

## Action Notes from BERA AGM held from 7.30 on 28 April 2022 at St Johns Church Hall

Those present: 42 Residents, including all members of the BERA Committee (except Amie Berkovitch who was unwell). Councillors Manda Rigby and Yuktेशwar Kumar also attended.

1. Charles Draper (Chairman) welcomed those present and said that it was good to have the AGM in person again for the first time since 2019.
2. Charles then explained the slightly revised agenda that would allow for a discussion and possible vote on Cleveland Pools hours of operation.
3. Charles then summarised his **Chairman's report** which had been circulated by email. There were no questions and **the AGM agreed to note it.**
4. At Charles' request, Manda then gave an update on the **Cleveland Bridge** situation. Manda that she was sorry for all the delays and difficulties caused by the Repair project. It had now become clear that the corrosion caused to the hanger bars keeping the concrete trusses in place was much worse than had been supposed. It was not at all clear if and how a repair could be conducted effectively and safely that would enable the bridge to once again allow the safe passage of HGV traffic. The Council had come to the view that this was not an economic proposition, but the DfT had not accepted this yet, and the issue could well end up in Court. They were now planning on the current restricted opening regime lasting at least another 6 months, and were working on plans to improve traffic light timings and the appearance of the bridge in the meantime. Those present welcomed the prospect that the current HGV ban may become permanent.
5. Wendy Powney (**Treasurer**) then summarised her report, which had also been circulated with supplementary information. She noted that we now had over 100 members. There were no questions, and the **AGM agreed to note the Report.**
6. Danielle Sellwood (River Flats rep) then set out the issues we faced on **river erosion**. Many of the houses in the Estate (and others elsewhere in the city) were affected by increasing river erosion issues. At the flats by the river there was much undercutting of trees, and pictures over time showed the problem was getting worse, with many at risk of going in the river. The erosion was caused at least in part by speeding tourist boats. She had had a very useful meeting with the relevant BathNES Councillor

and official who had been aware of the issue for many years and were willing to look for ways to improve the situation. The problem was that governance was complicated, with many responsibilities either shared or unclear. Danielle would press them to make progress in getting some management in place before increased river traffic from the opening of Cleveland Pools made the erosion problem worse. **The AGM agreed that this was an important problem that we should try to address.**

7. Alasdair Barron (Swifts and Trees Rep) then explained the aims and progress of our project to encourage more swifts to breed on the Estate – see his statement at Annex. **The AGM welcomed the report and pilot project.**
8. At Charles's request, Manda gave an update on the **Cleveland Pools**. The CPT was now planning a soft launch in September. They may have appointed an operator. They still had a funding gap to complete their project, exacerbated by increased cost inflation, and may ask the Council for further financial help. This could provide an opportunity to set conditions on negotiating an acceptable operating regime with those most affected on our Estate.
9. Ric Jerrom (Hampton Row rep) then explained the Cleveland Pools Immediate Neighbours (CPINS) position. There were inevitably varying views, but the obvious proposition that might also appeal to the wider BERA community was to seek agreement that opening hours would be confined to 8am to 6pm each day, as this matched the operating hours of the Residents Parking restrictions, and thus should discourage more distant customers who might be tempted to drive. Several points were made in discussion. We had always realised that it would be difficult to make the Pools financially viable. If swimming hours were too constrained, an operator might be driven to try to get income from less welcome activities. River taxis would be a problem. Some of our own residents might wish to swim in the evenings. There were no easy answers.
10. **The AGM agreed that the Council should be urged to use any financial leverage to require the CPT to negotiate seriously with the CPINs on the proposed operating regime, with good intentions expected on both sides, and should withhold the final commitment of additional funds until an agreement on this basis had been achieved.**

11. **There was then a vote on the proposition that the CPT should be required to limit the hours of operation of the Pools to match the Residents Parking restrictions of 8am to 6pm. The Votes were 31 in favour, 5 abstentions, 0 against, so the proposition was strongly supported.**
12. Charles then explained that Amie Berkovitch had set up effective liaison arrangements with our local beat PCSO (Becky Manley) who would arrange regular drop-in sessions.
13. Charles said that there had been no evident demand for Jubilee related events on the Estate, but they were being held elsewhere for those interested. We would again be supporting the Bathwick Estate Community Day event on Saturday 2 July being organised by Fiona Carnie, and we would be delivering flyers to each household accordingly.
14. Charles explained that Sylvia and Ken Ayers, John Mudford, and Francoise Pace were all standing down from the Committee. Sylvia had served as a very diligent Treasurer for 17 years. He would be presenting her with a bunch of flowers on the Committee's behalf. There followed a round of applause for Sylvia.
15. Charles explained that the members of current BERA Committee were all willing to serve for a further year, but it was important that all parts of the Estate were represented, and **we currently had no members from Rockliffe Rd following John Mudford's retirement from the Committee, or from Beckford Rd, Beckford Gardens, or Forester Lane. We very much hoped that residents from these streets will come forward in the course of the year ahead.** We also need a new Tree rep; Francoise had taken it on from Alasdair, but had had to resign from the Committee. Alasdair had taken the role back pro tem, **but we need a long - term Tree Rep replacement.**
16. Charles added that this would be his 8<sup>th</sup> year as Chairman, and he would stand down from the Chair and Committee at the next AGM. **He hoped a potential successor would come forward in the meantime. It would be a good idea if that person was a member of the Committee before then so they were familiar with how it currently operated and the issues we addressed.**
17. Charles then thanked Wendy and others who helped organise the meeting which closed at around 9pm.

## ANNEX

Alasdair Barron Report on Swifts at BERA AGM 28 April 2022.

The swift population across the UK is declining, and a group of Bathwick Estate residents who enjoy seeing these birds in our Estate over the summer months - wanted to see if we could reverse that decline.

At a meeting in March we decided to run a pilot this year, and then build on that experience to expand the project next year, 2023.

To date, 9 nest boxes have been erected, (thanks to Ed Haysler for making that happen), and we will monitor those and hopefully some will be occupied this summer.

The plan is to put a webcam in one of the occupied ones, and through an internet feed make the Swifts of Bathwick Estate world famous!

We're grateful for donations which have enabled us to put aside a fund for webcam and internet feed. We're also mapping existing nesting sites on the Estate, and adding to that the nest boxes we're putting up.

We want to develop the educational aspects the project offers, and make them happen. For example; in nest box construction, specifying and installing the webcam, or school environment projects on Swifts and their life cycle. Volunteers will help engage with schools, box construction, PR, and mapping – and of course if you are interested in this project you'd be welcome to join in.

As with the Bathwick Estate Trees Project, you can find information on the swift project on the BERA website, which is 'TheBathwickEstateResidentsAssociation' all one word, which has links to a wealth of resources and is well worth looking at.

Appropriately, today's date is the earliest date that Lucy Starling our resident birdwatcher has seen swifts arrive on this Estate. I wonder if she's seen any today!

Finally, some 12 houses have expressed interest in having nest boxes for next year, and if you'd like to go on that list, please let Ed Haysler know. The cost is likely to be in the region of £20 per box plus erection cost – and I should add that here that if you wish to put boxes up yourself it's at your own risk - BERA does not have insurance to cover this activity.

We hope this project will help to reverse swift decline – and that in future we'll see more swifts adopting the estate as their home and giving pleasure to residents, visitors, and the next generation of environmentalists.

So, my thanks to the project team, for the donations received so far, and also to the Bath RSPB who have provided the initial 10 nest boxes free of charge and for their very willing support and advice.