

BROCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting (129), held at 8pm at St Bridget's Church, Chelvey on Monday, 22 April 2024

Present: Tessa Jarman (Chair), Cllrs Dr Julian Ridge (Vice Chair), Emma Folkes, Mike Fishwick, Tom Daw (District Councillor), Andy Warren (Parish Clerk) and 16 members of the public.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Dr Bryan Smith and from Alison Howell of Natural England who was due to deliver a talk but was, unfortunately called away on business.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting 128 – 27 March 2023

The minutes of the 2022 Annual Parish Meeting, having been previously circulated were approved and there were no matters arising.

3 Chairman's Report 2023

Cllr Tessa Jarman, as Chair of the Council, welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting, introduced the other Councillors, Clerk and our new District Councillor Tom Daw.

Welcome and thank you for coming.

Well, what an extraordinary year for us! When I approached our newest member of the council, Emma, asking her to consider becoming a councillor I said that it wouldn't place too many demands on her time: 10 meetings a year, and a couple of external meetings, a few documents to read every now and then when something 'turns up'. Oh how wrong I was. Apologies Emma. It has probably been our busiest year yet!

Your council has met 12 times since our last APM in March last year, at ST Bridget's during the winter months, and St Nicolas's in the summer. No meetings are held in December and August, There are 6 places on the council supported by a part time clerk. Last May, 5 councillors were elected unopposed in the local elections: Me, Julian Ridge, Bryan Smith, Mike Fishwick and Emma Folkes. Andy Warren is our clerk, whom we are very grateful to have, and may I take this opportunity to thank him on our behalf for all the background work he does between meetings.

This leaves the council with 1 vacancy which can be filled by co-option. If you have an interest in becoming a councillor, please contact anyone of the current councillors, or Andy.

Financially, we are in a relatively healthy state. In January the council agreed on a 3% uplift on our annual precept for this year, which equates to a grand sum of £40.87 per annum for a Band D property. As a Parish we have very little recurrent expenditure, however, given the lamentable status of NSC finances, we can foresee additional responsibilities being passed our way as they endeavour to reduce costs across the board. We are therefore conscious of the need to always be prudent.

Over the past year, the council has been engaged with several key issues concerning the Parish. I will address these each in turn.

First: The Bus Service Improvement Program and the Brockley crossroads changes.

We strongly objected to the proposals from the outset. I'm sure that most of you are aware of the fiasco the BSIP team made over the approach adopted in their communication and planning of these changes. Despite all our letters of objection, no changes were made in respect to the prohibited right

turn into Brockley Lane from the A370 when approaching from Backwell or in the overall design. We did receive apologies for the way the announcement had been made, the timescales and the errors in communication but this was only once we had exhausted all avenues and even had a meeting with our local MP, Sir Liam Fox. We decided against taking this further to the ombudsman, as we perceived little would have been achieved in so doing.

To update you on progress: the junction is now in its 'snagging phase' according to the BSIP team. It seems that First Direct buses have complained that the bus lanes were too narrow, even though this was raised during the planning and implementation. The traffic signals by the bus lane were installed too close to allow buses through, but these have since been moved. There are a few signage issues and some overgrowth had to be cut back by the signals to allow buses through. There are some technical problems with the phasing of the lights: the buses using the bus lane are not being given priority over the general traffic and a feature to help traffic turning right up the combe is not functioning. There will be some additional road markings to be added hopefully in the later part of this week to aid drivers a 'step further in navigating the new junction'. A communications officer's words, not mine. It also has not helped that an 'official' diversion was set up directing traffic to turn right into Brockley Lane due to the road closure of Chelvy Road and Lane last week for which we are still awaiting an explanation. We are preparing our own 'snagging list' of items we consider require attention, this will include a request to replace daffodil bulbs which were probably destroyed during the works at the crossroads. A safety audit on the junction will take place, most likely to be in early May. I will refrain from adding any personnel comments here, other than it is sad that an accident has already occurred within a week of its inauguration. Let us hope that at least the improvements to the drainage system in and around the crossroads fare better than any surface works appear to be doing.

With respect to all other planned BSIP schemes, notably at Backwell and Congresbury; these have both been put on hold until at least November 2024, but as work is too far advanced, the Woodhill crossroads is proceeding. We continue to petition for improvements to both the access and for the provision of shelters for the bus stops in the Parish. NSC has recently just completed a review of the bus stops, and we await to hear what is being proposed. The funding for this is independent of the BSIP monies and is still available.

Partly because of the roadworks at Brockley Crossroads, and due to the amount of rain, there has been a serious degradation of our rural road network. Flooding has increased. Numerous potholes continue to develop, roadside edges are collapsing, verges destroyed and there has been a marked increase in traffic volumes. NSC has little or no resource to address these issues as we are constantly advised, but we continue to raise them on a regular basis. Please may I ask you all to continue reporting potholes to the NSC via their website. It also helps if you would let us know, this helps to strengthen our arguments for an improved road maintenance service.

Second: The Local Draft North Somerset Plan to 2038

We were asked to give feedback on a revised NS Local draft Plan in January this year as the final part of the ratification and adoption process. There were several issues that we were especially concerned about in particular: the changes to the Brockley Settlement Boundary between Backwell Parish and ours, and the exclusion of Bristol Airport from the Green Belt. Our current understanding is that the Local Draft Plan is subject to discussion and potential revision yet again following changes within NSC planning department and in the structure of the elected chamber. I hope that Tom will be able to update us on this status later.

This leads onto our third major issue: The proposed Grove Farm development.

Again, we have raised objections to this development. I am sure that many of you are aware of the local strength of opposition to this proposed development and of many objections raised. This is still very much in its infancy as a planning application and Taylor Wimpey continue to post revised documents to support their case: the latest tranche being posted on the 10th April. This is still very much an on-going issue and I'm sure will continue to occupy us in the year to come.

At this juncture I'd like to thank all Parishioners who gave feedback on their views about all three of these issues. It is reassuring to us as councillors to know that we are representing the broad consensus of much of the Parish.

The next two topics up for consultation are: parking charges and waste recycling. NSC has produced

questionnaires for both these which can be accessed on their web site, closing date for responses is 7th May.

Bristol airport won its appeal for further expansion. Bristol Airport Action Network Coordination Committee (BAANCC) decided not to pursue further appeal on the grounds of environmental law. There is an ongoing issue concerning the volume of night flights. Our district councillor, Tom is participating in discussion about this and perhaps will be able to give an update later.

Ash die back disease continues its relentless onslaught amongst the ash trees in the Parish and I suspect we will be subjected to more road closures as a consequence.

The new 'Demand response transport' service WESTlink was inaugurated last April and has received mixed response across NS; people either love it or hate it. Following a review, changes have been made to improve its efficiency and it is to continue for the foreseeable future. Our parish doesn't really benefit from the service partly due to the initial exclusion of Nailsea and the station from the service, and that it seems each request directs you to a bus stop on the A370 anyway.

On a more positive note, we did manage to hold our 'Parish Coronation Picnic', all be it on a later date in August due to the inclement weather over the Coronation weekend in May. Fortunately, insurance cover had been purchased and no loss was incurred due to its cancellation. In fact, although the Picnic was not held as a fund-raising exercise, a surplus was realised. This money was put towards the purchase of an oak tree and an iron bench as a lasting commemoration of King Charles's coronation. The tree has been planted in the Pond field behind Brockley Hall, opposite Manor Farm. The bench has also now been installed around it. I'd like to thank all those who helped and contributed and attended to making the picnic a success.

Finally, I'd like to thank all my fellow councillors for their support in this my first year as chair, especially Julian who stood in for me whilst I was away. I'll now hand over to Tom to give us his report and any updates he may have on the issues I've spoken about. You will have an opportunity to raise questions on any of the above issues and others at the end of the meeting. Thank you.

4 Other Report District Cllr Tom Daw

District Councillor Tom Daw was invited to address the meeting.

Since being elected last November he has been representing the Parish on many issues and updated the meeting:-

- BSIP (Bus Service Improvement Plan). As we are aware several objections both by BPC and District Cllr Daw were largely ignored. Discussions are continuing to try to mitigate various issues arising following the new junction becoming operational.
- Grove Farm – after the initial consultation this is still in early stages and a decision is not imminent and, as it stands it seems unlikely to be approved.
- Local Plan – work continues as the current version has been deemed unlawful and will need to be reconsulted.
- Airport - District Cllr Daw will be part of the consultative council which will be looking at the issue of excessive night flights.
- Westlink – This service is run by WECA (of which NSC is not a part so has little influence) but issues and questions for improvement will continue to be raised.
- Road repairs – supporting BPC efforts to deal with various potholes and road damage.

In addition, District Cllr Daw has arranged a meeting with NSC's Chief Executive Jo Walker to discuss his concerns on a range of issues encountered since his election.

5 Public Questions

Residents raised several issues: -

- Inclusion of Grove Farm as a designated area. (May be part of revised Local Plan for comment in due course).
- The recently erected 50 mph sign no Chelvey Batch. (after representations, agreement now to remove this)
- NSC pothole repairs. (poor standard of repairs will be taken up with NSC and further attention requested).
- Local Plan – when this is re-consulted will previous comments stand? (This will be clarified)
- New Documents have been submitted by Taylor Wimpey for the Grove Farm application. (These will be considered and commented on at the BPC May meeting).
- The question of a no confidence vote in NSC was raised. (District Cllr Daw recommends caution with this approach as there is a danger that if this was successful NSC could revert to Government control. This could increase the danger of issues, such as planning decisions being taken at Government level.)
- The Chelvey Conservation Area and whether NSC are in breach of this.

Meeting concluded at 8.20.

Andy Warren
Clerk, Brockley Parish Council
29 April 2023

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