

Centres were crucial to our achievements

THE Mayor of Bradley Stoke believes three key developments in the brief history of the town have helped make it what it is today.

Town Council leader Mark Forsyth cites the building of the Jubilee and other community centres, the opening of Bradley Stoke Community School five years ago, and the development of the Willow Brook Centre as all being the key to it becoming a thriving town.

He and his fellow town councillors have helped spearhead many of the developments over the years, but collectively they are determined to help the town develop for years to come.

Mr Forsyth (Con) said: "As a town council we do not necessarily know everything that's going on but if people come to us with ideas, or businesses needing help, we see our role as helping them find the right facilities, right funding or the right avenues to do this."

When town Councillor Jon Williams moved with his family to Bradley Stoke in the late Eighties they were only the 17th new family to buy a home there.

"Back then it was all mud, there were no resources in the town whatsoever," said the 51-year-old Liberal Democrat. "We had to wear Wellington boots whenever we left the house."

"There was nothing in the middle of Bradley Stoke for years. We didn't even have a postcode."

Mr Williams, his wife Karen and their daughter Samantha, now 25, moved there because they could get more for their money with a new-build.

The family's second daughter was born not long after – Rebecca, now 21 – and she was the first child to be Christened at the town's Holy Trinity church.

Mr Williams is one of five town councillors who are also on South Gloucestershire district council, which has more decision-making power.

Mr Williams believes regardless of their political affiliations, members have always tried their best to campaign for the good of the town on a unitary council level.

"I've always been optimistic and I've always believed that we could achieve what we have as a town," he added.

MPs tell of Bradley Stoke pride on eve of landmark ballot

Photograph: Steve Roberts

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Delighted: Liberal Democrat MP Steve Webb and Labour MP Doug Naysmith at the Jubilee Centre, Bradley Stoke

This is a thriving community

THE outgoing MPs for Bradley Stoke are delighted the town has finally cast aside its problems and become a "thriving community" to live in.

When the votes are counted at the General Election in May, the town will have a new representative in Parliament, regardless of the result.

Currently the town straddles two constituencies – Bristol North West and Northavon – but voters will be asked who they want to sit in the new seat called Filton and Bradley Stoke.

Outgoing MPs Dr Doug Naysmith (Labour) and Steve Webb (Liberal Democrat) have reflected on 13 years each helping the town grow.

Dr Naysmith said: "The way Bradley Stoke has changed over the years, it's very much a thriving community now."

"In the early days it was what I would call a deprived community. Not deprived in terms of poverty, deprived

Daniel Evans
d.evans@bepp.co.uk

in terms of community and leisure facilities."

Building of the new town to the north of Bristol started in 1987. But by the early nineties it was saddled with the nickname 'Sadly Broke' as many families who had moved there suffered from negative equity on their homes.

Dr Naysmith, who is retiring in May, believes the town's development – while keeping its green spaces – has eventually become a success.

"I do not know if the 'vision' was spelled out by planners when they started building in the late Eighties," he said. "In the beginning, it really was a collection of building sites. But eventually the town has grown, become integrated and it's all looking much better now."

"There's more of a mix of residents and the schools are of a very high



standard," added the Labour MP, who has served the south and central areas.

Liberal Democrat Mr Webb has represented the Bowsland ward in the north of the town since 1997.

"There was a lot of talk for a long time about the lack of facilities," he recalled. "I was delighted to be part of the campaign to get the secondary school built in the town. Things like this have made the people more proud of living in Bradley Stoke and more willing to stay."

Mr Webb believes over the last few

years the town has finally been able to forge its own identity and community spirit.

There is now a popular community festival every summer, the annual fireworks display becomes more successful every year and a town centre is being developed.

"It's difficult to have a sense of community when the pace of building is as fast as it was originally. It's hard to knit it together. But now a lot of families have been living there for a number of years," said Mr Webb.

"I think it will be a good thing for Bradley Stoke not to be split between two MPs anymore. Having one voice, and having the town's name in the constituency title for the first time, will instil more pride."

In the election, South Gloucestershire councillor Peter Tyzack will fight for the new Filton and Bradley Stoke seat for the Lib Dems, Ian Boulton is running for Labour and Jack Lopresti for the Conservatives.

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New staff member at town clinic

THE Willow Brook Clinic in Bradley Stoke has welcomed a new chiropractor into the practice.

Deborah Chadwick has joined the clinic that opened in November, having formerly worked out of the Almondsbury surgery in Patchway.

"It's been going very well so far," said Deborah, 31. "The clinic has excellent facilities and is in a great location. I've been really busy."

The clinic was set up by Craig and Moira de Groot, who had been looking for a number of years to open a private practice in the area. The number of clients has been steadily growing as word has spread. Craig said: "We've had a very positive start. We lost two weeks of trading because of the snow but



Health: Practice manager Karen Ferguson at the clinic's opening

apart from that everything is going very well."

The clinic has two chiropractors, three physios and one sports injury and massage therapist. The practitioners are

available from 8am to 7pm, Monday-Friday, and 8am-noon on Saturdays.

To make an appointment call 01454 625201 or visit www.willowbrookclinic.co.uk.