

## MINUTES of a Meeting of the FoBRA Committee on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2015 at 6.30pm in Widcombe Junior School

- 1 **Welcome** by Robin Kerr, Chairman, to 26 representatives and observers – see back page.
- 2 **World Heritage Site (WHS) Steering Group:** FoBRA is represented on this group, chaired by Peter Metcalfe - a designer, company director and former Mayor of Bath - and managed by Tony Crouch - an officer of B&NES Council. The Chairman warmly welcomed both to speak about the development of the WHS Management Plan.

Peter explained that Bath is an exceptional WH site, with the entire city being inscribed. The key challenge was therefore balancing the needs of a modern living city with an internationally acclaimed heritage centre. Given that so much of the site is in private ownership, successful management can only be achieved through partnership working and involving local people. For this reason he saw FoBRA as an essential member of the steering group and thanked the member Associations for their continuing engagement.

The new WHS Management Plan, currently in production, is an influential document in terms of city management. The next plan period (2016-2022) is likely to see considerable growth and the implementation of transport initiatives. How these are carried out will be very important and a priority for the new plan to influence and monitor. Peter asked members to consider what they saw as priorities for the WHS and to engage with the management plan consultation later this year and / or contact him or Tony Crouch at [pimpma@aol.com](mailto:pimpma@aol.com) or [tony\\_crouch@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:tony_crouch@bathnes.gov.uk)

Questions	Answers
Patrick Rotheram: Pollution reduction is our top priority and ought to be yours. How to minimise Pollution and traffic?	Part of UNESCO mission – current Plan had to address this. The Transport Strategy achieved it just in time! Transport is in our draft Plan.
Colin Clark: Examples of best practice e.g. Park & Ride must have shuttle service?	Some instances are available - including EU funding for Low Emission buses.
Jan Shepley: Are you statutorily consulted on e.g. Planning?	No - but there are links e.g. the Cabinet member for Planning is on our Steering Gp.
Patrick Rotheram: B&NES Placemaking Plan must identify central Bath with the WHS as a 'place' in its own right.	Hope FoBRA will emphasise this when that Plan is finally published. [Ch: It will be on our first agenda after the text is available]
Nigel Websper: No grants allowed for lantern and stonework reinstatement as deemed to enhance values of houses. Can this erroneous policy be changed?	It is an unfortunate constraint which deserves to be examined further.

- 3 a. **Minutes:** of the meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> May, previously circulated, were **approved** after adding Sheelagh Garner's apology for absence and discussing a query.
- b. **Banking arrangements:** The Treasurer **reported** that the signatories for our HSBC account have been updated in accord with our Constitution and that the Barclays account has been closed, with the funds added to our HSBC account.
- c. **FoBRA Membership:**
- i) **Cycle Bath** (whose Chairman Adam Reynolds was in attendance) was **proposed for admission as an affiliate** under Rule 3d. After discussion, illuminating and clarifying several matters, this was **agreed**.
  - ii) **Changes and Prospects:**
    - a) The Chairman and Secretary reported on various organisations with which members of the Executive were currently discussing potential future relations. The Secretary thought it might be helpful to some embryo associations if we

made more use of the category 'Corresponding Members' provided in our Constitution and also the creation of a model constitution to meet requests. In this context he and the Treasurer had identified some practical snags in our own constitution and they volunteered to submit draft updates before the next AGM, if the Committee wished. They were encouraged **to proceed accordingly**.

- b) Subscriptions:** The Treasurer reported that 16 members and 1 affiliate have already paid. Two members - CARA and TARA - and 1 affiliate (WRAG) have withdrawn. He asked that the remaining members and affiliates **send in their dues before the next meeting**.

#### **4 FoBRA Priorities:**

- a. Reduction of Pollution and Traffic** efforts led to three important meetings:

- i) EU Commissioner Martinu Vella and Julie Girling MEP:** Patrick Rotheram reported they had visited Bath to meet Councillors and residents (including Nick Tobin) to discuss air pollution. The Commissioner said the EU had no funding for national pollution measures but undertook to consider making Bath the subject of a study into the problems of air pollution in a historic city. The meeting was also helpful in highlighting the importance of this issue at the highest level.

In discussion, Nigel Websper urged FoBRA to concentrate principally on pollution reduction, drawing attention to the work being done in the University of Bath which raised hopes that technology may some day offer a solution to pollution. Patrick reminded him that the current statistics showed no evidence of early relief other than by reduction of traffic volume. The Chairman added that, even if all vehicles in Bath were pollution-free, the congestion problem would still exist, thereby slowing business and progress, and damaging the World Heritage Site.

- ii) Ben Howlett MP:** In the margins of the City Conference, Patrick and Robin had met our new MP, who was upbeat on the prospects for an alternative route for the A36-A46 traffic through Bath. They reiterated that FoBRA strongly supported both this, the Eastern Park-and-Ride and prosecution of Moving Traffic Offences.

**The continued plague of gulls in Bath** was also raised with Ben, who was encouraged to seek a change in the 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act to permit their reclassification as "pests" in towns/cities.

**Ben invited FoBRA to visit to him at the Houses of Parliament** in the Autumn – all members potentially interested please tell the Secretary now.

- iii) Cllr Tim Warren, Leader of B&NES Council:** The Chairman and Vice-chairman held their first meeting with Tim on 11<sup>th</sup> June. Robin said they covered: Air pollution and the creation of a Low Emission Zone; Transport Strategy and project incoherence; Parking (particularly control of visitor parking); Upstream potential flooding concerns; The Placemaking Plan; Planning (and the need for discipline and the adoption of conservation area documents); A new joint project (called a "Task & Finish Group" in Council speak), for example on Enforcement; and the City Centre Action Group.

- b. Planning and Development Control:**

- i) The Planning Report** – had been previously circulated and was **noted**.
- ii) 43 Upper Oldfield Park** – An updated draft of the Planning Sub-Committee's (PSC) recommendations had been previously circulated. The Chairman had received a letter, with attachments, from the developer's Architect a few minutes before the meeting, which he had not had an opportunity to consider but would refer to the PSC. In a wide-ranging discussion, opinions differed on FoBRA's future involvement, but it was recognised that the PSC's recommendations had been overtaken by several significant events, the most important being that the matter is now to go to a Public Enquiry. This indicates that the Planning Inspectorate takes

the view that the matter raises planning issues of broad interest, which should be fully debated – a view which the PSC had taken in its consideration. They were **invited to report, in light of events and this discussion, what, if any, recommendations they would now make.**

**c. Engagement:**

i) **Elections on 7<sup>th</sup> May:** The Chairman was encouraged to find that FoBRA continues to enjoy similar ready access to the new MP and Council chiefs as with their predecessors. The new list of Councillors is on pages 16 and 17 of B&NES Connect magazine. A majority Conservative administration has been formed, under Tim Warren, and his Cabinet consists of Charles Gerrish (finance), Tony Clarke (transport), Michael Evans (children), Martin Veal (community services), Vic Pritchard (adult social care & health), Marie Longstaff (homes & planning), and Patrick Anketell-Jones (economic development).

ii) **Your Bath – City Conference:** Patrick Rotheram reported there had been a good presentation on the Bath Transport Strategy by Peter Dawson, the B&NES officer responsible, with a useful exchange of views. The Council's Cabinet member for Transport, Dr Tony Clarke, had taken part but appeared less than fully committed to the vision of the strategy, that "Bath will enhance its unique status by adopting measures that promote sustainable transport and reduce the intrusion of vehicles, particularly in the historic core". The Chairman felt the City Conference has now developed into a useful part of Bath's organisation and governance. A suggestion that it might have been better attended if there had been more advertising and better marketing, was supported.

At a subsequent meeting with Patrick and Robin, Dr Clarke confirmed that he supported the strategy's aim of reducing traffic in the city, but he was unwilling to take measures which would affect drivers' ability to go where and when they wanted. Since traffic is unlikely to be reduced without traffic management and reducing parking in the centre as the park-and-rides expand (both part of the strategy), this appeared inconsistent with the aim. However he had initiated new work to monitor fine particulates which could be useful. FoBRA should continue to emphasise the importance of reducing traffic to lower air pollution and congestion in the city. This was one of the reasons for Patrick's recent letter to the Chronicle in support of the Eastern Park-and-Ride.

iii) **Democratic Accountability Bath (DAB):** Neil Barnes reported their aims to "increase accountability of our local representatives, particularly whoever is MP". FoBRA was invited, with other Bath community organisations, to the first meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> June with Ben Howlett "to continue the dialogue with the MP ... to hear his priorities ... and establish ways that different groups can represent their views to him".

Vice-Chairman Nick Tobin went with Neil and about twenty others, mainly representing social concern agencies e.g. Amnesty, CND, etc. Matters raised and discussion with Ben therefore tended to concentrate on aspects of national social/moral/political issues as distinct from Bath specific matters. However Ben stressed his intention to work towards achieving his pre-election promises on matters relating specifically to the City, for example the A46/A36 link, a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) and an Eastern P&R. It was agreed to hold further open meetings at regular intervals.

The second meeting, on July 17<sup>th</sup>, was planned to focus on reactions to the Budget. The attendance and matters raised were, as before, almost all concerned with issues of general social concern, e.g. student grants and welfare changes, rather than being Bath specific. DAB is clearly a potentially useful public forum, and all should consider attending as individuals if they have points they wish to pursue with the MP, but Neil did not think FoBRA normally need be represented.

- iv) **Flood Alleviation:** Ian Herve reported on his statement to B&NES Council's Planning, Housing & Economic Development Scrutiny Panel, when he presented a photograph of the River Avon in Flood during the late afternoon of Christmas Eve 2013 showing a building downstream from Cleveland Bridge, housing vulnerable and infirm residents. He said thankfully the flood peaked later that night and only the basement was flooded. He had shown this to demonstrate the power and levels of the river Avon in flood which is not appreciated by people removed from the river.

He continued: this event was **not**, as described by B&NES officials in their public briefing, "The worst floods in living memory"; **nor**, as stated by a senior councillor of the last administration, "the third of 1:100 year floods in the last few years". It was a relatively low flow event, measured by the Environment Agency as less than a 1/20 year Annual Return Risk - slightly less than the floods of the year 2000. The Environment Agency estimate the flow at about 250 cubic meters per second - that is 250 tonnes of water passing a given point in that photograph every second or about 900,000 tonnes every hour. The 1/100 year flood would bring flows about 60% greater with over 1.5 million tonnes an hour passing over Pulteney Weir. This 1/100 Annual Return Risk, with an additional 20% allowance for climate change, is the level of flow from which a short section by the Lower Bristol Road is to be protected with a £6 million taxpayer funded investment.

Ian concluded: in June 2012, the Environment Agency stated that "The current level of flood risk in Bath is considered unacceptable". At that time the number of properties currently at risk within the 1:100 annual probability footprint was put at approximately 1,100, increasing to 1,800 with climate change taken into account. In their September 2014 update the numbers were put at 930 increasing up to maybe 2000 allowing for climate change. Given the multiple occupation of Bath houses this will affect a substantial proportion of the Bath population. He had urged the Panel, and this new administration, seriously to address this, admittedly difficult, problem before history was repeated with a disastrous flood.

The Chairman added what he had said to the Panel - that he understood £6m spent on upstream flood alleviation would make a significant difference to the dangers, but this would have to be new money (a sound investment, however, and much less than the cost of flood damage repair, not to mention the associated anguish).

- 5 **The Chairman's Report** had been circulated. Among matters not already covered were his letter to the *Chronicle* on the structural **inadequacy of the Bath City Forum**; a wish for **feedback / comments on** the threatened closure of **Bath Magistrates' Court** and **our Website**; and a plea to inform the Secretary of any **changes in officers and representatives for the FoBRA Address List**.
- 6 **The Summer Party** took place on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> July in the garden of Richard and Sue Wales on Widcombe Hill. Over 40 of us were blessed by a dry evening, beautiful views and great hospitality. It made a modest profit.

**Forward Dates: Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> September and Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2015.**

Details of attendance and apologies on next page

## Attendance and apologies

### Present:

Robin	Kerr	Lansdown Crescent Association	FoBRA Chairman
Neil	Barnes	LCA	FoBRA Treasurer
Barry	Henderson	Liberty Gardens	FoBRA Secretary
Julie	Trollope	Bathwick Estate Residents' Association	FoBRA Soc Sec
Charles	Draper	Bathwick Estate Residents Association	Chairman
Colin	Clark	Bathwick Hill Residents' Association	Representative
Janet	Anderson	Camden Residents' Association	Secretary
Adam	Reynolds	Cycle Bath	Chairman
Roger	Nunn	Greenway!	Chairman
Ian	Herve	Henrietta Park Association	Secretary
Julian	Caldecott	Hensley & Egerton Road Association	Representative
Caroline	Kilner	Pulteney Estate Residents' Association	Representative
Nigel	Websper	Pulteney Estate Residents' Association	Chairman
John	Rushton	Sydney Buildings Householders Association	Representative
Patrick	Rotheram	Vineyards Residents' Association	Chairman
Liz	Littlewood	Widcombe	Secretary
Jan	Shepley	Widcombe	Representative

### In attendance:

Ken	Ayers	Bathwick Estate Residents Association	Observer
Nola	Wright	Bathwick Estate Residents Association	Observer
Cllr Peter	Turner	Pulteney Estate Residents' Association	Observer
David	Carr	Pulteney Estate Residents' Association	Observer
Hugh	Jones	(re WHS and Flood alleviation)	Observer
Elizabeth	Metcalfe	(re WHS)	Observer
Margaret	Favager	(re Development of 43 OUP)	Observer
David	Hadfield	(Architect re 43 OUP Development)	Observer

### Apologies

Nicholas	Tobin	Ainslie's Belvedere & Caroline Place R A	Ch & FoBRA V-Ch
Sheelagh	Garner	Ainslie's Belvedere & Caroline Place R A	Representative
Pat	Lunt	Bath Bus Users' Group	Chairman
David	Greenwood	Bath Independent Guest Houses Assoc	Representative
Clyde	Hunter	Bear Flat Association	Chairman
Chris	Beezley	Beech Avenue Association	Chairman
Nigel	Sherwen	Camden Residents' Association	Chairman
Julie	Platt	Camden Residents' Association	Representative
Mark	O'Sullivan	Greenway Lane Area Residents' Forum	Representative
Morny	Davison	Catharine Place Residents' Association	Secretary
Diana	Lockwood	Hensley & Egerton Road Association	Representative
Tom	Marshall	Macaulay Prospect Association	Representative
Joy	Bowker	Marlborough Lane & Buildings Res Assoc	Chairman
Colin	Clarkson-Short	The Royal Crescent Society	Chairman
Paul	Dowling	The Royal Crescent Society	Representative
Stephen	Little	The Royal Crescent Society	Treasurer

Signed Barry Henderson, Secretary 11 Aug '15