

BATHWICK ESTATE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 4 April 2017

Present: Committee Members	Charles Draper, Sylvia Ayers, Ken Ayers, Hannah Rees, Valerie Hayward, John Mudford, Julie Trollope, Nola Wright
Committee members' apologies	Amie Berkovitch, Pat Daws
Other residents	48
Councillor	Fiona Darey (Walcot)

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, and asked members to give their email address on the subscription form so that information could be circulated to them.

1. Chairman's Report

Charles Draper reported on the outcomes of the 2016 AGM and the issues that had arisen during the year. His full report is attached to the minutes.

2. Financial Report

The Treasurer, Sylvia Ayers, gave her report and circulated the 2016 Accounts for acceptance.

Although the annual subscriptions amounted to £208, less money came in than went out and overall funds continue to decrease. Even keeping expenses to a minimum, the cost of the 2016 Summer Social amounted to nearly £300 which covered the licence, invitations, entertainer and refreshments. The loss on the year has therefore risen to over £100.

In 2016 twenty-eight new members joined, twice the number for 2015, and the total number of members was 104.

The Treasurer reported that a welcome grant of £200 had been received from Fiona Darey and Lisa Brett and this would be used to fund the 2017 Summer Social.

Once again Nick Lennard, the Treasurer at St Mary Bathwick, has given his services free in auditing the Association's accounts and the Committee extended its grateful thanks for his valued assistance.

The meeting agreed that the accounts should be accepted and that Sylvia Ayers should continue as Treasurer for the coming year.

3. Election of the Committee

The Chairman introduced the members of the Committee standing for re-election. He mentioned that there were no representatives for Forester Lane, Hampton Row, Cleveland Row and Bedford Gardens. Ric Jerrom volunteered to represent Hampton & Cleveland Rows.

The Committee members were duly re-elected.

4. The Cleveland Pools Debate

The Chairman's opening statement is attached.

Christopher Heath, the CPT Director, outlined the Trust's plans and addressed the issues of construction traffic, the green travel plan options including buses, cycles, walking or river boat. On the issue of noise, he said that early morning and evening swimming would be limited to adults only and that the children's only pool was sited away from the residences. He admitted that there had been a lack of communication between the Trust and the neighbouring residents.

Ric Jerrom, representing the 35 immediate neighbours of the pool, felt that there had been little contact and when the third meeting was arranged they were faced with presentation rather than a consultation when it was too late to change the plan for financial reasons. He said that residents were concerned about the scale of the plans for a site that is surrounded by houses on three sides. Apart from the disruption during the construction period, the projected figure of *36,000 visitors annually - up to 484 per day. There was also concern about events that might be organised at the pools in the evenings.

After questions and further discussion, the Chairman asked members to vote on "**whether we should continue to object to the current plans because they do not take adequate account of local concerns over noise and traffic impacts on our estate**". The result was:

43	to continue to oppose the current plans
4	to support the plans without change.
3	abstentions

The Chairman said he would attend the Council Planning meeting the next day and raise the Association's objections.

*figure corrected 3/8/2017

5. Any other business

Julie Trollope, the Social Secretary FOBRA, drew member's attention to a summer party to be held on 26 July, at a cost of £12.50.

Hannah Rees told members about the "green" gym which was held on the community allotment in Hampton Row, and said there were currently only 2 allotment users; any residents who would like to join should contact her.

Ken Ayers urged members to sign the petition for a pedestrian crossing next to the fire station.

6. Hustings

The Chairman then introduced the prospective Councillors for the by-election in Walcot Ward caused by Lisa Brett's resignation on moving to the USA. He explained that the Labour Candidate, Amber Weston, was not now able to attend because of last minute work commitments. The candidates present were:

Richard Samuel	Liberal Democrat
Tim Stoneman	Green Party
Brian Webber	Conservative

The three candidates present then made short opening statements followed by a question and answer session.

7.

The AGM and Hustings concluded at 9.40pm

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- We voted at the 2016 AGM for a reduction from the 25% limit on HMOs. The Council is now reviewing its policy on this.
- We also voted at the 2016 AGM against an Eastern Park and Ride in the Meadows, but in favour if it could be elsewhere. (Record of the AGM says Kensington Meadows, but it should say Bathampton; this was clear at the time.) The Council has now decided to go ahead with one of the Meadows options, but we will continue to look for opportunities to oppose this, as we decided last year.
- We had a tied vote at the 2016 AGM on whether the Christmas Market should be extended to three weeks; in the event this proposal was withdrawn.
- All other important 2016 AGM issues will be addressed later in my report, or in other items on the agenda.
- We have carried on the same basic routine of bimonthly committee meetings with our Councillors (which helps all concerned). In between I often have a catch up of some kind with the Councillors.
- We are members of FoBRA, and I and one other Committee member attends their committee meetings every couple of months. These are very useful, as FoBRA is big enough to have an impact on traffic, development, and other environmental issues. This makes it easier for us to focus our efforts on issues that most affect us on the Bathwick Estate. We have a classic one coming up later!
- One important development this year has been much greater involvement in local planning issues. This arose from a planning application by the owner of land between the corner of Rockliffe Rd and the river to clear trees with the stated purpose of creating an area for growing vegetables. A group of local residents got together to object to this, as they thought the real purpose was a first step towards using it for more housing. They approached us, and we looked at the issues, and joined in the objections. The planning application was subsequently withdrawn.
- There was then a second issue over a proposed demolition and rebuild of a house in Rockliffe Avenue. This was more difficult for us to judge as an Association, as there were residents, and potentially members, on both sides of the argument. We concluded that we should focus any comments or objections we made as an Association on aspects of planned developments that had a major impact on the estate (such as the Cleveland Pools issue we will come to later) or on its overall character. We also hope to develop a local advice service for those faced with problems over planning issues. Amie Berkovitch will be developing this, and we hope to put something useful on the website. Our Councillors have also been assisting with these issues.
- One issue that we have been trying to deal with through much of the year has been the unwelcome impacts of the Crown Inn on Bathwick Street. As most of you will know, it now trades as a Chinese Restaurant, and most of its trade are Coach born Chinese tourists. For much of the year the Coach drivers have been attempting to park, or wait for prolonged periods, at that end of Bathwick St, or failing that at the bus stop on Beckford Road, or even on the roads in our estate. Our Councillors,

and Councillor Peter Turner from the Abbey Ward, have been pressing the Council, the Coach operators, and the restaurant itself to do something about this, with limited success. The second issue has been noise, air, and light pollution from the back of the restaurant which impacts Residents in Powlett Rd; complaints have gone to the Council with little effect.

- One issue on which we have worked with our Councillors and the Council traffic department is on local small, but useful, improvements in road signage etc. in and nearby our estate. This year we have seen two bollards installed on the far side of Beckford road where it curves sharply, and prevents lorries mounting the pavement; we have also had a couple of spells of vehicle activated speed signs to get people to slow down. The yellow box at the end of Forester Road has been renewed, and the sign about the yellow box at the Bathwick Street junction enlarged. Two things still being worked on are improvements to the top of Great Pulteney St to help buses get out, and the case for a Pelican crossing on Bathwick Street near St John's Church.
- You will probably have read in the news that Sydney Gardens has been awarded the first stage of a Lottery Funding Grant, hopefully £3.6m in total, for a substantial upgrade. This was the second try, and it worked because we had an effective steering group chaired by Councillor Martin Veal, and with all the neighbouring residents' associations, and one of their ward councillors, plus the Holburne museum. The Council is now gearing up for phase 2, which the same group will steer.
- Another issue that has been running through the year is the management of flood risk. This is an area of policy where things are divided in a complex way between the Council and the Environment Agency. If you follow these things there have been quite a mass of complex papers on the Council website. But from our point of view, there are two main issues that surface in them:
 - One is the issue of what can be done to protect those buildings at greatest risk of flooding near the river. About 500 dwellings in Bath are liable to flood risk at the 1% per annum rate and some of those on our patch. One of the objectives of the South Quays project is to reduce flood risk in that part of Bath. The Council have done a study of what it would cost to protect buildings upstream of Pulteney Bridge, and estimate this would cost the Council about £40m. FoBRA has been mounting a campaign to get the Council to face this problem and find the funding.
 - Our main focus has been on a smaller scale, but important issue, the Pulteney Radial Gate. The Council's earlier plans envisaged replacing this with other structures that would not have the responsive character of the Radial Gate. Their latest proposals focus on how best to maintain current levels of flood protection by refurbishing or replacing the gates. This seems much more sensible, but we will need to keep monitoring the developing plans.
- One of our Committee Members, Hannah Rees, runs our Neighbourhood Watch scheme. She has an email contact list, and passes on police advice about current crime issues. This year these have included Burglaries; thefts from cars; victimisation of vulnerable residents; and Nottingham Knockers.

- In recent months, our biggest issue has been the Cleveland Pools, but I'll talk about that under the next item.
- Finally, communications and membership. We put flyers around the Estate twice a year, and keep the website up to date, but it would be helpful if we can also keep you in touch by email. There is a space on the membership form for this, but we never get enough filled in to make an email contact list (beyond the committee) worthwhile. We are passing around a sign up list for email updates. Please add yours if you would like to receive news about our Estate and things happening nearby in that way.
- In August we had the Summer Social at the Boating Station, on the Sunday of the August Bank Holiday, as usual. This is a great occasion, in a very pleasant spot, thanks to the Hardicks, with a magician to entertain young children, and a cash wine bar. There is also normally a boat trip at the end. It's a good opportunity to get to know your neighbours better.

On the membership side, thank you for coming and joining. We try to advance the interests of the estate, and the more people who join us to have their say, and maybe help with the legwork, the better we can do it. So, please encourage your friends and neighbours to join. At £2 per annum it's a bargain!

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION ON CLEVELAND POOLS

As most of you know, we have long supported the Cleveland Pools project. We have regularly had presentations from Sally Helvey on progress for example. The Pools have clear historical importance. And it would be good to find a sensitive way of bringing them back into use for all of us.

But there was always a puzzle. Who was ensuring that the local community was on board as neighbours, rather than users? I was told by the Trust this would come later. Last year I asked if I could be on their steering committee. I was told they only had a project board. For me, the obvious comparison is with the successful Sydney Gardens HLF bid. This has a steering group including the relevant Residents Associations and Local Councillors, and is chaired by Councillor Martin Veal. It has worked very well.

The first time that the Cleveland Pools Trust agreed to speak to local residents in detail about their plans was September last year. In October they agreed to share their business plan numbers. In November, we in BERA were invited to one of these discussions for the first time, and at that meeting the Trust withdrew that offer. They said they could not negotiate over opening hours and planned numbers, as it was too late to change them. That understandably made some of the local residents present angry.

Shortly afterwards, the Trust submitted their Planning Application to the Council for the main build phase of the Pools project. This envisages the pools being open in the summer months up to 7 days a week, at times ranging from 7am to 9pm, with visitor numbers rising to 36,000 by year 3. Many visitors will be delivered by car even if they cannot park. The so-called travel plan in the application is a more a statement of the problem than a solution to it. As you know, our Estate, and particularly that end of it, is a very quiet residential area, with no through traffic.

We as an Association therefore objected to the granting of planning permission, and since late last year we have been working with the local residents and our Councillors, to try to turn things around. We do want the Pools to be renovated, but not at the cost of an unacceptable level of noise and traffic disruption on our Estate.

In our view, the Trust has been very good at consulting with all of us as users; but they have completely failed to engage with the neighbours they are impacting.

We have been urging the Council to get more involved with the direction of this project, as the Trust clearly needs help. We believe it needs a review, with local residents, of the local impact of the business plan assumptions behind the current proposals, to find an acceptable compromise.

Our actions on this have been set out on our website.

Clearly this is a major issue for our Estate. I have told you what we as a Committee have been doing about it. But we realised that we should debate it at our AGM today to enable all of you as our members to have your say.

We therefore set up tonight's discussion and debate. You have just heard me explaining what we in BERA have said and done on this and why. We will now have:

- up to 10 minutes from Christopher Heath, the CPT Project Director, on their CPT perspective on the noise/traffic/disruption issue
- up to 10 minutes from Ric Jerrom, one of the immediate neighbours group, on their perspective of the same
- then questions and debate which I would chair. (But we don't have too long for this as we need to allow time for the Hustings afterwards).
- I will then ask BERA members present to decide what our future attitude should be. I will be asking you if we should continue to object to the current plans because they do not take adequate account of local concerns over noise and traffic impacts on our estate.

By a fortuitous piece of timing, the Council Planning Committee is meeting tomorrow to decide whether or not to grant planning permission, and I have put my name down to speak as an objector on our behalf. Obviously I will only do so if the vote later confirms that you agree to the general approach we have been taking.