

MINUTES OF THE 2014 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
held 8 pm at St Nicholas' Church on Monday 24 March

Present: councillors Julian Ridge (Chair), Antony Ridge (Vice Chair), Mike Fishwick, Liz Lunn, David Pike, Bryan Smith; parishioners Linda Elliott, Tim and Michael Huscroft, Margaret Pike, Conny Ridge, Jacqui and Andrew Olver, Andrea Harrison, Katy Hallett, Brian Dejean, Geoffrey and Mary Hobbs, Wanda Denning. **In attendance:** District councillor Geoff Coombs, speaker Neil Rushton, Mrs Rushton, clerk Gill Rowley

- 1 **Apologies** from Rupert and Blanche Ridge, Gill Iles, Audrey Dejean.
- 2 **Minutes** of the 2013 APM were read out. There were no matters arising.
- 3 **Chair's report** Julian Ridge reminded parishioners that we try to represent them forcefully, but need them to tell us their views. They can approach any councillor or the clerk or come to any council meeting. The year had 11 main issues.
 - 3.1 **Grove Farm wind turbine:** An example of where parishioners alerted us to a problem, as we had not been consulted when the application was first submitted. We objected in November 2012 and again when the turbine height was changed. The bat survey and noise report are both of a very poor standard and we have objected that they do not meet the remit, in addition to our contention that the turbine is too close to a number of properties. The application will be heard again on 10 April.
 - 3.2 **Core Strategy:** North Somerset Council's revised plan for 17130 new houses, to be considered in April, will not affect Brockley or the green belt. New planning documents have been agreed which preclude building solar or wind farms within the green belt, and plans for a solar energy farm at Downside have been rejected.
 - 3.3 **Boundary Commission:** The review will reduce the number of district councillors from 61 to 50 as well as changing ward boundaries. Brockley will leave Backwell and will be either with Cleve, Wrington and Butcombe (one councillor) or in a 9-parish ward having three councillors. We think the latter is not viable and urge you to make your feelings known. **Email reviews@lgbce.org.uk and copy to mikejones@n-somerset.gov.uk or telephone 01934 634903 by 7 April.**
 - 3.4 **Bristol Airport's Local Community Fund:** We have applied for and received two small grants. The first funded signs and markings in Brockley Lane and Chelvey Road that warn of narrow bends and pinch points. The second will fund signs and markings to warn of horses and riders near Chelvey church. The Fund Committee is considering allocating around a third of its Fund to the provision of noise insulation to properties close to the airport, many of which suffer from aircraft noise on the ground.
 - 3.5 **Flooding and highway maintenance:** Our NSC Area Officer (Pepe Sanjurjo) has been moved to Weston and replaced by Gregg Brake; the Drainage Engineer (David Kingston) has left and his work is covered temporarily by Phil Hucker. The changeover has led to some upheaval, but we have established good relationships with both. Unfortunately a lot of work promised for the drains last summer did not happen. Following a recent site meeting with Phil and his manager and Brockley Hall Residents' Association, NSC agreed to undertake a series of measures in the new financial year: we will endeavour to see this gets done. NSC's updated system for getting rubbish removed seems to be working well: report litter etc. on www.n-somerset.gov.uk/connect or ring 01934 888802 and you will get feedback on what is being done.
 - 3.6 **Footpaths:** Our annual maintenance programme was done, with a focus on obstructed paths. Work is nearing completion on a new footpath from the A370 to the Bowling Green in the Brockley Combe, thanks to NSC and a group of volunteers. This will soon be signed, as will the bridleway into the woods from the Crossroads. Julian Ridge thanked Wanda Denning, owner of the woods, for making these projects possible.
 - 3.7 **Post at Brockley Elm:** We have replaced one of the oak posts, which was damaged. We are grateful to NSC for fixing the post for us, which involved breaking up a large concrete footing. The posts must be necessary, judging by the number of times they get hit.
 - 3.8 **Brockley church facilities:** Antony Ridge has had many meetings with interested parties to progress this. The water has to come from the main in Brockley Court Farm across Brockley Court land, and potential agreement has been complicated by the sale. We expect fund-raising shortly.
 - 3.9 **Annual litter pick:** This would be on 29 March. Pickers would not go up the Combe as NSC has promised to do it by the end of April, using one-way traffic control. We hope to make this a regular commitment, but NSC budget constraints are proving an obstacle.
 - 3.10 **The Great War:** We have not yet found anyone who died as a result of the 1914-18 war. We do know of five men who fought and returned: Ruscombe Smyth-Pigott, John Priddle and his brother Philip Priddle, William Edward Tutcher and Herbert Cecil Hawkins. We would love to hear of others: Gill is collecting information for Brock's News throughout the centenary. If we can find no evidence of any people killed, we may be another 'thankful parish'.
 - 3.11 **Budget:** This had been distributed, showing the precept remained at £3,300 for a third year. There were no objections.
- 4 **District councillor's report** Geoff Coombs said that North Somerset Council tax would be frozen this year. Central government funds had added 1 per cent as an incentive, and this would help NSC meet rising costs. He said the housing numbers in the Core Strategy should not cause concern. The Link Road between the A38 and A370, which would take traffic off the Combe, is on target to open in 1016-17. Regarding flooding, NSC officers had been overloaded with urgent situations and not much progress made locally. He will keep up pressure, particularly regarding the area around the Crossroads. The upgraded reporting system should make it easier for residents to report potholes, broken road signs, etc. Boundary Review: All ward boundaries are being amended to bring their numbers of electors into balance before 2015. He

preferred single-councillor wards, and thought the latest proposal for a very large ward with three councillors would mean individual councillors would have to cover a very wide area and would lose the local connection.

5 Parishioners' questions and comments

Brian Dejean asked about the collapsed wall on the A370. Julian Ridge said the wall belonged partly to his family, partly to Roger Fortune and NSC officers were chasing both. A badger sett lay under the pavement, which could not be repaired until the end of the breeding season.

Katy Hallett asked if fracking could come to the parish. Julian Ridge said there had been no recent movement although the areas allocated potentially for fracking include Backwell. Antony Ridge added that the Nailsea coal seams could be of interest for extracting methane. Geoff Coombs said NSC would be considering a motion at its next meeting. The government pressured councils to accept fracking, using money inducements: most of the Mendips are licensed, though the process lacks transparency. Supplements to the local Core Strategy applied some restrictions but the subject needs vigilance, with the Chelvey watercourses etc.

Geoffrey Hobbs praised NSC for the way it had repaired Brockley Lane potholes, particularly the collapsed drain at the entrance to Brockley Hall. But he thought the spring that has risen from North Combe in recent winters needed a new drain. Julian Ridge said the spring came out on the south side of the A370, where pavement gullies should take care of it, but these had not been jetted last summer. The drainage engineer has now promised to do this in the new financial year.

6 Any other business There were no other comments or questions, and business ended at 8.30.

Antony Ridge introduced the guest speaker, Dr Neil Rushton of the Churches Conservation Trust, who gave an illustrated talk on 'The CCT in action in Somerset'. Geoff Hobbs thanked him afterwards and the meeting closed.