

Federation of Bath Residents Associations

Minutes of the meeting of 11 March 2021 held on Zoom at 6.pm

There were a total of 49 people present

The Chairman welcomed everyone.

1. Minutes. The Minutes which are to be found on the website were approved. Proposed by Morny Davison and seconded by Tony Miles. Neil Barnes said that as the next AGM would be in September he was announcing that the membership subscription would remain at its present level.

2. CAZ. This starts on 15th March, Highways who should be complimented have put up the signs and warned drivers of non-compliant vehicles about the charges.

3. Cleveland Bridge. Ceris Humphries informed the meeting that there was a new petition which is not associated to a political party. She will send it to the secretary for circulation. The bridge will be closed for 3 months which will mean all local traffic will be diverted through the City centre. Other diversions have not been made clear by the Council, but should divert through traffic from the City centre. FoBRA Transport group is in continuing correspondence with the Council. Not confident that traffic will be diverted before arriving in Bath. The Chairman agreed to write to Council.

4. North Road The plans appears to mean than all traffic will have to travel up Bathwick Hill, meaning a longer journey from the east and more traffic, appear to be driven by an idea with no basis. Cannot be seen as working towards being carbon neutral. At present most cyclists use Widcombe Hill, which has a dangerous bend, could this not be improved and adapted instead of North Road? It was pointed out that it was a DFT scheme and if it were not to go ahead the money would not be forthcoming. The cycle road must comply with LTN120 which Widcombe Hill would not. The University has put out a statement which was read by Tim Kaner from the University. (see annex 1)

The Chairman announced that the Transport Group had decided that they would like a lead, a person would be elected at the AGM until that time Ceris Humphries had agreed to act as Transport Lead and would be co-opted onto the executive and the Transport Lead would become a full member of the Executive.

5. Livable Neighbourhoods. There were concerns from Marlborough Buildings RA that areas/streets were not taking into consideration the local area, there was not enough consultation, lack of information as to impact on neighbouring streets. LTN seemed to be being submitted by the Councillors without consultation with inhabitants. Holistic view is needed. There is a lack of clarity and feedback as to how the parameters of success are defined. There needs to be clarity as to why the decisions have been deferred for two months.

6. City Centre Security Plan. The Chairman had had a meeting with Dine Romero and Joanna Wright to learn the Council's position. He had been told that the Police had said the draconian measures should be put in place. The possibility of a terrorist attack was too big a risk to be able to take into account the lives of residents. Residents will probably move from the centre. Other Cities had the

same demands but had not been so draconian. A Consultant was overseeing it but TARA was not hopeful. The Manchester Arena bombings was cited in a press release, which was inconsequential since the bomber walked and did not use a vehicle. The closures had been in the pipeline for three years but the residents had never been considered. The consultant had been asked to re think disabled drivers, a disabled group from out of Bath were taking BANES to a Judicial Review as they were breaching the obligations under the Disability Act.

7. Planning. Graham Feltham said that the Homebase site application had been refused but it was going to appeal. Scala/Coop site revised planning. Norland would not now want 96 beds, so now 96 students had been applied for. The Hartwells application is at appeal. It would appear that saturation point has been reached. The Local plan had had a partial update. Good session with planners and the full text is on the website.

High Common/Entry Hill – the Chairman commented that the outcome for the High Common so far was excellent and showed what a concerted, coordinated effort by local RA's could achieve. The Council had u-turned and now there would be a 2-year pause for the High Common which will remain a park. The situation needed to be monitored since it appeared that the 2 local councillors, Lucy Hodge and Mark Elliot, were now refusing to engage with the majority of the local RA's and were instead in discussions with one or two groups, one of which was headed up by somebody who did not live in Somerset. The Sion Hill representative said in reply that the councillors might not be communicating with the majority of the RA's but were with Sion Hill. Their RA did not agree with what the other RA's now wanted, which they described as a "free-for-all" and in those discussions with the councillors, the councillors had indicated they now agreed with Sion Hill's position and also did not want a "free-for-all". The Chairman expressed the view that the Sion Hill representative might come to regret the use of the phrase "free-for-all" on further reflection.

It was pointed out that the Friends of High Common should be seen to be committed and pro-active. There were some concerns about anti-social behaviour but if the park was inclusive and welcoming this could be overcome.

The preferred bidder at Entry Hill is a small Bristol based company called Pedal Progression LTD. They are based at Ashton Court and run a cycle hire coaching facility there. This is not the outcome that the immediate community wanted and it seemed that the Council preferred this project from the beginning. The Council are contributing £500,000 to the Capital required for the development. Much more thought needs to be given to noise, traffic and ecology.

8. Business Support Group. Nicky Martin and Chris George from Bath College have joined the group. There had been a meeting with Richard Samuels the Council representative for business. The Group would engage with the Council. Should be joining the Economic Recovery Board this week and can then interface with a wider group. 30 thousand out of 80 thousands inhabitants are students. The Council admits a number of its properties are not in good condition. There is hoped to be an initiative in the summer. Sundays in the summer when shops and entertainment open should encourage movement in the City. A large number of visitors is expected this summer

9. The Chairman said that there was not time for item 9 - Consultations

10. Tree planting Alasdair Barron who had organised the tree planting in Widcombe pointed out that there are Council funds, but the Council does not have connections with inhabitants and vice versa. Wera Hobhouse was very supportive and in Widcombe they had planted cherries and hawthorns in 2019 with the Council's help. Locals had become Tree Wardens. One initiative was for people to have small tree nurseries in a corner of their gardens as there was a shortage of trees. A new

phenomenon was guerrilla gardening, people planting small plants and bulbs round the trees! It was hoped 100,000 trees would be planted in BANES by 2023. Alasdair suggested that a zoom presentation could be arranged discussion afterwards, with all who might be interested. He would send the information to the secretary to forward to FoBRA members.

11. AOB Nick Tobin reported on the World Heritage Site Advisory Board. Considerable discussion. 66% of emissions come from homes. There is an idea to showcase a heritage home to see how it can be improved. They would appreciate FoBRA's view and more interest in Heritage matters.

The candidates for the WECA Mayoral election are to be invited to a zoom meeting on 14th April where each candidate could set out his platform and then answer questions, probably sent in in advance. It was asked whether we might not also have a zoom meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner candidates.

It was pointed out that a letter had appeared in the Chronicle stating that FoBRA did not like Joanna Wright's policies on LTA's etc. The Chairman said he had not seen this the letter but the content suggested the writer had a political axe to grind with the council. The letter did not reflect FoBRA's position.

The seagulls are considered a nuisance, the council is trying to eradicate them and there is a survey which will be sent to the secretary to be forwarded to members.

26th March 2021

Annex 1 University statement

"We are absolutely committed to supporting schemes and local infrastructure which will enable active travel for our students, staff, visitors and local community, and help us to achieve our carbon targets. We therefore support the principle of the proposed active travel schemes.

We appreciate the proposals enable walking and cycling but do not have a view on the route selected. We recognise that there are a range of opinions on the different possible routes to achieve this aim, and that it is the Local Authority's role, in consultation with the community, to determine which route offers the most beneficial solution.

The University will work with whatever scheme is settled upon in support of our students and staff."