

# Brock's News



## The annual newsletter of Brockley Parish Council

### Annual parish meeting

On a cold night on 18 March, 21 people relished the new heating system at Chelvey Church while hearing reports from Julian Ridge and Geoff Coombs. The year's main topics were a new Sites and Policies Plan, news from Bristol Airport, proposed traffic calming in the lanes, a feasibility study for mains water at Brockley Church, work on local drains, the proposed wind turbine at Grove Farm, the new footpath in the woods, and daffodil planting. Copies of the budget were available and parishioners heard the precept for 2013-14 had been set at £3,300, with a call for £61 from reserves. Parishioners regretted the amount of litter in the Combe and the increasing amount of drinks cans, particularly along Chelvey Road and Lane.

Business concluded after 30 minutes, when Richard Simon and Steve Barrett, Directors of Solarsense, gave a much appreciated talk on 'The practical application of renewable energy', well illustrated with photographs of local examples. Thanks to Felicity Ford, the meeting ended with coffee and flapjacks. For more detail of the APM, see minutes on the parish notice boards.

### Connecting Brockley Church

Antony Ridge has been talking with interested parties, leading a feasibility study for the connection of mains water and a sewerage system at St Nicholas'. If these facilities were in place, the church would be a much more suitable venue for public functions and would help to make Brockley a more cohesive community. Watch out for developments: fund-raising could be in the offing.

### Brockley wins funding!

Bristol Airport's Local Community Fund has awarded us £395 to meet the cost of traffic calming plans agreed with North Somerset Council. This summer, drivers coming down the Combe will see a Road Narrows Ahead sign at the Crossroads. In Brockley Lane, Double Bend warning signs in advance of Solarsense will alert northbound and southbound drivers. In Chelvey Road, night drivers crossing the stream bridge just west of Chelvey Bridge will see a white line highlighting the edge of the narrow carriageway.

### Annual litter pick

Despite cold weather, 14 residents turned out to support the event. Although North Somerset Council had only been able to provide rubbish bags and three handheld pickers, the stoic team was not thwarted and scoured the parish lanes for rubbish. Some also ventured up the Combe as there was a strong feeling this was looking particularly messy and the associated risk of danger was low. David Pike also cleaned the millennium stone. Altogether, 21 bags of rubbish were collected and sorted. To ensure recyclable products did not go to landfill, half the bags were taken home for separate collection. There were worrying numbers of drinks cans - at least 50 cider and lager cans along Chelvey Lane alone. All in all, the event was a complete success. **Mike Fishwick**

### Education grants

The Backwell Educational Foundation makes payments to parishioners under 20 to help with their education. Ring 463261 for details. **David Pike**

### New woodland path

Walkers this summer will be able to enjoy a new waymarked path through the Combe. It will lead from the A370 opposite St Nicholas Way to join the existing track (which will become a bridleway) near the 'bowling green'. Thanks are due to landowner Wanda Denning and to Elaine Bowman at North Somerset Council for her help and commitment. Rambler Volunteers will clear shrubbery, and the council will donate £50 to costs.

### Didn't it rain!

There was minor flooding in Brockley for many weeks owing to the various springs that run along the edge of the escarpment. Because these only run every 10 years or so, the drainage infrastructure could not cope. Julian Ridge has discussed this with the North Somerset Council drainage engineer and a programme of work will be undertaken to ensure that all the known drains are working and will be regularly maintained.

### February Gold

A hundred new narcissi (February Gold) are in flower at the Crossroads. Councillors had planted these around the Liquidambar tree to mark the Diamond Jubilee. With the tree and bulbs planted by Brockley Hall residents and others, the four corners of the Crossroads are looking very attractive.

### Brockley's old trees

Brockley has a number of trees worthy of note. Four young oaks close to Brockley Church commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, the coronation of George V, and the Silver and Golden

Jubilees of our current queen. Our largest girthed tree is the cedar on the A370 close to the Crossroads. With a circumference in excess of 19', it is believed to be at least 250 years old and possibly planted by John Pigott. Up in the woods, and a few meters over the boundary in Cleeve, an oak boasts a circumference of nearly 27' and is most likely more than 500 years old. In 2012, Tim Hills of the Ancient Yew Group wrote a paper\* about the yews of Brockley which mentions the 35 that surround the old bowling green. He notes that these are probably 250-300 years old and 'no doubt planted to act both as a windbreak and to afford its "fashionable" visitors greater privacy'. A 1788 drawing shows this 'windbreak' sat on what was then an almost treeless plateau. A few larger and much older yews still grow in the rocky outcrops of the Combe.

Unfortunately, our oldest trees were lost as recently as the 1970s by logging activities. Two of these yews were recorded in 1838 (Loudon) as being 17' and 18' in girth, which means they could have been living in Brockley since before the Battle of Hastings. We should now ensure the tree heritage of Brockley no longer succumbs to the axe and can be enjoyed by future generations. Tree wardens can play a key part in protecting and promoting local trees, orchards, hedgerows and woodlands. If this appeals to you, email [ian.monger@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:ian.monger@n-somerset.gov.uk), or ring 01934 42698. **Mike Fishwick**

\*<http://www.ancient-yew.org/userfiles/file/brockley.pdf>

### **Snow warden(s) wanted**

Volunteer snow wardens monitor local weather conditions and local supplies, spreading grit and salt where needed. If you could help, ring Council Connect on 01934 888802.

### **Chelvey Church news**

The makeover at St Bridget's over the last six years has included saving the tower, re-leading windows, banishing draughts, replacing the organ, installing a sound system, and fitting under-pew and glass-fronted radiators to give the church untold warmth. All while retaining the simple beauty of this 900 year old church. The icing on the cake was a

bank of photovoltaic panels installed in the hidden central valley of the roof, producing green energy and a continuing income for the future. Suppliers Solarsense say it's the third oldest roof in the country to have been used this way. But we still lack the basics of mains water, toilet and kitchen. Now work just beginning and to be completed by the end of the summer will bring these together in a special unit on the north side of the churchyard. We hope to replace the adjacent lawn for the community's use. However, despite raising around £220,000 to cover all the costs so far, there is a shortfall for the current work. We aim to raise this from our programme of events and complete all the work this year. So come along to our **Spring Coffee Morning on Saturday 11 May** (1030-12 at The Spinney, Brockley Lane). If you come to the **Open Afternoon on Saturday 8 June** (2-5 at St Bridget's) you can inspect the improvements and progress on the new building. St Bridget's holds regular services - usually the first three Sundays of the month at 9.15 am. **Tony Stirratt**

### **Hospital transport offer**

Could you qualify for free transport to hospital and other medical appointments? 'Travel Guardian' has been designed especially for people who need help with mobility. Check [www.ptsdirect.org.uk](http://www.ptsdirect.org.uk), 0845 0039107.

### **Brockley Church news**

The FRIENDS OF BROCKLEY CHURCH are volunteers who raise funds to support the work of The Churches Conservation Trust, owners of St Nicholas' Church. We also help to look after and clean the church, especially before services - usually three a year. This year there will also be a wedding and a christening, and a **Flower Festival on 22-23 June** with a special service on the Sunday evening. Please tell your friends and come along to support the work done to preserve this old and beautiful church. We would also welcome more help on an occasional basis: ring 463738. **Wendy Dorey**

The ANNUAL BROCKLEY LECTURE was given in September by Rupert Ridge, who spoke on 'The Making of the British Empire as Seen Through the Eyes of a Family'. Rupert

combined his interests in military and family history in an absorbing account of 18C and 19C family members serving as imperial soldiers and administrators, particularly in India (starting in the East India Company). Their life stories took us also to China, Ireland and South Africa, conveying a remarkable period in British history. St Nicholas' Church was full and the buffet supper an enjoyable occasion. Ticket sales enabled donations to the CCT and Friends of Brockley Church. At the **7<sup>th</sup> Lecture on 14 September**, Prof. Tim Bliss will talk on 'The Mechanics of Memory'. **Antony Ridge**

### **How different are we?**

New data\* show how our population of 277 differs from North Somerset's as a whole. (B=Brockley and NS=North Somerset below.) We have proportionately more people over 64 (B 26%, NS 21%) but fewer under-5s (B 2.5%, NS 6%). Three quarters of our 16-74 year olds are economically active, 22% being self-employed (twice the proportion for NS). Our people are better qualified, with 40% at Level 4 and above (NS 28%) and 45% working in managerial and professional roles (NS 35%). In terms of industry sectors, 14% of employed residents work in construction, with 12.5% each in 'professional, scientific and technical activities' and 'health and social care' - all twice the proportion for NS; another 5% work in agriculture and forestry (NS 1%). Twice as many (12.5%) work mainly at home. Fewer households are without a car (B 3%, NS 17%) and twice the proportion (81%) have two cars or more. In our 95 occupied dwellings, there are fewer one-person households (B 14%, NS 31%). There are 239 names on our electoral register. **Gill Rowley**

\*Bristol City Council (04.02.13) 2011 Census Profile; via <http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk>.

### **Your council**

Cllrs: Julian Ridge (Chair) 462313, Antony Ridge (Vice Chair) 462179, Bryan Smith 462434, David Pike 463261, Mike Fishwick 462995, Liz Lunn 462989. Clerk: Gill Rowley 01934 876156. District Cllrs: Geoff Coombs, Karen Barclay. Main notice board: Brockley Stores. **If you would prefer Brock's News emailed to you, tell us at [brockleypc@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:brockleypc@hotmail.co.uk).**