

# **Minutes of the AUST PARISH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY**

Held on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 7:00pm at Elberton Village Hall

## **Present:**

Cllr. Steve Meredith, Chairman of Aust Parish Council – in the chair

Ward Cllr. Matthew Riddle – Severn Vale ward members, South Glos. Council

Speakers: Elizabeth Woodland (Village Agent), PCSO Paula Perry (Avon & Somerset Police), Sally Pattison (“Linking the Levels” project officer)

Emma Pattullo – Clerk

9 residents

## **1 Approval of minutes from the previous parish assemblies held on 9th April 2024 and 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

Cllr Meredith welcomed attendees to the meeting.

The minutes of the 2024 annual parish assembly were presented, agreed as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

The minutes of the additional parish assembly held on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024 to discuss the proposed development by EDF Energy of a new saltmarsh at Littleton-upon-Severn were presented, agreed as a correct record and signed by the chairman. It was noted that these proposals are now on hold and not expected to happen.

## **2 Speakers’ presentations**

### Elizabeth Woodland – Village Agent scheme

Elizabeth is employed by the West of England Rural Network as a Village Agent cover Aust and surrounding parishes. The scheme aims to support residents to lead healthy, independent lives. Elizabeth often works with older residents, but can offer help to any residents over the age of 18. Help might include signposting to organisations offering support, making contact with suitable community groups or assisting with support applications. For example, in recent months Elizabeth has helped a resident to apply for a disabled parking bay near their home, offered support after bereavements, and set up a liaison group for the various village halls and community venues in the area. Elizabeth can be contacted on [elizabeth@wern.org.uk](mailto:elizabeth@wern.org.uk) or 07880 344 460.

### Sally Pattison – Linking the Levels project

“Linking the Levels” is a joint project by South Glos. Council, Bristol Zoo and the Bristol Avon Rivers Trust. It aims to improve and restore habitats, particularly river and wetland ecosystems, across an area between the M5 and the Severn Estuary from Severn Beach to Hill. The current phase is focussing on what habitats and species are currently present in the areas, which are most important for the overall health of the ecosystem and what future projects might be feasible. Eels, glow worms and water voles are species of particular interest.

One current piece of work focuses on collection and DNA analysis of tissue samples from the various watercourses, the data is used to plot species across the area. Traces of eel populations have been found in areas where they were not previously known to be. The project is then looking at issues such as water quality and access which might be barriers to species spread and health.

A “friends” group has been set up for the new nature reserve at Aust, created as part of the recent sea defence improvements. The reserve was created from a previously tenanted farm to provide habitat for estuarine birds and includes areas of wetland, grazing and woodland. Volunteer sessions are held on alternate Wednesdays to work in improvements to the area.

### PCSO Paula Perry – Neighbourhood beat team, Avon & Somerset Police

Levels of crime in Aust parish and surrounding area remain low. There are occasional burglaries and there has been a recent rise in caravan theft locally.

The beat team had focussed on anti-social behaviour taking place in Aust at the end of Main Road and the offenders seem to have largely moved elsewhere. Residents are asked to report any suspicious vehicles using that area. Some of the motorhomes previously parked on Passage Road have moved to Main Road.

Another current focus is on rogue traders. A number of vulnerable residents in the area have been targeted by rogue traders and have paid out large sums of money for poor or no work on their properties. The police are working closely with SGC Trading Standards team and with Elizabeth the Village Agent to help elderly or vulnerable residents identify and deal with these criminals.

Paula noted that, although police in other parts of the area often use automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras to help in investigating rogue traders, burglaries and other crimes, there are no ANPR cameras in or around Aust. Such gaps in coverage are often exploited by criminals. Yate Town Council has recently been involved in obtaining more ANPR cameras for their area, and Paula urged Aust Parish Council to consider whether they could help with getting one or more ANPR devices in our area.

The main way that residents can help the police is to report issues to them. The beat team hold regular surgeries in Almondsbury community shop <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/your-area/severn-vale-and-pilning/> or can be contacted through the same web page.

### **3 Annual report by Steve Meredith, Chairman, Aust Parish Council**

Cllr Meredith gave the following report:

“We have had a full council all year, with myself as Chairman and Ian Jenkins as Vice Chair. The other councillors are Jeremy Warren and Julian Cooper representing Littleton, Heather Bayston from Elberton and Anne Wiseman and David Spratt for Aust. Thanks to all the councillors for their efforts over the year.

Emma remains as Clerk and is the main point of contact if you want to get in touch with the council. Contact details are available on the council's web pages.

The plans for possible creation of a saltmarsh in Littleton was the biggest thing the council has dealt with this year. Unfortunately the whole issue was very badly handled by EDF Energy, the potential developer. We held a well-attended public meeting for residents to hear from EDF and there has been a lot of behind-the-scenes work as well.

Thanks to Julian, Jeremy and the Littleton residents who spent many hours gathering evidence to use had it gone to public consultation. Thankfully, EDF have now seen sense and decided to concentrate on installation of the Acoustic Fish Device as in their planning permission. This doesn't mean the saltmarsh plans are completely off the table, but EDF obviously don't want to pursue them and hopefully won't have to.

Another big success for the year has been the formation of a volunteer group to carry out practical conservation work at Woodwell Meadows. This has been led by Heather with assistance from Jeremy. Thanks to them and everyone who has turned out to help. The amount of scrub in the upper meadow is much reduced and hopefully this will help the wildflowers to flourish this year.

The council received a grant from our South Glos Council ward members, Matthew Riddle and Tony Williams, towards equipment for the group, so thanks for that too.

Planning issues have been very quiet this year; the council has only received five planning applications for comment.

Whale Wharf continues to be a concern. Julian has led efforts to get enforcement action taken against the dumping of material in the lake and removal of trees on the site, with assistance from our ward councillors. There is now a Tree Protection Order in place which should hopefully protect the remaining trees.

The biggest current planning issue is the final consultation on the South Glos Local Plan, which will determine planning policy in the area for the next 15 to 20 years. There are no big developments proposed for the Aust parish area, most of which will remain as Green Belt. The parish council has submitted an objection to the planned travellers' site at the top of the hill towards Alveston. Residents can also make comments on this or any other aspect of the Local Plan, any comments need to be submitted to South Glos Council by 11th April."

#### **4 Annual report by Matthew Riddle, Ward Councillor, South Glos Council**

#### **5 Open Forum**

Residents raised the following matters, to which the chairman responded:

Q. It's said that a house near to Littleton Pond has put in a sewage system which discharges to the pond and I've seen effluent in the pond. What can be done about this?

A. The pond has no known owner and is registered as common land, to the Parish Council keeps a close eye on matters which might impact it. If residents see any problems there, they could report it to the Environment Agency who are the body which issues licences for sewage discharges.

Q. Local roads are in a very poor state with lots of potholes. What is being done about this?

A. Highways are the responsibility of South Glos. Council. They are aware of the problem, which has been made worse by recent weather conditions, and are trying to prioritise repairs to the worst areas. Residents can report specific potholes and other highways issues using the SGC "Report It" online tool: <https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/report/>.

#### **6 Close of meeting**

Cllr Meredith thanked all for attending.