New Year. The formal response to NSC from BRA will be put on our website in the near future – under the “Taylor Wimpey Housing Proposals” tab.

**NORTH SOMERSET LOCAL PLAN**

[Consultation Homepage - North Somerset Local Plan 2038: Challenges and Choices Part 2: Choices for the Future - North Somerset Council Consultations (inconsult.uk)](https://n-somerset-pp.inconsult.uk/consult.ti/NSLPChoices/consultationHome)

This a reminder for you to complete the “Choices” survey, **with responses required by Monday 14th December**. We hope as many members as possible will respond. BRA has made its formal response, with the help of our consultant, which will shortly be available on the BRA website, under the “North Somerset Local Plan” tab.

**BRISTOL AIRPORT**

A poll of BRA members in December 2019 showed that a large majority of members objected to the Airport’s plan to expand from 10 million passengers per annum to 12 mppa.

In March 2020, North Somerset Council (NSC) formally refused the application (Ref 18/P/5118/OUT), **as the airport already has capacity to expand up to 10mppa, and further expansion was refused on environmental grounds in the light of the Climate Emergency.** The Airport subsequently appealed against this decision. The appeal is likely to be heard at a Public Inquiry in July / August 2021, lasting about 4 weeks.

The original application can found [here](https://planning.n-somerset.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=PJML85LPMKI00&activeTab=summary).

Bristol Airport has chosen **this week** to submit **additional evidence** to support its case for expansion to 12mppa. The consultation period is frustratingly short and clashes with the local plan consultation and Christmas. **Residents have until 6th January 2020** to respond on this new application (Ref 20/P/2896/APPCON).

There are 300 pages of additional evidence much of which is highly technical. Bristol Airport has also updated its passenger number forecasts, following the recent drop of 85%. They expect numbers will return to near normal by the end of 2021, although aviation experts say this is more likely to be 2023/24. Their mid-range assumption for passenger numbers reaches their 10m capacity around 2024 and grows to 12 mppa by 2030 (if they are allowed to expand).

The main issues remain the environmental impact of permanent loss of habitat and green belt, plus increased traffic, pollution levels and noise, far outweighing the economic benefits. The expansion would not be in the best interests of Backwell residents, especially those at Downside. Sitting alongside this Appeal is theFully Coordinated Slot status application which, if achieved, would undoubtedly increase night flights and allow 24/7 operation.

**What can residents do next?**

**Please respond to this latest information by Wednesday 6th January 2021. You can confirm that your comment is unchanged from your earlier objection, if you made one.**

The BRA website gives our formal response to the original application, which members may find helpful, along with other documents to be found on our “Bristol Airport” tab. BRA will be submitting its formal response to NSC after analysing the new material, and this will be posted on our website.

**To make your comment, no matter how short, please go to** [20/P/2896/APPCON](https://planning.n-somerset.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=QK9A6KLP01600&activeTab=summary).

**ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY** **CONSULTATION**

[Consultation Homepage - Active Travel Strategy - North Somerset Council Consultations (inconsult.uk)](https://n-somerset.inconsult.uk/consult.ti/ats/consultationHome)

It is the season for surveys! NSC has great ambitions to increase the number of journeys we take on foot or on a cycle. There are 89 pages of a report explaining the strategy, along with a 10-page summary. It is however a short simple questionnaire with only 10 questions. These include some that address the practical reasons why people are not walking and cycling more. The link is given above, with **responses needed by Thursday 17th December**.

**BACKWELL LEISURE CENTRE**

There is some good news!

NSC has committed funds to make repairs to the Backwell Leisure Centre. Budgets are very tight, but our NSC Councillor Bridget Petty, and others, emphasised the importance of leisure provision at this time for our physical and mental health.
It will involve extensive roof repairs, and a new boiler. The work is planned to enable re-opening from the spring, but delays are possible as with any project, which could be exacerbated by Covid restrictions.

**YELLOW LINES ON MOOR LANE**

There is some encouraging news for residents of Backwell Vale regarding the temporary parking restrictions in Moor Lane which are due to expire in February 2021, by which time it was originally expected that the Coppice Place development would be completed. Taylor Wimpey has now proposed that similar restrictions be made a permanent feature and extended further into Longthorn, where commuter parking remains a problem. Our District Councillor, Backwell Parish Council and BRA all support this proposal and it is hoped that it will be approved by North Somerset Council.

**BACKWELL COMMON CLOSURE MON DEC 14TH AND TUES DEC 15TH**

NSC has given notice of the closure of Backwell Common near the railway bridge, to enable Bristol Water to repair a fire hydrant. A public notice is always issued for any road closure, which states it is for “a maximum period of 18 months”, but in this case adds that “it is anticipated to be 2 days in duration”, which is quite a relief after seeing the mention of 18 months!!

We send everyone very best wishes for the festive season.

From your BRA Committee

**Visit our website on** <http://www.backwellresidents.org.uk>

**Email us at** backwellresidents@btinternet.com