

# NAILSEA ACTION GROUP 2025 AGM

**Location:** The Grove Sports Centre and Social Club, St Mary's Grove, Nailsea. BS48 4NQ with thanks to the Manager for waiving the hire charge as long as the bar was patronised - which it was - and to the bar staff for their help in setting the meeting up.

**Date:** Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2025

**Time:** 19:30

**Theme:** How to protect your own green space.

**In the Chair:** Matt Thomas, who welcomed all to the meeting and outlined the agenda.

**Present:** 11 people: Reis Braganza, Jean Eade, Roger Eade, Antony Evans, Phil Gascoigne, Dave Gray, Gill Gray, Mike Rose, Patrick Smallbone, Matt Thomas, Doug Willis.

**Apologies:** Carol Deacon, Tracey Thomas, Chris Ambrose, Kingsley Belton, Neville Crewdson and Chris Turner.

**Minutes of the last AGM, Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2024:** Approved on a proposal from David Gray seconded by Doug Willis.

**Financial Report** (led by Matt Thomas)

£748.50 in the bank. There are some outstanding expenses to be paid once a new account had been opened with another bank as Lloyds, NAG's current bank, is now to charge £4.25 pcm. When this is effected, supporters will be invited to make a voluntary donation as in previous years. NAG's costs are not high, but include paying for the website domain, printing, occasional room hire, leaflets and leafletting etc...

**Reports on Activities since the last AGM:** (led by Antony Evans)

A number of points were made from the list below, only some of which were specifically mentioned.

Since the last AGM on 11 September 2024 (so only 8 months since the last AGM):-

- There have been 7 meetings of the NAG core group,
- 7 Nailsea Town Council meetings have been attended
- 3 North Somerset consultations have been attended
- The establishment of a local residents' association in Trendlewood, facilitated by NAG last year, has continued to meet and to develop its opposition to planning in its immediate area on some well used open green space.
- Another site in the Trendlewood area has been refused planning permission. NAG took an active part in opposing the planning application.
- A number of emails and other communications sent and received to officials and supporters.
- A number of letters and reports to the local media and free papers.
- Much individual work by committee/core group members on preparing for and documenting meetings, maintaining the website, keeping track of planning

applications, scrutinising associated and other documents, the Press and media reports etc...

- Maintaining awareness and receiving information from like-minded groups such as the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), the Open Spaces Society (NAG is a member of both), Tickenham Residents' Action Group (TRAG), Backwell Residents Association (BRA) etc...
- Joining the Open Spaces Society and maintaining membership with CPRE (Council for the Preservation of Rural England/Campaign to Protect Rural England).
- NAG has made detailed submissions to the North Somerset Council's consultation on additional sites for development, the draft Local Plan 2040, and to several other North Somerset Council planning permission applications (and others pending), in particular, those for the site north of Hanham Way, site to the north of Southfield Road, and the site to the west of Nailsea.
- NAG representatives have met informally the local MP twice.
- Individual members of the NAG core group have made their own submissions to these and to other NSC planning applications.

#### **Election of Officers.** (conducted by Matt Thomas)

Matt Thomas, who has been Chair for nearly ten years since November 2015, wished to step down owing to the increased expectations of his employer.

Chair: Antony Evans, proposed by Reis Braganza, seconded by Doug Willis

Vice-Chair: Reis Braganza, proposed by Dave Gray, seconded by Doug Willis

Secretary: The post continues to be unfilled at the moment. Antony Evans currently acts as Scribe, but expressed the hope that this role might now be taken by another.

Treasurer: There were no nominations for this vacant position, the duties for which are very light. Tracey Thomas, however, expressed her continuing availability to carry out the work if desired.

Matt Thomas will kindly continue in his role as IT co-ordinator and website manager, as a member of the 'core group', with Antony Evans, Reis Braganza, Dave Gray, Doug Willis and, newly welcomed, Mike Rose.

#### **Area Updates**

A number of updates were given by members of the NAG core group ["committee"], but not on every site that had been of interest to NAG since 2015.

##### *a) Partly or wholly completed sites included:-*

*The land behind The Uplands (by Stonewood Homes, called Elm Grove (53 houses) North Somerset council planning application reference number 20/P/2000/R3).*

The houses are almost complete with one or two now occupied, but have been withdrawn from the open market and sold to Alliance Homes as social and affordable housing.

Bucklands Place, Trendlewood, (by Acorn, (17 houses) NSC ref. no.: 18/P/5234/OUT.

This development, close to the junction with Station Road, is now largely complete, but only six houses have sold.

##### *b) Pending or unresolved situations*

South Nailsea, by Gleasons (400 homes) 23/P/1145/OUT

Gleasons have submitted documents for a further application in the face of a previous one being rejected largely on account of its poor single access point. This is now understood also to be in the flood plain, probably rendering the planning application still unacceptable.

*c) West Nailsea/West End, by St Modwen, (200 homes) 23/P/2325/OUT*

This is identified in North Somerset Council's draft Local Plan as a possible location for a large development, but, as recognised by NSC's Transportation Officer at a recent public consultation meeting, is very constrained by apparently unmitigable transport access and mobility.

*d) The Weston College site, Somerset Square. 22/P/1296/FUL, 22/P/1279/FUL*

There is planning permission on this very long deserted site for 38 one and two bedroom flats, revised to remove the requirement to provide affordable housing due to the site's limitations.

*e) The octagonal building in Somerset Square, formerly Nailsea Library.*

This is now the Livro Lounge Restaurant and Bar. The much publicised fatal concrete cancer that was alleged to be afflicting the building terminally appears no longer to be a concern.

### **Current Planning Issues**

*a) Land between Bibury Close and Birdlip Close, Trendlewood Way.*

This was initially speculatively purchased for a modest sum by a development agent, sold on twice each time for a larger sum, now divided into 12 plots for sale at £12k each. An active local residents' group, which NAG was instrumental in establishing, is resisting the development.

*b) A very small triangular piece of land approximately opposite the junction of Avening Close and Trendlewood Way (for 2 houses initially, now 1) 24/P/0137/FUL*

On the rejection of planning permission for two houses there is currently an application for one. This is compromised by a large protected mature Norway Maple and a common pathway (though not a registered public right of way) leading to properties to the rear of the site. An active local residents' group, supported by NAG is resisting this application.

*c) Grove Farm, Backwell, by Taylor Wimpey (515 dwellings) 23/P/2618/OU2*

This very substantial development now has planning permission, and though not in Nailsea, will impact on the town by virtue of the traffic that will be generated from the estate onto local roads and lanes. Apparently the decision was very swiftly made by NSC after only a few minutes of debate despite over 1300 public responses to the application most of which objecting. The development continues to be fiercely opposed by Backwell Residents' Association and was passed despite a strong criticism from an independent highways consultant who judged its critical impact on the local transport systems "of great concern".

Mike Rose gave a brief overview of the building sites situation in Backwell.

The approval of this application means that the nearby Gleasons application is less likely to succeed as much of the former's traffic and all of the latter's will impact on Station Road.

*d) Land to the north of Hanham Way, by Vistry (150 houses) 23/P/2322/OUT*

Despite a significant number of constraints and conditions, approval has been given by North Somerset for this development.

*e) Land North of Southfield Road, by Nailsea/Nailsea Holdings LVA LLP (381 houses)  
24/P/1586/OU2*

Fiercely opposed by local residents this is another highly contentious application with many unresolved issues relating to flooding, Land Yeo river contamination endangering the nearby Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the ecology and environment both flora and fauna. Despite all, this plan is likely to be approved by the district council though not by the local councils of Nailsea and of Wraxall.

**Brief Updates on current issues**

*a) North Somerset Council draft (regulation 19) Local Plan 2040*

The rationale that North Somerset Council has given for Nailsea and Backwell being strategically suitable for the development of up to 2,400 homes in the next 15 years (a 40% increase) on the basis of amenities, access to them, employment opportunities, infrastructure, transport etc is not supportable, Nailsea Action Group can easily provide evidence that Nailsea is eminently unsuitable for the scale of development on those grounds, as few or no plans exist for their provision.

In the current iteration of the Local Plan (2040 pre-submission), Schedule 4 shows no new educational provision for Nailsea despite extensive areas of land identified as most suitable or with other potential, let alone those sites already built on and inhabited or under construction. If, as is widely reported, Nailsea's population is likely to rise by some 5,000 souls in the foreseeable future, to avoid overcrowding in the already existing schools or pupils having to travel unwarrantably long distances for their education and the delaying complications that capital funding such schools tends to generate, it is very important that at least indicative intentions for school development in Nailsea are provided. In the 310 pages of the Local Plan for the whole of North Somerset, only three seem to be devoted to education.

The Local Plan under-identifies current traffic issues. One third of Nailsea and Backwell's population already commutes 10 - 20 minutes daily to and from work, only 4% of which travel by train. Network Rail recorded a strong objection to the Backwell Grove Farm planning application on the basis of its assessment that Nailsea and Backwell railway station is already well over capacity. Yet NSC avers that transport opportunities are good. Commuting by road will increase with all the inevitable commensurate damage to air quality and the environment.

Proposed housing developments below Morgans Hill and to the south of Nailsea (Gleasons) would obliterate the 'strategic gap' between Nailsea and Backwell.

*b) The Biodiversity Net Gain tool (BNG)*

Dave Gray recapped on what he told the 2024 AGM, and emphasised the BNG tool's requirement that a 'competent person' is appointed to score each habitat parcel for its environmental qualities and ecological value as a baseline for calculating the impact required to replace habitat lost in developing a site for housing by 10% *more* than what was there in the first place. It was reported that fortunately NSC now has a well qualified officer to implement the intentions of the BNG.

*c) The Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)*

For Nailsea the likely location for the BSIP hub would be on Link Road, widened from land currently in Waitrose's car park. NSC eagerly accepts government grants on the condition that bus lanes are established, but apparently failing to perceive the unintended consequences arising, as, for example, demonstrated at the Brockley Combe/A370 crossroads, and the original intention, now abandoned, to make Dark Lane, Backwell, one way.

*d) Car parks in Nailsea.*

NSC will be applying charges to drivers to use the Station Road and the Clevedon Road car parks. Traders fear a significant reduction in footfall and consequent loss of business.

**Your local green spaces in Nailsea, what is happening to them and what we can do about this.**

Reis Braganza summarised how small green spaces deliberately left by developers are now being speculatively sold off to agencies who commonly aspire to sell them on to housebuilders or home owners for the purpose of extending their property for a larger garden or house extension. Developers repeatedly submit re-applications, and usually NSC caves in in the end.

Reis detailed the situation opposite Avening Close (see 6.3b above), Bibury/Birdlip Close (6.3a), and a small triangular plot of land near St Francis's School for five houses, and six on a plot in Station Road. NSC has asked NAG for information on the land on Morgans Hill which it has provided with a view to it gaining some form of protection. A Morgans Hill Protection Association exists (to which NAG is affiliated), which retains funds from a much earlier and successful campaign to resist a housing development.

It was agreed that NAG should apply to have the route from The Perrings roadway southward to the entrance to the access to the Backwell Lake path officially recognised as a public right of way.

Antony Evans explained how residents might protect their own very local nearby green spaces as has happened for the area at the end of the cul de sacs off Blakeney Grove, Worcester Gardens, The Bramleys, and Newton Green, which is now listed as an area of open green space in the draft Local Plan. It is reported that the requirement for a local authority to maintain a five year supply of land for development may be re-instated.

**Any Other Business**

On 14<sup>th</sup> June the FloodPod [sic] is coming to Nailsea's Somerset Square for 10 a.m to 3 p.m. to demonstrate how to make a home flood resilient, with evening sessions at the Methodist Church from 5-6 p.m. for a discussion with panellists and 7-9.30 pm for the screening of the film 'The End We Start From'.

Antony Evans gave a vote of thanks to the outgoing Chair, Matt Thomas, for his energy in establishing NAG in the first place, and his leadership of it these last nearly ten years

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.