

# **ABBOTS LEIGH, HAM GREEN, PILL, EASTON-IN-GORDANO**

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN Background Paper 7**

### **Community Assets and Facilities**



**October 2019**

**Background Papers were prepared over 2018 and 2019 to assist the Neighbourhood Plan Team develop its thinking and proposals. Some of this background work has been overtaken by the development of the Final October 2020 Plan**

## **COMMUNITY**

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

- **Pill is an accessible centre for the whole Neighbourhood Area offering a range of retail facilities and local public services.**
- **There are more than sixty active community organisations within the Neighbourhood Plan Area**
- **There is a range of well-used community buildings/halls running with varied ownership and management, varied space facilities, and differing financial arrangements. The Community Centre is a focal point in Pill providing space for a wide range of community organisations and activities.**
- **There are relatively few organisations run for or by young people, and older teenagers are not felt to engage with many of the community facilities offered. There is little to engage younger people in Abbots Leigh.**
- **The Area is not one that receives significant external funding for community groups and there is scope for capacity building for fundraising for community organisations and/or buildings.**
- **Public open spaces across the Neighbourhood Area are well used, valued and contribute to community wellbeing offering provision for recreational and leisure use but also contributing to environmental and bio-diversity benefit.**
- **The Precinct is widely felt to need improvement and the Neighbourhood Plan should explore the possibilities of improvements in relation to housing, retail improvement and traffic management and safety.**
- **Public services – health, education, fire and rescue, police – offer local services and contribute in a variety of ways to community safety and wellbeing.**

## 7 COMMUNITY

This background paper covers a range of aspects of community life in the Neighbourhood Area – the groups and organisations established and managed by voluntary community input, the infrastructure of spaces in which community activity takes place and the Open Spaces which offer outdoor provision for leisure and recreation. Also in the paper are brief descriptions of the public services available to the Area.

### 7.1 Groups and organisations<sup>1</sup>

Sustaining the strong sense of identity and community identified in both the initial community survey and the sustainability workshop, lies a network of community organisations. Local knowledge, combined with the 'Events' page of the monthly Pill Paper and a survey of the use of community buildings (see below) identifies (autumn 2018) fifty active groups in Pill and Easton-in-Gordano and a further eight groups in Abbots Leigh.

In Pill there are women's, men's and mixed organisations addressing a range of age groups – specifically younger children and older people – together with a wide range of all age groups – sport and exercise, culture and arts, music and dance, and simply 'getting together' for coffee, tea or lunch. The Community Forum brings many of these groups together (every three months) for the exchange of experience and ideas. The Forum receives an annual financial allocation from the Parish Council and runs a small grants programme for community groups. There are also important community wide events – the monthly community market, The Pill Rag, an annual music festival, the annual Regatta, the Orchard Wassail.

In Abbots Leigh there are a number of similar groups – exercise, heritage, wildlife, artists. All residents are members of the Civic Society which runs a programme of village events throughout the year- New Year Brunch, Easter Egg Hunt, Summer Roses and Rose, Bonfire Night, Children's Christmas Party.

### 7.2 Community Infrastructure

**7.2.1 Buildings:** Activities such as those listed above are held in a range of community spaces. An autumn 2018 survey identified ten such spaces widely used and fulfilling a range of needs - Abbots Leigh Village Hall, Lodway Close, Methodist Church Hall, Miller's Close, Pill Community Centre, Salvation Army, St. John Ambulance Hall, St George's Church Hall (and Scout Hut), Pill Memorial Club.

These community spaces are under varying ownership and management, have varied levels of space and facilities, and operate under varying financial arrangements. Three are in the ownership/management of churches (Methodist and St George's Halls and the Scout Hall) and another is owned by a cricket club (Lodway). The Memorial Club is a member organisation (900 members) run by a Trust and Management Committee and employing two staff. Two halls lie within the ownership of a national organisations (Salvation Army and St. John's Ambulance), One is communal space within an Allied Homes development (Miller's Close) whilst the Children's Centre lies within the Pill Library. The Community Centre is owned by Pill and Easton-in-Gordano Parish Council. Abbots Leigh Village Hall also comes under the Parish Council control.

Most buildings are used regularly, some several days a week, the Memorial Club throughout the day. The Community Centre is most heavily used in terms of the range of organisations

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<sup>1</sup> Details of community organisations and their use of community buildings is given in Annex 1 to this Background Paper

(including the Youth Club). Although some organisations have experienced financial difficulties it seems that none of them are under threat of closure, although the Baptist Church Hall has gone. Most are managed by local voluntary individuals or committees and only the Memorial Club has paid staff. Whilst the Community Centre receives a parish council grant most community spaces generate some funding by charging fees, the level of which varies widely. It has been said (e.g. in community workshops/meetings) that there is inefficient competition between the several centres and that there is scope for rationalisation. At the same time the owners/managers/users of buildings express loyalty to 'their' building and would strongly object to suggestions of closure/rationalisation.

**The Community Centre** lies within the old 1843 school building. The Centre was donated to the parish Council by North Somerset Council. It is the home for the monthly market, a café and the Youth club, together with providing space for a wide range of community activities. There are rooms for meetings or public events. Together with fees for lettings, the Centre receives a grant from the parish Council.

### **7.2.2 The Precinct**

Pill has no High Street and The Precinct, lying on the X3/X4 bus route and stretching from the main road to Pill creek, is the hub for a number of community facilities. It is the nearest local shopping for Abbots Leigh, Ham Green and Easton -in-Gordano for whom Portishead and Bristol are the alternatives. The Precinct provides a range of services for both the town itself and neighbouring settlements. There is a Post Office, Chemist, Library, a Co-operative store, Hairdresser, Barber, a Veterinary Service together with a number of other shops, a charity shop, a couple of take-aways, three public houses and the Village Resource centre. Also located in the centre of Pill are the fire-station and the Salvation Army Hall.

Local employment is around a hundred. Parking is messy and insufficient. Alliance Homes, with around two hundred houses in their Pill Neighbourhood, are introducing a new 'neighbourhood' approach to managing their properties and relating to the community

The 1960s Precinct does act as a hub and is useful for local shopping, catching the bus, meeting friends. It has been widely and accurately described, by residents, however, (in a recent small survey) as dated, ugly, concrete, boring. Residents and local businesses complain about young people hanging around and kicking footballs. Suggestions for improvement range from 'demolition and start again' to 'get a few more plants and trees'.

### **7.2.3 Other Community Services:**

Several of the pubs, including the Memorial Club serve meals. There is a café in The Precinct and also at Brackenwood Garden Centre whilst St Catherine's School offers a weekly meal during term time.

There are other small service centres elsewhere, one with doctor, garage and hardware shop, another with a second Co-operative and, hopefully a new rail station. There are three churches and six public houses across Pill and Easton-in-Gordano but no community services in Abbots Leigh other than the George Inn.

## **7.3 Open Space**

There is much highly valued public open space within the Neighbourhood Plan Area, some of it jointly run by North Somerset Council, the Parish Councils and/or community groups.

Open Spaces, formally designated on the NSC policies maps are marked below by \*

**Watchhouse Hill\*** is owned by North Somerset Council and managed by a joint council/community committee, incorporates Pill Community Orchard together with extensive grassland/meadow, sports pitches supporting a range of recreational activities including dog walking, exercise, cycling, play, sports. (designated by NSC as Open Space).

**Ham Green\*** is an open grassed site lying beyond Watchhouse Hill

**Abbots Pool\*** is a recognised Green Flag woodland area for walking, cycling and fishing, is jointly owned by NSC, Forestry Commission and is managed by a joint NSC/community committee.

**Easton in Gordano Football Ground** is the home of St George's Football Club

**Hardwick Road\*** (formally called **Yew Tree Gardens**) in Easton-in-Gordano is an NSC designated local space by the Parish Council offering play space and a football pitch.

**The Old School Field** in Abbots Leigh is owned by NSC and leased to Abbots Leigh Parish Council for 100 years is used for play and for village events.

**Brookside** in Pill is owned by NSC and managed by Pill and Easton-in-Gordano Parish Council

**Priory Fields** lying between Pill and Martcombe incorporates the Village Green and is widely used for walking. (designated by NSC as a Town Green)

**Pill Longshore** part of the land known as the Landuns

**Chapel Pill:** common land known as the Point, Chapel Pill

**Victoria Park\*** in Pill running from the precinct to Pill Creek, is jointly owned by NSC and the Parish Council (together with Waterloo Wharf, designated by NSC as Common Land)

**Crockerne Pill** is grassed open space, adjoining the historic pill leading to the River Avon, used by mariners since before the C15th). Some archaeological sites including site of C19 dry dock and breakers' yards.

**Pill Allotments** The 5-acre site is owned by the Parish Council but is let to and managed by the Pill Allotments Association under a lease which is reviewed and renewed every ten years. There are 124 plots of varying sizes, rented to 94 named members /plot holders from the community. Some plots are cared for by individuals, some by couples, neighbours or families. One plot is a communal plot for non-members rented and run by SPAD (Sustainable Pill and District). Members have access to the site throughout the year but regular users of the site are well in excess of the 94 named members.

There are other open spaces to which residents have access Leigh Woods and the Leigh Court Estate stretching down to Paradise Bottom, for example, together with the spaces across which pass the many Rights of Way and footpaths (see also the Transport and Movement Background paper 2).

Much of the land in Abbots Leigh along Beggar Bush Lane is devoted to sport and recreation – the Bristol Bears rugby training ground, Cotham Park Rugby Club, Bristol Real Tennis Club, Clifton College Sports Ground, Abbots Leigh Cricket Club. This land is Green Belt and thus

protected from housing development but there remains potential for leisure, sport and outdoor recreation, subject to North Somerset council Core Strategy CS 27).

## 7.4 Public services

### 7.4.1 Education

**St. Katherine's Secondary School** has 780 pupils, drawn 70% from Bristol and from the first admissions area of includes Long Ashton, Failand and Portbury as well as Pill, Easton and Abbots Leigh. Intake is from over 50 primary schools with St. Katherine's being first choice for parents from all over Bristol. Numbers are growing and are expected to reach 1000 with an annual entry of 180 and a sixth form of 100. There are 100 Staff – 50% Teaching staff, 50% support, with staff recruited widely (e.g. Bristol, Wales, North Somerset).

Pupils are 52% male; 48% female, 77% White British, 31% are special, educational needs (SEN) and 11% receive free school meals and 28% are vulnerable disadvantaged.

44% of pupils travel to school by bus (split equally between school bus (five a day) and the cheaper public bus). 23% come by car/car share, 24% walk. Very few cycle. 53% of Year 13 pupils go on to University and 36% to college or an apprenticeship.

The 2018 OFSTED brought criticism and the requirement for improvement across the board and St. Katherine's is now one of three secondary schools in the Cathedral Trust – (Cathedral Choir, St. Katherine's and Trinity Academy (opening September 2018)). There are also four primaries within the Trust – Headley Park, Victoria Park, Stoke Park and Cathedral.

Joining the Trust was a St. Katherine's choice but was welcome to the Trust in part because of the 70% Bristol base of students. Being within the Trust will offer economies of scale and expertise to St. Katherine's – HR, finance, safeguarding and a range of school policies. The Trust will offer support, but not control, but will determine the annual school budget.

Advantages to the Trust include the possibility of making use of St. Katherine's land. The priority at present is first modest growth and consolidation of the progress that has been made to date and second integration into the Cathedral Trust structures. A capacity review is under way at present focussing on the way in which expected growth to 1000 can be managed. The Cathedral, Gordano and Backwell schools are all heavily

**Crockerne Church of England Primary School**, located in central Pill, together with six other Weston-Super-Mare primaries, has become a member of the Kaleidoscope Academy Trust based in Weston. Crockerne has a nursery entry of around 50 and a pupil population of over 300. 8.5% are on free school meals; 11.6% are have SEN. Many pupils move on to St. Katherine's but some also into Bristol and to Gordano secondary.

### 7.4.2 Health

**Heywood Family Practice** has 6,700 patients drawn from Pill, Easton-in-Gordano, Abbots Leigh, Failand and Portbury. It employs 30 staff (largely part-time), including seven (part-time) doctors and a nursing staff of five, also receptionists, dieticians, secretaries, clerical/admin). The Practice has become one of five in a new primary care network (Portishead Medical Group, Clevedon, Mendip Vale and Harbourside, which will bring economies of scale and new specialisations. Social prescribing is to be introduced with three new staff across the network involving more outreach and contact with isolated patients (e.g. home visits, triage to services). A Clinical Pharmacist is also to be introduced across the network. The workload of the practice is rising (age distribution of patients; increased complexity of many cases, growth of diabetes, asthma, mental health, child obesity) and this has implications for recruitment, staffing and skills which all adds to practice workload. The

practice has a patient participation group meeting quarterly. Face to face is still important - and remains possible in a small community-based practice – but there are shifts towards out of hours working, phone consultations, texting, video consultation.

There is a dental practice on the Eden Business Park, a care home (Abbots Leigh Manor Home) and a centre supporting people with learning disabilities (Freeways) on the edge of Abbots Leigh.

There is a major Care Home in Abbots Leigh supporting on average around 80 users.

### **7.4.3 Fire and Rescue**

Pill Fire station, one of 21 stations in the Avon Fire and Rescue Service, is in a group of five stations (Pill, Clevedon, Weston super Mare, Blagdon and Winscombe) managed by a Station Manager. Pill Fire station is crewed by fifteen retained duty firefighters, many holding full time jobs elsewhere. Staff must live or work within five minutes of the station bringing a strong community focus to work in and with the community. Operational services include fighting fires, promoting fire safety at home, fire investigations, inspection of and risk reduction in buildings, attendance and police support at traffic accidents, and emergency response (e.g. flooding, hazardous materials, terrorist attack)

The service addresses issues of safeguarding – adult vulnerability (especially vulnerable older people), vulnerable children and young people (at home, at school or round and about). The service offers home visits and works on community education. In Pill, the Fire Station is central to the village and there are close community links not least because retained staff live locally. The fire service, like other community services faces difficulties in recruitment. Whilst family and intergenerational links bring recruits to the service it is more difficult to attract newcomers to volunteer for what can be an onerous and time-consuming activity. Housing costs can force younger families to move away from the traditional 5-minutes away dwelling locations. Rural communities and rural businesses can present problems.

In conjunction with the police the service has organised local events to help children understand the risks of fire (fire-engines always attract an audience). Pill in Bloom is given a space for its annual celebration.

### **7.4.4 Police and Community Safety**

The Abbots Leigh and Pill/Easton-in-Gordano parishes lie within the large Redwood beat of the Avon and Somerset Police Area. There is no police presence in Pill with the nearest police station in Portishead. Across the beat crime levels have been stable over the past twelve months, running at 729 criminal offences and 348 anti-social behaviour incidents. The latter are down by 15% over the last year.

Crime rates in the Neighbourhood Plan Area are low by comparison with other parts of the police area. Nevertheless, there are local priorities - vehicle crime in Leigh Woods (24 in one month) and anti-social behaviour in Pill. (noise, harassment, nuisance, rowdy or inconsiderate neighbours, vandalism, graffiti) addressed in part by the issue of Community Protection Warnings in part by

Any increase in household numbers in North Somerset over coming years would increase the role of the police in terms of their contribution to safer buildings and community safety in and around building. Avon and Somerset police work Secured by Design, a national police crime prevention initiative works on behalf of Police Forces alongside planners and the construction industry, to reduce crime by 'designing it out both by working with planners and developers at the design stage to include security into the built environment, for example through natural surveillance, landscaping and lighting and by encouraging manufacturers of products such as doors and windows, to meet 'police preferred specifications.

The police work closely with partners, North Somerset Council and Avon Fire and Rescue, on major incidents (e.g. road accidents) and on community links – a recent community safety education event for children in Pill, for example. A bike security marking initiative was a success at the National Trust car park in Leigh Woods. offered. As with the Fire Service police work has become more complex with police involvement in mental health, in hate crime, in cyber-crime and child abuse replacing the more familiar patterns of burglary or traffic offences.







	GETTING TOGETHER	Friday Night Live							YES				
		Getting together									YES		
		Community Market	YES										
		Bingo		YES							YES		
		Cameo							YES				
		Garden Club			YES								
		OAP Club		YES									
	MEN	Men's Group	YES										
		Men's Breakfast	YES					YES					
		Crockerne Men's Group											
	WOMEN	WI			YES								YES
<b>OTHER</b>		Computer Courses										YES	
		Dog Obedience	YES		YES								
		Garden Furniture Sales											YES
		Casualty Unit								YES			
		Portishead and Pill Service Unit								YES			