

## Your council

**Tessa Jarman** Chair 01275 462619

**Julian Ridge** Vice Chair 07950 655761

**Mike Fishwick** 01275 462995

**Bryan Smith** 01275 462434

**Emma Folkes** 07794 030891

**Stephen Parsons** 07818 401669

**Clerk: Andy Warren** 07932 191964

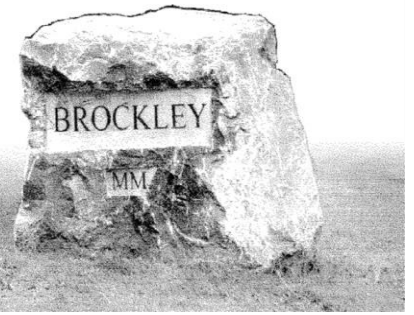
Main notice board: Chelvey Batch triangle

Email: [brockleypc@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:brockleypc@hotmail.co.uk)

Website: [www.brockleypc.org](http://www.brockleypc.org)

Facebook: @BrockleyParishCouncil

# Brock's News



## THE ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF BROCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

May 2024

Issue 22

### PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

#### ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2023

The 130<sup>th</sup> APM was held at St. Bridget's Church on 22 April, and it was good to see a good turnout of residents.

#### CHAIR'S REPORT

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 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 Chelvey 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.

*Third:* 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 provide 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.

**Tessa Jarman, Chair**

## PARISH CHURCH OF ST BRIDGET'S



Our regular services are at 9.15 am on the first three Sundays of each month. Please also check on the noticeboards or in the Backwell and District Magazine in case there are special services for festivals. Our website will also be a useful guide.

[www.stbridgetschelvey.co.uk](http://www.stbridgetschelvey.co.uk)

### PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DATES

Parish Council meetings take place on the first Monday of the month (except August and December) and are held at 7pm. Venues will be either St Bridget's or St Nicholas. This is subject to change so check our website for up-to-date information.

#### 2024/25 dates (subject to change):

10 Jun 2024	1 Jul 2024
2 Sep 2024	7 Oct 2024
4 Nov 2024	6 Jan 2025
3 Feb 2025	3 Mar 2025

Agendas and minutes are available to view on the website. **ALL WELCOME**

### BATS IN BROCKLEY

There are 18 species of bats in the UK of which 17 are known to be breeding here. In Brockley we have at least 13 species with only the rarest having not been recorded during a fortnight in October 2023 when two Parish Councillors hosted static bat detectors

as part of a survey by Bath University on behalf of North Somerset Council. This survey was only a snapshot of bat activity in one part of the parish, quite late in the year.

The commonest bat recorded was, unsurprisingly, the common pipistrelle which is one of the commonest British bats. These amazing creatures weigh between 3 and 8 grams with a wingspan of 200 to 235 mm and eat small flying insects which they can locate in total darkness by means of ultrasonic echo location with a peak intensity at 45 kHz, a full octave above even a child's hearing. These are the bats often seen around dusk in our gardens.



Greater Horseshoe Bat

At the other end of the scale, our largest bat, the Noctule weighs between 18 and 40 grams with a wingspan of 320 to 400 mm. A blackbird has a wingspan of 340 to 390 mm. Unlike the pipistrelle, which hunts in a small area with a jinxy flight, the Noctule flies fast and straight along the line of hedgerows diving to catch larger insects at speeds of up to 50 MPH.

In Brockley we are fortunate in having a nationally important maternity roost of greater horseshoe bats in Brockley Hall, an SSSI. These bats have been known about since the 1980s and have been extensively studied. The numbers have



steadily increased over the years but recently have started to fall from a peak of over 700. This is a bit concerning and is probably due to a nationally observed decrease in the number of insects together with the dramatic reduction in summer grazing by cattle in the area. Many local farmers are feeding cattle indoors because of the high incidence of bovine Tb locally.

The greater and lesser horseshoe bats, which also breed locally, are, together with all other species of bats, protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and amendments and Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. They are also specifically protected within the North Somerset and Mendip Special Area of Conservation and any planning application requires a full environmental study, together with agreed mitigation methods, carried out by a licensed ecologist.

**Julian Ridge**

## **ST NICHOLAS CHURCH BROCKLEY**



The Friends of Brockley Church held a very successful Quiz Night earlier in May that raised almost £300 for funds. The event included their now famous catering together with copious amounts of liquid refreshments, all of which created a lovely atmosphere and a most enjoyable event.

The clock is currently running slightly slow as the FOBC Chairman decided to adjust the timing and as a result made the situation worse!

This is now in hand and the pendulum is being adjusted by very small increments to get the timing spot on.

The churchyard grass is being cut on a monthly cycle and there has been a major cut back and prune of the overhanging trees together with a man-eating rose bush that lay in wait for passers-by. We have also been given the sign board at the top of St Nicholas Way. Glendale Ltd have now moved to Weston and agreed that the Friends may have exclusive use of their sign for events. We are most grateful to the company for this as it gives us an excellent roadside advertising space.

Events at the Church are reasonably well attended but it is important to remember that the building is now 'redundant' and while still consecrated and a fully functioning religious building it holds very few services. From being the centre of the community, it is now very much sidelined and if it is to remain as an historic public building and, unlike most country churches, with daily access by the public, it must have visitors and events. Without these, interest will decline, and the Churches Conservation Trust will reduce their support as this is based on visitor numbers. If that happens the next stage could be closure and a potential sale. The Friends are a non-religious organisation and exist to stop the Church falling out of use and work to maintain the building as a community resource. However, this ultimately depends on local residents who are prepared to support our functions, both by coming to them and by supporting the Friends. There is nothing more demoralising than putting on an event and having very few people turn up. That

doesn't often happen, but please don't leave it to someone else! There are a wide range of events during the year from drama, music, history and flower arranging to paranormal talks, so there is something for everyone. In addition, the Church can be used by residents so if you are looking for somewhere to hold an event, please contact the Friends. Payment is usually by donation, and it is a very cost-effective way of hiring space.

Details of events are in the Newsletter and on the Facebook page.

Although the intention is to have the church used as a community venue, it still remains a consecrated building and the overriding intent of the project is that everything done will be in keeping with the traditional ambience and use and that all activities will be mindful of its past history and respectful to those who have gone before.

**Please come and support your local church!**

## **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR TOM DAW**

Tom was elected as the District Councillor for Wrington (which includes Brockley) in November 2023.

Tom can be contacted by email [Thomas.Daw@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:Thomas.Daw@n-somerset.gov.uk) and mobile 07377 401879

## **STOP PRESS!**

Following the recent APM, and Tessa's appeal for new Councillors, we are delighted to confirm Stephen Parsons as a very welcome addition.