

## Contact Details

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### Your Parish Councillors are:

- Diane Ingrey (Chairman)
- Carol Blackledge
- Roger Clayton
- Andrew Beeston

*All contact via the Clerk*

### Meetings:

**Wednesday 8th May 2019**  
**AGM at 6.30pm, APM at 8pm**  
Wednesday 12th June 2019  
Wednesday 24th July 2019  
Wednesday 11th September 2019

Monthly meetings usually start at 7:30 pm in the  
Cricket Club, Blaguegate Lane, Lathom.  
Agenda is posted on notice boards prior to meeting.

**All very welcome to come along**



## Newsletter

No. 25

April 2019



## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

**at 8 pm on**  
**Wednesday 8th May 2019 at**  
**The Cricket Club,**  
**Blaguegate Lane, Lathom.**  
**All Welcome**

## Local Plan

The Borough Council's controversial draft plan, issued last September, seemed to have been rejected by the ruling Labour group, resulting in the resignation of Councillor John Hodson as portfolio holder for planning. Unfortunately, as the political architect of this plan, Councillor Hodson is unrepentant about the draft, in spite of its many exaggerated claims.

This Parish Council put forward a very detailed response to the Plan exposing these claims, which underpinned the central proposal to provide homes on Green Belt Land for residents of Sefton under the "duty to co-operate" with neighbouring authorities. However, it was apparent that Sefton had never requested such co-operation. The Green Belt in this Parish would have been largely covered in houses, arranged into two "Garden Villages". These proposed villages would not have complied with Garden Village standards, which themselves are only being *piloted* by the Government in 14 approved schemes across the country.

The overall proposal included huge industrial development around junction 3 of the M58 and a further "garden village" adjacent to that (in Bickerstaffe Parish). The livelihoods of individual farm owners and tenant farmers were to be ignored.

## Roadside Litterpick

The Parish Council employ various tactics in the fight against litter. We arrange community litter picking days, issue litter pickers to volunteers who agree to clean around their property and employ a local contractor once a year to do a 'deep clean'.

This March twenty four bags full, plus various amounts of other items that couldn't go in the bags. Firwood Road and Lyelake Lane were the worst of the roads. Most rubbish appears to have been thrown from cars and includes fast food outlet packaging. However, there is still a lot of fly tipping and an increase in hard core has been noticed. If you see fly tipping please do report it to West Lancashire Borough Council on <https://www.westlancs.gov.uk/environment/keeping-west-lancs-tidy/fly-tipping.aspx>



## Fingerposts Project

Installation of a total of 5 fingerposts has now been completed. A further 3 are now on order and they will hopefully be in place in the not too distant future.

The 3 new locations will be:

Footpath 10 at junction with Whiteleys Lane

Footpath 21 off Blaguegate Lane beside Fyles Farm

Footpath 22 at junction with Firswood Road

We have, again, received 50% funding for the costs of these fingerposts from West Lancs Borough Council with balance of cost being made from Parish Council Funds. We hope that the improved signage is helpful to our local walkers and look forward to seeing increased usage and enjoyment of our footpath network. Increased usage will also help to prevent footpaths becoming overgrown with fast growing weeds. Any help from local landowners and residents in cutting back encroaching weeds is greatly appreciated.

Please contact the Parish Council (via the clerk) if you notice any damage to or have any concerns regarding the fingerposts.

Combined with other development proposals in the plan, the Green Belt between Skelmersdale and Ormskirk would have been reduced to the point where the two towns would almost be merged. As there were no dates attached to these proposals, they would have led to a developers' charter and to speculative assembly of Green Belt land parcels generally, aimed at even more development.

These are just examples of the sweeping nature of the Plan to which we, and many others, objected. It took a lot of research effort and we paid £950 into a fund created by CPRE (the Campaign to Protect Rural England) to finance a report by a qualified and respected demographer to test the Council's population assumptions. It contained important criticisms of the Borough Council's approach. Full copies of the Parish Council's and South Lathom Residents' Association's (SLRA's) submissions appear on the Parish Council website.

"Going back to the drawing board" only commits the Borough Council to a delay and re-assessment of its plans, so the threat of these proposals has not gone away. For example, the newly Cabinet - approved Council Plan 2019 to 2021 contains a foreword, partly written by Council Leader Ian Moran, which commits the Council to produce a plan lasting until 2050. That is not what was announced in mid-March.

## Advice from Trading Standards

We are determined to ensure that any new plan (which is supposed to be only a review and extension of the existing plan) is based only on sound facts and assumptions.

We take the view that any money we spend reasonably to protect our area will be money well spent. Such money cannot lawfully be taken from the Community Infrastructure Levy (which is being paid in instalments by Bellway Homes) but we do have reserves ready to deploy as necessary. Unfortunately, in order to protect these reserves, we can no longer absorb fully the rising costs associated with running the Parish Council (see separate article about the Parish Precept).

### Community Infrastructure Levy

These monies have to be spent on capital projects to improve life in the community. They cannot be used for everyday running costs of the council.

It has been decided to use some of the money from the Community Infrastructure Levy to upgrade the public rights of way throughout the parish. We are particularly keen to make them accessible to disabled residents or residents with limited mobility if possible.

### Beware Bogus Roofers

As the better weather approaches, reports are being received throughout Lancashire of roofers cold calling offering to carry out repair work where no repair work is necessary or work is charged for that has not been carried out. Often these are jobs that you cannot do yourself and cannot check they have been carried out correctly or needed to be done in the first place. Traders often panic the householder into having work carried out.

**Trading Standards advice is to always say no to cold callers. The Safetrader scheme can help you find a trader in your area, contact 0303 333 1111 or [www.safetrader.org.uk](http://www.safetrader.org.uk)**

### Door to door selling of household goods?

Residents are warned that there have been a number of reports of cold callers selling dusters door to door in the Ribble Valley. Some older people have felt intimidated by these callers, who have been pushy on occasion. While it is not illegal to sell goods on the doorstep, Trading Standards recommend that it is better to be safe than sorry, and that you should safeguard yourself by not purchasing goods this way .

## Precept

You will no doubt have noticed that there has been a small increase in the Parish Precept from £9,000 per year to £10,000 per year.

Our precept was set to take account of new Bellway properties contributing to the precept, (as will happen in reality), but the Council has calculated the percentage increase in precept using the pre-Bellway number of properties in the Parish. We did challenge but they would not revise the figures. We have not increased the precept for the last 10 years; we have absorbed decreases in funding from WLBC for certain types of spending and used reserves when needed.

This year we have allocated most of our reserves in the budget to a "fighting fund" to oppose plans to make huge inroads to our Green Belt in the Local Plan. We used parish funds to sponsor the report by Council for Protection of Rural England on demographic requirements for the areas which was so influential in making WLBC reconsiders its preferred options policy in the Local Plan.

**This parish council is totally dedicated to protecting the Green Belt and the identity of Lathom.**

**Please check out the Parish Council Website  
at  
[www.lathomsouthpc.co.uk](http://www.lathomsouthpc.co.uk)**

A survey of the footpaths has been undertaken and a draft copy can be seen on the parish council website.

We are currently awaiting recommendations on improvement

works and costings from the authors of the report. We are also in contact with Lancashire County Council using the report as leverage, to make them undertake the maintenance work required under Health and Safety regulations.

We have contacted Community Payback Service with a view to them taking on board a project to do some of the maintenance work, (a free service). We will keep you updated on the project.

## Tree Warden Report

Trees ! It is proposed to discuss what the parish can best do re trees at the Annual Parish Meeting on May 8th.

Meanwhile we have the list of twenty tagged species for a check list, the Community Orchard appears to be in good heart - and Swells Wood gets ever wilder under the influence of Spring: onwards and upwards!

## Wainhomes/Jacton Properties' Application

This outline application (reference 2019/0069) for 130 homes to be built on an area stretching from Old Engine Lane and Slate Lane junctions with Firswood Road towards Neverstitch Road has proceeded slowly. There have been many opposing representations from local residents, South Lathom Residents' Association and this Parish Council. More recent comments have come from consultants, mostly suggesting conditions and/or further studies.

The Borough Council has confirmed that no pre-application discussions took place before this application was submitted.

Our basic objection to the proposal is that these homes would be built using access from Firswood Road. This is in direct contravention of the Development Brief for the area and flies in the face of capacity advice given by the Highway Authority. This capacity has been fully taken up by the Bellway ("Lathom Pastures") development. Detailed objections to Wainhomes' indicative layout plans also apply but these belong to any "reserved matters" stage. However this outline application ought to be refused outright, meaning that the applicants would need to submit a different outline, or a full, planning application.

Experience from the Bellway development has taught us all that we cannot trust the Borough Council to follow its own Development Brief, in spite of the fact that it is a "material consideration" in determining any planning application for the

overall site. Nor can we rely upon any condition that is attached to planning consent because such conditions have not been enforced on the Bellway site to date. They were not even discharged (Council satisfied with detailed documentation) until long after development began, so could not be enforced.

Disruption to the daily lives of residents living on and around Firswood Road has been extensive and "residential amenity" for individual properties has not been protected. A development of 130 homes, on top of the 94 homes being built by Bellway, would be significantly more disruptive, not only during the construction phase but, more importantly, for the long term.

We are mindful that development of the rest of the allocated site is problematic, mainly because the relevant landowners have failed to live up to their promise of working together to produce a coherent overall development. Fragmented proposals will not resolve that problem and they are not acceptable to this Parish Council. WLBC's Director of Planning and Regeneration was given permission two years ago to carry out compulsory purchases from those landowners (not others), in order to enable a co-ordinated development to be planned, with access only from Neverstitch Road. *Used sensitively*, compulsory purchases are required now, unless those landowners start to work together. Otherwise, all applications which include access from Firswood Road must be refused.