



# Lathom South Parish Council

*servicing our local community*



**Newsletter 32**

**Winter 2023**

Welcome to our winter newsletter!

As this is the first newsletter since the May elections, we introduce our new Councillor, Andy Taylor. Andy is a local resident who has been involved with the local community for many years. His knowledge of the Local Plan process is already proving invaluable.

We also welcome new residents to Lathom South, we hope you are enjoying finding out about your local community and exploring the local footpaths.

Everyone is welcome to attend the Parish Council meetings which are generally held on the second Wednesday of the month at the Cricket Club on Blaguegate Lane. Meeting dates and agendas are displayed on the three Parish noticeboards situated on Vale Lane, Scarth Hill Lane/Whiteleys Lane and outside the Cricket Club. This information and much more is also available on the Parish Council website

**[www.lathomsouthpc.co.uk](http://www.lathomsouthpc.co.uk)**

Over the last few months the Parish Council has been busy with various projects including, traffic calming proposals for Dicks Lane and Firwood Road, public footpath maintenance and the continued development of Swells Wood and Jacobs Wood which now has a path and litter bin in addition to benches. Further details of just some of the projects can be read in this newsletter.



# Firswood Road Bridge Proposal

We have submitted proposals to Lancashire County Council Highways Officers twice over the summer period and each time they have been rejected on the grounds that Firswood Road has a good safety record. The fact that there has been significant development in the area, which is in the process of being increased substantially, was ignored. The obvious points that there is only one, very narrow and sloping pavement over the top of the bridge, putting many pedestrians in the position of having to walk in the roadway (which is “blind” and only wide enough to take two cars at a time) was not recognised as being a serious problem.

There are other points to consider, such as that new housing brings more children and dogs into the area and that the first section of the linear park will take those users who are heading west to the southern side of the bridge. At that point the only west-leading footpath is Footpath 22, opposite Slate Lane, on the other side of the bridge.



On return, they will have to use the same pavement over the bridge to reach the linear park, with the same risks. This linear park is planned, eventually, to connect Skelmersdale with Ormskirk along the bed of the old rail line, providing a safe route for walkers and cyclists, but it is only the first stage at the eastern end that is under development.

Following the second rejection, our County Councillor, Rob Bailey, protested on our behalf to the Director of Highways, Phil Durnell, who agreed to listen to Parish Council representatives in his office in Preston. That meeting, lasting about forty minutes, took place on Thursday 21st September, the result of which is that the “Operations Manager, Countywide Traffic Safety” took away the task of costing our proposals and looking into any other options. We stressed the need to make reasonable progress without unnecessary delay. I think it is fair to say that he was not enthusiastic, even though we had been warned that the County Council would not be able to contribute funding to any of the work.

Taking a sober view of prospects, it does seem that we should not be optimistic at this point and that a further ‘push’ is likely to be needed.

## Request For Speed Reduction on Dicks Lane

In July, on behalf of the residents of Dicks Lane, Lathom South Parish Council put forward a request for a reduction of the national speed limit on Dicks Lane to a 40mph limit. LCC Speed Management have discussed the site with engineers and local traffic teams who are to discuss the request further with their police liaison. We await a final decision!

## **Wainhomes Development ("Latune Gardens")**

Several new homes have been occupied on this development and we welcome the residents to Lathom South Parish. However, those residents might be unaware that several planning conditions have not been met by the developers and there is a risk that the ones involving access improvements will not be met before many more homes have been occupied and the winter months have passed. This will leave new residents without safe, direct pedestrian access to local facilities - and car dependent.

It is against this background, as well as safety concerns for all users of Firswood Road, that the Residents' Association is pushing the Borough Council, as the planning authority that agreed these conditions with Wainhomes, to take early enforcement action. At the time of drafting, time is passing quickly, with no decision having been made.

### **Want Ultrafast Full Fibre broadband - in our area?**

Building the new Ultrafast Full Fibre broadband to the whole of the U.K. is a massive engineering project that will take Open Reach years to complete. But did you know the more people in a community or area that register their interest on the Open Reach website the more likely it is they'll come to your area –

help spread the word and get more people to register at

[openreach.com/ultrafast](https://openreach.com/ultrafast)

# Local Plan Update

As you may be aware, West Lancashire Borough Council (WLBC) is currently drafting a new Local Plan for West Lancashire. A Local Plan is a government requirement and it sets the planning policy for a specific local authority area to allocate land for particular types of development (housing, employment etc.), protect certain areas of land from development (in theory, Green Belt, nature conservation sites etc.) and guide decisions on planning applications and future new development. Our main concern is that the three main political parties are bidding against one another to promise huge increases in house building without having clear ideas of how to deliver them, without building on the areas that are currently protected.

There is a Local Plan currently in place for West Lancashire which runs until 2027. However there is a national requirement for a 5 yearly review, looking ahead a minimum of 15 years. The last draft Local Plan in 2018/2019 proposed building 16,000 houses in 'garden villages', numerous industrial complexes etc. up to 2050. This faced massive opposition from many quarters - and was subsequently abandoned.

WLBC started afresh in early 2020 on drafting a 'new' revised Local Plan to cover the period 2023 – 2040. It issued a 'call for land' and then they consulted residents, housing developers and other

interested parties on the potential content of the new Local Plan regarding which land should be protected and/or what should be developed. It also baked into this the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA, refreshed in July 2021) and used this to form the 'pool' of sites from which any necessary proposed land allocations will eventually be chosen in the new Local Plan. The outcome of this consultation was issued publicly in June of this year, and within this feedback developers suggested that housing developments of up to two thousand houses could be built in Lathom South, on what is currently prime agricultural greenbelt land. Further industrial development is also mooted. There are no firm plans in place for these developments at the moment - and hopefully WLBC will disregard the suggestions. Some concerned residents from areas that could potentially be affected have already pre-emptively contacted local borough/county councillors and senior WLBC planning management to object strongly to any such developments.

As your local representatives, we object to any suggestion of being "NIMBYs". Most of us have lived in new houses previously and most of us have had children who want the opportunity to continue to live in the area but a wholesale influx of incoming families from surrounding towns and cities is a completely different matter. This area has taken considerable development since XL Business Park was approved and the associated housing land (supposedly to accommodate workers for the industrial units) was allocated. We

now have around 430 to 440 extra houses in an area of fewer than 400 homes previously. That is a lot to absorb in a semi-rural, mainly agricultural, area and further development threatens food production, wildlife and opportunities for people to exercise.

WLBC is now at the point of drafting its 'preferred options' for the new Local Plan, and will issue proposals to the public in due course (its own timeline shows this being issued later this year but could well change). At the point of publication WLBC *should* then initiate a public consultation stage, when views can be lodged and arguments for/against presented. In general the overall timeline for publication/review/acceptance of a new Local Plan is sometimes over several years. That includes a number of formal review stages – public consultations/examinations and formal review by the Planning Inspectorate etc. but there could well be pressure to shorten the process.

We are able only to monitor progress at this time - in view of the lack of proposals from WLBC for the new Local Plan - but will keep residents updated as more details emerge.





On Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October the newly formed "Friends Of Jacobs Wood" met to do a little housekeeping in Jacobs Wood and Swells Wood. It was a beautiful sunny morning and they managed quite a few jobs in the 2.5hrs that were allocated for the working session. A couple of patches of bamboo that had started to invade the woods were dug up and disposed of. The remnants of a fire were tidied away. A bag full of tree wraps that are used to protect saplings from hungry deer were collected and some work was undertaken to try and clear out the waterway a little. General tidying of litter was also performed and locations for two new nesting boxes and a new bench were also decided upon.





The next Friends Of Jacobs Wood meeting will be in early Spring with a date yet to be decided but will probably be late February/early March. Please keep an eye out for signs on Firswood Rd and dotted throughout the woods giving the exact date and please come along to say hello.



## Owl Nest Boxes

The Parish Council were successful in its application for a £300 biodiversity grant from Lancashire County Council. It was decided this money should be used to purchase owl nestboxes from the RSPB (one for barn owls and one for tawny owls). Suitable locations have been decided (following RSPB guidelines) and it is hoped the boxes will be in place before the end of this year.

We are fortunate to have both Barn and Tawny owls in our area. Although sightings are not common due to the owls being nocturnal birds of prey they are regularly seen at dawn and dusk. We hope by providing additional nesting sites we can encourage more resident owls for us all to enjoy.

# Community Orchard

Situated in the bottom left corner of the playing field off School Lane are the first planted trees, a mixture of apples, plums and damsons which have all survived bar one (Tydeman) which we suspect may have been on the wrong root stock. Five more apple trees however, a mixture of cookers and eaters such as Cox's Orange Pippin, Discovery, Golden Delicious and Granny Smith were planted in October thanks to the generous supply by West Lancs BC. Winter pruning of all the trees is in progress and an updated identification board is being prepared. The area is now just about



full without encroaching on the playground area, especially the zip wire. If anyone has any suggestions, e.g. should we add a fence or hedge, please let us know.

A photo of the October planting by 2 councillors, spades at the ready, is shown left.



*May you enjoy  
a happy  
and prosperous  
New Year!*

## WEST LANCASHIRE ARMED FORCES



My name is Paul Hennessy and I am the Armed Forces Champion for West Lancs, one of my responsibilities is delivering the Armed Forces Covenant for West Lancashire Borough Council.

The armed forces Covenant is a promise to the nation that the armed forces community should be treated fairly and face no disadvantage when accessing public and commercial services.

The covenant was established in 2011 and since then thousands of businesses, organisations and local authorities have signed into this. Building on this the armed forces act 2021 is now creating a legal obligation on specified bodies in all four home nations of the UK, this is known as the **Armed Forces Covenant Duty**.

*This though is only a part of my remit. I am also trying to reach out to all veterans and members who have served in the armed forces. You may just want to talk to like-minded people, you may have issues that were part of your service and do not know who to contact or what help you can get. Or you may just have questions?*

*If so, please contact me*

*Email: [Cllr.p.hennessy@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.p.hennessy@westlancs.gov.uk)*

*Tel: 01695423872*

*Facebook: Cllrs Aughton and Holborn*

## **Contact Details**

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**Website: [www.lathomsouthpc.co.uk](http://www.lathomsouthpc.co.uk)**

### **Your Parish Councillors are:**

- Andrew Beeston
- Carol Blackledge (Vice-Chairman)
- Andrew Chanter
- Roger Clayton (Chairman)
- Ernie Pallas
- Darren Steele
- Andy Taylor

***All contact via the Clerk***

**Meetings held at 7:30pm at the  
Cricket Club, Blaguegate Lane, Lathom, WN8 8TY  
Meetings are usually held on the second Wednesday of  
the month but please check the website**

**[www.lathomsouthpc.co.uk](http://www.lathomsouthpc.co.uk)**

**Please contact the Clerk (details above) to raise any items**

