

# THE S.W.A.G. TIMES

WINTER 2012 EDITION

www.stantonwickactiongroup.org  
Contact us: info@stantonwickactiongroup.org

## What Next for Stanton Wick Old Colliery Site?

SWAG will continue campaign for positive development

**T**he community prevails and a crazy, opportunistic and damaging proposal bites the dust - or in this case, the slag. So, the threat of an overwhelming number of gypsy and traveller families setting up home in the green belt and in the hamlet of Stanton Wick has been withdrawn and (legally) has no chance of ever being resurrected.

This whole bruising exercise has produced two positive outcomes: that the communities have remarkably come closer together socially - and by concern for our future well-being and the future of what is a significant and large semi-derelict site in the middle of the communities of Pensford, Publow and the Stanton's.

During the months since May, the Stanton Wick Action Group team has explored the entire history of the Old Colliery, looking at the historic significance, the biodiversity and the heritage of the site which looks sad and neglected, particularly when sitting next to the sympathetic and imposing conversion of the former Winding House and the Miners showers and wash-room. We have discovered the significance of these redbrick colliery buildings (some of the last remaining examples in the UK), and listened more intently to those

amongst us who have vivid memories of the Colliery and its significance to our heritage. We are very fortunate to live in such an interesting area, steeped in the history of deep pit coal mining and we want to help preserve that history in buildings, artefacts and through publications.

The SWAG team has therefore turned its attention to encouraging and helping the redevelopment of the Old Colliery site in a positive way, both for the landowner and the community.

We recognise of course that it takes more than one to tango, and the decision on the Old Colliery's future rests with its owner. For that reason, we will continue to work in support of any redevelopment proposal that - on balance - will enhance the well-being of the wider community and not adversely affect the residents of Stanton Wick and other nearby communities. We will continue to press, wherever needed, for the support of BaNES to any proposal that brings benefit to the community. Everyone wants to see the Old Colliery site developed.

**For more information and to register for updates, go to: [www.stantonwickactiongroup.org](http://www.stantonwickactiongroup.org) or please email us at [info@stantonwickactiongroup.org](mailto:info@stantonwickactiongroup.org)**

## BaNES Falls Foul of 'Five Year Rule'

Core strategy future now in doubt

**B**ath and North East Somerset Council has been struggling to produce a new Core Strategy, the long-term planning document that will replace its old Local Plan. Recently this struggle has entered a new and more worrying phase.

Early in 2012 the Planning Inspector in charge of the process requested that the Core Strategy process should pause for 12 months while the council produces new housing targets.

However, the old Local Plan which the Core Strategy is meant to replace, expired in 2011, leaving no valid Plan at all. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does allow councils to give weight to expired or emerging plans, as long as they are in keeping with the NPPF itself. But there's a catch: the

Five Year Rule. The NPPF states that if a council has not allocated enough sites for new housing to last for five years, then its policies on housing are invalid and planning applications for housing must be decided using the NPPF alone.

So BaNES therefore finds itself caught out. It hasn't agreed housing numbers, so can't prove that it has five years-worth of sites.

Until it can, planning applications could be accepted that would never have passed before - including developments on green fields outside village boundaries.

The developers are queuing up for what could be a planning free-for-all. The only silver lining is that the NPPF gives good protection to Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, but it remains a very worrying situation.

## From Rags to Riches!

The SWAG clothing bags are gone, and hopefully many of you now have a bit more room in your wardrobes since jettisoning those impulse buys and clothes that no longer fitted.

Bristol Textile Recyclers collected 227 bags full of SWAG togs from us, weighing in excess of 1,000kg (and nearly filled a double garage). The BTR 'Clothes for a Cause' campaign is aimed at raising funds for community projects, and this paid us out a fantastic £570. Prior to the BTR collection we had to sort the bags to ensure anything unsuitable was removed; there were very few though, so thank you for sorting so carefully, and anything we could not trade in for cash was donated to charity shops.

In sorting, we discovered some absolute gems: vintage jackets, lovely unworn dresses with the labels still on, brand new designer boots, even classic wool coats...! We took these top notch items to a carboot sale and then the Valley Green Belt Show - with amazing financial success.

It was sometimes difficult to get the pricing right, but we were spurred on by the thought that the individual items were each getting what a SWAG bag of lesser quality clothes would fetch.

Added to the money raised from Bristol Textile Recyclers, we managed to convert your SWAG clothes donations into nearly £1,000, and we still have enough good stock for one more blow-out 'everything must go' car boot sale. So, to everyone who spent their valuable time sorting through drawers, cupboards and wardrobes, bagging clothes, and donating them, a very big thank you!

We'll have more details on what the final total is on our website [www.stantonwickactiongroup.org](http://www.stantonwickactiongroup.org) in the New Year and we will also be publishing details of forthcoming fundraising and community events for your 2013 calendars.

Remember, the best way to ensure you get all the latest information and updates from SWAG, is to sign up to our mailing list at the website above. Or email us directly at [info@stantonwickactiongroup.org](mailto:info@stantonwickactiongroup.org)

## Jimmy Cricket Bowls Over Crowd

World-famous Irish comic Jimmy Cricket brought his unique, family friendly style of entertainment to Pensford for SWAG... and left audiences crying with laughter.

Playing two packed nights at the Memorial Hall on 7th and 8th Dec, the line-up also included female vocalist May Marion, local duo 'Musicians In Black' and a late

night disco. The funds raised through ticket sales, refreshments and a raffle totalled a whopping £2,000 for SWAG. Organiser Jennie Jones said: "Jimmy was hilarious. He left everyone howling with laughter". Clarke Osborne of SWAG said: "Huge thanks to Jennie and Dave Lewis for organising two nights of amazing fundraising."



Jennie Jones, Jimmy Cricket, Dave Lewis and Kris Mountford. Photo copyright Trina Anstey

## Fracking: Can we Really Afford it?

**O**ur environment is under intense pressure from many quarters, so it comes as no surprise that another potential assailant is on the scene.

UK Methane Ltd submitted plans to test drill for Coal Based Methane (CBM) in the Hicks Gate area in Sept, and the planning application now awaits the attentions of BaNES. CBM drilling involves the extraction of methane trapped in undisturbed coal seams. Large volumes of ground water must be pumped out to free the gas, and the process results in contamination of this water with multiple chemicals. Fracking is a process by which gas trapped within shale rock is released by fractures caused by pumping of water under high pressure.

There are major risks: water, land and air pollution, impacts on farming and wildlife, health and safety, and visual impacts and noise pollution. The unquantifiable costs are

born by later generations and the environmental consequences may be impossible to rectify. The good news is that local opposition to the Keynsham proposals has been vociferous; we must support groups that focus on these issues.

### STANTON DREW PARISH COUNCIL

**INVITES YOU TO ATTEND AN INFORMATION SESSION ON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING & THE NEW LOCALISM ACT.**

**THE PARISH COUNCIL WILL BE HOLDING SESSIONS ON SATURDAY FEB 9 & SUNDAY FEB 10TH 2013 FROM 10AM-2PM.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT JUDITH ON 331311 OR JOHN ON 333410.**

**WE HOPE YOU WILL ATTEND TO HELP YOUR COMMUNITY PLAN FOR THE FUTURE.**

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## Has the Community Won the Battle or the War?

By Clarke Osborne, Chairman of The Stanton Wick Action Group

**T**hey say victory is sweet; well it was a great feeling when the three sites were withdrawn at the Cabinet meeting on Sept 9th and we can all allow ourselves a short time of celebration. However, for our community it is, I fear, the battle and not the war that is won. The battle of stopping the madness of proposals to develop a massive gypsy and traveller site is over, but the war of ensuring that the Old Colliery site is developed in a way which benefits the community and adds to its overall well-being has

only just begun. Winning the battle comes at a price – in time, energy and money. Employing quality advocates is expensive even if a high level of legal support is provided and success comes comparatively quickly. Unlike most litigation, the application for a Judicial Review does not come with any precedent for cost recovery, so there is no cheque from BaNES to help our fundraising.

It is a real shame that we were not able to persuade BaNES of the error of their ways and that

consequently we needed to launch our application for a Judicial Review. However, sometimes policy becomes so entrenched, that reason and thought has to wait for the threat of crushing defeat.

We all now hope that following the battle, BaNES and the community they serve will move closer together and will ensure a lasting, and close dialogue over those issues that have real impact on our amenity and well-being.

A new initiative, certainly; a new understanding of the Chew Valley? We hope so.

## Local Groups Recognised by Chairman of BaNES

**T**wo Voluntary Groups in Stanton Wick and Pensford have been recognised with Certificates of Commendation in the “Volunteer Team of the Year” category in the Chairman of the Council’s Annual Community and Business Awards.

Stanton Wick Action Group, which was nominated by Judith Chubb-Whittle of Stanton Drew Parish Council, received an award for its efforts in protecting the Green Belt, while Pensford Toddler Group was nominated by Publow with Pensford Parish Council, and received an award for the fantastic quality and running of the group.

At a reception in the Guildhall’s Banqueting Room, attended by SWAG, Stanton Drew Parish Council and the Pensford Toddler Group, Chairman of the Council, Cllr Rob Appleyard presented

certificates to SWAG’s Karen Abolkheir and Liz Richardson, and Toddler Group members Adele Balzan and Sara Box. Karen said “although there is a certain irony in us receiving an award for fighting against BaNES, we are delighted to receive public recognition of our efforts”. Adele said “the award is lovely recognition of all the hard work and time that the group’s members had put in over the years.”



Cllr Rob Appleyard congratulates Pensford Toddler Group’s Adele Balzan (L) and Sara Box



Chairman of the Council Rob Appleyard and SWAG’s Liz Richardson (Left) and Karen Abolkheir

## Broadband Boost?

The planned roll-out of “superfast broadband” will have little positive impact on many of the residents of the Stantons and Pensford, most of whom are a long way from Chew Magna (01275) or Compton Dando/Pensford (01761) exchanges. Whilst people close to the exchanges might get 20Mbps, anyone in the outlying areas will be stuck with an unreliable <1 Mbps service little better than they currently have. A group is working with the “Connecting Devon and Somerset” programme, in cooperation with Parish Councils, and aligned with the forthcoming Placemaking/Neighbourhood Plans. The aim is to achieve a decent level of service. As well as committee members, people are needed to help with surveys. If you can help, call Simon Whittle on 01275 331311 or [simon@tensheds.co.uk](mailto:simon@tensheds.co.uk)

## Thank You to You All!

The thank you list is long... and always growing! On behalf of SWAG, I would like to extend huge thanks to the countless residents and local businesses who have helped us achieve so much this year. Thank you to the underwriters, sponsors, fundraisers, groups and many, many local volunteers who have so generously donated their time, talents and funds to help protect the precious area we live in. We all hope you have a fantastic Christmas and a peaceful New Year. Thanks again, Clarke Osborne, Chairman of SWAG

## Mining Our Area’s Rich Heritage

Guided walk unearths mining secrets

**A** very enjoyable afternoon was spent recently exploring the local landscape for clues to the rich coal mining heritage of Pensford, Stanton Wick and Stanton Drew. Local resident Roger Moses led the walk on behalf of The Mendip Society. Starting and ending at The Rising Sun, Roger guided the walkers from the Miners Welfare in Pensford and up to the disused Great Western railway line



Roger Moses and Shane Gould lead walkers on a discovery of the area’s mining heritage

at the bottom of the woodland attached to the Winding House. The line not only carried passengers but also serviced the mines of Pensford and Bromley. Roger and local historian Shane Gould explained the use of the industrial buildings, and then walked past the Carpenters Arms (formerly a row of miners cottages) and “Kepplegate” the old miners chapel. Roger then led the walkers to the site of the old Bromley pit, then underneath the Victorian railway viaduct and back to The Rising Sun. Since BaNES’ proposal to develop a Gypsy and Travellers site at the Old Colliery interest in the local coal mining heritage is high, and former miner Robert Bailey has agreed to hold a talk on the topic. More details soon.

## “A Truly Terrifying Experience...”

... and that was just for the cast and crew! On 2nd November, a packed Memorial Hall saw the first instalment of ‘Tales From The Black Book’ - a ghost story from the pen of Pensford’s Paul Baxter who not only wrote, produced and directed the event but also built the sets, narrated and acted. Breaking with tradition, the show included live acting, a shadow puppet show and even a zombie dance number. Adopting a “show must go on” mentality, the cast which included local youngsters Peter and Mia, plus Rob, Cai, Sue and Karen, kept

going despite the sound effects computer crashing. The play was complemented by a hot dog stall with the cooks braving the November drizzle, and most importantly, a bar! The event raised a whopping £472 for SWAG. Thanks to everyone who attended what is rumoured to become an annual event, congratulations to Paul, the whole cast and crew, and a huge thanks to Steve Haines of Pensford-based Media Maintenance Company, who provided the lights and PA system for the show.

## The Community Trust 100 Club Launches!

**A**fter many hours of research and discussion with many residents, the launch of the Publow with Pensford and Stanton Drew Community Trust 100 Club (or more simply ‘The Community Trust 100 Club’) is ready. During January, friends of SWAG will be signing up the 100 members of this unique club, each of whom will pay £20 per month into a pool from which three winners of cash prizes will be drawn every month. In November an extra draw awards a huge prize (£3,600 if 100 members for 12 months). Members

will meet on the last Monday of each month (not obligatory) to make the draw, have some fun and discuss local issues of the moment. The funds raised will be used for projects within the PPS parishes, and members will decide on the strategy for fund distribution. So, a great way to help your community, influence local projects, meet new people, have some fun and (possibly) win money. So don’t be shy and join us now! Call Sue 01761 490748 or email [sue@sueosbo.com](mailto:sue@sueosbo.com) and we will get a member’s pack to you pronto!