

PILNING & SEVERN BEACH PARISH COUNCIL

**Public Meeting held on Monday 8th December 2008, commencing at 7.00 pm,
in PILNING School, Bank Road**

COUNCILLORS Mr I Humphries (Chairman), Mr J Black, Mr S Cooper
PRESENT (7) Mr D Humphries, Mr D Nethercott, Mr I Roberts & Mr N Webb.

Also Present:- J C Rawlinson (Clerk), Mr P Tyzack & Mrs Sheila Cooke (S Glos Councillors), and 94 members of the public, including Mr Mike Hawkins, Chairman of Aust Parish Council and a Police Constable and PCSO from Avon & Somerset Constabulary, and a reporter from the *Thornbury Gazette*.

APOLOGIES for ABSENCE

None recorded.

Topic for Discussion – TRAVELLERS: DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

The Chairman introduced members of the council to those present and summarised the DPD process so far.

The Clerk read through the points raised with South Glos Council, and also the responses received.

PT then expressed his disappointment at the way in which SGC had dealt with the DPD, especially in the procedure followed in producing the list of possible sites. He had taken part in the process, examining and commenting on the document, but not on the identified sites. He also attended the Cabinet meeting at which the decisions were made, protesting at the lack of scope used in identifying the sites listed. The DPD was, however, produced unchanged.

PT expressed his concerns over the status of land in this area, covering the importance of the river environment and the need for adjacent wildlife corridors. European directives covering 3 important categories of environmental concern are not accommodated by this DPD, which is also contrary to the standards laid down in the Biodiversity Action Plan.

Mike Hawkins addressed those present, outlining the success his parish had in getting rid of 'their' traveller site, albeit only after 15 years of effort.

Christine Bush of Bretry spoke of the problems caused in the vicinity of her home, after which many of those present spoke of their concerns. Among the questions raised were: what cost falls upon the local authority in providing for travellers; and, what is the toll upon nearby residents in respect of the quality of their lives, and the devaluation of their properties. The Police Constable spoke briefly in response to a complaint about the lack of action by the force in dealing with certain matters. Karen Widdows of Pilning stated that all districts should have sites. They should not all be placed here. Simon Ball of Pilning commented that if the plan goes ahead, Police support and proper management of sites should be guaranteed for communities like ours.

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The mood of the meeting was wholeheartedly against any form of traveller occupation within the area, and there was some indignation over the total absence of listed sites in the Thornbury area and only 1 site in the rural north of the county. The proximity of the site to the school was of some concern, and residents complained of a lack of communication from the council.

The Clerk advised those present that all the points raised were also of concern to the parish council. He directed them to the final paragraph of the comprehensive information sheet, produced by DN and circulated to all present at the beginning of the meeting, advising them of the importance of submitting comment – a response that would have greater significance than anything the parish council could achieve on their behalf.

SC summarised her involvement, and views, on the process, warning that any comment made should relate to planning matters in order to be considered. Personal views of travellers should be avoided at all costs.

IH thanked all who had attended. All attendees were encouraged to take and complete comment sheets. With the time now at 8.45 pm the meeting was officially drawn to a close.

Parish council members spoke with various members of the public, later discussing amongst themselves the possibility of meeting with Mike Hawkins, to discuss the procedures followed by Aust PC in dealing with their traveller problem. Although SGC have provided the opportunity for 3 members to attend a meeting at Thornbury, it was agreed the meeting with MH should take place first, as it could provide further pointers which may prove useful when dealing with SGC.

J C Rawlinson
Clerk
10th Dec

Signed.....Dated.....