

# People Against Bureaucracy Group



## Members' News Sheet

Dear Members and Supporters,

December 2023

### CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Hoping your Christmas is filled with joy and happiness.

#### **PRESTBURY BY-ELECTION – 12<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2023.**

Congratulations to Stanley (Stan) Smith for winning the by-election. Unfortunately, the turn-out was low, but it attracted a number of political and independent candidates, all claiming to work wonders for Prestbury given the opportunity. PAB is proud to stand on its long record of delivering for residents on matters important to them. Many members will recall our efforts to control the devastating flooding, to protect the Green Belt and to ensure Prestbury concerns were highlighted within the Borough wide Joint Core Strategy plan.

#### **HISTORIC LAMP POSTS – PRESTBURY ROAD.**

Just in case you didn't know, there are four unusual and historic lamp posts at the lower end of Prestbury Road between Pittville Circus and Windsor Street. Another unusual fact is that the four lamps are surviving remnants of the Cheltenham District Light Railway which operated an electric tramway service in Cheltenham between 1901 and 1930. The last we heard about the lamps was that they were due for a refurbishment in August which would take 3 months to complete.

#### **THE ICE RINK – IMPERIAL GARDENS.**

Following the disappointment of not having the Ice Rink last year, it is good news to learn and to see the construction of the Ice Rink taking place in Imperial Gardens. The Ice Rink was due to open on 17<sup>th</sup> November and run until New Year's Day. Environmental concerns have been expressed because of plans to use biofuel generators to power the ice rink. This was probably the reason why there was no ice rink last year, but nothing has changed.

#### **CAROL SINGING ON FERNLEIGH GREEN – UP HATHERLEY.**

For the past 40 years or more, local residents have gathered on the Green to sing carols with their families and friends on Christmas Eve. It is a good start to the Christmas celebrations and each year it attracts some 300 to 350 people, who not only enjoy the singing, but the addition of a small noggin of mulled wine to start the Christmas celebration.

#### **PITTVILLE PUMP ROOM STEPS.**

Cheltenham Borough Council, with financial help from Friends of Pittville and a grant from the Enover Community Trust, have restored and reinstated the 200 year old steps outside the Pittville Pump Room. This will improve and define the path down the central lawn.

This conservation work and much more will enhance the historic landscape at Pittville Park, which will be welcomed by everyone.

Friends of Pittville have been foremost in dedicating their efforts to the restoration and maintenance of the Park, which is greatly appreciated.

### **131 THE PROMENADE.**

In spite of plans to reduce the size of the marquees with the addition of 'dome shape tops', the application has been turned down by Cheltenham Borough Council.

### **THE GREEN BELT.**

England's 14 Green Belts cover just a tenth (12.4%) of the land mass, but it provides a breath of fresh air for the people who live close to or in these precious areas.

It came as a surprise to read the comments of the chairman of Natural England who suggested that 'building on the Green Belt should be part of the answer to the housing crisis, providing more effort was put into improving the quality of urban green spaces.'

Sound words, but considering there are nearly 300,000 empty properties in England and recently a record number of brownfield sites have been identified that could provide 1.2m homes. It seems that a closer analysis of the situation needs to be undertaken.

There are plenty of options to meet any housing demands without taking the Green Belt.

### **TRUMAN'S FARM, GOTHERINGTON, NEAR CHELTENHAM.**

News that a planning inspector has approved a planning application for 45 houses at Gotherington overturning a Tewkesbury Borough Council decision to reject them is very disappointing.

It is disappointing because the Inspector has used the reason that the Council 'could not demonstrate that it had a sufficient existing reserve of housing sites to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing – a requirement under national planning policies.'

It would be interesting to know how many councils in the UK meet this requirement.

### **IDSALL DRIVE CAR PARK.**

We are very disappointed to report that the purchase of Idsall car park has been rejected by Prestbury Parish Council.

In 2021, Cheltenham Borough Council offered to sell the car park to Prestbury Parish Council for £40,000 which was significantly less than the market value, but this offer was rejected.

Recently, after discussions with PAB Councillor Ian Bassett-Smith, the Borough Council again agreed to sell the car park to the parish council for the original offer price of £40,000.

This offer was discussed at the parish council meeting on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

However, in spite of the supreme efforts of Cllr Bassett-Smith, supported by his colleague Stan Smith and former councillor John Payne, the offer was again rejected by the parish council.

The car park is now likely to be sold at the commercial value and the site as a car park will be lost forever.

This is sad news for the village.

### **MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY.**

Sheila Smith, the wife of our newly elected PAB Councillor for Prestbury, has kindly agreed to take on the role of Membership Secretary from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2024.

Please give Sheila all the help and support you can with the membership collection. Thanks.

VISIT THE PAB WEB SITE: [www.pab.org.uk](http://www.pab.org.uk)

**PAB ALWAYS WORKING FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMUNITY**

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