

## **Catherine Whybrow's address to B&NES cabinet 11<sup>th</sup> Jan 2012**

I am a director of NRR, nominated by Radstock Residents Association, giving my personal view.

Radstock has an unusual settlement pattern with most housing on the hills round old coal pits. The centre was mainly streams, roads and railways. In 1958 Pevsner wrote: "Radstock is really desperately ugly." We were told once the railways had gone we would get a proper town centre. Even then the County of Avon said the nine-road junction was one of their worst, as they put in the double roundabouts and a new bridge to stop the flooding.

Radstock has improved. We have the artistic wheel, the museum, two cycleways, two parks, and a Conservation Area. We are "the best preserved mining town in Southern England", a backhanded compliment. But we still have bad traffic jams and no proper town centre. You gave the old railway lands to NRR to develop and to enable a new road pattern for Radstock.

In 2003 NRR had extensive local consultations about the road pattern hoping to find a clear solution. No such luck. All the solutions have big problems. We opted for sending all the traffic to the south thus clearing the centre and north side for a more pedestrianised town centre, passed with our 2007 plans.

But Radstock always hated the new pattern because it attacked what centre we do have at present only in anticipation of providing a new one. Those who only disliked the traffic joined with anti-NRR campaigners ( NIMBYs and those passionate about nature or steam railways) to form a formidable protest group. So your highways department last autumn reassessed the proposed changes, and used new modelling techniques to come up with a better way to ease the peak-time traffic flow. It keeps Frome Road open, only sends lighter traffic through the centre which then has 20 mph restrictions, it provides a new bus station and extra pedestrian crossings. (I was on a B&NES committee which put 2 new pedestrian crossings in Radstock; they really helped.)

My main aim is for a lively and safe town centre. I think this is the best we can get. Radstock can produce objectors to any traffic pattern but all developments in Radstock are on hold until the roads are settled. The centre needs more residents and our young people need the housing. Radstock needs this decision now. Please let regeneration finally go ahead.