
PRIDE IN PORTBURY

PARISH NEWSLETTER NO.3 – JANUARY 2016

Happy New Year from your Parish Council

Well here we are again, it seems only a few days since we last sent out our Newsletter. You've mostly said how much you appreciate hearing about what is going on in the Village. Your Parish Council has been just as busy and quite a lot has been happening again, so here goes!

First a diary note – the Annual Residents' Meeting will be on the 10th May – at the Village Hall

Pylons – of course!



We couldn't start without a bit of a gloat about pylons. Everyone will have heard by now that the Planning Inspectorate ruled in our favour and selected route Option B for the new Hinkley Connection. This came as a bit of a surprise, a very welcome one, but surprise none the less. Whilst we all thought that our case was compelling of course, we daren't hope that the positive vibes we were getting meant that we had convinced the Public Enquiry panel. Anyway, all of everyone's efforts did make a difference and the Planning Inspector's report gives a number of reasons why they didn't think that route option A was suitable.

What I do need to tell you however is that this still could happen again. If another developer, maybe the Highways Agency or the Docks, decided to build close to our residences then we can't be sure that we would be able to resist a planning application. That is why we are proceeding now with a Neighbourhood Plan for our parish; some of you may have seen some consultation notices in the press. This is about us as a Community establishing a degree of control of our own destiny. Based upon the questionnaire that many of you filled in during 2013 we are developing a formal document that sets out what we want to see for the Parish. In it we will specifically refer to protecting our boundaries from development and maintaining a "buffer zone" adjacent to the Docks. Eventually this document will be registered with North Somerset Council and keeps us on the front foot when it comes to dealing with big planning applications such as the Pylons project.



We do need you all to play your part in this. We'll be publicising the developing plan document and you will have the opportunity to contribute to it and give us comments. Look out for the Annual Residents' Meeting in May; come along if you possibly can.

Traffic Round up

A lot has been happening on the traffic front, some things have been acted upon already. Briefly, we've had a couple of meetings with the Highways Engineers from North Somerset Council and they have agreed to draw up a



package of measures that will provide traffic calming through the Village. Hopefully it will also ease the congestion and safety problems on the Sheepway. Your comments on Facebook were invaluable in making our case to North Somerset and we got a surprisingly encouraging response. Nothing will happen straight away, it will depend upon budgets, but we are hopeful that in 2016/7 we might get some commitment to our need. Again we can discuss this at the Annual Village meeting so that you can see the design proposals first hand.

After a number of incidents on Portbury Lane, on the S bend near Racecourse Farm, we urged North Somerset to take action. It turned out that one of the radar warning signs had stopped working, and with bad rain this was probably a factor in a spate of incidents. The Highways Engineers investigated the trigger speeds on the signs and then agreed to reduce them to 40mph in both directions. We're hoping that this will restore calm to the Road.



Village Green and War Memorial

Plans are beginning to take shape for the Village Green; we've had one meeting with residents who live closest. Ideas are still being developed into a more firm plan for border planting, some of which may happen by March

We would also like to do something with the War Memorial. The present memorial needs some permanent repair; there is a large crack in the face of the plaque of names. This crack might even be growing. Additionally there are some names missing, some of which have been added to a supplementary plaque. During last year's Remembrance Service it came home to me that we have a real problem managing people and traffic if we want to hold an outdoor service each year, which I believe we do. A rather unpleasant altercation with a passing motorist rather spoiled our quiet enjoyment of the 2 minutes silence!



There are a couple of options.

Firstly it is possible to replace the plaque of names on the other side of the memorial, thus making it a more integral part of the green. If we then lay some paving and stonework on this side we will have a traffic free area for the annual service.

Alternatively we could do something with the back face of the Memorial, maybe place an artwork (mosaic) on a remembrance theme and still put in some paving and seating along with it.

We are working with these ideas at the moment and will be able to show some more of this, again at the Annual Residents' Meeting in May.



Allotments

There are vacant allotment plots available if anyone wants to try "the good life". Just let us know if you'd like to rent one. We'd also like to get to know what ideas plot holders have for making life easier down there. There is room, for example, for some storage area that might be useful. Additionally we could team up with other allotments, eg at Elm Tree Park, in order to get good deals on plants and seeds. It would be beneficial if plot holders got together from time to time so that we can get to know what the Parish Council could do to help down there – so please come along to the May Residents' Meeting to let us know your thoughts.



Green Bags



Unfortunately it very much looks like we have lost our chance to keep hold of the green bag system for our garden waste. We've written to North Somerset suggesting ways in which we might be able to keep them, including limiting the number of bags to 4 per household. Whilst the final decision hasn't yet been taken I fear that we will be forced in to accepting a green wheelie bin some time soon. It appears that there is a Health and Safety issue with the use of the bags and contractors are very reluctant to continue with their use; it's very difficult to argue against this, though we have tried.



Station Road Footbridge



We've been having a number of issues with our footbridge and these are still being chased. Firstly thank you to those who reported the collapsing fence around Christmas. I took a bit of phone effort, being holiday, but we got a temporary repair done (very temporary). We are still chasing this as its getting worse again!!!

Additionally the removal of the barriers on the bridge has made it more accessible for the disabled, but it has caused other problems. There have been near accidents

because of fast mopeds, which shouldn't be using the bridge anyway. We are trying to get a modified barrier design to help this.

Whilst on the subject could we ask horse riders to dismount as they cross the bridge, it really isn't safe to ride on because of the low barrier height, designed for footpath use. We don't want to get into banning horses because we realise that this is a useful route over the motorway, but strictly it is a footpath only, with permitted use by pedal cycles. Thank you to those who have cleared up their horse droppings too, that makes for a safer route for all.



Annual Residents' Meeting – May 10th – 7pm Village Hall

The first year of this Parish Council is nearing its end, where the time has gone I can't imagine. A fair amount of stuff has happened; but it all takes time when you consider that we only meet once a month. We have tried to keep you all informed by this newsletter and I'm glad to see that over 80 households have signed up to receive it by e-mail, others get it via Facebook, so I do think we are getting information out there.

At the annual meeting in May it's your chance to tell us what else you think could be done in and around the village. We get to know quite a lot by the use of e-mail and Facebook but we'd like to hear from you directly also.



The agenda for the meeting is yours; just tell us what items you want considered. In addition we have the following items to tell you more about and to discuss with you.

- Neighbourhood Plan – we will e-mail a draft, we want to consult with you all on this.
- Traffic Calming – we will have some ideas from North Somerset to discuss with you.
- Parking in the Village – we want to brainstorm ideas for keeping our streets clearer for residents.



Mike Phipps - Chairman