

**Rec Trust - statement to Council 10<sup>th</sup> Oct 19**  
**and Response by Rec Trust Chairman 6<sup>th</sup> Nov 19**

Chair and Councillors,

I was recently invited to the Annual Meeting of the Rec Trust. In case anyone has forgotten, this is the body which owns the Rec, the largest and most significant piece of open land in Bath, and the place where application for a very large rugby stadium may shortly be submitted. I attended the meeting as I wanted, on behalf of the residents of Bath, to hear what the Trust thought of the Scoping Report recently submitted by Arena1865 as the basis for its request to B&NES for a Scoping Opinion setting out the framework for the stadium's Environmental Impact Assessment. This is because, if the Environmental Impact Assessment isn't right, the planning application won't be either.

The Trust Chairman firstly refused to take questions, on the grounds that it wasn't that kind of meeting. When we asked where questions could be asked, he replied, "At the AGM", but added that the AGM was private so we couldn't attend. Under pressure, he did permit a few questions, and mine was one of them. However, his unsatisfactory reply was that they would consider the issues and answer in writing. I can let you see his answers, but they are bland, uninformative and useless.

The operation of the Trust seems to be completely opaque and it's unclear even how the Trustees are selected and appointed. This is not the way for a public body in charge of an asset so important to Bath (and to the World – after all, it is a World Heritage Site) to act. I call on you therefore to invite the Trust to mend its ways, to become more open, and to revise its Governance policies in line with modern practice – and to do this very, very soon.

Robin Kerr, final, 7<sup>th</sup> Oct 19

**Response by Rec Trust Chairman:**

**Bath Recreation Limited** [www.bathrec.co.uk](http://www.bathrec.co.uk)

Charity Registration Numbers: 1094519 & 1173521 Bath Recreation Ground Company Registration Number: 10735297 Pulteney Mews Bath BA2 4DS

Dear Sir/Madam

**Bath Recreation Limited statement**

Following a statement made by Mr Robin Kerr, Chair of Federation of Bath Residents Associations, to a Bath and North East Somerset Council meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2019 we would like to provide a balanced response about our governance and charity in general.

Our charity was established under the direction of the Courts, the Charity Commission and with involvement of local residents in 2016. We are governed by Charity and Company law and regulated by the Charity Commission and our Governing Documents were handed to us by Court Order. Far from being opaque details about our governance, our trustees and our activity can be found on our website at:

<http://www.bathrec.co.uk/governing-document/>  
<http://www.bathrec.co.uk/about-us/>  
<http://www.bathrec.co.uk/blog/news/annual-meeting-2019-11-september-2019/> (a link to our annual report is at the bottom of this page).

Our charity operates on 3 sites in the City and delivers charitable support to a wide range of charities, organisations and schools including: Bath Festivals, Bath Half Marathon, Bike Bath, Bath Carnival and the Rotary Fireworks. We deliver sports and PE opportunities across 20 primary schools in Bath, provide recreation space at Broadmoor Orchard and have protected a sports ground in Combe Down. We host the BaNES Playing Pitch Strategy group and support activities from a wide range of strategic partnerships across the City.

The Rec is our key asset and we have invested significantly in preserving and enhancing the Grade 2 listed buildings and other facilities. These include the former Bath Bowls Clubhouse which now serves as the home for Bath Croquet Club and a meeting room used by dozens of local charities. All facilities are now in constant use including by Residents Associations.

Once you have considered the information above we trust you will consider that Mr Kerr's statement is not reasonable and, in fact, plain wrong. He was advised in advance of our annual public meeting that he should address his questions about the stadium development to the Board in writing; he chose not to do so. Mr Kerr's statement gives a very false representation of our charity and our work in the City. Whilst his personal frustration is regrettable, we do appreciate that the potential development of a new stadium is causing a wide range of reactions. Our position, and ability to comment appropriately, has not changed since we made the following public statement (first issued in 2018):

*"Bath Rugby's aspiration to build a new stadium at the Rec is well known. The charity will consider this primarily in terms of the benefit a new development will bring for the purposes of the charity and its beneficiaries. A key factor will be to provide the funds that can be directed to the provision of recreation facilities in or near Bath. The Trustees will of course be interested in any community benefit, in particular how the development will blend in with the rest of the Rec, but would not be part of the design process."*

To date we have had no formal application from our tenant so are unable to make comments based on wider public consultations as these are an evolving process. As Trustees we must restrict ourselves to the direct business of the charity, to do otherwise would be a potential breach of duty.

Yours sincerely,

Geoffrey Fairclough  
Chair on behalf of the Board of Trustees

6.11.19