



FOCUS

on Bathavon South

Edited by Neil Butters and the Bathavon South Liberal Democrats - Call us on 01225 722 511

Help for small shops

Bath & NE Somerset councillors want to protect small shops. A recent meeting of the Council's Major Projects Panel discussed a special strategy to do this. They recognised that "village and community-run shops can be the glue which helps hold communities together, offering much more than just the goods that they sell." Their recommendations include

- providing **business advice and training** to small rural businesses,
- **flexibility in planning permissions** to enable village shops to flourish, and
- **making use of small shops** for delivering Council services like information, bookings and payments.

The Council has also decided to grant 100% business rate relief to village shops.

Rural Renaissance grants from the South West Regional Development Agency are available through the Council for projects such as the Freshford Shop Project led by Cllr Gitte Dawson - a plan to turn the village shop and post office, whose owners wish to retire, into a community-run shop - like the one in Wellow.



Neil Butters outside Wellow community shop

New: "Ring & Ride" door to door bus service

"Ring & Ride" is a new door-to-door fully accessible bus service not only for older and disabled people but for anyone who cannot use public transport. The service covers a wide area, with Wednesdays between 9 am and 4 pm set aside for people in Wellow, South Stoke, Freshford, Hinton Charterhouse and Shoscombe. Use it for shopping or social trips, doctor appointments, or to visit friends or the library. You must register to use it - call **Tel 01761 417 504**.



On the other four days, there's a subsidised shared taxi service for people in Shoscombe, South Stoke and Wellow - the so-called "**Fare Car**". It makes two journeys into the centre of Bath every morning and two out of Bath every afternoon. Any resident can use it. Again, you need to register - call **Tel 01225 477 615** to get your free Fare Car membership.

A separate Bath-based Ring & Ride service looks after people in Monkton Combe - **Tel 01225 335 019**. This is not restricted to a particular day.

Noise ban for Combe Grove Manor

Combe Grove Manor did get its late hours licence in February - despite numerous protests from Monkton Combe residents and the school. But the committee imposed a strict ban on noise - no music must be audible from neighbouring properties. A good solution if it works!

Sad pre-election arguments over the Spa!



What the Tories don't tell you

- Of the current Tory councillors, more voted FOR the Spa than against
- Tory councillors sat on the committees that supervised the project
- Tories often chaired the meetings about the Spa while it was being built
- The Tories admit that the Spa is making a good contribution to the local economy.

The Good ...

The right decision

In July 2000, councillors from ALL political parties voted for the rebuilding of the Spa. It was an important part of Bath's Roman heritage and had been derelict for years.

The right result

Bath can be proud of its Spa once again. Visitor numbers are way above the forecasts and the Spa has triggered big outside investment which will generate many new jobs for the people of BathNES.

The Bad ...

The construction was technically more difficult than expected and the project was years late and well over budget.

All the political parties backed the decision to go ahead and ALL of them were on the committees that supervised it through the hard times.

So ALL the parties have a share of the blame.

On the plus side, the Lib Dems deserve credit for seeing the project through and for making the decisions that turned it round.

and the Ugly

It's a shame but the Tory behaviour on the Spa is not very pretty - pretending that they were not involved and blaming everyone else.

Only a few days ago, a Tory leaflet in Bath referred to the "Lib Dem Spa" six times, sometimes in lurid headlines.

It would be nice if the Tories could be more open about their role in the Spa, including its success. Their negativity does no justice to the Spa or Bath and North East Somerset.

Council Tax up 5%

Major pressures on the budget came from the following sources:

■ **Transport.** The popular free bus passes for pensioners – basically a good thing – are costing far more than they should, and new parking regimes in Bath have led to major shortfalls - both adding up to 2% on Council Tax.

■ **Salaries.** "Single Status" – the fair reassessment of all Council



pay, free of any discrimination - is putting up the overall salary bill. Negotiations were lengthy and difficult, so there's back pay involved, and you can never take money away – only add it!

■ The **Social Services** budget is overspent once again. How to avoid this without cutting vital services to the needy?

Sorry ...

Note from Cllr Gitte Dawson: "One thing people tell me they hate when I knock on their doors is political parties getting at each other. I have tried very hard not to be political in working for my ward .

But when the blame culture gets too extreme - as it's just doing now, on the Letters pages, because of the election - I can't just sit by and let it happen! I hope people will understand."

St Julian's Primary in Wellow rated "outstanding"

An Ofsted report on St Julian's C of E Primary School last month heaped praise on the school. "Children get off to a flying start", it said, "and become confident and independent learners". "New headteacher Sue East was congratulated for

having a clear vision and determination, and her staff praised for working hard to improve the quality of education.

"This is a real success story that I am proud to be part of as a Governor of the school", said Gitte Dawson.



Gitte Dawson outside Wellow School

Heard on the doorstep

Local campaigner Neil Butters from South Stoke and Cllr Gitte Dawson have been out knocking on doors to see what most concerns residents in the ward. Here are some of the issues people have raised with us:

■ Uncooperative dustmen.

We have persuaded the dustmen to collect from some dustbins immediately inside people's properties rather than insist that the bins be put out specially on the day.

■ Unhelpful recyclers.

People generally like the very comprehensive green box scheme – but say items are often left behind without explanation. We have asked that the recyclers leave a note explaining why certain items should not be put in the green box.

■ Unreliable cardboard collection.

We hear that in some areas, the cardboard collections do not always happen. We have followed up on this and hope that the gaps have been plugged.

■ **Speeding traffic.** A universal comment! Monkton Combe and Freshford now have statutory 20mph speed limits, Hinton Charterhouse has a

30mph one, Wellow and Shoscombe have advisory 20mph limits. In South Stoke the debate still goes on as to whether such signs make any difference. We are pursuing extra flashing warning signs where parishes want them. There are no magic solutions!



■ Difficulty finding a school.

We were able to put a youngster in contact with the Connexions office in Bath, who are there specifically to advise young people on the decisions and choices they need to make in life - Tel 01225 461 501.

■ **Blocked gullies.** At least three were pointed out to us – we have asked for them to be cleared and will be checking up on them soon.

■ **Potholes!** We've referred those that have been pointed out to us to Council Connect – but remember, potholes deeper

than 4 cm and longer than 30 cm must be patched within 24 hours, so the easiest thing is to pick up the phone and dial **01225 394041** for Council Connect!

■ **Aggressive horses.** This can spoil walking. We have again contacted the Council's Footpath Team.

■ Parking in Applecroft, Shoscombe:

More parking is needed so the green does not get chewed up. We will contact Somer Housing again to see what can be done.

■ Chaotic school traffic.

Another recurring complaint in all villages with schools, and no easy solution. It is sad that so many parents feel they

need to **drive** even short distances to school and then right up to the front gate - and even stay there and chat rather than move on.

■ Badly timed buses.

Two operators run hourly buses along the B3110 - but only ten minutes apart! We have investigated - but it seems deliberate and nothing can be done. It's the regrettable result of free competition in public transport.

Locked gate on Midford to Wellow greenway.

This was a mistake during resurfacing - it has already been corrected.

Please support Two Tunnels!

The exciting Two Tunnels Greenway project was almost killed stone-dead last month. Sir Elgar Jenkins, Tory Transport Exec Councillor, had suddenly decided - behind closed doors and without consultation - that the project was not worth supporting financially. Or had he just forgotten about it? Yet it stands to bring some £1.2m of lottery money into our area!

Fortunately, an avalanche of letters and emails, good press coverage and last-minute lobbying of the Council Executive by supporters managed to reverse this step just in time, and now the

forward capital programme does contain some funding towards the project (for 2008/09 onwards).

The plan is to open up the Devonshire and Combe Down railway tunnels (between Midford and Wellsway) for use by cyclists and walkers, then to link this route into Linear Park and the river towpath at the Bath end and into the Midford to Radstock greenway at the other end. It will make a great recreational and commuter route and an exciting new tourist attraction. Says John Grimshaw of Sustrans: "If this doesn't attract as many visitors



Devonshire Tunnel entrance

as Bath Abbey then we have failed!"

Now there is a planning application in. If you like the project, please write to the Council to support it! Write to **Planning Dept, Trimbridge Hosue, Bath BA1 2DP.**

See also www.twotunnels.org.uk

William Smith monument

The monument to geologist William Smith who lived in Midford in the 18th century is now in place on the Midford to Wellow greenway. It shows samples of all the



rock found around here.

types of

Why not stand for Parish Council?

All 65 Bath & North East Somerset councillors are up for re-election on 3rd May, and so are all parish councillors.

Parish Councils do great work looking after their villages - monitoring planning applications, keeping the roads repaired, swept and tidy, consulting on and implementing traffic measures, keeping people informed, getting Village Plans underway.

Parish Councils have more powers than people realise. You can make a real difference. Find out more from

your Parish Clerk - before April.

You need not be a veteran resident to stand - newcomers bring a welcome fresh eye. It's also a great way to meet people and get involved in the community.

Hinton Charterhouse to embark on Village Plan

Hinton Charterhouse are just embarking upon their Village Plan. A project team gathered quickly at the recent Annual Parish Meeting to take this forward. A key objective for Hinton is to influence planning decisions towards maintaining a living village rather than excessive visual perfection.

Can you help us?

Would you like to join our enthusiastic, growing team of helpers by delivering a few leaflets in your area?

If so, please ring **Neil Butters on 01225 832 256.**

Do you have a Council-related problem?

Email us on buttersn@aol.com or write to us at

Hillside Cottage, Southstoke Lane,
South Stoke, Bath BA2 7DN.



Your local Lib Dem team:
Cllr **Gitte Dawson** and local
campaigner **Neil Butters**