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# PRIDE IN PORTBURY

PARISH NEWSLETTER - JULY 2015

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As your newly appointed group of Councillors we are very keen to make sure that we are attending to the things that matter to you over the next 4 years. There hasn't been the need for an election; the number of nominations for Councillor matched the number of vacancies. Whilst this means that we have avoided the resulting administration costs, it does mean that you haven't had the opportunity to chose who you want to represent you and what you want us to do. We therefore want to agree a set of objectives based upon things we can influence and also make sure that we are tackling the things that matter most to our Community.

Please visit the Parish Website, <http://www.portbury-council.com> to find out who we are and to see the sort of information that we place there, I'm sure you'll find this useful. You can also see minutes of the monthly meetings that we hold, which tell you quite a lot about things that are going on in the Parish and within North Somerset.

During 2014 we sent out a questionnaire to all households in the Parish to try and gather data to help with the creation of a Parish Plan. We had over 130 returns from this and some of the key messages were very consistent across the whole group of people who returned forms. From this information we have been able to see that the top priorities that matter are -

Traffic and Transport – several issues and all thought to be high priority.

Village Facilities – Village Hall and provision of a shop.

Protecting the Green Belt and minimising external effects from development

Improving the Village environment – e.g. Village Green

Wider communication from the Parish Council

These will be our key priorities for the next 12 to 24 months.

Below is an overview of the key all the areas of the Village survey which we will now use to set our more specific objectives as your Council. Please read through the headings below and give us your feedback if these areas need more definition or refinement.

We have decided to issue this first newsletter of this Council by conventional paper, and footslog to deliver. This is to ensure that you all get the same information at the same time. We cannot, and don't intend to continue with the expense of this method of circulation when so many of us are now connected to the internet. We intend to send out future circulars by e-mail, we promise this will only be about once a quarter, unless there is something pressing (pylons comes to mind). Please let us know your e-mail details which will NOT be used by any other third party, if you want to be kept informed about what we are doing. A paper Newsletter will still be produced in small numbers and will be left at strategic places, Village Hall etc. If you don't have internet access and cannot get about then let us know your address and we will endeavour to deliver a Newsletter to you.

So, please read this first Newsletter to the end, and find out what we plan to do. Feedback we receive will be used to refine the objectives above, and the detail below, so that we can then be confident that we have your mandate to proceed. Please also let us know your contact details at the address below, or return the tear off slip to the postbox at the Village Hall; there will be a special box for the Parish Council on the wall at the front of the building, please use this also to let us know about anything that concerns you if you don't have access to e-mail.

[contact@portbury-council.com](mailto:contact@portbury-council.com)

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Please keep me updated about news in the Parish from time to time.

Name

Address

E-mail address for receipt of Newsletter information

## Portbury Parish Council - first priority work areas for 2015-17

Below is a more detailed outline of what the Parish Council has determined are its key activity areas from the next 24 months. This programme has been derived from the feedback from the 2014 Parish Plan Questionnaire and contains a continuation of projects already in progress.

### Traffic

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### Transport

The issue that appears to be top priority to everyone is in the area of traffic, transport and highways. The range of issues you are concerned about covers

- 1 HGV traffic in the village
- 2 Speed of traffic through the village
- 3 Condition of road surfaces
- 4 Numbers of parked cars in the streets
- 5 Support for the Portishead/Bristol rail link
- 6 Street lighting for vehicles and pedestrians



We will therefore consult with North Somerset Council in order to carry out an analysis of the traffic coming through the village. From this work we will be able to come up with a plan for traffic management which we can then offer to you for your views. Funding of such a plan may take a while but at least then we will have something to aim at. There is much repair that is needed to the roads in the village. We already know that some surface dressing work will take place in July 2015, on Mill Lane. We shall also be trying to get some priority for the rest of the repair work that is needed; this may take a while as we all know how funding is stretched very thinly at Weston super Mare.



### Planning (Controlling/Reducing External Impacts)

It was clear from the answers to the questionnaire that most people wanted to preserve the green belt around the Village. More specifically people wanted to preserve the skyline, under threat from both pylons and the advancing docks. In addition a reduction in both noise (M5) and light (Docks) pollution was a high priority for most of you.



Whilst we are not currently likely to see large scale development of any green land around the Village, we do know that some sites are "on the radar" for possible future consideration. It is our view as a Council that whilst generally opposing such development it is important to complete the work carried out during the pylon campaign which described the landscape character of the Parish. This work would then be used in the planning process to give us a say in what happens in the future, unlike what happened during the pylon campaign when National Grid had free rein to consider any of the land around Portbury for routeing their pylons.



The Council will therefore aim to be well informed about developments outside the Village. We will stay engaged with Bristol Port Company through their liaison meetings and look for opportunities to influence their thinking on development as it arises. We will also keep abreast of any motorway development proposals, especially at junction 19, and will encourage the use of low noise surfacing whenever repairs are taking place.

On the general planning front we will be as helpful as possible when residents are planning to do work to develop their own properties. We will consider what is best for the Community and near neighbours when reviewing planning proposals. North Somerset Council will assess proposals on their technical merit with due regard to governing legislation and heritage value. Once a decision is taken by North Somerset, the Council will then seek to ensure that the agreed plans are followed. We will be obliged to take action if development occurs that is outside the scope of the permission given regardless of our own views on the merit of the application



### **Village Facilities and Services**

There was a lot of interest in continuing support for the Village Hall and also in creating a Village/Community Shop. Adequacy of bus services was also high on the list of things that people are concerned about, especially for getting to Doctor's Surgeries.

The Parish Council will therefore continue to find ways of supporting the Village Hall and will explore ways of collaborating to secure funds to meet the ever present maintenance and repair need on the building. Whilst the creation of a Village Shop is a significant and challenging task, through supporting the Hall we will preserving the environment within which such a shop may become a possibility. We will consider the ways in which a shop could be created and will provide a briefing on this within a future newsletter.



### **Village Environment**

Amongst the physical improvements that people thought mattered were the provision of additional children's play areas and more seating in public places. In addition a safe footpath to the school was also considered important.

The Parish Council has already started to commit funds to improvement of the Village Green, 2 courses of weed treatment will be completed during 2015. The WI will be providing planting to create a natural bee garden on the Southern side of the green, this has prompted us to think

about the whole green and we will develop ideas for planting that will make the green much more colourful. These plans will also include the provision of more seating, perhaps around the magnificent lime tree on the Northern side. Once the plans for the Green are complete we will then move our thoughts to the wider Village. There are many "black spots" which go untended and would benefit from some maintenance or upgrade, a draft list of areas has already been created. At each of these locations we will endeavour to communicate with neighbours to agree what best can be done to bring about sustainable improvement.



### **Communication**

Whilst most people felt that they knew how to contact Councillors when necessary and also understood the workings of the Council, the idea of a Parish Newsletter was welcomed. Other ideas included a new residents welcome pack and a Community Forum.



From the sample of people covered less than half had visited the Parish Council Website, but it is clear that the number of residents viewing the Village Noticeboard on Facebook is growing, and already exceeds the number who responded to the questionnaire.





This Newsletter is a response to the potential demand for information within the Village and it is our intention to repeat this on a quarterly basis to begin with. We will concentrate our efforts on giving information via the Web, but will use paper circulars as necessary and in particular to give information to those people who are not connected to the internet.

We will use the Parish Council's own website and Facebook page as a means of providing access to information, such as governance information and papers from Council meetings.

Above all we will take note of your communication with us, whichever way received, and will endeavour to reply to you personally. We will use your feedback to us as a way of monitoring both what matters to you and for how we are doing on your behalf.



### **And finally - Recent News on Pylons**

We are at last at the end of the fight against the pylon route through our Village. It's been a long haul, lasting nearly 4 years! A lot of people have expended a lot of effort over this time on your behalf, reading mountains of papers and writing volumes of representations. At this point we don't know if we've been able to convince the Planning Inspectorate of our views or not. It does seem that we have been listened to and we made several key points at public meetings which were definitely taken on board by the panel that is considering the case.



We remain quietly hopeful, and marginally confident that we will win the day. By the time of the next newsletter we may know more. What is important is that all the good work done on researching the views of the village and the planning environment around us is put to good use.

Mike Phipps  
Chairman  
Portbury Parish Council