

# MINUTES of the FoBRA Committee on Tuesday 23 February 2017 at 6.30pm in Widcombe Junior School

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- 1 **Chairman** Robin Kerr, welcomed members' representatives (details at end), particularly Richard Colston to his first meeting and Graham Feltham applying for membership for LOPRA.
- 2 **Minutes of the Committee and Extraordinary General Meeting** on Tuesday 15 November 2016 with the Constitution then adopted, circulated on 2 December 2016, were approved.
- 3 **Reduction of Pollution and Traffic:** Patrick Rotheram reported on a busy few weeks:
  - a. **West of England Joint Transport Strategy** and **B&NES Parking Strategy** consultations: On behalf of FoBRA he had responded to the consultations – which had been improved by members' comments, for which he was grateful. On Parking Strategy, we had proposed a set of principles on which the strategy should be based, and he hoped that these might find their way into the final strategy in some form – see details on our website at: <http://www.bathresidents.org.uk/cms/uploads/parking-strategy-for-banes-response-by-federation-of-bath-residents-associations-27-jan-17.pdf>
  - b. **Freight consolidation:** Following the decision to end the trial he had written to *The Chronicle* on 22 December about freight issues in Bath, suggesting the Council investigate a local system like that in Gothenburg, Sweden.
  - c. **The next Air Quality Action Plan:** Our representatives met again with Environmental Services to discuss this. The Chairman also wrote to Cllr. Tim Warren, Leader of the Council, on air pollution and the need to reduce traffic volumes in the city. A small group of members had taken to the streets to canvass support for Ben Howlett MP's petition on an A36-A46 link. This had gained some 300 signatures in little more than an hour, contributing to the total of some 2,800 signatures gained mainly from mail drops. Ben Howlett had now submitted the petition to Parliament and was continuing to press the issue with Ministers.
  - d. **The Eastern Park & Ride:** In January, B&NES Cabinet had approved this for Site B, west of Mill Lane off the Batheaston bypass. As there were possible difficulties over access and land acquisition, the alternative would be Site F, east of Mill Lane (the site given planning permission several years back). A 'call in' by Councillors opposed to the plans earlier that day had been rejected. The scheme would now proceed, but much remained to be done to prepare a full business case for the selected site and gain planning permission. Opposition remained strong.
  - e. **The Bath Alliance for Transport and Public Realm** had been launched on 22 November with a presentation to the Council's Cabinet and Officers. Later there had been discussions with B&NES senior officers and the other Parties. Disappointingly, neither *The Chronicle* nor other local media had deemed it newsworthy that 15 key organisations in Bath were calling for action on transport in the city. *The Chronicle* had carried an article about an interesting plan put forward by Adam Reynolds of Cycle Bath to eliminate most traffic from the city centre. This actually complemented the Alliance approach, which called for the Council to develop the Transport Strategy into a comprehensive transport plan.
  - f. **Transport Commission:** Patrick had attended a meeting on 23 February, at which officers presented a list of actions to deliver the Transport Strategy. This was helpful, although it fell short of the comprehensive plan proposed by the Alliance. It had been agreed that the Council should consider publishing this as a means of starting to gain public engagement with the strategy. The actions included study of traffic reduction in the city centre, which represented some progress. Van du Bose had now joined the Commission representing the Alliance, as had Louise Prynne for the Bath BID.
  - g. **Illegal HGVs:** A community group in Bradford on Avon was working with Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire Constabulary to monitor illegal HGV use of the town bridge. Volunteers pass details of HGVs on the bridge to the Police, and prosecutions have ensued. Given the unwillingness of Avon and Somerset Police to take any action against HGVs passing through Bath city centre, Patrick had suggested a similar scheme for Bath to the Transport Commission. Louise Fradd had agreed to take the idea under consideration. If it came to

fruition, volunteers from FOBRA would be welcome, as Patrick did not plan on being the sole activist on this matter!

- h. **Pot holes** had shaken up Ken Ayres cycling down Pulteney Road to the meeting; Rachael Hushon had noticed around the city that contractors' vehicles sometimes churned up potholes and wondered whether the Council could seek some recompense from them.
- i. Finally, Patrick reported that the Council was looking at a tram proposal and that CURO was well advanced with proposals for a cable car linking Foxhill to Bath railway station, which their consultants considered to be the best option for movement between the new estate, Combe Down and the city. Public consultations are due in March. The idea was already generating a great deal of concern among residents in Widcombe and Lyncombe.

#### 4 Planning and Development Control:

- a. **The Planning Brief** from Vice-chairman, Nick Tobin, circulated with the agenda, was noted and, in Nick's absence abroad, Peter Gunning represented the Planning Sub-committee (PSC) in the subsequent discussion. Since circulating the brief, changes had been made to the proposed Bath Quays South development, which the PSC will study. Comments on the amended plans must be submitted by 10 March but we do not now expect to object.
- b. **Placemaking Plan** – FoBRA's final response to this crucially important exercise, stretching over the past three years, was circulated to all members before the closing date on 12<sup>th</sup> February. The Chairman has asked the Council's Planning Policy unit for an early meeting on the few important outstanding points, mostly on Parking and Student Housing. In answer to a question on how members might help, he hoped many would press the Council to publish a formal student housing policy.
- c. **Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)**: Chris Beezley's letter to *The Chronicle* was much appreciated. Matt Humberstone spoke with detailed knowledge from a student's perspective and, with a few reservations on particular points, strongly supported FoBRA's work in exposing the facts on student housing, which had been too long concealed. Robin reported that Cllr. Bob Goodman, Chairman of the Bath City Forum (BCF) said at their meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> February that the Council was far advanced in launching a consultation on several aspects of this and Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSAs).
- d. **Party Houses and Fire Safety**: Patrick Rotheram updated the Committee on the statistical data, technical advice and the consequential lobbying activity of FoBRA representatives, adding that he had reported over 38 Party House addresses to Avon Fire & Rescue so that their fire precautions could be checked. Richard Samuel suggested considering also the use of recurring nuisance notices.
- e. **Cleveland Pools**: Charles Draper emphasised the need for the promoters of this scheme to consult local residents on several practical and safety matters, including parking.
- f. **Upstream flooding mitigation**: The Chairman reported on the frustrations in lobbying for action by the Environment Agency and Council. He reported that, at the Abbey Ward Flood Group meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> February he had put forward a proposal for consideration through the Bath City Forum of a 4% additional Council tax precept over 20 years on Bath homes to raise the money required. Little reaction has been received so far.
- g. **Foxhill**: Nola Edwards thanked the Committee for support for the Residents' Association.

#### 5 Engagement

- a. **The Chairman's Report**, which had been circulated during the week, and included a full report on a meeting with the Leader of the Council and two other Cabinet members, was noted and the following matters arose:
  - i. **The West of England Mayoral Election on Thursday 4 May**. It was agreed to hold a special meeting to hear and question all the candidates, if it can be arranged.
  - ii. **The Housing White Paper** – of 104 pages but with a good Executive Summary, is at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/590043/Fixing\\_our\\_broken\\_housing\\_market\\_-\\_housing\\_white\\_paper.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/590043/Fixing_our_broken_housing_market_-_housing_white_paper.pdf) and will sharpen the

debate between those seeking urgent solutions to the desperate shortage of affordable housing and those protecting every blade of grass in their own back yard.

- iii. **Shrubs attack:** An informed discussion appeared to clear the air on differences between some members of Ainslie's Belvedere & Caroline Place RA and the Camden Association.
- b. **Bath City Forum** has met twice since our last meeting and seems to be developing a worthwhile way of operating, through working groups. There are currently 3 vacant places.
- c. **Council Refuse Collection policy:** Rachael Hushon reported on recent discussions and tabled two photographs illustrating some of the challenges met in the Council's proposed management dependent upon gull sacks. Given the problems discussed at the last meeting, it is hard to see how an acceptable solution can emerge any time soon. Paul Dowling emphasised the importance of Members actively lobbying their own ward councillors, supporting FoBRA representations.
- d. **Membership – Lower Oldfield Park Residents' Association:** Graham Feltham, Chairman of the new association, confirmed their wish to join the Federation. The Secretary confirmed eligibility and admission was decided unanimously.
- e. **AGM preparations:** It was confirmed that the AGM would be held in conjunction with the Committee meeting scheduled for Tuesday 9 May. The Secretary calculated that, under **the new rules:**
  - **Notice** should be circulated on or before Tuesday 11 April;
  - **Nominations**, etc. to be lodged with the Secretary by Friday 21 April;
  - **Agenda** to be circulated by Tuesday 25 April.

**6 FoBRA Priorities:** Members' representatives agreed that, if the Secretary circulated a survey / questionnaire, they would ensure a timeous response from their associations to allow him to submit a paper for discussion before the next meeting. It was suggested that, while much of what we did had to react to events, we might give more thought to matters which could be of significance to our members in years to come such as driverless cars and double glazing in Georgian Houses. We should also consider different approaches for some short term focused campaigns and some other longer haul issues.

**7 Any other Business:** BIGHA – The Chairman had received that day a note from David Greenwood (a past BIGHA representative but now writing only in a personal capacity) that it had withdrawn from FoBRA some months ago. Reasons given were differences on Parking, Christmas Market and Party Houses. In his reply, the Chairman observed that, in a democratic organization, not every policy could expect to be welcomed by all members, but he refuted the accusation of little action on Party Houses, stating that no other organization had done as much as FoBRA and some of its members on this.

## **8 Functions and Forward Dates:**

- a. **Winter reception in Victoria Art Gallery:** Nigel Websper had sent a note, with his apology for absence, saying how useful as well as enjoyable he had found the reception. This seemed to be the general view and, after the Chairman gave details of the reduced loss, it was decided provisionally to hold another one next year and possibly a garden party this Summer, maybe on Bathwick Hill.
- b. **A Committee meeting and AGM** is scheduled for Tuesday 9 May.

**Attendance details and Apologies for absence on next page**

### Attendance details and Apologies for absence

#### Present:

Robin	Kerr	Lansdown Crescent Association	FoBRA Chairman
Neil	Barnes	Lansdown Crescent Association	FoBRA Treasurer
Barry	Henderson	Western Riverside	FoBRA Secretary
Matt	Humberstone	Bath University Students Union	Community Officer
Charles	Draper	Bathwick Estate Residents Association	Chairman
Ken	Ayers	Bathwick Estate Residents Association	Representative
Richard	Samuel	Camden Residents Association	Chairman
Julie	Platt	Camden Residents Association	Representative
Nola	Edwards	Foxhill Residents Association	Secretary
Richard	Colston	Green Park Residents Association	Chairman
Mark	O'Sullivan	Greenway!	Representative
Ceris	Humphreys	Henrietta Park Residents Association	Chairman
Rachael	Hushon	Lansdown Crescent Association	Representative
Graham	Feltham	Lower Oldfield Park Residents Association	Chairman
Paul	Dowling	Royal Crescent Society	Deputy Chairman
Van	DuBose	St. James's Square Limited	Representative
John	Rushton	Sydney Buildings Householders Association	Representative
Kirstie	Rowlandson	Upper Oldfield Park Residents Association	Secretary
Patrick	Rotheram	Vineyards Residents' Association	Chairman
Michael	Wrigley	Widcombe Association	Representative

#### Apologies

Nicholas	Tobin	Ainslie's Belvedere & CPRA Chairman	FoBRA V-Chairman
Aled	Davies	Bath Spa University Students Union	Vice-Pres Welfare
Lucy	Woodcock	Bath University Students Union	President
Colin	Clark	Bathwick Hill Residents' Association	Representative
Clyde	Hunter	Bear Flat Association	Representative
Chris	Beezley	Beech Avenue Residents' Association	Chairman
Janet	Anderson	Camden Residents Association	Secretary
Morny	Davison	Catharine Place Residents' Association	Secretary
Adam	Reynolds	Cycle Bath	Chairman
Margarida	Dolan	Greenway!	Chairman
Ian	Herve	Henrietta Park Residents' Association	Secretary
Diana	Lockwood	Hensley & Egerton Rd Residents Association	Representative
Stephen	Huard	Marlborough Lane & Buildings Res Assoc	Chairman
Nigel	Websper	Pulteney Estate Residents' Association	Chairman
Caroline	Kilner	Pulteney Estate Residents' Association	Representative
Stephen	Little	Royal Crescent Society	Treasurer
Van	Dubose	St James's Square Bath Limited	Representative
Paul	Sandford	Upper Oldfield Park Residents Association	Chairman
Jeremy	Boss	Widcombe Association	Chairman
Jan	Shepley	Widcombe Association	Representative
Liz	Littlewood	Widcombe Association	Secretary