

MINUTES of the FoBRA Committee and Extraordinary General Meeting on Tuesday 15th November 2016 at 6.30pm in Widcombe Junior School

Circulated on 2 December '16

- 1 **Chairman** Robin Kerr, welcomed 23 representatives and observers - details at end.
- 2 **Minutes:** of the meeting on 20th September were approved without dissent.
- 3 **Extraordinary General Meeting** – The Secretary explained the background for this business and thanked representatives for their positive response to enable the Notice to be circulated as required by the constitution which had served since 2010.

The revised draft FoBRA constitution (circulated with the EGM agenda) was considered and, following a vote on a motion duly proposed and seconded, was adopted unanimously as the Constitution with immediate effect – a copy is attached for the record and the new version can be found on our website www.bathresidents.org.uk under 'Papers'.

- 4 **Reduction of Pollution and Traffic:** Patrick Rotheram spoke to his briefing note which had been circulated before the meeting:

- a) **2015 Air Quality Plan:** A recent High Court ruling required the Government to reconsider it. One deficiency was that it only addressed London and five other major cities, ignoring the serious problems of smaller cities such as Bath; nor was action proposed on diesel cars, although now the largest single source of NO₂ pollution, as on London Road. He had written to DEFRA on these points, and the Chairman had written to Ben Howlett MP.
- b) **B&NES pollution monitoring:** The Council had just issued NO₂ data up to 2015, which has been posted on the FoBRA website. There is still no sign of a reduction in NO₂ pollution across Bath – except in Widcombe High Street where it had reduced from 49 to 37 mcg/m3 following completion of the Rossiter Road scheme, which showed that traffic management can be effective in reducing air pollution levels.
- c) **Confused Council policy** - arising from the coach parking study and the Council's evidence to the Placemaking Plan Inspector on the eastern park and ride: While the Council had several policies calling for major reductions in city centre traffic, in practice it continued to treat the city centre purely as part of a road network to be maintained rather than a world class heritage asset and a place where people live, work and visit. Patrick had raised this at the Transport Commission, which had asked for studies of how to reduce city centre traffic. He hoped that the Bath Alliance for Transport and the Public Realm, to be launched with a presentation to the Council leadership on 22 November, would change attitudes.
- d) **West of England (WoE) Joint Transport Study:** A consultation had been launched on their new Transport Vision. FoBRA had commented on the study in January. The Vision contained a comprehensive and ambitious programme of transport improvements, which he believed FoBRA would wish to support. Patrick was consulting with the FoBRA Transport Group on a draft response, which would be circulated to members by the end of the month.

- 5 **Planning and Development Control:**

- a. **The Planning Brief** from Vice-chairman, Nick Tobin, circulated with the agenda, was noted and the following points emerged:
 - i. **Bath Quays South – Riverside Business Park** Westmoreland (16/04818/ERE03): The planning application for demolition and mixed developments seemed acceptable.
 - ii. **Former Ministry Of Defence Foxhill** Premises - now called Mulberry Park (14/04354/EOUT) and Regeneration of Foxhill Estate (16/05219/EOUT) – A report that the Council would be most unlikely to make compulsory purchase orders for privately owned homes in the Foxhill Estate and the decision of the Development Management Committee (DMC) to control light pollution in Mulberry Park were welcomed but there remained concern that Curo still did not appear to be facing up to dealing responsibly with long standing owner-occupiers and vulnerable tenants. After Nola Edwards, Secretary of Foxhill Residents' Association, provided further information and answered

questions, the Vice-chairman undertook to consult the Planning Sub-Committee to consider a supportive letter of objection to the developer's application for outline planning permission to redevelop the Foxhill site. [Later: He wrote on behalf of FoBRA to the case officer on 30 November].

- iii. **Midland Bridge Student Accommodation** proposals (16/04273/FUL) – there was concern at the proposed use of city centre land for student accommodation over the wider responsibility for the provision of much needed housing supply for key workers and young professionals in this location.
 - iv. **University of Bath – Accommodation Block** development (16/02345/FUL) noted that this application was approved on 29th September.
 - v. **Former MoD Site on Warminster Road** (14/02272/FUL & 16/04829/FUL): There was support for the local Ward Councillor's request that the application is taken by the DMC for full scrutiny and not delegated to officials.
 - vi. **Sulis Down** – it was thought that 500-600 homes might be developed near South Stoke.
- b. **Placemaking Plan** – The Chairman reported that the Inspector's interim findings have just been published including her ruling that changes to important assumptions in the B&NES Core Strategy should be addressed through an interim review. Following further consultation over the Christmas period, the final report may be expected in late January.
 - c. **A probable retrospective planning application about Beechen Cliff:** Margarida Dolan alerted the Committee to Greenway's concern and invited members to view the site and undertook to circulate her Association's reasons for resistance. Charles Draper declared his interest as a School Governor.
 - d. **Bathscape:** Mark O'Sullivan reported via the Secretary that the bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund had been approved. The development phase is aimed to complete by May 2018 with delivery by October that year involving a £1.8million programme to improve the setting of Bath and the interface between the city communities and its surroundings.

6 Engagement

- a. **The Chairman's Report** was noted and Robin expanded on 4 items:
 - i. **Flooding risk above Pulteney Bridge** - a textbook example of where it pays to have local and Bath-wide residents' associations. Raised with FoBRA over a year ago by Henrietta Park Residents' Association, because it was simply being ignored by the Council, we jointly brought it to the attention of the Placemaking Plan Inspector and await her ruling on it. Meanwhile, the Council has, rather reluctantly, published its River Avon Options Appraisal, which covers not only the replacement of the two sluices within the city, but also the risk to homes along the banks. This is going to be discussed at a meeting with Council Officers (and a few Councillors) on 18th Nov.
 - ii. **Neighbourhood Planning:** The Chairman's report refers to Neighbourhood Planning where the legislation seems not to be robust enough to withstand the assaults of rich developers or unscrupulous Councils who can afford expensive QCs. The Chairman has spoken to the B&NES Cabinet member for Planning, who is appalled, especially as she pushed through just such a Plan in her Ward in Chew Valley.
 - iii. **Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMO) policy:** Nick, Van DuBose and the Chairman attended a most illuminating HMO Policy workshop on 14th Nov, sponsored by Bath City Forum, with a sprinkling of estate agents able to give the real facts about the rental market in Bath, Councillors from wards with lots of HMOs, representatives of both Student Unions, and Officers from appropriate Council departments. An estate agent said the overwhelming majority were let to students because landlords preferred them. A Councillor feared that young families on modest incomes will move out of Bath as they cannot live in a HMO and can't afford anything else. Projections show HMOs increasing by hundreds with still more loss of Council tax (for which the Government no longer compensates LAs). Robin quoted the National HMO Lobby recommendation of no more than 10% HMOs per area (vs current 25% in Bath) and no higher than 20% of the

population in that area. This was supported by several Councillors with relevant wards. At his table, they recommended further rules: no family house to find itself 'sandwiched' between two HMOs (Southampton); Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSAs) to be included; numbers cap on both universities; and controlled parking zones. There was also a call to build PBSAs with fewer studio flats at silly rents, but instead more austere communal accommodation at affordable rents, it being thought that the Planners might be able to impose this.

iv. **WoE Joint Plans and 're-consultation'**: Information about these evolving plans can be found at www.jointplanningwofe.org.uk or on displays in the One Stop Shop from 5th to 16th December. The Council announced yesterday that the three Authorities involved have now formally consented to the Order for the WoE devolution deal.

b. **Bath City Forum**: The next two Forum meetings are on 1st December and 2nd February, the earlier one being to examine the draft Council budget. A related event was the annual get-together 'Developing Health & Independence' at BRSLI on 2nd November - a heart-warming occasion, showing what DHI does for recovering addicts of all sorts.

c. **Council Refuse Collection policy**: Rachael Hushon's report was welcomed. She added:

i) Following a walking tour of Bath's Georgian street fronted properties on October 26th, the Officer in charge of B&NES' new refuse regime has agreed that a review will be conducted. This will take into account the limited refuse storage space in subdivided properties in central Bath and it is expected that some central areas of Bath which fit the criteria will retain a weekly general refuse collection.

ii) **The widespread distribution of gull sacks** currently being used as permanent external bins hanging on railings is proving a more difficult problem to solve. The Officer in charge has promised to give more thought to this issue and will examine enforcement strategies to ensure they are taken inside properties after collection day. The resident groups who met with her all stressed that our heritage Georgian architecture should not be blighted in this way and if B&NES proceeds with this distribution it must deliver a proven workable enforcement system before doing so. We shall continue to engage with B&NES Council to ensure our world heritage city is kept clean for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors to Bath.

d. **Membership – Upper Oldfield Park Residents' Association**: The Secretary reported this recently formed Association met the criteria for membership. Paul Sandford, Chairman and Kirstie Rowlandson, Secretary, who had been observing the meeting, confirmed their wish to join the Federation and admission was decided by the Committee without dissent.

7 Dates: - Winter reception on Tuesday 17 January 2017 at 6pm in Victoria Art Gallery.

The Chairman emphasised the importance of a large turnout of members from all Associations; and the Treasurer neilharnes@gmail.com will take bookings at £10 per head by cash, cheque or bank transfer (Reference: your surname) to Sort code: 40-09-19, Account No: 42211815.

- **Committee** on Thursday 23 February 2017 at 6.30pm at Widcombe Junior School.

Please note the now adopted Constitution attached

Attendance details and Apologies for absence on next page

Attendance details and Apologies for absence

8 Present:

Robin	Kerr	Lansdown Crescent Association	FoBRA Chairman
Nicholas	Tobin	Ainslie's Belvedere & Caroline Place R A	FoBRA V-Chairman
Neil	Barnes	Lansdown Crescent Association	FoBRA Treasurer
Barry	Henderson	Western Riverside	FoBRA Secretary
Matt	Humberstone	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
Adam	Reynolds	Cycle Bath	Chairman
Nola	Edwards	Foxhill Residents Association	Secretary
Margarida	Dolan	Greenway!	Chairman
Ceris	Humphreys	Henrietta Park Residents Association	Chairman
Rachael	Hushon	Lansdown Crescent Association	Representative
Nigel	Websper	Pulteney Estate Residents' Association	Chairman
Caroline	Kilner	Pulteney Estate Residents' Association	Representative
Stephen	Little	Royal Crescent Society	Treasurer
Van	DuBose	St. James's Square Limited	Representative
Paul	Sandford	Upper Oldfield Park Residents Association	Chairman
Kirstie	Rowlandson	Upper Oldfield Park Residents Association	Secretary
Patrick	Rotheram	Vineyards Residents' Association	Chairman
Jan	Shepley	Widcombe Association	Representative
Liz	Littlewood	Widcombe Association	Secretary

In attendance:

Ron	Plant	Circus Area Residents' Association	Observer
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Apologies

Lucy	Woodcock	Bath University Students Union	President
Aled	Davies	Bath Spa University Students Union	Vice-Pres Welfare
Colin	Clark	Bathwick Hill Residents' Association	Representative
Clyde	Hunter	Bear Flat Association	Chairman
Chris	Beezley	Beech Avenue Residents' Association	Representative
Richard	Samuel	Camden Residents Association	Chairman
Janet	Anderson	Camden Residents Association	Secretary
Morny	Davison	Catharine Place Residents' Association	Secretary
Mark	O'Sullivan	Greenway!	Representative
Ian	Herve	Henrietta Park Residents' Association	Secretary
Ian	Blair	Hensley & Egerton Road Res Assoc	Chairman
Stephen	Huard	Marlborough Lane & Buildings	Chairman
Paul	Dowling	Royal Crescent Society	Deputy Chairman
Van	Dubose	St James's Square Bath Limited	Representative
John	Rushton	Sydney Buildings Householders Assoc	Representative
Jeremy	Boss	Widcombe Association	Chairman