

MINUTES of the FoBRA Committee on Thursday 20 July 2017 at 6.30pm in Widcombe Junior School

Circulated 30 July '17

- 1 **Chairman** Robin Kerr, welcomed 26 members' representatives and observers (details at end).
- 2 **Administrative:**
 - a. **Minutes** of the meeting and AGM on 9 May 2017, previously circulated, were approved after including for Committee item 4 c the fleshing out proposed in the agenda: "... Widcombe Association's strongly reasoned opposition emphasised by Michael Wrigley and shared by Greenway, Foxhill and ML&BRA who feared an undesirable precedent. LCA were opposed to the proposal on several grounds, not least that it was "a vanity project unrelated to our traffic problems. Others saw it as ..."
 - b. **Admission to membership:**

The Cavendish Road Society: Justin Draeger, Chairman and Emilio Pimentel-Reid, Secretary confirmed their wish to join FoBRA after establishing good relations with their surrounding Associations. The Society was welcomed unanimously.
 - c. **FoBRA Consultations: Procedure between meetings** – The Secretary reported that, in the course of an email consultation to establish if a draft letter by the FoBRA Chairman concerning FoBRA's support for an EP&R should be sent to the Bath Chronicle, he had decided to despatch the letter despite the Chairman of Bathwick Estate Resident Association (BERA) sending an objection based on that Association's consistent view of the matter. The difference, over a fine point, had been overtaken by events (but in the interest of transparency the relevant positions are detailed in an annex to these minutes) but the procedural point remains: Whether, in an email consultation, any member association had an absolute right of veto on a proposal even if, as in this case, it was the only one of 29 associations to object. The mood of the meeting appeared to be content with the customary practice of reaching decisions according to our constitution and against introducing the concept of an absolute veto for all.
- 3 **Changes in the political landscape** – implications for residents – The Chairman reported:
 - a. **WoE Metro Mayor:** Tim Bowles has been in office for only a couple of months and has had to move offices as well, but he has appointed Cllr Tim Warren as his Deputy Mayor, and has dished out £17M in Transport Infrastructure funding, though only a little of that to Bath so far – for move of the coach terminal from Avon Street to Odd Down. We have high hopes that, once our new Cabinet member for Transport gets his feet under the table, and the Bath Transport Plan is negotiated and published, Mayor Bowles will prove a fruitful avenue for some of the cash needed.
 - b. **Bath MP:** Nick, Patrick and I met Wera Hobbhouse last Friday in my house. She gave us over an hour and was most impressive. We spoke about her two favourite topics: transport and housing. Patrick will talk about the former, but on housing, we discussed students, HMOs, Foxhill and Party Houses. She plans to meet us again in October, which is good.
 - c. **B&NES Cabinet:** It's been a turbulent week in the Guildhall, with 4 members of the Cabinet changing; and a significant announcement on transport for Bath! Conservatives are into the second half of their current administration, so we hope they're still going to be able to achieve some of their manifesto traffic targets before electoral worry sets in.
- 4 **Reduction of Pollution and Traffic** – Patrick Rotheram reported: CURO had abandoned their plans for a cable car during the week, following a poor public reaction. The previous day, B&NES Cabinet had formally scrapped their proposal for the Eastern P&R at Site B or F.

Where did this leave us? In effect there had been no action to implement the Bath Transport Strategy (BTS) once agreed by all parties on the Council. No action on reducing city centre traffic; failure to link city centre traffic reduction with the EP&R, so undermining its case. In addressing the B&NES Cabinet meeting on behalf of FoBRA he stressed the need to reduce traffic and pollution, and urged them to implement the BTS. He welcomed the appointment of Cllr. Mark Shelford as the new Cabinet member for transport, whom he had met, and was

approaching his brief by seeking a clear vision of the city on which to base transport policy.

Patrick noted that one of the first statements by our new MP had been to declare her opposition to an A36-A46 link road across the Limpley Stoke valley. We have explained FoBRA's view that the A36-A46 through traffic was a major problem in its own right and also impacted on traffic throughout the city. The Department for Transport (DfT) would not allow B&NES to limit traffic on this route without an alternative route acceptable to Wiltshire, so one has to be found. An upgraded A350 could help, provided DfT would then allow B&NES to limit HGV movement through Bath. An alternative closer to Bath such as the route from Bathford to Beckington, proposed by the Highways Agency in 1997, might be needed to remove the maximum through traffic from the city. We hoped that she would support the case for feasibility studies advocated by her predecessor, to provide a sound evidence base for decisions. We had made the same points at a meeting with Cllr Neil Butters, Lib Dem transport spokesman, but at the Cabinet meeting he said that he would be opposed to any scheme that did not have support in the Freshford area, which would effectively give the valley villages a veto over a route to remove through traffic from Bath.

It remained to be seen whether either of the main political parties in Bath was prepared to take action to implement the Council's own policies to reduce city centre traffic (e.g. the Core Strategy, which called for a largely car-free city centre). As FoBRA's letter to The Bath Chronicle about the EP&R said, "where is the political leadership to tackle Bath's traffic problems?" The Parking Strategy for Bath remained under consideration.

5 Planning and Development Control:

Planning Brief from Vice-chairman, Nick Tobin, circulated with the agenda, was noted. There was widespread admiration for Foxhill Association's well argued opposition to Curo's development proposals and they would be strongly supported by Widcombe and FoBRA. [**Later.** Sadly, the Council's Development Management Committee allowed Curo's outline planning application by 5 votes to 4].

a. **Placemaking Plan:** The Chairman reported that the Council formally adopted the Plan last Thursday, after four long years. He was the sole public speaker at the meeting. The Secretary had circulated his remarks, which are also posted on the website. They were necessarily robust, focusing on Student Housing and Transport, where the Plan has failings. A Core Strategy review must be conducted urgently.

a. **Waterspace Study:** Mentioned in the Chairman's Report, it may lead to a vast 35-element project, but does not address flooding. Ian Herve felt it was only 'aspirational' as there was no funding and agreed that the other main concern for members adjoining the river are issues of moorings and the rights of 'live-aboards'.

b. **Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs):** The Chairman's Report draws attention to a proposed review of the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which formed the Council's policy on them. In our view a tightening of the proportion allowed in any one area, from the current 25%, is overdue. In June the Council proposed 10%, which is what FoBRA had recommended – a further consultation will follow. If approved, it may extend the parts of the city where HMOs are created but at a lower density. Moreover, following the Housing and Planning Act a lot of changes to the scope of mandatory HMO Licensing may come in during the year – details at <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/housing/houses-multiple-occupation-hmos/licensing-houses-multiple-occupation/new-legal>

c. **Party Houses** are in the news again. The Planning Report discusses an important test case at 5 Belvedere and the Chairman has been on the air about the subject, first on video for Bath Newseum, and then on BBC Radio Bristol.

6 Engagement

a. **The Chairman's Report**, previously circulated, was approved.

b. **Council Refuse Collection policy:** Rachael Hushon reported that B&NES new refuse scheme will be introduced in the Autumn. Leaflets and stickers designed to help Resident Associations be proactive where local people do not observe refuse protocols have been

shared with Members and our feedback has gone to Pam Jones the Council's lead officer introducing the scheme. She has been very helpful and willing to listen to residents.

Whilst the communication materials are a good idea, we are concerned that the new non-recyclable waste quotas may be overlooked by many residents who do not care about the public realm. The council needs to recognise that this could make central Bath dirty and insanitary. We have suggested the following:

- i. Clear up of existing soiled bags left rotting in filthy streets before the new scheme is introduced – to encourage clean and tidy streets as the scheme is introduced.
 - ii. Also ensure that enforcement is proactive to stop any abuse developing.
 - iii. B&NES to provide direct contact data to Resident Associations to enable swift reporting to appropriate officers and resolution of problems.
 - iv. The Council's HMO licensing scheme to require that refuse management be a licensing condition ensuring landlords take responsibility for the conduct of their tenants. Student liaison officers should consider a refuse protocol for students beyond Oldfield Park as many students live in HMOs in the heart of Georgian Bath.
 - v. New developments of terraced properties should provide for concealed storage areas and effective refuse management.
- c. **Restricting consumption of alcohol in public places** – The Secretary reported that B&NES Council has launched a consultation on proposals to replace the existing 'Designated Public Place Order' with a 'Public Space Protection Order'. The online consultation link, closing on 15 August, is http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/cc_onsultations/have-your-say-restricting-consumption-alcohol-public-places-bath. More information from Community Safety Officer Lores_Savine@BATHNES.GOV.UK 01225 396420.

7 FoBRA Priorities: The Secretary regretted he had not yet circulated a questionnaire / survey in preparation for a discussion paper but initiated a brief discussion which brought out several suggestions e.g.: Include the current ones in the review; add a vision of what we want Bath to be; Tweak plans to emphasise the World Heritage Site; Housing – bring together all related issues and raise priority; Enforcement – generally and on gulls particularly; consider the 'Core Strategy Review'. The Secretary asked Members to forward any further suggestions for us collectively to prioritise.

8 Functions and Forward Dates:

- a. **The next Committee** is on **Tuesday 19 September** at 6.30pm in Widcombe Junior School.
- b. **Subsequent scheduled Committee dates** are: Tuesday 14 November 2017, Thursday 18 January, Tuesday 20 March and Thursday 17 May 2018 (incorporating the AGM).
- c. **Our Winter Reception** is planned for **Tuesday 6 February 2018** in the Victoria Art Gallery.

Attendance details and Apologies for absence on next page

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Present:

Robin	Kerr	Lansdown Crescent Association	FoBRA Chairman
Nicholas	Tobin	Ainslie's Belvedere & CPRA Chairman	FoBRA V-Chairman
Neil	Barnes	Lansdown Crescent Association	FoBRA Treasurer
Barry	Henderson	Riverside Community Voice	FoBRA Secretary
Ben	Palmer	Bath University Students Union	Community Officer
Charles	Draper	Bathwick Estate Residents Association	Chairman
Ken	Ayers	Bathwick Estate Residents Association	Representative
Nola	Wright	Bathwick Estate Residents Association	Observer
Justin	Draeger	Cavendish Road Society	Chairman
Emilio	Pimentel-Reid	Cavendish Road Society	Secretary
Barry	Gilbertson	Circus Area Residents' Association	Chairman
Morny	Davison	Catharine Place Residents' Association	Secretary
Nola	Edwards	Foxhill Residents Association	Chairman
David	Beaven	Foxhill Residents Association	Treasurer
Patricia	Griffin	Foxhill Residents Association	Observer
Mark	O'Sullivan	Greenway!	Representative
Ian	Herve	Henrietta Park Residents' Association	Secretary
Stephen	Huard	Marlborough Lane & Buildings Res Assoc	Chairman
Rachael	Hushon	Lansdown Crescent Association	Representative
Graham	Feltham	Lower Oldfield Park Residents Association	Chairman
Martin	Jenkins	Riverside Community Voice	Chairman
Paul	Dowling	Royal Crescent Society	Deputy Chairman
Nicola	Isherwood	Royal Crescent Society	Representative
Van	DuBose	St. James's Square Limited	Representative
Patrick	Rotheram	Vineyards Residents' Association	Chairman
Jeremy	Boss	Widcombe Association	Chairman

Apologies

Colin	Clark	Bathwick Hill Residents' Association	Representative
Clyde	Hunter	Bear Flat Association	Representative
Chris	Beezley	Beech Avenue Residents' Association	Chairman
Janet	Anderson	Camden Residents Association	Secretary
Adam	Reynolds	Cycle Bath	Chairman
Ceris	Humphreys	Henrietta Park Residents Association	Chairman
Diana	Lockwood	Hensley & Egerton Rd Residents Association	Representative
Nigel	Websper	Pulteney Estate Residents' Association	Chairman
Caroline	Kilner	Pulteney Estate Residents' Association	Representative
Stephen	Little	Royal Crescent Society	Treasurer
John	Rushton	Sydney Buildings Householders Association	Representative
Paul	Sandford	Upper Oldfield Park Residents Association	Chairman
Kirstie	Rowlandson	Upper Oldfield Park Residents Association	Secretary
Jan	Shepley	Widcombe Association	Representative

Barry Henderson, Secretary Circulated 30/7/17

ANNEX to the minutes with reference to Item 2C.

2 Administrative

c. FoBRA Consultations: summarising the differences in email correspondence:

Relevant text of FoBRA Chairman's draft letter to the Bath Chronicle circulated 18 May
"... We hope that B&NES will now move swiftly forward with the implementation of the East of Bath P&R, which features in the emerging West of England Joint Transport Study as well as B&NES's own Bath Transport Strategy ... No one thinks that an Eastern P&R by itself will solve Baths' serious problems of traffic congestion and air pollution, but it can make an important contribution as part of a comprehensive transport plan for Bath. We urge B&NES to press ahead with developing the Bath Transport Strategy into an effective Transport Plan for the city."

Extract from the response by Chairman of BERA by return

"As you know, we in BERA support an Eastern Park and Ride in principle, but not if it is in the Bathampton Meadows as the current plan envisages. We would therefore oppose the sending of such a letter."

The Secretary, In the absence of the FoBRA Chairman and Vice-chairman but fortified by recollection of the FoBRA written response to the original Council consultation, supporting a P&R at Site F or B, which had been fully discussed in FoBRA Committee on 10 September 2015 at item 4 a. ii) of the Minutes; and having received no other opposing note, **decided to send the letter as drafted.**

Accordingly he wrote to say so, on 21 May, **to the Chairman of BERA** submitting that "BERA's position is currently entirely compatible with FoBRA's as expressed in the draft (and supported by all other members responding - with one query)."

The Chairman of BERA was not content and asked for the matter to be discussed at the Committee in July. It was on the Agenda (although partially overtaken by the Council's decision not to proceed with either Site F or B). Hence Minutes item 2 c. and this annex.

Please let the Secretary know jsbarrhenderson@icloud.com if any Representative wishes a copy of the full correspondence summarised here.