

Federation of Bath Residents' Associations

Thursday September 7th 2023,
Widcombe Junior School

Ordinary Committee Meeting

MINUTES

Attendees:

Sylvia Sinclair, FoBRA Secretary/SJS; Rachael Hushon, FoBRA Chair/LCA; Stephanie Higgins, LCA; Elizabeth Curnow, FoBRA Treasurer, CCRA; Jeremy Boss, FoBRA Vice Chair; Theresa Franklin, CCRA; Malcolm Baldwin, CARA; Rakesh Menon, CARA; Julia Perryman, MLBRA; Julie Ingerfield, BBRA; Tony Miles, UOPRA; Ric Jerrom; BERA; Sally Galsworthy, BERA; Jan Shepley, WA; Mike Wrigley, WA; Nick Tobin, AB&CPRA; Richard Wales, BHRA, Caroline Greenwood, PERA; Ian Tarr, TARA; Ceris Humphreys, PERA; John Rushton, Examiner of Accounts, SBHA; Paul Crowsley, SH&SRRA; Morny Davison, CPRA; Corrine Evans, Observer, University of Bath; Laura Bold, Observer, Bath Spa Uni SU; Hanna Hajzer, Observer, University of Bath SU; Jimena Alamo, Observer, University of Bath SU.

Apologies:

Sally Parkes, SH&SR RA; Mark O'Sullivan, Greenway Lane; Patrick Rotherham, Vineyards; Stephen Little, RCS; Katina Beckett, Entry Hill; Ghika Savva, Student University Partnership; Graham Feltham, LOPRA; David Monson, UOPRA.

Welcome to observers from Student Unions: Neetu Karwal, Laura Bold, Jimena Alamo, Hanna Hajzer; Corinne Evans, Uni of Bath VP External Relations; Ian Tarr, TARA (see below).

Reminder:

Chair asked that all new reps write on name cards if they are to be regular reps and also to keep secretary updated as to any email changes etc. Secretary will make new name cards for next meeting.

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes to be approved from 15th June committee meeting with minor amendments.
Proposed Nick Tobin; Seconded Tony Miles

Welcome returning member – Ian Tarr of TARA.

Chair welcomed back Ian Tarr, Chair of TARA (Town & Abbey RA) whose RA voted in July at their AGM to re-join FoBRA. Chair said she was delighted to have TARA back in the fold and asked Ian to speak briefly about TARA. Ian said TARA was named when it was in Abbey Ward (now part of Kingsmead ward) and covers residents living in the historic core of the city. He mentioned they have between 200 – 300 households with majority of residents living in apartment blocks and above shops etc. Ian said TARA is also a part of the City Centre Action Group which meets with cabinet members and other city centre stakeholders (CARA for example) and acts as the voice to city centre.

FoBRA Chair thanked Ian and pointed out to all members that it is important that the city centre is represented as a place that residents live in as well as where wider Bath residents and tourists visit, park and shop. The residents who live in the city centre should be considered and respected when decisions about night-time economy and other commercial activities are being considered. It is therefore great to have Ian representing these residents again at FoBRA. Later in the meeting, Chair asked for members to vote to re-admit TARA in to FoBRA by a show of hands. Passed.

Planning update (contained in Chair's annual report)

Jeremy Boss spoke about planning matters. He noted that FoBRA objected to the Lidl development at the Lambridge training ground on London road and also, that FoBRA commented on the Western Riverside phase 2 plans of which we are broadly supportive but awaiting detail. He noted that the plans for St William have now been resubmitted (western riverside phase 2) and are available online. He noted that there have been significant changes to the plans primarily building height reduction, more trees etc. and felt it is moving in right direction. Nick Tobin asked how much the height has been reduced by? Jeremy's response was "broadly a floor with some floor to ceiling heights reduced too". He mentioned that the old BMW garage site blocks are being built now and that it will be a big residential area. Despite this size of new residences, he noted that community facilities are very sparse despite existing residents at Riverside wanting significantly more community space. Ceris Humphreys raised the air pollution issue on Western Riverside with so much new development and said that there needs to be a sensor down on this location as the Council needs to make sure proper monitoring of emissions is taken and mitigation for residents. Chair agreed and mentioned sprinkler systems should be required during demolition if dust levels are high etc. Chair will put this on agenda for next FoBRA meeting with Cabinet members. Finally, Jeremy mentioned that on the FoBRA website the planning piece has been rewritten slightly to make it broader and more generic. Chair mentioned that workshops begin Monday for Local Plan Partial Update. Only one invite and that was to Chair of FoBRA despite Chair requesting more places allocated to enable Bath resident input better represented at the workshop.

Transport update (contained in Chair's annual report)

Ceris Humphreys said that the Transport Report had been circulated. Only update is WECA consultation on A4 Bath Bristol corridor. Events coming up including a Drop In event on the 14th. Ceris went on to highlight second WECA consultation on corridors – one of 3 consultations with the 3rd called "Bath City Centre". It is very concerning that we are looking at these consultations in isolation without knowing how they will work together and how they will impact on Bath wide traffic. In addition, the knock-on effect on the council's own policy. This brings into question how the WECA consultations have been designed to make scrutiny very difficult. For example, the A4 splits to Upper and Lower Bristol road and the A431 Bitton road yet the consultation is silent on Lower Bristol Road and A431. What is the impact and potential for being displaced to residential roads to the north and to the south of A46? She mentioned that these are very residential areas, with high density of students as well as less advantaged residents. Ceris has written to Cllr Sarah Warren to ask for the 3rd consultation to be made available before the current Bristol one is closed. She noted that Somer Valley consultation has closed. She said that there needs to be a more joined up approach to these consultations and the changes going on in our city, such as the Milsom Quarter plan which is another example of no recognition of the impact of this on cross city traffic using residential areas as alternative cross city routes. Awaiting answer from Cllr

Warren. Chair agreed that consultations should be meaningful and must be joined up. Michael Wrigley mentioned in addition, the huge impact on all roads of new houses being built in the city numbering over 1000 units. Chair mentioned that while car allocation has come down to less than 1 per dwelling in the city centre core, this is still a lot of new housing putting pressure on all roads. Sylvia Sinclair commented that FoBRA should not support any change to main roads (A4 and A36) that displace traffic to residential areas as this contravenes council's own policy. Ceris said that cycling is impacted too and A36 doesn't have cycling infrastructure and question how many students do cycle to Uni without this infrastructure on the A36 main road.

World Heritage Advisory Board update (contained in Chair's annual report):

Caroline Greenwood said that the report has been circulated. She mentioned that Tony Crouch has retired. Adrian Neilson is newly appointed. Next Board meeting Zoom session on heritage impact. 31st October.

FoBRA meeting with BNES' leadership:

Chair said a meeting note was sent out following meeting with Cllr Guy and Cllr Rigby. She said the entire hour was spent discussing the issue of condition of streets and pavements, weeds and stone damage in Bath. Cllr Guy said that cleansing has become a priority. Mentioned the current fragmented approach to commercial waste removal in the central city and said that the council is trying to rationalise that and is speaking with York council about what they have done on this issue. Chair said that there is a new officer in the team who has been doing more enforcement. She said that it was conveyed to Cllr Guy and Cllr Rigby that it is not just waste that is the issue but that the bins are dirty, pennant stones are dirty etc. In addition, Chair said they were informed that utility companies undertaking works in the city do not have any statutory obligation to replace like for like and as such, they are often removing pennants and putting down something else. Michael Wrigley has received different info on this topic and Chair is now going back on this with Cllr Rigby as there appears to be contradictory info. Nick Tobin asked what was mood like from Cllr Guy about comments regarding the state of the public realm? Chair said the council realise there is a problem, and that the leader of the council was frank regarding constraints they have with finance and are looking at Manchester tourism levy trial in detail. Chair mentioned that with regards to the issue of weeds in the city, that officer Colin Dodson is working hard trialling systems. Hot foam trial seems more effective. Chair said for residents to keep posting issues on Fix My Street. Tony Miles mentioned that he wrote to Fix My Street re river issues, sunk boat, oil coming out of engine and he has followed up with a letter to Wera Hobhouse who was very responsive and has written to council on this matter. Ian Tarr spoke in relation to waste collection in the city centre. He said there is now a City Centre Management Group (Lead Cllr Tim Ball). One meeting but only involved BID and no residents groups. Another meeting next week. Focus now is just trade waste but need to move to residential waste too. Ian has connection into city centre management group. Richard Wales suggested that the utilities issue (not replacing like for like) cannot be exclusive to Bath and asked how this is handled in other cities like York? Chair will raise with Cllr Rigby at next meeting and asked members to please bring issues you want to have raised at the next meeting with Council leaders on 18th October 2023.

Reminder Winter reception – Tuesday 28th November 6.30pm Elim Chapel.

Secretary reminded members that the FoBRA winter reception will be held in late November. A Save the Date will go to Councillors and key stakeholders shortly. All RA members are invited. Donation was £15/head last year (to cover wine, canapés, room hire) and the donation this year will likely be a slightly more due to inflation.

Institutional stakeholder status – what this means for Resident Associations:

Nick Tobin raised an issue his RA (AB&CPRA) has encountered recently. He said all 35 members of his RA voted in support of new RPZ. This was submitted but a junior officer said only one vote can be recorded as RAs are not institutional stakeholders. Nick took this up with senior officer Chris Major who confirmed that RAs, and indeed FoBRA are not institutional stakeholders. Nick said this further raises the question of a democratic deficit in Bath. Chair explained the issue of a democratic deficit for the benefit of new people attending this meeting and pointed out that while the Council represents the wider BANES area (not just Bath city), other areas in BANES also have parish councils who have a bigger say than even our ward councillors. Theresa Franklin asked if FoBRA has decided not to lobby for a parish council structure for Bath city? Chair reminded members of meeting where Cllr Rigby spoke on this topic and how it was explained that the cost per resident in the city would be high – around £200/household on council tax bills if this was to be set up. The Council doesn't feel this is an appropriate thing to do with cost of living crisis. In addition, there is potential that the electoral maps may be redrawn with South Glouc being made bigger and at that point, Bath might be made a city council again. The Council don't want to go ahead with a costly review if central govt might redraw boundaries but there is no timeframe to this. Chair said this reinforces that if there is an important issue in your area, that it is vital that RAs communicate with their members and ask them to respond to these consultations themselves in addition to the RA.

A.O.B:

1. IAG (independent advisory group with police). Chair and Malcolm Baldwin attended meeting at the forum 4th September 2023. Meeting was attended by Parish councillors from BANES area as well as Chief inspector Scott Hill, Inspector (Neighbourhood policing) John Nash, and Mark Shelford (PCC). Minutes from meeting will be circulated. Mark Shelford gave a very good presentation. Karen Corrigan also presented on operation remedy and county lines operations. John Nash made commitment that as crime stoppers and 101 are sometimes hard to get through to, that residents should visit police website and go on neighbourhood policing. If residents contact police via that, their PCSO will get back to them (may not be immediately). Malcolm taking view that data base of incidents helps with resourcing. Chair said there have been reports of active/aggressive and organised begging in the city and this sort of thing needs reporting. Ceris Humphreys said also that beat teams have surgeries. Effective to drop in and tell them about areas of issue. Theresa Franklin highlighted a number of car break ins on Cavendish Cres and need for better lighting. Chair said that Mark Shelford has offered to come to present to FoBRA and she has proposed 7th December FoBRA meeting.

2. Laura Bold, Bath Spa SU reminded members that it is the start of the Uni term this week and that there will be a lot of new students moving into our neighbourhoods. She asked that we kindly welcome them. She mentioned that students are very interested in community matters and might be interested to know about FoBRA.

3. Chair mentioned the Falco bike hangar rentals now live. She mentioned some still have spaces including ones near student HMOs.

4. Corinne Evans, VP External Relations Uni of Bath mentioned that it is the Bath Uni open day this Saturday. Free buses for visitors from the park and rides. Hope to help with traffic flows.

5. Malcolm Baldwin reminded Chair to vote for re-admittance of TARA (show of hands).

6. Laura Bold invited all residents to the Bath Spa MA Art & Design Degree Show at Locksbrook Campus 23rd – 27th September. Free admittance.

Chair thanked all committee members for continued work in their communities and closed the meeting