

## **Minutes**

### **FoBRA Ordinary Committee Meeting 22nd September 2022 Widcombe Junior School**

#### Attendees:

David Monson, Upper Oldfield Park; Tony Miles, Upper Oldfield Park; Sally Parkes, Sion Hill & Summerhill Rd; Neil Barnes, Sion Hill & Summerhill Rd; Ceris Humphreys, PERA; Jeremy Labram, Camden RA; David Quine, Sydney Buildings; Sally Galsworthy, BERA; Charles Draper, BERA; Theresa Franklin, Cavendish Crescent; Malcolm Baldwin, CARA; Blake Walker, University of Bath Student Union; Alexander Robinson, University of Bath Student Union; Michael Wrigley, Widcombe Association; Julie Ingerfield, Bloomfield Road Association; Stella Pirie, Entry Hill Community Association; Katina Beckett, Entry Hill Community Association; Justin Draeger, Cavendish Road Society; Caroline Greenwood, Pulteney Estate; Courtenay Gardner, Treasurer, Cavendish Road Society; Graham Feltham, Vice Chair, Lower Oldfield Park RA; Rachael Hushon, Chair, Lansdown Crescent Association; Sylvia Sinclair, Secretary, St James's Square Bath Limited; Ghika Savva, Student Community Partnership; Nola Wright, Bathwick Estate (observer); Richard Wales Bathwick Hill

#### Apologies:

Mark O'Sullivan, Greenway Lane; Nick Tobin, Ainslie's Belvadere; Stephen Little, Royal Crescent Society; Gordon Harrower, HERA; Rob Richardson, Avondale and Osborne Road RA; Paul Crowsley, Sion Hill & Summerhill Road RA; Liz Hallam, Lower Oldfield Park RA; John Long; Camden RA; Jeremy Boss, Widcombe Association

#### **1.Approval of Minutes 9th June 2022**

Amendments: Add Mark O'Sullivan apologies to minutes

Motion to approve: Michael Wrigley

Seconded: Tony Miles

#### **2.Transport report**

- a. Transport report previously circulated one week prior, and no further questions raised.
- b. CARA suggested the need for a single point of reference for all road closure/diversions Other Ras use the weekly Leader's bulletin to learn of planned works.

Link found here [https://mailchi.mp/bathnes/c1abrmI9jy-633256?e=\[UNIQID\]](https://mailchi.mp/bathnes/c1abrmI9jy-633256?e=[UNIQID]) You can sign up for this bulletin by following this link: <https://bathnes.us4.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=d4b66021dfe971c98d4145331&id=fb2e3530f2>

- c. Transport lead explained that the Rec. survey/questionnaire for new travel plan was unclear in its purpose.

#### **3. Planning report**

- a. Planning report circulated one week prior; no questions raised prior to Committee meeting.
- b. Gas works site discussed – Environment Agency will be overarching body to ensure compliance with contamination report findings.
- c. Camden sought a point of clarification regarding how the planning group select planning issues to monitor. Planning lead explained that it is based on several factors including scale,

importance to Bath city and whether there is a significant impact of a site to member RAs. Also compliance with Local Plan.

**Action: Planning Sub Group to summarise and forward before next Committee meeting agreed process for clarification**

#### **4. Future meetings**

a. December 15<sup>th</sup> 2022 meeting

Members agreed to issue an invite to Transition Bath to speak at this next Committee meeting– finding ways forward to make homes in bath more energy efficient and how communities can work together to bring projects forward.

Sion Hill mentioned – home energy day 28<sup>th</sup> September BPT co-hosting

<https://bathnewseum.com/2022/09/22/home-energy-day/>

PERA mentioned– climate and biodiversity festival

<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/climate-and-biodiversity-festival>

b. March 16<sup>th</sup> 2023 meeting

Chair proposed a hustings format, more details to follow.

**Action: Secretary to send Invite out to 4 political parties to save date**

#### **5. Winter reception**

Wednesday 16 November 6pm – 9pm

a. Elim Church – opposite Charlotte Street carpark (recently used for Bath Preservation Trust AGM).

b. Other venues too expensive (Victoria Art gallery room hire has doubled since last time we used it).

c. Elim Church licencing means we cannot charge for tickets so will be suggesting a £15 voluntary donation for member attendees (will cover drinks and nibbles and room hire).

d. Non-member RA Guests will include the regular invitees including ward councillors, cabinet members, party leaders, the mayor, key officers, and other key stakeholders in the city.

#### **6. Web site contact details**

a. Secretary to write to all RAs for correct info for FoBRA website and BANES website

b. Chair urged members to send more photos

c. Camden repeated call for a map graphic to be shown on the web site detailing FoBRA's membership reach.

**Action: Following the Committee meeting the Chair requested that Camden help create this graphic to provide to our webmaster**

#### **7. Cllr Manda Rigby discussion - Democratic Representation**

a. Councillor Manda Rigby came to speak to the Committee as a member of BNES' Cabinet and FoBRA liaison.

b. Manda outlined the history of the formation of BNES unitary authority in 1996 and discussed the benefits, costs, limitations of power, and appetite amongst the wider

electorate to undertake the review process to form Parishes or a City Council which could give Bath more statutory powers. In addition she summarised the costs of a Community Governance Review which could be in the region of £180,000 based on previous experience. A reactive governance review needs 7.5% of local electors to proceed which is a high threshold.

#### Questions from the floor

1. Is Bath at a disadvantage without parish status? Manda said not entirely correct. Mechanism how CIL is distributed would change but not the amount. In a parish structure distribution is more clear. Bath gets the correct/fair share but distribution is not so clear. Potential disadvantage is in distribution not amount
2. Do Bath Chartered Trustees have any oversight of CIL distribution? Manda stated that accountable people make decision where CIL is spent.
3. Unitary authorities got rid of layer – A parish or town council would be putting it back (Camden)
4. CARA questioned competency levels rather than structure of representation.
5. Government is currently discussing a complete review of Local Authority structures. For example BNES could be joined with South Gloucestershire. This would be the moment to consider Bath City identity and representation.
6. PERA noted that Parish Councils yield influence because they are statutory consultees. Manda stated that a Parish council has right to put in its thoughts on planning.
7. Widcombe - could Bath city trustees obtain official consultee status? The Chair and Manda both regarded this as an interesting suggestion.
8. Widcombe also raised that Trustees are all councillors and all democratically elected. Powerful reason to do more but charter says must be non-political. Needs to look at legal status. Trustee meetings are not public, and many felt this could change to improve scrutiny.  
Manda agreed to check with Council's Legal Officer.
9. Cavendish Road Society – Taunton has recently become a City Council. What was the driver for this decision? Manda – big gap between the issues in the rural areas versus the town. Town council to bridge that gap. Frome is another example.
10. Camden – challenge to FoBRA. Map showing reach/representation of FoBRA. Chair agreed and subsequently asked Camden to produce this for the webmaster
11. LOPRA – councillors spend a lot of time with parish councillors. How does voice get heard if no RA? Manda stated that Bath is not unique – one of 12 chartered places which are not parished.
12. What is £4.50 per household precept charged to Bath city households used for? Twinning associations, Mayor of bath Relief Fund, Mayor of Bath Walks.
13. Top things individual RAs could do to help ward councillors? Manda suggested that putting more trust in your ward councillor and keep dialogue open. Ensuring good governance amongst our own RAs would help too.

**Conclusion from Chair: Wait for update from government review before putting back on agenda.**

Thanks extended to Manda for joining the FoBRA committee meeting.

**Action:**

**Manda to check legal status and opportunities for the Chartered Trustees to sit on the Bath Area Forum and become statutory consultees.**

**Camden RA to produce FoBRA “reach” map**

Addendum:

**Additional questions forwarded to Manda following the meeting**

Cavendish Road Society submitted the following request following the meeting. This has been forwarded to Councillor Rigby.

I understood from the meeting that if people had further questions for Cllr Rigby that they should put them to her through you and she would endeavour to answer them. I have the following questions that follow from my question about Taunton's city council:

1. How long (approximately) has the process taken to move Taunton to City Council status (assuming the process completes as planned in 2023)?
2. What has been the direct cost to the Local Authority of this process?
3. What is the annual revenue that the City Council precept is projected to raise?
4. What is the projected annual cost of running the City Council?
5. What is the average number of electors that will be represented by each of the City Councillors?
6. Prior to the introduction of the city council how are the electors of Taunton represented? Are they represented by both parish councillors as well as district councillors (now county councillors)?

**Response:**

- I'm afraid we do not have an information team resourced to research into other councils
- Justin would need to approach Taunton. But bear in mind that Taunton is not a unitary authority so any direct comparisons would not be completely helpful.