

## BATHWICK ESTATE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION AGM – CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This has been the year of covid, of course. As we went into lockdown in March 2020, we tried to work with the BathNES 3SG arrangements to establish support networks for our more vulnerable residents who might need help. To cut a long story short we established such a structure, and leafletted all our residents offering practical help via a named street representative. This was generally gratefully received, but the main thing it demonstrated was that neighbour support groups were either already in place or quickly sprang into being, using WhatsApp networks or more traditional methods.

We were unable to hold our AGM in April, and for a time suspended our bimonthly committee meetings, but from June resumed them via Zoom, which was better than nothing but meant that three of our committee members could not take part. We were also unable to collect subscriptions (since we only use cash) and formalise memberships. But since we have not been hiring rooms or delivering leaflets our costs have also reduced. These things remain the case now.

Traffic in Bath fell very noticeably during the first lockdown, and even more so on our Estate. This was welcome in many ways, but there were some incidents of children cycling dangerously which we warned parents about, and there were and are concerns about traffic speeding on the Estate.

Another welcome reduction in traffic was brought about by the Cleveland Bridge weight limit put in place by the Council pending repairs to its structure. We supported efforts through the planning process and via petitions (where we could without breaching our political neutrality) to make these limits permanent, alas without success.

Over the course of the year our two local HLF supported projects have proceeded at very different paces, despite receiving their main funding together in early 2019. The Sydney Gardens upgrade is well under way. The Cleveland Pools project has only now awarded its main contract (to Beards). In the intervening period the Cleveland Pools Immediate Neighbours have struggled to get a meaningful dialogue with the Cleveland Pools Trust on managing the impacts of the build process on them. The hope is that this will now be easier. Beard seem to have good intentions in this regard.

Some good things have been happening locally over this period. Many of you will have seen and enjoyed two sets of illustrated diary highlights from local naturalist Lucy Starling. Some will have been inspired to enjoy the many lovely walks we are privileged to have so close by – including the guided walks she offers. And on our Estate itself, Alasdair Barron has done an amazing job through working with the Council Tree officer and liaising with many of you to establish 50 new street trees for our enjoyment and health. This has been widely publicised via public and social media, and with other residents' associations. As you know, we are nominating Alasdair for a Council Award.

Over much of the year, the Council has been putting forward a plethora of different, and seemingly unconnected, transport improvement schemes, all allegedly aimed at improving public health in some way. We have tried to understand what each scheme means for us, how they interact, and respond accordingly, but this has been difficult, and it is pretty clear that the Council have not made these connections themselves. I have provided a summary of these schemes separately to support our discussion under a separate agenda item.

As usual we have looked at planning applications on the Estate as they appear on the Council website, and have commented when they appeared likely to have a major impact. A case in point is the (still undecided) application for a new build on land behind Rockcliffe Rd.

We continue to be active members of FoBRA (the Federation of Bath Residents Associations) which is a very useful forum for exchanging views and organising collective effort. We are also members of an equivalent national organisation (NORA) which produces an impressive stream of analysis and reporting on all the things Central Government is doing in this area.

*Charles Draper*

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