

Address to Bath and North-East Somerset Cabinet

- 1. Thank you for allowing the time for me to address the Cabinet on what has become an issue of significant concern for local residents. The Petition presented today has been signed by more than 200 people, not only local residents but those who come to walk, cycle ride or otherwise visit the St.Catherine Valley, set in the southern edge of the Cotswolds AONB.**
- 2. Local residents are petitioning the Council for the second time once at the time of the licencing application and now today, for a second time on the related planning issues in this case.**
- 3. The current position is that a drinks and entertainment licence was granted in May this year to the owners of St.Catherines Court against overwhelming opposition. It is the view of your Council that to legitimately operate the licence, planning consent is required to match the change in use from residential to its current commercial use. Owing to current legislation the Council is required to deal with planning and licencing issues separately.**
- 4. The owners now intend to operate the premises on a commercial scale and it is this fact that has led to the intensity of opposition that has featured in the national and local press. The strength and depth of that opposition can not be over stated based as it is on a legitimate concern for public safety , nuisance and the right to peaceful enjoyment of a rare and protected environment.**
- 5. Indeed that strength and degree of support has been a critical factor in the Parish Meeting putting its weight behind this cause and fully supporting local residents. St. Catherine Parish receives a precept of £260 pa and is one of the smallest parishes in the UK. And yet both residents and the Parish now find themselves having to take on a complex bureaucracy of law, regulation and procedure which we are ill – equipped to do.**
- 6. None of the residents have any legal training and it has been a belief in the rightness of their cause, fairness and a belief in the democratic process that has led them to this point. Quite properly they now look to elected members and this Council for support in upholding the democratic right and to guard against a perceived tendency to acquiesce and to take the easy way out.**
- 7. Quite simply residents are asking that the planning rules that they abide by should be applied fairly and equally to all without exception. They expect to see a strong corporate approach by the Council in protecting the lives of local residents; effective governance in meeting their civic duties and responsibilities and evidence of a greater willingness to heed the views of local people in implementing legislation**
- 8. I thankyou for your time and I will be pleased to answer any queries.**