

9 May 2018

Mark Foster
Chairman
Newton St Loe Parish Council
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Professor Sue Rigby
Vice-Chancellor

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Dear Mr Foster,

Thank you for your letter of 13th April, which the Vice-Chancellor has passed to me for reply. I recognise that there are issues to address, but am disturbed by the tone and content of your letter, since it suggests there has been a serious breakdown in relations between our two communities, which is very regrettable.

Planning conditions update

You asked for updates on the status of outstanding planning conditions; a detailed response is contained in the attached document. If you are of the view we are in breach of any planning conditions, please feel free to raise these with me, with specific details, and I will investigate further; currently, I find no evidence to support the suggestion that we are not meeting our planning obligations.

Parking in the Village

I fully appreciate the concern that residents have about parking in the village by non-residents during the working week. However, much as the Parish Council would like us to police car-parking in the village, there is simply no legal basis for us to do so.

We continue to do all we can to encourage students, staff and visitors not to park off-campus, but, as you will appreciate, the village's streets are public highways, over which we have no legal jurisdiction. We can no more insist on staff and students not parking there, as we can tell them to not visit the Globe pub, or the Farm Shop.

One solution to the problem, which has been previously considered, is to introduce resident-only parking, as is the case in many other parts of Bath & North East Somerset, where such schemes operate well. As you know, the University has offered to provide up to £25,000 to fund the implementation of such a scheme, if it is supported by residents, via a vote.

I understand that the main stumbling block in moving towards such a solution is the unwillingness of B&NES to support the on-going operation of the zone, as the local highways authority. We would be happy to work alongside the Parish Council, and with Cllr Veale with whom I have spoken, to persuade B&NES officers to take a different view.

Student Value to Newton St Loe

As you point out, the several hundred students living in accommodation on campus form part of the electorate of Newton St Loe Parish, specifically those registered to vote here.

You may well have a better idea than me of the value of the students, their visiting families, and indeed our permanent staff, to the Globe and Farm Shop.

We are aware that for several years students have been involved in the May Day celebration; I understand that only this week two of our students helped staff the barbeque. I suspect more students would be very happy to be involved with suitable local events, if they are informed about them in advance.

I do hope that we can move forward constructively. The Estates team and I would be happy to meet with you and fellow councillors, if you felt that would be helpful?

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Neil Latham', with a horizontal line underneath.

Neil Latham CBE
Chief Operating Officer

Cc Cllr David Veale