



FOCUS

on Bathavon South

April
2003

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Edited by Gitte Dawson and the Bathavon South Liberal Democrats - Call us on 01225 722 511

Council elections: Candidate confirmed



Gitte Dawson - Liberal Democrat
candidate for Bathavon South

Local Liberal Democrats have confirmed their choice of a candidate for the Council elections on 1st May. Not surprisingly, they chose Cllr Gitte Dawson who has been

looking after Bathavon South ward very effectively for the past four years. In fact, no-one challenged her for the post.

Says local campaigner Jim Davies: **"We are lucky to have Gitte who has worked very hard to look after the interests of the seven villages in this ward."**

She has been part of the Liberal Democrat Executive this past year, which has bought us extra influence in the Council."

The election is on **1st May**. If you are not going to be around you can have a postal vote. You need to ask for yours by **Wednesday, 25th April**. Simply return the card attached to your polling card - or call **ActionLine** on **01225 39 40 41** for a form.

Catch your own speeders!

Nothing seems to upset village residents more than people driving through their village at dangerous speeds - and the police doing nothing about it.

The police have now come up with a self-help scheme. Parishes can purchase their own speed guns, and residents can monitor drivers going too fast.

They pass the information on to the police.

Hinton Charterhouse Parish Council have taken up the challenge and have had no difficulty finding volunteers to man the gun!

Watch this space for a report back on their success.

Freshford Mill turned down



The Freshford Mill site - run down and often flooded

In a surprise vote, the planning committee refused - unanimously - permission to put 26 flats and 3000 sq m of light industrial and office space in the run-down buildings at Freshford's Peradin site.

Officers had said the scheme should be approved but residents, the parish council and local councillor Gitte Dawson felt the scheme would cause traffic chaos in the narrow lanes leading up to the site. It would have generated 1600 traffic movements per day.

In a crowded meeting of the planning committee members were left in no doubt about local feelings. Members had also visited the site for themselves.

The applicants may now appeal, so the battle is not yet won.



“Message in a bottle” - so simple it is bound to work!



Local resident and actress Stephanie Cole at the launch of the “message in a bottle” scheme

Bath & North East Somerset Council has put in place a very simple way to help vulnerable elderly people who live alone.

When an elderly person has a fall - or is taken ill - or needs emergency help for any other reason, the doctor, ambulance driver, policeman or neighbour needs to know basic details such as name of GP, medication needed, next of kin. The Council is now making available to people standard little bottles for containing such information. The bottle is to be kept in the fridge - because everyone has a fridge, and fridges are always in the kitchen where anyone can find them!

Hinton resident and actress Stephanie Cole helped launch this simple measure which is supported by a number of charities. **“I know from experience just how useful this will be. It is so simple, it is bound to work!”** she said when she presented a giant mock-up of a bottle to the first pensioner.

Packs are available free of charge from Council offices, libraries, Somer Housing offices, Citizen Advice Bureaux in Bath and Midsomer Norton, local police stations and some GP surgeries.

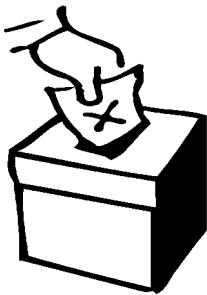
Or call **ActionLine** on **39 40 41** to get one.

Claim your free Discovery Card

Council-run museums are free to residents. To gain free admission without any fuss, get a Discovery Card! Take a recent utility bill and some identification to The Roman Baths - have your picture taken - and walk away with your own Discovery card. It gets you free admission to the Roman Baths, the Costume Museum and Parade Gardens. It also gets you good discounts on a large number of independent attractions.

Get your youngsters to vote!

This may be the first time your teenage or student son or daughter is allowed to vote. Try and persuade them to do so! Teaching young people about democracy is so important. Make sure they know the choices - and encourage them to talk to the candidates to find out who they want to support. Get them a postal vote if they are not going to be here on the day.



Please tell us what you think!

Your comment / problem:

.....
.....
.....
.....

NameTel.....

Address

.....Email

Return to Gitte Dawson, Hillside Farm, Church Lane, Freshford BA2 7WD



Councillor Gitte Dawson
Tel 01225 722 511
Email gitte.dawson@virgin.net

Residents' survey 2003: What you told us - and some answers

Thank you!

Almost 200 of you kindly agreed to fill in one of our survey forms when we knocked on your door - and told us your views on a number of different subjects. This was not a scientific exercise - the sample was not

totally random. But we still got a good impression of just what matters to people in Bathavon South, and how much.

Many of you also took the time to tell us your thoughts on issues not covered by the form. We found that very useful. We will be replying individually to many of those, and summarise a little here.

Transport issues

What concerned you most?

1st: Cars speeding in village

2nd: Peak-hour school traffic

3rd: Poor road maintenance.

Our questions about transport concerns found the greatest echo with respondents, and amongst them, cars speeding through village came out on top.

In villages with schools,

Needs of elderly people

This is how you ranked things which extra money might buy for elderly people:

1st more home care

2nd better transport to hospital

3rd free bus travel

The Liberal Democrats want to make home care widely available to help the elderly stay in their own homes as long as possible.

Travelling to the RUH will get

school traffic came next; and all were concerned about the poor state of our highways.

Many of you were scathing about the state of our highways. And yes, we do have a vast backlog of repairs on our highway network. But our spending on this is increasing - this year it is £7.2million, up from last year's £3.5. m.



easier for people in our villages when the new bus service between the Odd Down Park & Ride and the RUH starts up. It is to be an "on demand" bus - with minimum wait! It should be in place by June.

Liberal Democrats want to give pensioners free bus travel. We failed to get it in place this year but we are still working on it.

Experience elsewhere has shown that making buses free generates lots of extra journeys - and cost!

Community safety

We were surprised to find that **76%** of people living in our villages are worried about crime! Less than half have been a victim of crime.

The crime most villagers seem to worry about is burglary. Neighbourhood Watch schemes are probably best for tackling this.

About **one third** of people belong to a **Neighbourhood Watch** scheme, and of the remainder, **two thirds** would like to. The police will advise and can help set up new schemes.

What would reduce crime? Almost half ticked the box for **faster response from the police**. Some said "what response?" and we had some examples of poor response.

The police are spending 30% more this year. Most of the extra money will go on beat policemen. The Government claims credit for this but it is actually paid for by your Council Tax - this alone puts Council Tax up by 3%.

Alas the beat policemen won't be deployed in our villages. But there is also a promise of faster response times and better call handling.

We will enquire exactly what service is meant to be available to residents in the rural areas, and press for a g r e e d s e r v i c e standards.



Computers and the Internet



Almost **60%** of residents use the Internet. But only a third of these have ever looked at the Council's Website - **www.bathnes.gov.uk**. This is a shame, as the Council puts a lot of effort into making information available on the Net. The Website currently holds 5000 page of information - and that's without counting committee and other meeting reports which add another 12000 pages.

The Website contains everything from Council services available, planning applications submitted and outcomes of planning committee meetings, to bus timetables, information about schools and admissions policies, and details about your councillors and parish councils - and lots more. Do have a look!

There are also opportunities to give your views on all the subjects the Council is currently consulting on.

We also asked you about **broadband** - and whether you thought this was worth promoting. Almost two thirds of those using the Internet thought so.

For those that were worried about extra expense - this was not going to be an expensive item. It was more about keeping people informed about how they might help themselves to get telecomms operators to provide better telecomms services to rural areas, and about lobbying the powers that be to try harder.

STOP PRESS - Freshford School

Thanks to Cllr Gitte Dawson's efforts, there is to be a review of admissions arrangements at strategic rural schools - which includes Freshford.

If you are at all worried about your child getting a place at Freshford Primary School - please do write a letter to **Nick Lacey, Education, Bath & North East Somerset Council, Riverside, Temple Street, Keynsham BS31 1LA** - or email Nick at **nick_lacey@bathnes.gov.uk**. Copy to Gitte Dawson!

Recycling

The message really seems to be getting through about recycling!

Almost **90%** of residents use the green box scheme to recycle paper and glass. **68%** recycle cans, and **40%** recycle both textiles and tin foil.



Did you know that you can also put the following in your green box:

- printer and toner cartridges
- engine oil, oil filters and car batteries
- mobile phones, batteries and chargers
- spectacles (donated to Vision Aid)

Plastic bottle collections should all be in place from the beginning of April. You should have received a leaflet. Your green box collection day might have changed as routes had to be re-organised to accommodate the larger collection volumes.

Most of you were very reluctant to recycle food waste, and expressed concern about rats and smells. The Council is still investigating this area, but the idea is to supply householders who want to participate with special sealed bins.

As to garden waste, most of you compost this yourselves - which is, of course, the very best way. Free compost bins are on offer to pensioners from time to time - call **ActionLine on 01225 39 40 41** if you are interested.

You can also buy compost from the Council which is made from garden waste the Council collects. Again, call **ActionLine** for information.

And finally - how much do you know about the Council?

We asked you about some items of Council information. The result:

- 68% know about ActionLine
- 70% about Council museums being free
- 55% about free bus passes for pensioners
- 38% that fridges can be collected free.

You told us that you got most your Council information from the press and radio; next, from Council News; and in third place, from your Parish Council. Full marks for the parish councils!

We had hoped to see the LibDem Focus newsletters a little higher up the list, and hear that people would feel free to contact Gitte Dawson any time they needed Council help. Please do feel free to do so! **Gitte welcomes your calls and wants you to be informed.**