

FoBRA Committee Meeting 31st July 2013

Summary of Minutes:

Both Chairman and Vice Chairman were abroad for this meeting, so Gerald Chown (Macaulay Prospect) stood in.

Tom McBain, the Council's Property Director, was first up, with a presentation on their Grand Parade and Undercroft Project. Its aims are to open up the Colonnades below the Empire Hotel for commercial use; extend the Guildhall Market and generally uplift the riverside there. The initial phase, which is due for completion by the end of next year, is to create high class restaurant space in the undercroft, overlooking the weir and bridge, with access from Grand Parade above; followed later by expanding the Market into the Guildhall car park. He showed visualisations of all this (distributed with the full minutes), stressing Cabinet provisional approval. Questions covered late night security; coordination with nearby projects; the Council's reputation recently in managing large projects; highway issues; the demand for yet more retail and dining facilities; integration of the Council's Public Realm and Movement Strategy; public lavatories; the need for alternate business premises; flooding risks; and noise.

The Chairman's Report included items on B&NES' Public Realm improvement programme (on which FoBRA contributed some requests recently); Crest Nicholson's most recent workshop on the tall 'Landmark' buildings which they plan at Western Riverside; feedback on (a) the City Conference in May, (b) the City Identity Steering Group, (c) the Council's peer review exercise, (d) the Transport Commission; FoBRA's response to the Conservatives' call for a poll on Bath's governance deficit; and the Council's distribution of more scavenger-proof bags, which led to a spirited debate on gulls.

An item introduced for the first time was 'News from Associations'. Out of 27 full members, seven sent in responses, full of advice about what they were doing in their areas and we hope for more during a six-month trial. This was followed by a report from the Communications working-group, with a fascinating impact survey, conducted by the representative from Bath University Students' Union.

The Planning Report included items on Core Strategy progress; the new Placemaking Plan, and on what FoBRA intends to comment; Our objection to the Sainsbury's plan; Tesco Appeal progress, and FoBRA's evidence to it; the new Rec Trust Board and FoBRA's ambitions for a role there; and the Newbridge P&R plans.

Lastly, FoBRA's Summer Party was reported on, and approval was given to prepare another Winter Reception.

Next meeting on Thursday 3rd Oct.

Robin Kerr, Secretary, 10th Aug 13