

MINUTES

FoBRA Ordinary Committee Meeting 15th June 2023, Widcombe Junior School

Attendees:

Rachael Hushon, FoBRA Chair, LCA; Graham Feltham, FoBRA Vice Chair, Lower Oldfield Park; Elizabeth Curnow, FoBRA Treasurer, Cavendish Cres; Sylvia Sinclair, FoBRA Secretary, SJS Bath Limited; Jeremy Boss; Ceris Humphreys, FoBRA Transport Lead; PERA; Sally Parkes, SH&SR; Neil Barnes, SH&SR; Jeremy Labram, Camden; Mark O'Sullivan, Greenway Lane; Mike Wrigley, Widcombe Assoc; Jan Shepley, Widcombe Assoc; Nick Tobin, Ainslie's Belvedere & Caroline Place; Sally Galsworthy; Bathwick Estate; Tony Miles, Upper Oldfield Park; David Monson, Upper Oldfield Park; Julie Ingerfield, Bloomfield Road; Karen Baldwin, CARA; Malcolm Baldwin, CARA; Theresa Franklin, Cavendish Cres; Katina Beckett, Entry Hill; Patrick Rotherham, Vineyards; Laura Bold, Bath Spa SU (Observer); Stephanie Higgins, LCA; David Morgan, Bear Flat Assoc; Ian Tarr; TARA (Observer); Angie Paddock, Southlands RA (Observer); Nick & Laura Squire; Lambridge RA (Observers); Ghika Savva, Student Community Partnership (Observer).

Apologies:

Claire Jackson, Bathwick Hill; Richard Wales, Bathwick Hill; John Rushton, FoBRA Accounts Examiner; Marianne Evans, Bath Spa SU; Neetu Karwal, Bath Spa SU; Morny Davison, Catharine Place; Prof Phil Allmendinger, University of Bath; Julia Perryman, ML&B; Stephen Little, RCA; Rebecca Schaaf, Bath Spa University; Mark Thurstain, Bathwick Estate.

Welcome:

Welcome from Chair who thanked everyone for coming and mentioned in particular how lovely it was to see a few "old faces" who we hadn't seen for a long time. She mentioned that a member had originally planned to raise the issue of knife crime in Bath in AOB but that they had decided that this was no longer appropriate for discussion at this time after sad events on Saturday evening.

Approval of Minutes:

1. Minutes from meeting December 15th 2022 – Approved Katina Beckett; Seconded Julie Ingerfield
2. Minutes from Hustings March 23rd 2023 – Approved Ceris Humphreys; Seconded David Monson

Introduction of Observers:

Chair welcomed the new Bath Spa SU representative in attendance and thanked her for taking the time to come along. Chair mentioned how much we value our student community in Bath and we always value their input at our meetings.

Chair also welcomed two new RA groups (see below) who have formed recently and who have approached FoBRA to become members. Chair outlined the process for new RAs to join FoBRA; we help with advice regarding their constitution, encourage a wide communication process to encourage inclusion within their communities. We then ask them to come and observe a FoBRA meeting and then decide with their committee whether they

would like to join as formal members. If so they would be voted in to join at the next meeting.

Southlands RA

Their Chair was invited to outline their Association. It came about after a small group formed who were fighting against the new LTN planters, but from this more people came together to form the wider association. They now have a constitution and have had one RA social gathering and another one planned. The RA now is about getting residents talking to each other within their community for more cohesion and is about wider issues too.

Lambridge RA

Their Committee member was invited to outline their Association. They have a very strong community in Lambridge but 45 interested residents came together with interest in forming a formal RA following the plans for a Lidl on Lambridge Meadows. Nick mentioned that this 1.3h site is very sensitive and the fact that a formal environmental impact assessment was not required on such a sensitive site was in many residents' view an error. Nick mentioned a large number of people got in contact and wanted to know how to object. He mentioned that this site is on a key entrance to city. The site is environmentally sensitive with beavers which are a protected species repopulating the riverbank at this point in the river and it doesn't make sense to build a supermarket there when one is only 900m away (Morrisons) which is also aggressively priced. He said they are not against Lidl but they do not feel it is appropriate on this site. He also mentioned the impact the additional supermarket with have on local retailers and also on traffic flows on the London road. Traffic lights to turn into this site could cause more rat runs to residential streets as the London Road congestion worsens and drivers seek other routes around Bath. He finished by saying that he did not believe any other city with UNESCO World Heritage status would allow such a development. He mentioned that Council is letting verges go wild, it seems ludicrous that there was no formal environmental impact assessment on this site.

We welcomed the Student Liaison Coordinator for the Student Community Partnership. She spoke briefly about her role and mentioned that the Student Community Partnership is a joint venture between the Bath Spa and Bath Universities, Bath College, their Student Unions, Norland College and B&NES local authority with the aim to improve relations between students living in the city and other local residents.

The Abbey Area Residents Association

The Chair of TARA, Ian Tarr, was also welcomed and joined the meeting as an observer.

Planning Update:

Vice Chair said that the Planning Update had been circulated in the Chair's Report. In terms of other planning matters, he spoke about the Lambridge meadow and Lidl planning application and said that FoBRA's position, as agreed at our meeting on December 15th 2022, was that development of any kind on this green field site was opposed in principle. He mentioned that this is an environmental sensitive site on river corridor and perhaps even more crucially impact on an important heritage gateway to our world heritage city. In addition, he added that we became very concerned that the council pre application screening determined that a formal Environmental Impact Assessment was not

required. He finally went on to clarify we are not opposed to Lidl developing appropriate sites in Bath, but this green field site is not appropriate.

Greenways Lane mentioned a recent meeting that was held at paragon school and a plan to draft a traffic management plan. Mark noted the significant volumes of traffic generated by schools which is a big problem in Bath and that there appears to be such little communication between schools and what can be done to encourage schools to work together with parents. The Chair mentioned small adjustments with school uniform rules can encourage walking to schools, Children wearing sports kit on sports days means they don't have to carry heavy kit bags. Two secondary schools are trialling this to encourage more walking to school.

Vineyards asked whether Fobra responded to the consultation for short term lets. The Vice-Chair replied that it was via communications last year that it was decided individual RAs would respond to this consultation from feedback /views expressed.

Upper Oldfield Park spoke about solar panels and double glazing and that there appeared no easy route for planning. The Chair has previously written to the Council to inform them of the consultation run by London Borough Kensington and Chelsea to provide blanket listed building consent for slimline double glazing for grade 2 listed properties. However, it seems that while the planning application process has to be undertaken by individual applicants, consents are now widespread across the city (whole house consents to grade 2 listed building at Lansdown Place West, solar panels on grade 1 listed property at Lansdown Crescent.)

The Bath Preservation Trust have issued guidance and are very supportive of retro fitting, of slim line double glazing to grade 2 buildings and especially of secondary glazed units (which have become extremely lightweight, almost invisible from outside and can function with a sliding sash system ideal for grade 1 listed properties).

Camden RA are being proactive as an area so members were encouraged to communicate with other areas who have progressed in this area to get recommendations of trustworthy suppliers.

Bath Rugby Stadium

General point made that FoBRA cannot take an informed view based on the consultation because there is not enough detail provided at this stage. In principle FoBRA does not object to Bath Rugby improving their stadium facilities for the purposes of playing Rugby but reserves judgement regarding the scheme that will come forward given that the consultation did not provide enough detail. Key issues remain:

Key heritage sight line;

No additional car parking;

Impact of commercial intensification of other uses.

(We must ensure council fulfills statutory responsibility to meet environmental protections re impact on residential neighbourhood of frequency of amplified music into historic properties. Ensure council complies with own JNZ policy and determines impacts of extra traffic across the city for additional events outside of Rugby activities.)

Transport Update:

The Transport Lead said that the Transport Update is contained in Chair's report. She mentioned that it had been an inactive period with local elections but highlighted the following topics:

Scholars Way, which is the active travel route from Odd Down to Claverton Down, may proceed. This is a route across the southern plateau connecting school and Uni sites with catchment areas. WECA funding has not been granted, we await further updates.

The Annual (2022) Air Quality reports and the annual CAZ update report are expected soon, but data will continue to be skewed by Cleveland Bridge works. Also, until decisions are made regarding the weight restriction on Cleveland Bridge the future compliance with air quality is unclear.

LNs. Summary info and timetable for each potential scheme is still posted on the B&NES' website. Member RAs encouraged to check any page relevant to their area and participate in further consultation steps as schemes evolve.

Local Plan. The forthcoming full update is an opportunity to make the Local Plan more joined up in terms of planning and transport, and to reflect the extensive changes in national law and policy arising from climate change. One area FoBRA may wish to revisit when commenting is the balance of measures between the Local Plan (examined by HM Inspector) and the Transport Supplementary Planning Document (unexamined and more easily challenged by developers).

Ainslie's Belvedere asked when or if weight limit will be lifted from 18t on Cleveland bridge. She responded that when the contractors were finishing work and some serious unexpected issues were found, it was agreed that measuring devices built into bridge to measure vibration and see if bridge is appropriate for weight limit, we await report.

World Heritage Advisory Board update:

WHAB Co-Lead said that the WH Advisory Board update was contained in the Chair's report. He said the next meeting is next week. It is also now time when the WHS management plan is redeveloped. Link into management plan. He noted that Bath has second inscription as great spa towns of Europe. Only approx. 22 WHS cities have double inscriptions. A consultant is doing update. Tony Crouch is the officer involved. Barry Gilbertson appointed for 3rd term.

FixMyStreet & "Clean & Green" reminder:

Chair asked that members please ensure that their residents use fixmystreet for graffiti and other issues in their areas. With regards to graffiti, she mentioned an initiative that even on private buildings the council will remove graffiti at their cost as long as permission is granted by the owner the property. If there is any reply to the report generated by the website which suggests that the graffiti won't be cleaned then please contact Ward Councillors to query.

Upper Oldfield Park asked if FixMyStreet can be used to report sunk boats on the river. Chair said to try as officers' KPIs are presumably measured on time to resolve issues on FixMyStreet.

The Chair mentioned the city centre and said that while BID are doing a good job of clearing litter, the city centre still looks grubby due to staining and Gull detritus on pavements. She has raised this with Cllr Rigby and suggested steam cleaning of old pennants as this needs to be responsibility of Council to ensure the city centre is clean and not rely on BID. Southgate is clean but union street upward have very dirty/stained pavements and bins. Members were encouraged to get photos and send through to Sylvia to collate. Circus is doing a lot of work in Margaret Buildings which is in CARA catchment. CARA Chair said that the Clean and Green team recently steam cleaned paving in Margaret Buildings and if you chase them, they will respond.

Vineyards commented that streets look awful with weeds growing everywhere. Green and clean team getting weeds removed but they grow back. Chair to raise this with Manda Rigby at next meeting with BNES leadership.

Ainslie's Belvedere and Widcombe commented that the public realm looks terrible. Broken paving stones in particular.

Cavendish Crescent will invest in own heat blow to keep weeds down themselves. They will report back on how effective.

Membership & Subscription to NORA:

A number of very divergent views on the issue of continued membership were received by the Chair when we went out to FoBRA membership and it is clearly a contentious issue. She said that as subs have been paid for this year, we do not need to make decision right now and we can revisit the issue of membership later in the year before next year's subs are paid. She had a meeting with Robin Kerr NORA membership secretary to discuss concerns that people have and has asked for FoBRA to be better informed. One key issue is that FoBRA doesn't have a rep on NORA. Discussions followed which highlighted NORA access to Government, information flow, and governance. Committee agreed that the topic will be revisited later in the year.

Subscription to BPT

A show of hands showed clearly that members thought that FoBRA should be a member of BPT. Treasurer to action.

Agree Winter Reception (Tuesday 28th November Elim Chapel).

Chair advised that we will host councillors and important guests as we did last year which was a great success. She noted that with the Elim Chapel as venue, we are unable to sell tickets and a voluntary donation will be asked for by members attending (covers costs of inviting councillors, catering, venue, wine etc). She thanked Vice Chair and Secretary for organising last year's party.

A.O.B

1. Chair thanked Camden RA for map of representation. This is still a work in progress. Students will be shown on this map. University have done work about where students live and we will add this to the FoBRA map of representation (different colour).
2. Chair also paid a special thank you to Sion Hill RA for all the work to update FoBRA website.
3. FoBRA has been contacted by Friends of the Rec. They would like to offer any RAs to meet with them to discuss legality of whether there should be development on the Rec (in their view). Please contact Secretary if you would like to be put in touch with Friends of the Rec.
4. PERA spoke about flood risk management – purpose-built student houses as an awareness raising item. Important one for students living near the river. She said there is a lack of clarity of where responsibility lies. She has submitted a number of FOI requests to environmental agency and council and she is talking to council. When planning was granted for student housing there was no ongoing management of the flood risk. No responsibility or clarity of who has responsibility for managing flood risk and communicating to student residents. Responsibility of private owner but how are they held to account. She mentioned that safety equipment not there on the river. There is some uncertainty about which Councillor is in charge – Bath Spa Rep will take this forward with the Council.
5. Chair advised that our Vice Chair will be stepping down. The Committee thanked him for all of his work in this role, for stepping up to Chair when required, and for helping her find her feet when she was elected as Chair. She presented him with a bottle and card from all at FoBRA to thank him for his hard work.

General meeting closed.