

New Surgery Approved

On 20th October North Somerset Council's South Area Committee approved the application for a new surgery at Pudding Pie Lane Langford. Building the new surgery means that the existing Wrington and Churchill surgeries will be closed and the effects of this on residents were considered at the meeting.

Objections to the application included – travel difficulties for many Wrington residents particularly the elderly, increased traffic near Churchill Primary school & the building is outside the village fence. Other patients, mainly outside Wrington were in favour of the new surgery because they welcome the new facilities.

NSC cllrs on the South Area committee did not consider that the disadvantages to Wrington residents were enough to refuse the application. They were also told that the Wrington Vale Medical Practice could close in 5 years' time if the facilities were not improved, because patients would leave for other Practices.

The Wrington Vale Practice has promised that there will still be a surgery in Wrington although it will only cater for a quarter of the present patients. Residents without cars hope that this will not disappear as well.

Bus Subsidy Cuts

North Somerset Council is cutting 40% of its bus subsidies next year, and the Government has also stopped its subsidy to rural bus routes. The total subsidy cuts are £490,000.



The results of the rushed public consultation over the summer are being considered now, with contracts to be awarded in early December. We should know soon whether the 121 bus through Wrington and Redhill will survive.

Liberal Democrat
JUMBLE SALE
on
Saturday 12th Nov
at 2 pm

Wrington Memorial Hall

Clothes Books Plants Bric-a-Brac

Many Bargains All Welcome

Admission 25p

Please ring 01934 862109 or 862303
for jumble collection or bring to the
Hall from 11am.

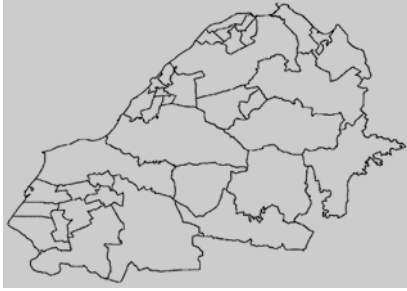
Fair Funding for Schools?

Since the creation of North Somerset Council in 1996 it has been poorly funded by each Government in turn. In particular, the Government funds each pupil in North Somerset by about £400 less per year than the average pupil across the country. This makes a huge difference to school facilities and is clearly unfair.

The Government now aims to improve the system so that pupil funding does not vary so much from council to council. Various options are being considered including the way that disadvantaged pupils are counted and cost differences between primary and secondary schools. North Somerset should benefit from a fairer system but any changes will not be made until 2013 or 2014.

Boundary Changes

Constituency boundaries are being redrawn across the UK in order to give MPs equal numbers of electors (around 8,000 each) and to cut down on the number of MPs from 533 to 502.



North Somerset and Weston-super-Mare already have 8,000 electors each and the Boundary Commission recommends that these two are not changed.

On North Somerset Council, many councillors want to cut the number of councillors but the Boundary Commission will have the last word on this. Next year the Commission will review and consult on the number of North Somerset's cllrs and then redraw ward boundaries for the 2015 local elections.

Even if the number of cllrs stays the same (61), ward boundaries will still change because populations have grown hugely in Portishead and Weston. Cllrs are supposed to represent roughly equal voter numbers but some wards are now much larger than others.

Affordable Housing in Villages

House prices in Wrington, Redhill and Butcombe are high, which makes it hard for many young families to afford housing here. There are very few ex-Council houses still available as affordable housing for rent (now Housing Association Alliance Homes) and they do not become vacant very often.

Last year 17 more affordable houses were built in Wrington on an "exception site" at Rickyard Rd outside the village fence. These are for residents with a Wrington connection who are unable to afford market rents or house prices, but there are still not enough affordable houses for local people who need them.

The lettings policies for the affordable housing on Rickyard Rd and the Alliance Homes are different. Unlike Rickyard Rd, no priority is given to Parish residents when Alliance Homes are let. Priority goes to those in greatest housing need from anywhere in North Somerset.

Cllr Deborah Yamanaka asked whether the policy could be the same for all rural affordable housing and give priority for those with local connections. But sadly the answer is no. By law, residents from across North Somerset must have equal access to affordable housing. Only a few local lettings policies are allowed, as on the Rickyard Rd site.

Weekly Waste Collections?

Government minister Eric Pickles wants Councils to collect rubbish weekly. Councils can bid for grants to keep or bring in weekly collections for the next 5 years but the grants are not at all clear. Another minister Caroline Spelman quotes collection of "smelly waste" which usually means food waste.

So if there is a grant to keep weekly food waste collections then NSC could apply. If the grant is to bring back weekly rubbish collections then NSC will not apply, as this would discourage some residents from recycling.

NSC's food waste is mixed with garden waste and turned into compost. This keeps it out of landfill, cuts down on methane emissions and saves £56 per tonne in landfill tax, totalling around £40,000 a year.



A lot of NSC residents do not use the weekly food waste collections, preferring to include it in their fortnightly rubbish. This is a pity, since their food waste adds to landfill, methane emissions & NSC costs. It is easy to wrap food in newspaper (or cornstarch bags from Amors) and put it in the brown box.