

New Chairman for the Town Council

Councillor and North Somerset Alderman Barry Walters was elected the new Chairman of Portishead & North Weston Town Council on Wednesday 7th May at the Town Council's Annual Meeting.

Barry was elected unopposed for the municipal year 2008/2009. The Council Year always runs from the Annual Meeting each May.

He is a very long serving Member of the Town Council having served continuously from 1987. Until May 2007 he also served on the District Council where he has chaired a number of Committees and been Leader of the Council.

In his acceptance speech he said that in his view the next year would be a year of consolidation. House building was expecting to slow down. He hoped to build on earlier work to improve communications with local residents both old and new and hoped to improve contacts with local businesses and traders.

The Town Council was funding a new community hall to serve the new Village Quarter which it is hoped will open by October this year.

Furthermore several projects were at long last, coming to fruition: the new school, Trinity Primary at Marjoram Way, the new health centre on Harbour Road, the wild-life reserve and the foot and cycle paths between Portishead and Portbury should all be completed this year.

Building would soon commence on a new Italian restaurant and a pub on the Dock-side. Public access round three sides of the dock is now open, with access on the fourth side under completion.

Barry is particularly keen to see more native specimen trees planted in places where they can grow to their full size. Such trees need lots of space and time to reach their true glory. Trees planted as part of new developments although vital, rarely can be given enough space. He would welcome suggestions for suitable sites.

New Vice Chairman

District and Town Councillor David Pasley was elected Vice-Chairman at the same meeting. David has been on the Town Council for over 9 years.

Portishead Outdoor Pool reopens despite predictions of closure

At precisely 10am on Saturday 24th May the Portishead Open Air Pool opened as usual for business for the summer season of 2008. In the past year rumours have been rife that North Somerset's only outdoor heated pool would close, but the Deputy Leader of North Somerset Council with responsibility for the Portishead Open Air Pool has stated that it is not the Council's intention to close the unique amenity.

It has been confirmed that local Portishead District Councillors have requested the Pool be subjected to the scrutiny process that would thoroughly investigate the way the pool has operated over the past years and to examine potential to improve the way it is run in the future. The scrutiny panel is currently working on the project and is expected to reach a conclusion with a recommendation later this year.

The Town Council voted by a large majority to publicly support the continuation of the facility. In February of this year the Town Council passed the following motion:

"That the Portishead and North Weston Town Council considers the Outdoor Pool, located near the Lakegrounds to be a valuable asset to the Town. In light of the considerable recent growth of the Town's population, especially among young people, this unique sports amenity should be protected against any possible future closure. The Town Council welcomes North Somerset Council's plans to thoroughly scrutinise the past and current running of the Pool in order to identify ways to enhance the facility without being a financial drain on Council funds. Members of the Town Council are concerned that the lack of adequate funding in the past, coupled with

poor marketing and questionable administration for this venue has jeopardised the pool's future. The Town Council does not wish to see the Pool closed and supports the efforts of those who are endeavouring to keep the facility operating for years to come. Moreover, this Council wishes to play a role in any decisions that may affect the Pool's future".

Rodmoor Road Rose Garden reopens better than ever

Fears that the cherished rose gardens at the junction of Rodmoor Road and Beach Road West would be lost have been addressed after a local councillor and council officers acted swiftly to quash the rumours. Britain in Bloom judges last year told members of Portishead in Bloom that the 50 year old rose garden was looking past its best.

Realising that new roses cannot be replanted in old rose beds the decision not to replant with more roses was taken and the sad news broken to rose lovers across Portishead. Acting in good faith, Portishead in Bloom embarked on a scheme to remove the old roses with the view to replanting the gardens with colourful perennials.

Public reaction was swift and the decision was not popular with many residents, particularly the elderly who considered the area as a place of beauty and tranquillity where they could sit quietly and enjoy the scented flowers and the views across the channel. Local Councillors were united in their call to keep the Rodmoor Road site as a 'rose garden' and after due consideration, adequate funding was found from Section 106 agreements which had been earmarked for the improvement of the Lakegrounds.

The old and tired rose beds were removed and rich new soil replaced. In the past few weeks the replanting has been completed and your views on the scheme will be most welcome.

Public have their say at the 2008 Annual Town meeting

The Annual Town meeting is facilitated by the Town Council so that any local resident can come along and talk about ideas they may have to improve the Town or indeed to criticize where they may think there is room for improvement. The meeting always starts at 7.30pm and there is no limit to the number of people who can participate. The idea is that your local councillors can hear first hand what local residents have to say about the Town Council and the work they undertake.

Disappointingly, only 6 members of the public turned up at the Annual Town Meeting to speak about matters that concerned them. One person spoke about the railway, public transport and bus stops etc., A retired councillor spoke about the Cabstand Exhibition and hoped that people would take the opportunity to consider the options to modify or not the traffic light system. A local lady expressed concern that the High Street was a mess and that the Town Council should paint the bollards in Portishead Blue. Another lady and a familiar face to these meetings, raised the issue of the Outdoor Swimming Pool and urged the Town Council to continue to support the local amenity.