

## **LCA AGM 2020 – A Review of 7 years as Chairman**

**Membership and Money:** Membership has stayed fairly constant at around 145, the responsibility of Steph Higgins and, before her Corinne Taylor. Both acted as Treasurer (a vital but thankless task); as did Mandy and Christopher Shaw.

**Secretary:** This other vital background job was initially undertaken by Delia Jay, followed by Simon Brand. I cannot thank them (and the Treasurers) enough.

**Website:** Built by Mandy Shaw in 2013-14. Rebuilt in 2019. Webmaster Simon Brand.

**Newsletter:** Issued every year to all households in the area. Derived from the website by Mandy Shaw and initially 2 pages: expanded to 4 pages in 2017. Taken over by Rachael Hushon in 2018.

### **Projects:**

- Park Street handrail installed and opened by The Mayor in Oct 13. Begun by Beccy Derry-Evans. Financing largely from Ward Councillors' Initiative Fund.
- Finials: LBA granted 2013. First mention in 2016 newsletter and decision on funding approved at that AGM. Completed and opened by Mayor in Oct 16. Project managed by Beccy Derry-Evans. Funded largely by Marianna Clark.
- Replacement of the cobbles (or 'setts'), and paving of the inner pavement in Lansdown Crescent have been discussed and are suggestions for the future.

**Parties:** Initially the responsibility of Marian McNeir, and now Megan Dalton. With only a few exceptions, we held both winter and summer parties in houses and gardens generously provided by members: Carol singing too. Of course, others helped to make them a success, notably Sue Branfoot and my dear wife.

**Events:** Trips to Highgrove & The Edge 2015. WWII bomb - Hope House – May 16

**Constitution:** Somerset Place was added in 2015.

**Neighbourhood Watch:** Run by Delia Jay. 2016 was the first mention of our regular Beat Officers and their 'surgeries' in St Stephen's.

**Traffic:** This has been Nick Bishop's busy area, particularly in 2017, when the Hope House hoardings caused such trouble; and when we finally managed to get a TRO to inhibit loading alongside the hotel. In addition, 2017 was when coaches started to appear in significant numbers. We managed to reduce this with an advisory notice at the entrance to LPE, but it wasn't until a TRO, imposing a width limit, was introduced earlier this year that we were able to control the problem properly, mirroring Royal Crescent and The Circus. Also this year, much greater issues have intruded, due to the Climate Emergency, with a Clean Air Zone planned across much of Bath, an expected revision of parking policy; and probable creation of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods.

**Planning:** This is a never-ending worry, much of it low level, but with two really big issues – Hope House and 'Beckford's Lawn and Walkway' above Dixon Gardens.

During the period, planning was the responsibility of Anthony Pearson, James Whatmore and myself.

**Hope House:** Initial plans were shown in 2014 and approved the next year. In 2016 ownership was transferred to Acorn, and demolition started. Later that year they managed to evade their Affordable Housing obligation, citing the extra costs related to the bomb and a mystery sewer. Groundworks continued into early 2017, when the builders, Rhatigans, arrived. Their huge crane went up mid-17 and was to stay with us for 2 years. As the various buildings rose, we began to suspect that Block D was going to be higher than promised (and overtop the LPE wall considerably). This resulted in a long dispute with the owners, builders, planners and, finally, the Local Authority Ombudsman, which we lost. However, we did manage to force the re-routing of 4 very unsightly heating exhausts from Block D; so a small triumph resulted! Now the crane and hoardings are down, and the site is partially occupied. There are a few remaining issues, such as parking rights in LPE and fencing in the parkland, but otherwise it is returning to tranquillity.

**Beckford's Lawn and Walkway:** 2015 saw the first mention of plans to build a house on the Lawn above Dixon Gardens – withdrawn after objections from BPT and LCA. In late 2015, the owner, Karen Barton, then ordered the doorway on ULM to be widened, which was stopped by the Council and an enforcement order issued. Ms Barton appealed, which was refused in Sept 16, so she appealed to the High Court, which was also refused, in March 17. Thus she had to rebuild the wall that summer, using stone which we gave her. We are still trying to get her to replace the door, and possibly to sell the land to the community, but her idea of a fair price is very wide of ours. Meanwhile, fly-tipping occurs, and the land (including dangerous sheer drops) remains derelict and unsafe.

**Community Clean-ups:** These have become necessary because of lack of Council funds to undertake work which is properly its responsibility. The Council does, however, provide tools.

**Refuse:** The Council introduced a new refuse policy in Nov 17. Rachael Hushon was instrumental in persuading them that black bag weekly collections were the only choice possible for street-fronted historic houses (rather than wheelie bins or fortnightly collections) and she ensured that this was the case across the whole city, as FoBRA Lead in this field.

**Field:** By contrast with other areas of LCA activity, the field (under the careful management of James Whatmore, followed this year by Michelle Maguire) has been tranquil and largely uneventful, as it surely should be.

Robin Kerr - draft 2 and final dated 29 Feb 20