

## WARD COUNCILLOR REPORT FOR YATTON PARISH COUNCIL

- In anticipation of the second national lockdown (which started on 5th November) **we reactivated the community response** in Yatton and Claverham and made a new call-out for volunteers. At the time of writing, 113 people have offered to help and an expanded core coordinating team will meet on Wednesday for an update on local planning and to discuss the key issues, opportunities, approach, priorities, actions, etc.
- I am a member of the North Somerset Local **Outbreak Engagement Board**, chaired by the Leader of the Council. The membership of the Board includes the Director of Public Health, NSC Chief Executive, Police and Crime Commissioner and a range of leaders from the local VCSE sector. The Board oversees public-facing engagement for the outbreak response and communication of key decisions related to outbreak management - e.g. the eventual lifting of restrictions and engagement with the local population to ensure risks and decisions are understood, acceptable and practicable.
- As you know, on 24th September NSC took the decision to terminate the Biffa **recycling and waste contract** early. As part of the transition of the service to a local authority trading company (LATco), I have been chairing the cross-party (and senior officer) steering group which meets weekly to monitor and progress this work - with the key aims of making service improvements for the benefit of residents and delivering on our climate emergency goals.
- I have been involved in the drafting of a motion that will be brought to full Council on 10th November, which - if approved - will formally declare an ecological emergency and NSC will promote the policy as “tackling the climate and nature emergencies”. I was also one of a number of elected members and senior officers to take part in ‘climate literacy’ training in October. NSC is the first council in the country to participate in [this programme](#).

## Ward matters

- *I continue to be kept busy (understatement) by casework, signposting and cascading information to residents and responding to messages and questions via social media.*
- We will all be aware of the extent of the works currently being carried out on behalf of Gigaclear (and to a lesser extent, TrueSpeed) and other utility companies.
  - NSC officers have been in touch with Gigaclear about this current disruptive phase of their fibre optic build out. NSC relies on all local utility companies to be mindful of their reputation and the public perception of their service and the need to keep good relations with NSC to facilitate the works.
  - Gigaclear was supposed to have sent letters to every house in Yatton. I'm pretty sure this did not happen.
  - NSC officers work with contractors on snagging issues and residents should be reassured that contractors are obliged to put right any verge areas they may have damaged - e.g. topsoil and reseed.
- I understand how residents find the disruption frustrating - especially as it comes on top of the work that needs to be done to upgrade utilities to serve all the development at North End and Smart Systems. It now looks like Gigaclear will have the work at the southern end of the village completed by Christmas.
- I hope the plans for the proposed 20mph zone along Yatton High Street (largely paid for from developer contributions) will soon be ready for public consultation - with a view to implementing before the end of the FY - although I can't rule out that slipping a little further with another lockdown. YPC will recall the extent of the 20mph zone under consideration is from a point just south of the Wemberham Lane mini-roundabout all the way through the village centre up to the Claverham Road / B3133 mini-roundabout. This is part of a comprehensive package of measures under active consideration in and around Yatton - with the aim of accommodating social distancing, improving safety (and the perception of safety) for pedestrians and cyclists, encouraging modal shift, and the reallocation of road space.

- The first residents have now moved into the **Strawberry Gardens** extra care apartments.
- Construction of **Chestnut Park Primary School** is scheduled for completion by the end of January 2021. Opportunities for potential use of the new building to benefit the community (from then until the school is handed over to Clevedon Learning Trust next summer) are being explored.
- Following further conversations with senior officers at NSC, I intend to convene a meeting between NSC senior officers and the Parish Council to discuss an offer from NSC for progressing any remedial works for **Wakedean Gardens**.
- As part of NSC's commitment to 'rewilding' in the district, an area of Horsecastle Park has been identified to plant 78 'whips' (young tree seedlings) in February 2021. However, I have reservations about the appropriateness of the intended site.
- I continue to have regular contact with planning officers about two particularly lengthy, complex and difficult planning **enforcement** cases in the village.
- Having been intimately involved in the campaign to keep the sorting office in Yatton, it would seem Royal Mail are intent on continuing with their plans.

## Planning

- The second part of the **Local Plan consultation** opened on 2nd November. This "Choices" consultation is looking at some alternative approaches for the broad spatial locations for new housing and employment over the next 15 years. In the New Year NSC will take stock of what is happening with the proposed planning reforms, and I suspect may need to prepare a new style local plan document identifying the new zones for 'growth', 'renewal' and 'protection'. This is going to be very difficult given the (in my view) totally unsustainable amount of housing the Govt has identified for North Somerset - something NSC (and our local MPs) are challenging. Nevertheless, we need to plan positively for the future. Decisions on where new homes should be built will be taken in the next year or so. The

consultation runs until 14th December.

- I have continued to have discussions with planning officers and other stakeholders regarding Persimmon's slightly amended application to build 60 dwellings on **land off Moor Road**. If planning officers are minded to recommend approval, the application will come to committee to be decided by councillors - most likely on 16th December.
- I am robustly questioning why NSC has allowed the applicant to bring forward a proposal for **34 dwellings on the Stowey Road site** (previously dismissed at appeal in January 2018) on an existing duplicate application which remained "valid". Meanwhile, public consultation is open for comment until 25th November.
- NSC has received a pre-application from BoKlok and Octavia Homes for a development of 60 dwellings on land off Wood Hill/Smallway. The proposal is for homes adopting fabric-first principles and assembled on site using Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), which would also deliver an upgraded **medical practice** for Mendip Vale Medical Practice.
- More planning applications for residential development are very likely to come forward in the next six months:
  - **Rectory Farm** (Mead Realisations) - an outline planning application for approx. 100 dwellings anticipated by December this year
  - **Boxbush Farm** (Strongvox Homes) - a full planning application for approx, 40 dwellings... again, expected by the end of the year.
  - **Yatton RFC** (Strongvox Homes) - two linked planning applications for 1) a new clubhouse and associated playing pitches and 2) for residential development on the current rugby club site (approx. 80 dwellings) anticipated in Spring 2021.
- Following the appeal submitted by **Bristol Airport** against the decision of NSC earlier this year to refuse the planning application to expand the airport, I participate in fortnightly update meetings. It is anticipated that the public inquiry will be held in July 2021.

**Cllr Steve Bridger**

9th November 2020