

Annual Parish meeting May 2017

This last year has continued much as previous years for the parish Council, but some major projects as well.

The closer connection with our neighbouring Parish of Pill and Easton in Gordano continues to be great benefit, primarily through the tireless work of our District Councillor Don Davies and the work of our Clerk Julie Smart where we gain from her local experience of managing local issues in Pill.

The Parish finances are in good shape under Julie's attentive management and she will update you on that separately.

On the strategic planning level we are continuing to work closely with Pill and Easton in Gordano and Murray Stewart will update you separately on that later.

There continue to be a number maintenance issues on the A369 that we try to keep the District Council on top of. The North Somerset Council Area Officer that covers this area is Paul Smart and he is generally pretty good in following matters up for us, but we need to meet with him to remind him of the key local issues. The one significant issue that has been resolved this year is the flooding of the A369 in the dip below the George. After years of pestering North Somerset they at last cleared the blocked pipe and reinstated an historic balancing pond in the adjacent field, and this has worked effectively since. It took less than a week to implement.

Don Davies has continued to challenge North Somerset Council on road safety on the A369 and speed limits on our behalf. He has proposed a scheme to reduce the speed limit to 40MPH between Martcombe Hill and Dennyview Road and then to continue the 30MPH through the village and for it to continue all the way to Bridge Road in Leigh Woods. North Somerset Council Highways dept have accepted a part of this but we will be continuing to push for the whole of it.

The Parish Council has replaced all the 28 street lights on the side roads in the village which were over 50 years old at a cost of £11,600. This should reduce our electricity costs from about £1750 per year to about £450 per year, as well as significantly reduce our annual maintenance bills from circa £1,000 per year. There were a few teething problems, but they have been mostly sorted out. Mostly due to defective timers.

We are relieved that the major earth filling works on Beggar Bush Lane have now been completed and the number of earth moving lorries through the village has reduced at last. This was all carried out as part of a planning permission originally granted in the 1990s. The site has been sold to Bristol Rugby club for a training ground. The Parish Council decided not to object because the project had to be judged against the scheme that already had permission, and it was considered that overall it would less impact that the buildings and lighting already granted. They have taken on board a lot of landscaping and environmental suggestions and will be working with the Council ecologist to come up with the most appropriate scheme through planting.

In discussion with Bristol Rugby Club they offered to contribute to the community to offset against the impact of their development. They agreed that they would pay for the implementation of changing the National Speed Limit on Beggar Bush Lane to a 50MPH limit in order to make it safer for more vulnerable users such as cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders who use or cross the road.

This will be in the form of a payment to the Parish Council to ensure that it gets spent on what it is intended for. North Somerset Council highways team are coming round to the idea and are now urging us to work with the adjacent Parish Councils including Long Ashton, Wraxall and Failand and Tickenham. This would cover the A369, Beggar Bush Lane and the Clevedon Road. Positive support has been received from these other parish councils as the Traffic Regulation Order costs would be similar whatever the extent of the roads covered. Contact has been made and the first joint discussions should take place soon.

We are continuing to work with the Village verges group lead by the Macbeths to identify the best affordable mowing regimes that are for the best interest of plant diversity and wildlife. To that end we have again had the verges between Home Farm Road and the Avenue, Manor Road and Manor Lane cut. in addition to those sections cut by the village orderly.

I would like to thank the record number of those of you who came out to help in the annual litter pick which does help to keep the verges of the roads free of litter and make the parish look a more cared for, despite the people passing through the village who throw their litter out of the car windows or fly tip.

We are still working on creating a permissive footpath link into Leigh Woods from the footpath that links the school field and Home Farm. These things seem to take years, but we have not given up.

Defibrillator. We have agreement with the Portishead Lions to install a defibrillator in the phone box. We are hoping to tidy it up with the Civic Society. We are waiting for a quote from our electrician to get it installed.

In the school field we have replaced the play equipment put in in about 1992 with equivalent equipment that meets current standards with a rubber bonded mulch base which is a great improvement on the bark chippings. we have also had to replace a couple of horizontal beams to the equipment installed 11 years ago. The cost of all these works was about £17,000 and we are very grateful to the Civic Society who has contributed £6,000 towards this project. We are now having all the equipment formally inspected once a month by the play equipment company who carried out the work and inspect the play equipment in Pill

With regards to planning Audrey will give the detail, but apart from the fact that the majority of applications appear to relate to maximize the sizes of houses that can fit on their plots, there are two that have caused greatest controversy.

One planning issue that came through as a register of permitted development was the application to increase the size of Leigh Warren Bungalow on the A369 near the cricket field by a factor of 5 under the pretext of permitted development. North Somerset Council rejected this, but it went to appeal in August and much to everyone's disgust it was approved by the planning inspector so we wait to see what will happen next.

The Parish Council together with the Civic Society has continued to work with Jason Cox of North Somerset Council in order to keep Abbots Pool as a treasure for the local community. The volunteer working parties continue very ably organized by Jo Cheverton and our thanks are to her for the hard work that they and the volunteers put in. No mountain biking signs have been put up so that if you meet anyone cycling who is not on the bridleway please do ask the whether they

have seen the signs and tactfully ask that they stick to the bridleway and don't damage the paths around the pool

John Butler continues to manage to keep the Village Hall as probably the most attractive Village Hall in North Somerset as the major asset belonging to the parish council for the benefit of the village with the diligent work of our Caretaker John Prodder. More on that from John later.

With regards to Skittle Alley, we are working with a group from Civic Society and exploring more options for the building and maybe consider some small flexible light business units. One of the big perceived problems is lack of parking especially as more people are using AL as a park and ride site.

We are very grateful for all the work that the Civic Society continues to do in organising several events throughout the year and in particular the popular Fireworks display. This partnership with the Parish Council whereby the Civic Society organises social events and the Parish Council deals with the routine and formal matters is very much valued and is of great benefit to our community. Congratulations to Tommo and the team for all of the work that they do. There will be another Friday evening social in the village hall this week as a substitute for the pub, and who knows what is going on there.

The website is a very valuable asset to the village and please keep the webmaster, Paul Whitehouse, posted about anything that is happening and if you haven't already signed up for emails, please do so. You can always unsubscribe if you don't want to continue to receive them

As I said we have benefitted from an enormous amount support from Don Davies who raises our issues at District Council level, and maybe after June 8th he will be able to raise the matters in Westminster on our behalf. I don't know how he gets the time to do it all. Don will update you on the Community Land Trust afterwards.

I would thank Julie Smart, our Parish Clerk, who successfully steers the council and makes sure that we all do our jobs properly, and manages our accounts. John Prodder very strongly supported by Jan, looks after the Village Hall going and provides a lot of additional input keeping the hall in very good condition. Nigel Mail as the village orderly continues to keep the school field, the green and some of the verges trimmed back.

Finally I would like to thank my fellow councilors, Audrey Telling, Elizabeth Anderson and John Butler as well as Murray Stewart, together with Mike Crabtree for still always helping out when asked.

Village Award

The Parish Council have decided to present the award Paul Whitehouse who does so much so promptly in keeping the website up to date whilst also keeping an eye on the Civic Society as their Secretary. Unfortunately Paul and Elizabeth are at Moscow Philharmonic this evening so can not be here. I shall try to ensure that they receive the trophy in tact in the next few days