

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 – 12TH 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.

Fine words of course, but where were they during the period when the High Street and Deep Street were frequently flooded following local storms.

Did they show any support to the residents who regularly put sand bags to their front doors before going to bed, or joined the PAB Group when they met the then Secretary of State for the Environment when he paid a visit to Cheltenham, which ultimately solved the flooding problem.

We achieved not one flood relief scheme, but five for Prestbury.

No more wet feet and no more hanging the carpets out to dry on the clothes line each morning.

I say again: Where were they when they were needed?

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 17th 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 noggling of mulled wine to start the Christmas celebration.

PITTVILLE PUMP ROOMS STEPS.

Cheltenham Borough Council, with financial help from Friends of Pittville, has started work to restore the historic 200 year old steps outside the Pittville Pump Rooms.

We understand that the two original plinths are being refurbished and local stone is being laid to improve and to define the historic 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 in England 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.'

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 20th November 2023.

However, in spite of the supreme efforts of Cllr Bassett-Smith, 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 newly elected PAB Councillor for Prestbury, has kindly agreed to take on the role of Membership Secretary from January 1st 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

PAB ALWAYS WORKING FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMUNITY

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