Congresbury New Village Hall Referendum
Community Right to Build Order
Information for Voters

About this document

On 15 September 2016, there will be a referendum within the Congresbury parish area for a Community Right to Build Order to build a new Village Hall/Community Centre on the site of the King George V playing fields within the village. This document explains the referendum that is going to take place and how you can take part in it. It explains:

- What a Community Right to Build Order is; and
- What the referendum is and how you can take part

Referendum on the proposals in the Community Right to Build Order
A referendum asks you to vote yes or no to a question.
For this referendum you will receive a ballot paper with this question:

“Do you want the development in the Community Right to Build Order for Congresbury to have planning permission?”

What does my vote mean?
You show your choice by putting a cross (X) in the ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ box on your ballot paper (‘yes” if you want the proposals to have planning permission or “No” if you do not).

Put a cross in only one box or your vote will not be counted.

If more people vote ‘yes’ than ‘no’ in this referendum, then North Somerset Council will resolve to approve the Order and it will then have planning permission.

If more people vote ‘no’ than ‘yes’, then Order will not be given planning permission.

What is Neighbourhood Planning and what are Community Right to Build Orders?

What is neighbourhood planning?
Neighbourhood planning aims to help local communities play a direct role in planning the areas in which they live and work. There are a number of ways this works. A community can for example prepare their own neighbourhood plan, to show how the community wants land to be used and developed
across the neighbourhood area. Usually this neighbourhood area is the whole of a parish. Communities can also draw up their own proposals for development which they would like on a particular site within the neighbourhood area. These proposals are similar to a planning application and once approved give planning permission for that particular development. This is what is now being proposed in Congresbury.

**What is a neighbourhood area?**
A neighbourhood area can cover single streets or large urban or rural areas. In North Somerset the boundaries of a neighbourhood area are put forward by town or parish councils.

In Congresbury, the boundary of the neighbourhood area was approved by North Somerset Council and is identical to the parish area of Congresbury parish.

**Who can prepare a Community Right to Build Order?**
Community Right to Build Orders can be prepared either by the Town or Parish Council, or by a Community Group within the neighbourhood area. This is instead of them being proposed by a developer or landowner. The proposals for a new village hall/community centre proposals have been prepared by the Congresbury Village Hall Development Trust.

**Who approves them?**
Instead of a CRtBO being considered by North Somerset Council through a planning application, it is scrutinised by an independent examiner. The examiner looks to see if the proposals meet national and local planning policies and promote sustainable development. It must have been developed with the involvement of the local community.

An independent examiner Mr Andrew Ashcroft has assessed this Community Right to Build Order and has made some changes to the conditions which were originally proposed, in order that it meets the necessary tests. The Order which you will vote on at the referendum is this amended order. The changes which have been made are to the conditions in section 2.2. No other changes have been made.

**What is proposed in this Community Right to Build Order?**
You can view the Order either:-
- on line at [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/congresbury/nvh](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/congresbury/nvh)
- at Congresbury Library - Monday 2-5pm; Wednesday 10am-1pm; Friday 10am-1pm and 2-5pm; Saturday 10am-1pm: or
- at North Somerset Council Offices in Weston-super-Mare – within the library Monday to Friday 8.30am-8pm (staffed 9am-5pm, 10.30am-5pm on the first Wednesday in the month); Saturday 8.30am-7pm (staffed 9am-4pm); Sunday 10am-7pm (staffed 11am-4pm). Customers can self-serve if the library is not staffed.
The Order proposes the construction of multi-use village hall and community centre on land at King George V Playing Fields, Stonewell Drive, Congresbury.

The proposed building is shown to have a footprint of 926 square metres and is located to the immediate north of the existing tennis courts. It would occupy the site of the existing tennis pavilion and surrounding land.

The existing Recreation Club building is proposed to be demolished and its site would become the main car park for the remodelled set of facilities on the wider Playing Fields. The access into the proposed main car park would use the existing vehicular access off Stonewell Drive. The Order also proposes the construction of a three bay layby in Stonewell Drive.

There are many planning conditions included within the order which mean that North Somerset Council would need to approve many further details before building work could go ahead.

**How is a Community Right to Build Order prepared?**

There is a statutory process that must be followed for the making of a Community Right to Build Order. This is the process which the Congresbury CRtBO has followed. The neighbourhood area must be designated first.

The local community can decide what the Order contains, but it must meet the following ‘basic conditions’:

- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the Order; and
- having special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic merit that it possesses, it is appropriate to make the Order; and
- having special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of any Conservation Area, it is appropriate to make the Order; and
- the making of the Order contributes to the achievement of sustainable development; and
- the making of the Order is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan in the area; and
- the making of the Order does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with European Union (EU) obligations.

The draft Order must be prepared through a process of consultation with local residents and businesses and the final draft Order must be subject to a set ‘publicity period’, where people are given an opportunity to submit comments.

An independent examiner then reviews these comments and checks whether the draft Order meets the basic conditions and other requirements set out in
the regulations. This is to make sure that referendums only take place when proposals are workable and meet planning rules. The examiner then reports whether any modifications need be made so that the Order meets the basic conditions and whether it should proceed to a referendum. The Congresbury examiner concluded that a number of modifications were necessary to the Order so that it could proceed to referendum. These have been incorporated into the version which you can see online and at Congresbury Library and North Somerset Council Town Hall (within the library).

North Somerset Council then organise a referendum. The referendum will consider whether the Order should be given planning permission. All those registered to vote within the neighbourhood area (i.e. Congresbury Parish) are entitled to vote in this referendum.

If more than half of those voting in the referendum on 15 September vote in favour of the plan then North Somerset Council must “make” the Order (i.e. give it planning permission).

**Voting in the referendum**

**The referendum area**
The Referendum area is identified on the map shown on page 5 as the parish area of Congresbury Parish Council and is identical to the area which has been designated as the Backwell Neighbourhood Plan area.

**Referendum expenses**
The referendum expenses limit that will apply in relation to the referendum is £2533.34. The number of persons entitled to vote in the Referendum by reference to which the limit has been calculated is 2,904.

**Specified documents**
A copy of the specified documents, that is the documents listed below, may be inspected at the following

- North Somerset Council offices
  Town Hall, Walliscote Grove Road, Weston-super-mare, BS23 1UJ during normal office hours;

- Congresbury library Monday 2-5pm; Wednesday 10am-1pm; Friday 10am-1pm and 2-5pm; Saturday 10am-1pm

**The specified referendum documents are the:**

- Community Right to Build Order
- Report of the independent examiner. This contains a statement that the independent examiner has recommended that the draft order is submitted to a referendum.
- Summary of the representations submitted to the independent examiner
• Statement that sets out general information as to Town and Country Planning including neighbourhood planning and the referendum (information for voters). **This statement.**

• Details of enfranchisement rights (there is no necessity for this statement as it is not applicable to this Order).

All of the above documents can be viewed on the council’s website at [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/congresburynvh](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/congresburynvh)

**Can I vote?**
You can vote in the referendum if you live in the parish of Congresbury and:

• You are registered to vote in local council elections, and
• You are 18 years of age or over on Thursday 15 September 2016

You have to be registered to vote by midnight Tuesday 30 August 2016 to vote in the referendum.

You can check if you are registered to vote by calling 01934 634909.

The referendum will be conducted in accordance with procedures which are similar to those used at local government elections.

**Ways of voting**
There are three ways of voting:

**In person on 15 September:**
Most people vote in person at their local polling station. It is easy and a member of staff will always help if you are not sure what to do.

In Congresbury there are two polling stations, each within the same building at:

• The Old School Rooms, Station Road, Congresbury, BS49 5DX

You will receive a poll card telling you this.

If you do not receive your poll card, you can contact the elections team on 01934 634909.

Polling stations are open from 7am to 10pm. If you have not been given our ballot papers by 10pm you won’t be able to vote, so make sure you arrive in plenty of time.

**By post:**
To vote by post, fill in an application form and send it to Electoral Registration Officer, Town hall, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1UJ, to arrive by 5pm on Wednesday 31 August.

Ballot papers can be sent overseas, but you need to think about
whether you will have time to receive and return your ballot papers by 10pm on Thursday 15 September 2016.

You should receive your postal vote about a week before polling day. If it doesn’t arrive in time, you can get a replacement from North Somerset Council Offices in Weston-super-Mare up to 5pm on Thursday 15 September.

By proxy:
If you can’t go to the polling station and don’t wish to vote by post, you may be able to vote by proxy. This means allowing somebody you trust to vote on your behalf.

To vote by proxy, fill in an application form and send it to Electoral Registration Officer, Town hall, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1UJ to arrive by 5pm on Wednesday 7 September.

When you apply for a proxy vote you must say why you cannot vote in person.

Anyone can be your proxy as long as they are eligible to vote and are willing to vote on your behalf. You will have to tell them how you want to vote.

Postal and proxy vote application forms are available from the elections team on 01934 634909 or for downloading from the Electoral Commission’s website at www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/how-do-i-vote

Am I registered to vote?
If you’re not registered, you won’t be able to vote.

Most people register to vote using the form that local councils send to each household each year. If you are not on the electoral register, you will need to complete a voter registration form and send it to the Electoral Registration Officer, Town hall, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1UJ to arrive no later than midnight on Tuesday 30 August.

Registration forms are available from the elections team on 01934 634909 or for downloading from the Electoral Commission’s website at www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/register-to-vote

How to find out more
Further general information on neighbourhood planning is available on the following website www.planningportal.gov.uk/inyourarea/neighbourhood/

You can all the planning documents relating to the Congresbury referendum www.n-somerset.gov.uk/congresburyvnh
For queries about planning issues and the neighbourhood plan contact North Somerset Planning Policy Team on 01934 426224.

For queries about the referendum and voting please contact Electoral Services on 01934 634909.