

FoBRA Committee – Tuesday 10th Mar 20

Chairman’s Speaking Notes – edited for issue by email

1. **Welcome:** Welcome to all my readers!
2. **Minutes:** of 21st Jan meeting. These draft minutes were issued on 25th Jan and have been posted on our website. We received a couple of significant comments in reply,
 - Firstly, a request by Ceris Humphreys to replace the words in AOB, which we minuted as follows:

“Ceris Humphreys commented that FoBRA seemed to be made up from white people of a certain age group. She hoped it would become more inclusive.”

by the following:

“Ceris Humphreys reported that the ‘Our Shared Future’ meeting had prompted a public comment that certain groups were commonly under-represented at such meetings in Bath. She noted FoBRA had made big strides on inclusivity in recent years, but highlighted the need for us to continue to look for opportunities to be more inclusive and more representative.”

- And secondly a request by Nigel Websper that the following statement attributed to Cllr Romero be clarified as it was factually inaccurate:

“Lastly she felt something must be done about Airbnb and student housing, as the council does not receive any Council Tax from either of these, perhaps a new class of use should be introduced by the Government to force owners to seek planning approval first.”

Kirstie agrees with Nigel, but points out that, as this is actually what Dine said, the minutes should remain as they are, but carry a Post Meeting Note, as follows:

[“This statement by Cllr Romero is incorrect, as, although B&NES does not receive any Council Tax from students, it does from Airbnb properties. However, Airbnb properties reduce the long term residential housing stock, which could be one reason for seeking a separate Use Class for them.”]

3. **Application for Membership:** Entry Hill Community Association – Katina Beckett – deferred.
4. **Chairman’s Report:** I hope you have all been able to read my report which went out on 2nd March. I wish to comment on a few items in it:

Leader meeting 3rd March: It was attended by Cllrs Dine Romero and Tim Ball (Housing & Planning). Nick and I spoke about the following:

- Feedback on the Council's Corporate Strategy – see item in my Report.
- Climate Emergency event on 9th April – tickets available from Eventbrite.
- Double glazing and heating in Listed Buildings
- Cleveland Bridge weight limit and closure.
- CAZ implementation
- Low Traffic Neighbourhoods
- Parking Policy
- Assistance from the Alliance
- Short Term letting – pressure for regulation and NORA letter to Minister.
- Long term letting problems and associated 'Push' film, due for screening at the Little Theatre in late March
- Social Housing
- Student Housing policy and PBSAs
- Rec and Stadium
- Bath City Forum
- FoBRA leadership changes

PCC Hustings: I propose not to pursue this suggestion, in view of the current emergency.

Public Liability Insurance: Recommendation that all members consider this.

Constitutional amendment on Inclusivity and Diversity: See annex A. I have received a proposal to add "sexual orientation" under the list for amendment of Article 2, so it would read as follows:

2. Membership The Federation is open and inclusive, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, socio-economic situation, religion, disability or age. Membership shall be open to autonomous residents' associations within the City:

- a. Properly constituted with a.....

8. Communications, Procedures and Financial Interests:

8e. In reaching decisions and in responding to local authority and other proposals, the Committee and office-holders shall use reasonable endeavours to act impartially on the merits of the case and to avoid ~~religious-or~~ party political ~~or any other~~ bias.

[Note: Religion has been covered in the addition proposed to (2) above, so does not need to be repeated.]

Further note: It has been suggested that some mention should be made of help to aspirant members with the drafting of constitutions and accounts. Appropriate words have therefore been inserted on the website under "Members – Joining FoBRA", as it is not a Constitutional matter.

If you are content, this will go forward to the AGM for a vote ($\frac{2}{3}$ majority needed).

Corona Virus Help: Lastly, with the spread of Coronavirus and the likelihood that there will be people in our neighbourhoods in need of help while in 'self isolation', it might be

something that all of us would like to investigate and offer. I know of one of our member Associations which has already issued a circular within its area – and to all residents, not just registered members. I spoke about this on BBC Radio Bristol this morning.

5. Planning Report: Planning Report was issued on 2nd March. Ceris has nothing significant to say on the Rec/Stadium, but some worries about the Hartwells and Bath City Football proposals.

6. Transport Report:
Patrick's report was issued on 2nd March.

At the 3rd March meeting with the Council Leader, and also in conversations I have had with her previously, I pressed the point of retaining the 18t weight limit on Cleveland Bridge after the repairs are done (as urged in Cllr Manda Rigby's petition). I think she wants to agree, but is constrained by the terms of the DfT grant. She said she was in conversation with Wiltshire Council about coming to agreement over the traffic displaced there. In the end, I think it's going to depend on the power of public opinion – hence the importance of the petition and (possibly) demonstrations, etc. Ceris has sent a powerful note about Cleveland Bridge's historical significance to Historic England.

7. Housing Report: Graham Feltham's report went out 6th March.

Patrick attended Airbnb's roadshow in Bristol last week. Beforehand, he had been asked to complete a preparatory questionnaire (now on our website). He reports that the meeting included WECA Mayor Tim Bowles, B&NES Leader Dine Romero and Matt McCabe (Chair of B&NES Planning Committee). Generally, there was support for a system of registration. Both Cllrs Romero and McCabe supported bringing Short Term Lets (STLs) under planning control through a new use category. It was generally agreed that registration should be compulsory (which AirBnB appeared to support) and preferably administered by central Government rather than locally. Dine also talked about the pressures on the housing stock due to the large number of Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) blocks in Bath; there was an interaction here, as PBSA landlords were letting out their properties as STLs when they proved too expensive for students.

8. Preparations for the AGM:

Chairmanships: You will wish to be aware that, so far, the Secretary has received one definite application for the Chairman's position, from Justin Draeger of the Cavendish Road Society; and one for Vice Chairman, from Graham Feltham of Lower Oldfield Park. There may be more before the deadline on 1st May, but I welcome these two applications, and the dedication to the Federation's work which they imply. I commend them to you for the future.

Dates: (subject to Covid 19 restrictions)

[27th April – Executive meeting, including candidates]

28th April – AGM to be called

8th May – Nominations to be received

12th May – Final calling notice

26th May - AGM

- 9. Winter Reception Wed 12th Feb – wash-up:** Our winter reception on 12th Feb was a great success with almost as good a turnout as last year. Moreover, it broke even (profit of £2.69!).
- 10. Summer Party?** This would be a decision for my successor, but would you like to have a Summer Party? Our usual pattern is to hold it in the evening, in a lovely garden belonging to one of our very generous members somewhere in or around Bath

Forward Dates:

Committee meetings: Tuesday 26th May (with AGM), at Widcombe Junior (subject to Covid 19 restrictions).

Robin Kerr, draft 2, 10th Mar 20