

Backwell Residents Association Newsletter

April 2025

We invite you to come to our AGM on Tuesday 29th April from 7pm to 9pm in the Sixth Form Lecture Theatre at Backwell School, entrance via Meadow Close
Members and non – members are welcome to attend
(membership form on the back page)

This annual Backwell Residents Association (BRA) Newsletter is delivered to over 2,000 Backwell and nearby households by our volunteers, and aims to bring you up to date on important village issues prior to our AGM, where you will be able to have your say.



The Newsletter contains unwelcome information for many Backwell residents. At this gloomy time, we are starting with a reminder of some of the good things about Backwell.

Backwell Lake: This is owned by Wessex Water (WW) and is an important balancing pond for their operations. WW also supports its use as a community asset for walkers and for its abundant wildlife. It is much used and appreciated. A win-win if ever there was one!

Backwell Playing Fields: This land was donated to Backwell Village in 1929 by the Robinson family. It is now operated as a charity and covers 18 acres. It is well used as an open space for walkers and for organised activities, including scouting, soccer, tennis and bowls, providing healthy exercise for all ages.

Backwell Environment Trust (BET): This charity was created in 2004 and owns 22 acres of woodland on either side of Cheston Combe, including the Jubilee Stone. Volunteers maintain its footpaths (some wheelchair friendly) which are open to the public. BET has discovered much wildlife and encouraged many rare fauna and flora.

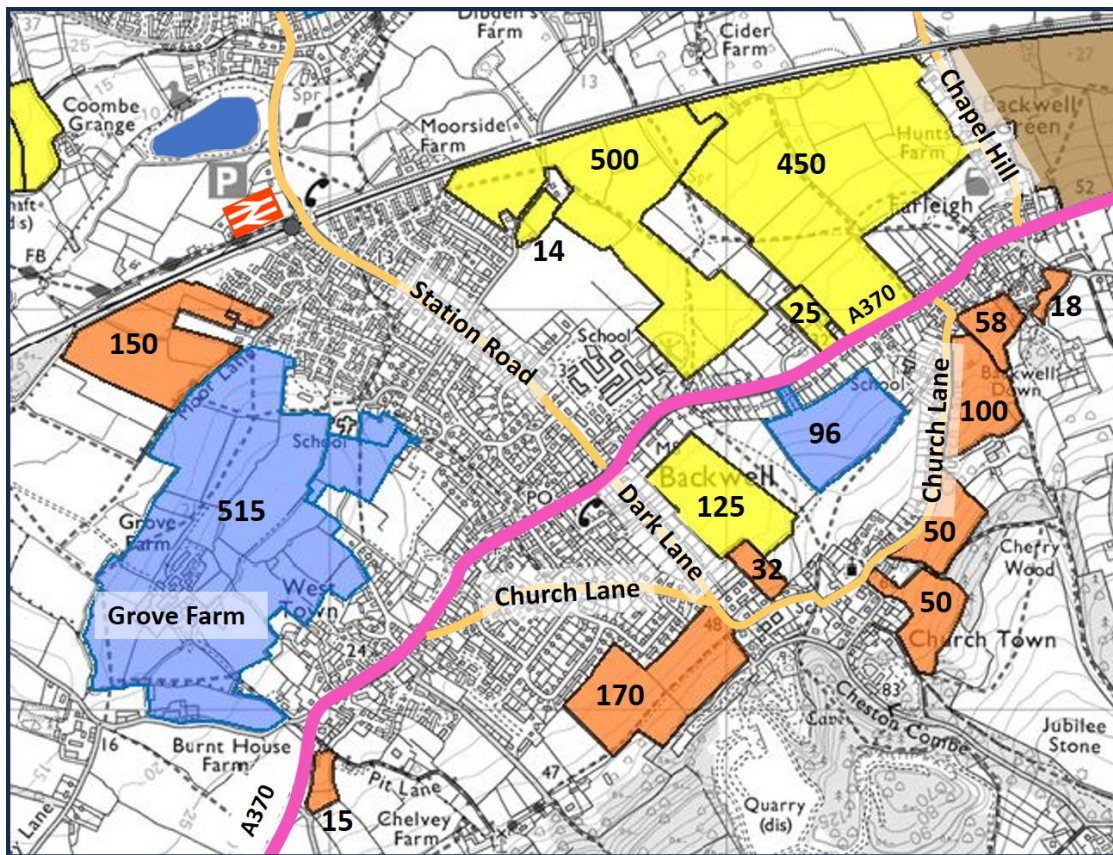
Backwell Allotments: These were created in 1977 on land now owned by Backwell Parish Council (BPC) behind The George pub. The 90 plot holders include young families and pensioners. In recent years its benefit for mental wellbeing has been realised, as well as having green credentials. There is a wonderful view of Tyntesfield in the distance.

North Somerset Draft Local Plan (LP) 2025 – 2040: North Somerset Council (NSC) produced a Local Plan (LP) in 2024 to achieve a target of 15,275 houses over the 15-year plan period. In late 2024, the Labour government increased this number by 8,620 to 23,895 over the 15-year plan period. NSC has just finished consulting on a draft showing where these additional sites could be. Three main areas would take this increase: **Weston, South West Bristol and Nailsea / Backwell.**

The choice of Nailsea / Backwell is explained by NSC, saying:

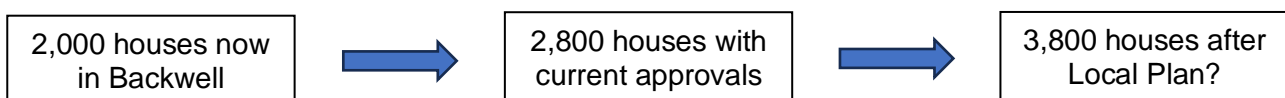
“The town of Nailsea taken together with the adjacent village of Backwell have been identified as a potential strategic growth location given the range of services, facilities and jobs and excellent public transport opportunities provided by the rail station and A370”

Implications for Backwell (coloured map of LP)



- Existing Proposed Residential Allocation
- Most Suitable – sites identified as potential for further consideration and consistent with spatial strategy
- Other Potential- sites as consistent with spatial strategy inc both sites with potential and some with constraints
- Less Sustainable – sites not considered consistent with spatial strategy of emerging Local Plan

Backwell now has almost 2,000 houses. Approved sites (including Grove Farm) will already add a further 800. Unfortunately, the next draft LP might also include the large yellow areas for 500 and 450 houses. **This is not only Green Belt but high - quality agricultural land.** Albeit less likely, if any of the orange and brown sites are included, the numbers will be further increased.



Next Steps for the Local Plan: In the near future NSC will produce a Transport Strategy and a new draft LP to achieve its increased housing target. BPC, BRA and, we think, the majority of residents, will oppose the building on the yellow areas of Green Belt – whether or not there is an access road under the railway (see next page).

Flooding Risk Areas: In March, NSC opposed building 150 houses in West Yatton, but a government inspector has now allowed this development, saying ‘It will be necessary to allocate some sites that are at risk of flooding to meet the housing needs of the district’. This surprise ruling could have significant implications for future building applications.

Grove Farm 515 houses (Ref 23/P/2618/OU2): The application by Taylor Wimpey for 515 houses was approved by NSC’s Planning and Regulatory (P & R) Committee on Wednesday 19th March. There were nearly 1300 objections from the public, and the development prompted the “Save our Village” campaign, citing the 25% increase in size of Backwell, and our inadequate roads. It has been included in recent drafts of the LP and now seems certain to go ahead. BPC and BRA are working to ensure that Backwell receives maximum benefit from the funds available for this large development – Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106.

Farleigh Fields (West) 125 houses off Dark Lane (Ref 24/P/1185/OUT): An Inquiry was held at Weston on 13th and 14th March, with a good attendance from Backwell residents. A dozen of them spoke of their serious concerns, mainly for the safety of pedestrians, especially school children, near the access road into the development and along Dark Lane. NSC has approved the application, which will feature in the forthcoming LP. It is hoped that the Inspector will insist on robust conditions for the development. Most Backwell residents think it should never have been supported by NSC.

Rodney Road (Ref 20/P/1847/OUT and 24/P/0533/RM): Outline planning permission for building 65 houses in the field by the Scout Hut was granted in March 2024, subject to conditions, most of which have now been solved to the satisfaction of NSC, so the development can go ahead. BPC / BRA, and our consultants, remain concerned about the safety of the access and impact on Rodney Road and other already busy routes near the site.

Farleigh Fields East 96 houses (Ref 23/P/2508/RM): Users of the A370 will not need reminding that work has started on this development. The site became a mud bath during the winter, with some houses on Farleigh Road having flooded gardens. Residents, BPC, BRA and NSC have, variously, spent time with Persimmon staff on site and with its senior management regarding flooding and the impact of huge earthworks. At some stage, Farleigh Road will become 30 mph on its whole length from the crossroads to beyond The George.

Local Green Space (LGS) (on Farleigh Fields): Options for the purchase and use of the designated LGS land are being actively pursued by the BPC Working Party. Persimmon has said that it will make the formal offer to BPC in 3 months’ time. A key objective for our village is to preserve this LGS for future generations whilst minimising any future financial liability on BPC.

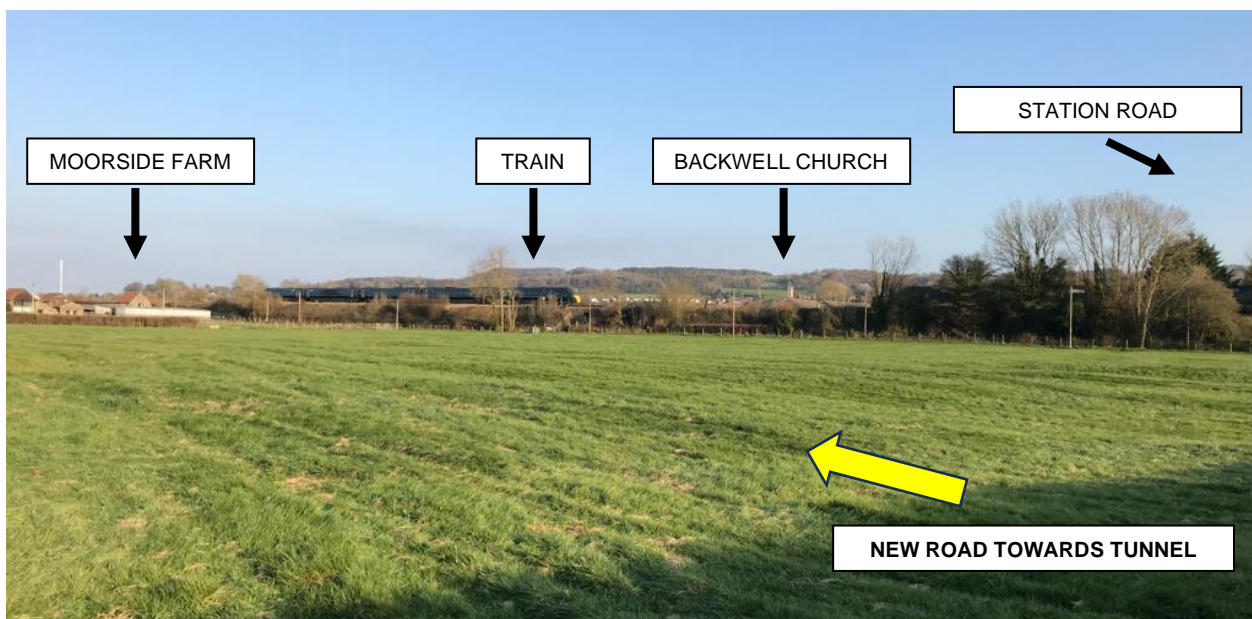
New Backwell Neighbourhood Plan (NP): Backwell’s Neighbourhood Plan (NP) was written in 2015, and once the new Local Plan is ‘made’ the current NP will effectively be redundant. There are important advantages in having an up-to-date NP, including receiving an increased percentage of finance from any Community Infrastructure Levy. Backwell is being encouraged to start seriously considering preparing a new Plan. This will be a

challenging task. Ideas on who will do this and how it can be undertaken are being researched.

Even Keel, Moor Lane (Ref 22/P/0252/OUT): This site has currently one dwelling in a large garden, with some adjacent land. The latest application is for 35 houses and would bring some much-needed modest sized houses into the village. However, the vehicular access to the site is felt to be wholly inadequate. NSC, BPC, BRA and many local residents continue to oppose it. The developer appealed and a hearing was held on March 25th. The government Inspector will give a decision shortly.

Gleasons Site – Nailsea / Backwell Border (Ref 23/P/1145/OUT): An outline planning application for 400 houses was submitted to NSC in June 2023, and a decision is awaited. The development would have a considerable impact on the strategic gap between Backwell and Nailsea. In particular, the access road would pass close by Backwell Lake, to access Station Road between the lake entrance and the station car park. This would inflict major damage to the tranquillity of the lake and increase surface water run-off, affecting properties in Station Close.

New Road Across Backwell Common: At the NSC drop-in session for the Local Plan at the WI Hall on March 10th, a new road was mentioned as a possible way to facilitate development on land East of Backwell (500 / 450 on the map). It would join Station Road between Backwell Lake and the Station car park and go across Backwell Common, with a tunnel under the railway and onto the A370. The new road would provide some reduction in traffic levels along Station Road up to the crossroads, BUT this proposal would completely destroy the character and setting of the Backwell Common area.



Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP): The BSIP proposal for Backwell was the subject of a drop-in session at the WI Hall on Wednesday 29th November 2023, where much local opposition from a very large number of residents was evident. Communication since then has been minimal, but a proposal is expected very shortly and there is much concern about what it will contain. The first proposal included making Dark Lane one way only up from the crossroads, with no access down Dark Lane onto the A370, a bus lane and transport “hubs” created at the Leisure Centre and / or the Spar Green.

Bristol Airport: Bristol Airport is expanding to accommodate 12 million passengers annually and expects to reach 11.5 million by next year. Upgrades include a new terminal

frontage, renovation of the Air Traffic Control Tower, and a new multistorey car park with a transport hub opening in June. The expected application to expand operations to 15 million passengers per annum will increase air traffic movements from 86,000 to 100,000 and add 1,000 more night flights annually. BRA continues to have a good connection with the Parish Councils Airport Association (PCAA) which monitors activities at the airport to check on intrusions into the Green Belt, noise, night flights, expected changes to flight patterns, and parking issues in nearby villages (including central Backwell).

Jubilee Stone Footpath: It was always known this would be a slow process but the lack of progress to date is disappointing.

Ex Mica site at Backwell Crossroads: Work is in progress to create a new, licensed general store on the site.

BACKWELL RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

This year's ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held at 7.00pm on Tuesday 29th April 2025 in the Sixth Form Lecture Theatre at Backwell School (entrance via Meadow Close off Station Road).

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Approval of 2024 AGM Minutes (available on website or on request to Hon. Sec.)
3. Chairman's Report
4. Membership Report
5. Honorary Treasurer's Report and Audited Accounts for year to 31st December 2024
6. Election of Officers: Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and up to seven Committee Members. The following Nominations have been made at the date of this Notice:

Hon Secretary	David Heymans	Proposed	Geoff Wells	Seconded	Mike Veal
Hon Treasurer	Kevin Crawford	Proposed	Mike Veal	Seconded	Carrie Riches
Committee Member*	Angela Ribbon-Miles	Proposed	Jane Elliott	Seconded	Val Wells
Committee Member*	Geoff Wells	Proposed	Sue Veal	Seconded	Michael Pratt
Committee Member*	Val Wells	Proposed	Barbara Harland	Seconded	Gill Collinson
Committee Member	Roscoe Chubb	Proposed	Chris Miles	Seconded	Mike Rose
Committee Member	Lorraine Hopkinson-Parker	Proposed	Keith Riches	Seconded	Karen Barclay
Committee Member	Nicola Foot	Proposed	Geoff Wells	Seconded	Margaret Kemp
Committee Member	Ann Heymans	Proposed	Barbara Harland	Seconded	Judy Thomas

7. Appointment of Auditor:

Auditor	Richard Gaunt	Proposed	Kevin Crawford	Seconded	Valerie Wells
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8. Any Other Formal Business
9. Guest Speakers and Open Forum

*These three Committee Members, having served three years, are retiring by rotation and offer themselves for re-election. Nominations for the Committee vacancies should be made to the Honorary Secretary, 36 Longthorn, Backwell, BS48 3GY at least 24 hours in advance of the Meeting. Nominations must be proposed and seconded by members in full membership for not less than three months prior to the Annual General Meeting and signify the nominee's willingness to serve. Members are reminded that the Committee has authority to co-opt additional members as necessary to undertake specific roles. The

retiring Secretary, Mike Veal has agreed to be co-opted after the AGM in the role of Assistant Treasurer. Jacqueline Reardon has agreed to be co-opted as Website Manager.

NB The Meeting is open to all villagers but only paid-up members may vote or make nominations. The formal aspects of the AGM will be kept to a minimum so that we can devote most of the time to the matters covered in the attached newsletter and other matters raised by members.

Current Elected Committee Members:

BARCLAY, Karen – (Parish Council Liaison) – retiring at AGM
COLLINSON, Gill – (Recruitment) – continuing as Committee Member
CRAWFORD, Kevin – (Treasurer) – offering to be re-elected at AGM
DIXIE, Grahame – (Ecology) – continuing as Committee Member
ELLIOTT, Chris – (Special Projects) – continuing as Committee Member
HARLAND, Barbara – (Airport, Traffic, HWRC and BPC Liaison) – continuing as Committee Member
KEMP, Margaret – (Membership & Web Manager) – retiring at AGM
PRATT, Michael – (Planning) – continuing as Committee Member
RIBBON-MILES, Angela - (Social Media) – offering to be re-elected at AGM
RICHES, Keith (Chair) – retiring but offering to be co-opted as temporary acting Chair after AGM
ROSE, Mike – (Planning Specialist) – retiring at AGM
VEAL, Mike – (Secretary) – retiring but offering to be co-opted as Asst. Treasurer after AGM
WELLS, Geoff – (Publicity and Communications) – offering to be re-elected at AGM
WELLS, Valerie – (Recruitment) – offering to be re-elected at AGM

Current Co-opted Committee Members:

CHUBB, Roscoe – (Planning Adviser) – nominated for election at AGM
FOOT, Nicola – (Membership Secretary) – nominated for election at AGM
HOPKINSON-PARKER, Lorraine – (Backwell Resistance Liaison) nominated for election at AGM
VEAL, Sue – (Minutes Secretary) – retiring at AGM

The BRA Committee is mindful of the fact that we are a membership organisation, and that often a planning application will have both positive and negative aspects. We welcome comments from our members at any time. We look forward to welcoming our members and non-member residents to our AGM. Over 450 Backwell households with approximately 800 adult members paid subscriptions for the period to 31st December 2024. Renewal subscriptions of £10 per household were due on the 1st January to cover the year to 31 December 2025 and we are grateful to those households who have already renewed their membership. Any household which joined in the last three months of 2024 will have its membership carried forward to 31st December 2025. **A membership application / renewal form is attached** and we hope that, if you have not already done so, you will join or re-join to strengthen our representation and increase our funds upon which there are likely to be heavy demands this year in attempting to mitigate the worst effects of proposed developments in the forthcoming North Somerset Local Plan.

Visit our website at
Email us at

www.backwellresidents.org.uk
enquiries@backwellresidents.org.uk

Backwell Residents Association Membership Form

Period up to December 31st 2025

I / We would like to join (re-join) Backwell Residents Association.

Forename: _____ Surname: _____
Forename: _____ Surname: _____

Address:

Post Code:Telephone:

Email:

Please supply an email address if at all possible. Our main distribution method is by email bulletins, which are fast and cost nothing. Newsletters are much less frequent.

Membership Subscription £10 per household per year
(Membership gives votes for all household members aged 18 and over) £10.00

I / We wish to make an additional, optional donation to BRA £ _____
TOTAL £ _____

Signed: Date:

Help is welcome with deliveries, BRA admin, IT skills, other specialism etc.
Please state below if you would like to offer assistance

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Please return this form and money to the BRA drop box inside the Post Office or to Mike Veal, 36 LongThorn, Valerie Wells, 8 Bramley Drive, or to any other BRA committee member. Cheques are payable to Backwell Residents Association.

Or renew by electronic transfer to Backwell Residents Association: Nat West sort code 60-14-49, Account No 05005531 giving your surname, house number and street. Please also email us on enquiries@backwellresidents.org.uk to add or confirm your contact details on our membership list. Better still please set up an electronic annual standing order.

Visit our website at <http://www.backwellresidents.org.uk/>. This is kept up to date with all our communications, links to other websites etc. It is a valuable resource.

Backwell Residents Association Objectives - 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.

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION and PRIVACY REGULATIONS (GDPR) *The details you supply on this membership form will be kept on the BRA database and used for internal admin purposes and will not be shared with any other organisation. It will be used to keep you informed by bulletins and newsletters on matters in furtherance of BRA objectives. By joining BRA you give permission for us to store your information and you agree to BRA sending you information to your address, or to your email or (exceptionally) by phone. You may contact us at any time to cancel this arrangement. BRA abides by the principles of the GDPR, and will maintain the security and privacy of your personal information*