



Pilning & Severn Beach Parish Council

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AVONMOUTH EXPLOSION

The Parish Council December meeting started by remembering those who lost their lives on December the 3rd, in the blast that occurred in a silo at the Wessex Water plant near Avonmouth. The four people – Michael James, Brian Vickery, Raymond White, and Luke Wheaton - went to work in the morning, to serve our community, but did not return back home.

Stoke Lane AFC, where Luke played for the U18 Colts, set up a Just Giving page to help raise money for the costs of the funerals, as featured on BBC Points West. If you would like to make a contribution to help the families affected by this tragic incident, visit

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/john-underhill>

LOW FREQUENCY NOISE POLLUTION

The Abatement Notice issued by South Gloucestershire Council Environmental Health Department in partnership with the Environment Agency (EA) is due to expire in January. In the meantime, SUEZ informed members of the Parish Council that they have three plans in action; they are currently manufacturing components that they think will solve the problem. We are hoping that SUEZ will have resolved the issue before the expiry of the Abatement Notice. We would like to remind you that any disturbance (this also includes flies or odour from the incinerator) can be reported to the EA on their 24-hour pollution number - **0800 80 70 60**.

ORCHARD POOLS

We would like to thank all residents who have contacted the Parish Council about the devastation of the woodland area known as Orchard Pools. The response to our question, "Do we keep fighting?" was one of overwhelming support, with only two out of nearly two hundred respondents feeling that we should not waste any more money and effort on trying to stop the bulldozers. Our thoughts behinds it are that if we don't stop them here, then where will it end? We certainly do not want to see more of our green space given up to industrial development, which creates more dust, noise and pollution!

We have joined an organisation called Environmental Law Foundation (ELF) who have a network of planning lawyers. They have offered to help us with the legal argument. Sadly, we are forced to challenge South Gloucestershire Council to get them to work for us and for our environment, rather than bow to the pressure from the developers. We hope to have more news from ELF soon.

PILNING AND SEVERN BEACH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

This is a reminder that our first Neighbourhood Plan working group meeting will take place on **Monday, 11 January 2021**. For joining instructions, please contact the Parish Clerk.

SEVERN BEACH 100 – CENTENARY CELEBRATION TEAM

The plans around the celebrations in June 2022 are taking shape. But we need more volunteers! If you would like to be on the Centenary Celebration Team, let our Parish Clerk know.

CENSUS 2021

The decennial census is almost upon us. Households in Pilning and Severn Beach Parish will soon be asked to take part in the nationwide survey of housing and the population. It has been carried out every decade since 1801, with the exception of 1941.

Information from the digital-first census will help decide how services are planned and funded in our local area. This could mean things like doctors' surgeries, housing or new bus routes. Households will receive a letter with a unique access code in the post, allowing them to complete their questionnaire online. Paper questionnaires will be available on request.

Census day is March 21st, 2021. For more information, visit: www.census.gov.uk

PILNING AND SEVERN BEACH RAILWAY STATIONS

Do you remember the time when Pilning Railway station featured in the national news as the third least used station in the UK, when only 46 “entries and exits” were made at the station in the entire year? Since then, the station has been attracting a lot of attention – both from the railway enthusiasts, who found it exciting that high speed trains regularly (albeit only once a week) stop at a “forgotten” station, and the local families, who suddenly realised that even the existing level of service actually gives an opportunity for a decent day out in Bath, Cardiff or Gloucester (discovering in the process that train travel may be cheaper and less stressful than driving!) Overall, according to the figures released in December by Office of Rail and Road (ORR), there was a 55% year-on-year increase of passenger numbers at Pilning by April 1st, 2020; and a whopping 1,440% increase since the meagre 46 passengers in 2016. Even though ORR added a comment saying that the absolute change in passengers was small, we note that 710 passengers had a great time travelling to or from Pilning before the start of the pandemic. Even since the travel restrictions came in, we observed that between the lockdowns, the station was used by responsible passengers for leisure and exercise, in line with the government's guidance.



Passengers waiting to board a train in May 2019
Photo: D.Hassell

Passenger footfall at Severn Beach station also went up, by 19.5% (from 251,994 in 2018/19 to 301,154 in 2019/20). ORR suggested that the reason for the increase was an improvement to Sunday service to 11 trains per day, from 2 trains per day previously.

PARISH COUNCIL – JANUARY MEETING

Our next meeting is going to be held online on **Monday, the 4th of January 2021, starting at 7pm**. As usual, everyone is welcome to join us. Among other items, we will be discussing a possibility of forming a Community Land Trust, progress made with funding for repairs of St Thomas's Tower, and new locations for the defibrillators. The minutes of the previous meetings and the current agenda, as well as the dial-in details can be found on the Parish Council website.

We would like to wish all the parishioners a Happy New Year. We look forward to working with you, and for you in 2021. With your help - to paraphrase a well-known saying – we will continue to be a small group of thoughtful, concerned citizens that undoubtedly can change the world!

Article by Olga Taylor on behalf of the Parish Council