

## Chairman's Report – Year End 2015

Welcome to you all, especially any new residents. As many of you already know I have stepped down as Chairman after five enjoyable and busy years. I shall remain on the Committee for the moment and be happy to pass on any background and knowledge to my successor. Below I reflect on the last year in Leigh Woods.

### **Elections**

Thursday May 7 2015 saw us voting for our District Councillors. Following boundary changes we are now part of Long Ashton, Leigh Woods, Failand and Wraxall area and our 2 Ward Councillors are Charles Cave and Kate Stowey. Our Long Ashton and Leigh Woods Parish Councillors are Martyn Harries and newly coopted Alan Johnson following the sad death of Audrey Moser in October 2015. Audrey was a woman of many skills and we all owe her a huge debt for the work she put in as our Parish Councillor for many years.

### **Clifton Suspension Bridge**

Over the last year we have seen the Clifton tower disappear under wraps to be eventually revealed with pointing renewed and work on the saddles completed. Further maintenance has included replacement of some of the hangers. We now expect the disruption to move to our side as the Leigh Woods tower receives similar treatment this year. Meanwhile the plans for upgrading the toll booth facilities are available to view on line <http://www.cliftonbridge.org.uk/toll-house-replacement-project> and upstairs in the Visitor Centre, do look at them as they propose putting a coffee outlet on the site of the old visitor centre.

### **National Trust, Leigh Woods**

A permanent green shelter has been built as a rainy weather meeting point along the main track towards Stokeleigh Camp. In August, North Somerset Council approved the plans for a catering outlet and composting toilet but attached an advice note that all marketing and publicity should recommend parking at the Forestry Commission car park.

### **Planning matters**

#### ***Burwalls***

As I write the scaffolding on the house is coming down, progress is continuing as are the constant bleeps from reversing vehicles on site. The builders have made Burwalls Road a traffic hazard with over 80 vehicles regularly parked along it. The site manager Calvin Smith of Bray and Slaughter is on 07768846402.

### **Local issues**

#### ***Parking***

The Working Party on Parking has been doing just that: working at finding a way forward. We all owe thanks to the group especially the efforts of Tricia Bedford as the secretary. Her latest report is being sent separately to you. It's hard to believe how bad the situation has become since the Clifton RPZ was introduced last April. The latest update from the working party can be found in my column on the LWS web site (see link: [http://www.leighwoods.org/Kate-s\\_Column/kate-s\\_column.html](http://www.leighwoods.org/Kate-s_Column/kate-s_column.html) ).

## **Social Activities**

### ***Bracken Hill Open Gardens***

The April visit was very well attended, at least 40 folks turned out, and the sun shone. Thanks to Shane Clark, of Wills House Restoration, and Ian Smith of Devonshire Homes who welcomed us and stayed to chat. We enjoyed our walk around the listed gardens, appreciating the spring flowers. Our October visit was similarly well attended and we chatted with some of the residents.

### **Litter Pick**

On Saturday 11 April, 18 people turned up at the Vestry for coffee then armed with litter pickers volunteered to clear particular roads. This year we collected 14 bags in total. Many thanks to those who turned out and worked so hard while chatting, and to Jane Worthington who organised it all and Gregg Brake, our North Somerset Area Officer, who provided bags and litter pickers.

### **Summer Party**

Many thanks to our kind hosts Lynne and Michael Bothamley for another fun and lovely evening, drinks were drunk, nibbles consumed and table tennis played while plenty of conversation flowed.

### **Balloon Fiesta**

The Balloon Fiesta brought its usual traffic chaos. It was a bumper year for the Fiesta with perfect weather and amazing ascents. Unfortunately this brought many more people than usual to the Fiesta and as a result many were turned away, so we understand, as the car parks were full. This in turn created a traffic jam that backed up along Cumberland Basin and into the City Centre.

### **Autumn Talk**

On 19 October 2015 The Leigh Woods Society organised a talk at the Clifton Suspension Bridge's Visitor Centre by Julia Elton, on 'Who designed the Suspension Bridge? Fact and Fiction'

Julia has a deep knowledge of Brunel's original work and also that of the two engineers, Sir John Hawkshaw and William Henry Barlow, who many years later modified Brunel's design and actually built the bridge we use today. Work started on the bridge in 1831, the piers were built but work ceased in 1836 and for 33 years the piers stood overlooking the gorge with no bridge linking them. But it turns out this was a good thing. Prominent civil engineers Hawkshaw and Barlow decided to honour their colleague Brunel who had died in 1859 by completing his bridge. They went back to Brunel's original design and applied the many lessons that had been learnt in the intervening years particularly with regard to the wind loading on the bridge deck. There had been several spectacular failures of suspension bridges due to insufficient rigidity of the deck. Accordingly, they increased the hanging chains from 2 to 3 and greatly strengthened the decking with substantial cross girders. Due to these improvements the bridge is still operable today, without them it would not be.

So when you cross Brunel's bridge you should also remember Hawkshaw and Barlow whose legacy is our much loved and well used bridge.

Our thanks are due to Laura Hilton and her team at the Visitor Centre for making us so welcome and helping organise the evening.

### **Winter Party**

Our winter party venue was once again Belvedere where we were made very welcome by the Boss Family. The children had been hard at work making mince pies and acted as waiting staff during the evening. The Tree looked wonderful and the glitter ball giving twinkling lights ensured a festive atmosphere. The new kitchen was much admired and the food prepared there was eaten with relish. The Bar was busy as usual. We welcomed many new faces and again had a high attendance. Thanks go to our hosts and all those who helped to make the evening a success.

### **Communication**

Another splendid newsletter was put together by Angela Probyn and Tricia Bedford and circulated last spring. They have decided that this year's will be their final one, so we'd love to hear from anyone who wishes to produce one for 2017!

From all that I have said you will see that a lot of work goes on behind the scenes and I would like to thank all the officers and committee and helpers for their sterling efforts. At this point I must especially thank Liz Corrigan who has served on the committee with enthusiasm. She has been the Neighbourhood Watch Chair for more years than we care to count, ensuring that each street has a coordinator and communications get through. She has printed and distributed to others all the LWS paper copies that get pushed through your front door over the year as well as helping organise, collect and serve the food at our wonderful parties.

Bob Whiffen our exemplary Treasurer since 2012 moved house over the summer so we held an extra committee meeting to ratify the co-option of Ian McKay as our new Treasurer. Bob did great work keeping tabs on membership and a beady eye on our funds. We thank him for his good humoured clear accounts and wish him well in his new life the other side of our Bridge.

We like new people to come onto the Committee, so if anyone else would like to join us please don't be shy in stepping forward!

Finally, I would like to thank each of you for your personal contributions throughout the year.

***Kate Buss  
Chairman  
March 2016***