

**MINUTES of the FoBRA Committee meeting on
Thursday 7th April 2016 at 6.30pm in Widcombe Junior School**

Draft updated on 18/4/16

- 1 Robin Kerr, Chairman, welcomed our guest speaker with 25 representatives and observers - details on back page.
- 2 **Bath-Alkmaar Twinning** – Martin Broadbent, Chairman of the twinning association (and a past Chairman of Greenway!) spoke of the progress of the 70th anniversary celebrations of the oldest city twinning arrangement including several exchange visits. For further information or to offer participation email rev.martin.broadbent@gmail.com
- 3 **Minutes** of the 4 February meeting (circulated 9/2/16): The previously advised addition of an observer and correction of a date in 7 b were noted and the minutes approved.
- 4 **Reduction of Pollution and Traffic:**
 - a. **Transport Vision and Strategy Implementation** (update):
 - i. **Alliance progress:** At the previous FoBRA Committee meeting it had been agreed to support the creation of an Alliance to encourage the Council to develop a Transport Plan. Patrick Rotheram reported that there had been some progress: Bath Bridge, an independent group which aims to support innovation and development in Bath, had agreed to act as the sponsor, so the Alliance was now a Bath Bridge initiative which FoBRA was supporting. Several prominent individuals had given their support and discussions were in progress with key organisations in the city.
 - ii. **B&NES Council's Transport Scrutiny Committee meeting on 22 March** was to consider options for transport to the east of Bath, which was linked to the issue of an eastern park and ride. It was a full day event and there had been a number of interesting presentations including one by Patrick underlining the traffic and pollution problems in Bath and the need for a solution that balanced the needs of communities to the east and the city itself. No conclusions were reached on the day; the debate would feed into the Council's decision on the eastern park & ride, which was now expected in May.
 - b. **Bath Transport Commission**, chaired by Sir Peter Hendy: Patrick attended a meeting on 31 March, the first since the full Council approved the Bath Transport Strategy in November 2014. The Commission considered a report by Council officers of progress on the Strategy. In reality, there had been very little movement, other than on the P&R and discussions on an alternative route for A36-A46 traffic.

In particular, nothing had been done on traffic management in the central area. It was agreed that the Commission would meet again in June to consider an 'implementation plan'. It was good that the Commission remained in being and would consider the implementation of the Strategy, but it remains to be seen how much real progress this represents. There was still a need for the Council to develop and resource a proper transport plan for Bath to implement the agreed strategy (hence the Alliance – see 4 a. i. above).

c. Other related issues: The Chronicle had carried an article a fortnight ago about the discovery of serious air pollution in Bath by a mobile monitoring unit. Patrick sent a letter, published today, pointing out that B&NES Council had been monitoring air pollution in Bath for almost 20 years, that it had confirmed that there was serious air pollution throughout the city, and that a Transport Plan was required to reduce the traffic which was the main cause of the pollution.

In discussion, the Chairman pointed out that the new authority proposed under the **West of England Devolution** scheme could, if agreed, have a major impact on transport in Bath. It would have responsibility for public transport, and this offered the potential for significant improvements to bus services. It would be the channel for transport infrastructure funding, with responsibility for 'key routes' and franchise bus services in the area – as in London. This made it all the more important for B&NES Council to develop a Transport Plan for Bath and to be ready to play a full part in the work of the devolved authority. This had been recognised in the 'Vision' paper for the Bath Alliance for Transport and Public Realm.

5 Planning and Development Control:

a. The Planning Brief (circulated 1 April) was noted.

i) **Christmas Market:** Vice-chairman Nick Tobin initiated a discussion on the proposals for a 7 day extension by Bath Tourism Plus (BTP). There was concern that commercial considerations may become paramount without proper protection from the associated environmental and traffic problems, dislocation of public transport and the lives of residents. It was agreed that he should canvass the views of local resident organisations and, if appropriate, submit Comments to the Council reflecting the discussion.

ii) **Curo's Foxhill development:** Mark O'Sullivan congratulated Jan Shepley and the Widcombe Association on their representations on the risk to the World Heritage Site skyline from the proposals.

iii) **Bathscape Interim Partnership:** Mark also reported that he had represented FoBRA on the Board during the day. Their resubmission of the 2014 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) under the Landscape Partnerships scheme would be made in June and was likely to be of the order of £1½m, to be supplemented by matching funds from elsewhere.

b. Placemaking Plan: We are waiting for the Examination in Public, and for the associated process of 'agreement of common ground' with the Council.

Student Housing Policy: Following all the work which our Universities' Lead, Chris Beezley, put in during the run up to Placemaking Plan submission dates, the Chairman said we have been discovering that the two universities have not been quite as transparent or consistent about their building plans or their ideas for accommodation of their students as they claim.

Moreover, as previously reported, the new Bath City Forum (BCF) held a major enquiry into student housing in Bath on 21 January but it was a bit of a 'dialogue of the deaf', with the universities boasting how useful and valuable they were to Bath, and ward councillors stating how their communities were being destroyed by 'studentification'. Since then, the BCF Chairman has been taking evidence and soliciting ideas – from FoBRA as well as others.

One idea is to require the universities to limit their growth and build more accommodation on campus; another is to reduce the HMO Article 4 Direction limit from its present 25% to something nearer the 10% figure recommended by the

National HMO lobby, thereby facilitating a more equable spread of HMOs across the city (or even inhibiting some from being created). A third is to negotiate a proper student housing strategy, recommended by FoBRA for years, which would cover a policy for student housing blocks as well as campus accommodation and HMOs for students.

Lastly, as will have been seen from the NORA part of the Chairman's Report, we have to avoid the dreadful example of Durham: Two instances of what has gone wrong there – first, central Durham is apparently the only place in the UK where Waitrose have had to close a supermarket (“we can't sustain a branch on only six months' business per year”), and second the chairman of the Durham residents' association most affected now has to travel 3 miles to reach a GP! The Chairman concluded that we had to tackle the problem properly now or go down like Durham.

- c. **Foxhill Consultation:** There was a slightly encouraging report on a Workshop held on 1 March arranged by B&NES Council and CURO (facilitated by ATLAS) to review a draft charter on the regeneration of the Foxhill estate.

6 Engagement

- a. **The Chairman's Report** previously circulated was adopted without dissent.
 - i) His underlining of the importance of the **West of England devolution** proposal is reported at item 4 c and on **Student Housing Policy** at 5 b.
 - ii) **Planning Enforcement:** He encouraged reading of his note on significant changes since the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012. Based on the experience of Lansdown Crescent Association in seeking restitution of an historic wall, he felt it had become biased in favour of the developer (or vandal, depending on your viewpoint).
 - iii) **Your Care, Your Way:** Since the presentation to us by the Clinical Commissioning Group, they have been looking for suitable contractors to run it and are due to make an announcement on 18 April.
- b. **Bath City Forum (BCF):** Van DuBose has been appointed Vice-chairman of a sub-committee on its constitution while Robin has been appointed Vice-chairman of the one handling the devolved 15% of the new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL – akin to the old Section 106 funding). The next full meeting of the Forum (all welcome to attend) will be on Tuesday 26 April when the new subject of **Neighbourhood Plans** will be on the Agenda.

7 Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 17 May

- a. **Nominations – closing now:** The Secretary reported he had received valid nominations under the current rules for re-election of the Chairman and Vice-chairman. Colin Clark (BHRA) proposed Neil Barnes be re-elected as Treasurer; this was seconded by Ian Herve (HPRA) and Nola Edwardes (FRA). The Secretary proposed John Rushton be re-elected Accounts Examiner; this was seconded by Caroline Kilner (PERA) and Julie Platt (BERA).
- b. **Proposed simplified constitution:** An updated draft had been circulated on 14 March which was generally welcomed. Charles Draper queried whether there was adequate provision for changes to the constitution and the Secretary undertook to look again at this and any potentially related point.

c. **Any other business for the AGM / Committee on 17 May:** The Committee must appoint a Secretary and proposals for any other business must be submitted to the Secretary by Tuesday 19 April.

d. **Committee Agenda suggestions:** Additional items were: Management of parks at night; vehicles on pavements; and leaving engines running when parked.

8 Forward Dates: Committee (incorporating AGM) - Tuesday 17 May
 Summer Garden Party - Tuesday 28 June – book now
 Committee - Wednesday 13 July
 Committee (provisionally) - 2nd half of September

Present:

Robin	Kerr	Lansdown Crescent Association	FoBRA Chairman
Nicholas	Tobin	Ainslie's Belvedere & Caroline Place R A	FoBRA V-Chairman
Neil	Barnes	LCA	FoBRA Treasurer
Barry	Henderson		FoBRA Secretary
Julie	Trollope	Bathwick Estate Residents Association	FoBRA Social Sec
Matt	Humberstone	Bath University Students Union	Community Officer
Aled	Davies	Bath Spa University Students Union	Vice-Pres Welfare
Charles	Draper	Bathwick Estate Residents Association	Chairman
Michael	Ayers	Bathwick Estate Residents Association	Representative
Colin	Clark	Bathwick Hill Residents' Association	Representative
Morny	Davison	Catharine Place Residents' Association	Secretary
Richard	Samuel	Camden Residents Association	Chairman
Julie	Platt	Camden Residents Association	Representative
Adam	Reynolds	Cycle Bath	Chairman
Mike	Arnell	Foxhill Residents Association	Representative
Nola	Edwards	Foxhill Residents Association	Secretary
Mark	O'Sullivan	Greenway!	Representative
Ian	Herve	Henrietta Park Residents' Association	Secretary
Diana	Lockwood	Hensley & Egerton Road Res Assoc	Representative
Caroline	Kilner	Pulteney Estate Residents' Association	Representative
Van	Dubose	St James's Square Bath Limited	Representative
John	Rushton	Sydney Buildings Householders Assoc	Representative
Patrick	Rotheram	Vineyards Residents' Association	Chairman

In attendance:

Martin	Broadbent	Greenway!	Guest Speaker
David	Beavan	Foxhill Residents Association	Treasurer
Nola	Wright	Bathwick Estate Residents Association	Observer

Apologies

David	Greenwood	Bath Independent Guest Houses Assoc	Representative
Catherine	McCarthy	Batheaston Forward	Secretary
Clyde	Hunter	Bear Flat Association	Chairman
Chris	Beezley	Beech Avenue Residents' Association	Representative
Janet	Anderson	Camden Residents Association	Secretary
Ceris	Humphreys	Henrietta Park Residents Association	Chairman
Rachael	Hushon	Lansdown Crescent Association	Representative
Nigel	Websper	Pulteney Estate Residents' Association	Chairman
Paul	Dowling	Royal Crescent Society	Deputy Chairman

Liz	Littlewood	Widcombe Association	Secretary
Jan	Shepley	Widcombe Association	Representative

Barry Henderson, Secretary Updated Draft circulated 18/4/16