

Bleadon Acting Together



Bleadon Acting Together started as a small group of people concerned about a planning application in Purn Way. Purn Way has a closed end and we are often seen in the road talking to each other about Bleadon issues.

Then we heard that there was going to be an application for 250 houses and a school on the fields at the front of the village. We didn't see anything being done except some people doing a survey and we forgot all about it. The group in Purn way concentrated on a housing development behind us. We got information from Bleadon BOB and from the campaigners who fought the application at the top of the hill. We also had a lot of local knowledge as some of the people had lived in the village all their lives.

In the next couple of weeks, the public meeting was advertised for the 200 houses and we went to find out more at the hall. Once again, we all met each other in Purn Way and swapped stories about who was doing what. We felt that there was an uncoordinated effort, so we formed Bleadon Action Group to bring our knowledge to support the fight and help the village decide what we needed to do to show solidarity against the developers. We arranged a public meeting of our own.

The issues became apparent at that meeting and we could see that there were some parts of Bleadon not working together. We had our own challenges in this regard and emotions were running high. Lots of people with excellent intentions were not pulling together.

Action was our intention, so we started to communicate and to gather a petition. We created a network around the village so that information could get to people quickly. Meetings were huge but done in houses and we all brought chairs. We thought seriously about what people would get from our communications and sought only to inform and help.

The planning application arrived, and we set to work with our network to alert people in the village to the application. Many of the people in the parish felt strongly that we needed some formal representation, so we collected a fighting fund and hired a specialist. This process took some time as we stuck to a formal procurement process where possible and looked at several options. We applied for an extension to the process and we were fortunate enough to get one. The Bleadon Objection was published on the North Somerset Council Planning site.

At the same time the Parish Council had been struggling for members and it became obvious that our best course of action was to bring the village together by joining the Parish Council. Jim Baines, Anne Selway, Joanne Richardson, Andy Scarisbrick and Kirsten Hemingway-Arnold all agreed to apply for co-option. Kirsten was initially rejected by the sitting parish council but was elected at the next meeting.

With five of the team now part of both organisations and with public opinion that our name implied we were rebels or activists we decided to change the name of Bleadon Action Group to Bleadon Acting Together. We went from BAG to BAT and added a beautiful new logo.

You can get in touch with us via the Bleadon BOB website(bleadon.org.uk/actiongroup) and via our Facebook Group (@BleadonAG) or via email at BleadonActionGroup@gmail.com - we are always looking for new members.

Kirsten Hemingway