

Bathwick Hill Residents' Association Newsletter

February 2014

Chairman's Report

The Autumn happening went well, it was well attended and the speaker, Colin Johnston, the City Archivist was both very knowledgeable and enthusiastic and received many questions regarding the history of the area. Should there be any of you with questions you didn't have opportunity to raise, please let Claire know and we can put them to him and I am sure he will be pleased to answer your query.

It is difficult not to continue this report without mentioning the weather as there is so much of it. But to look on the bright side – all of Bathwick Hill is at least 25m above flood level. If the one exception will write to me I will see what I and the Association can do to help – or at least send our sympathy.

With regard to the person who suffers flooding we might even be able to send a voucher for the Food Bank, which is a clumsy way of leading into the topic for our speaker at the AGM (Thursday 20 March).

It seems odd that in these affluent times there are people reliant on the Food Bank but there are lots and the Food Bank is our selected charity for the current year. Some explanation of the current state of affairs will be given by our speaker David Purdon at the AGM. Even if we do not need the Bank's assistance I am sure that they can find a role for us to help them.

Amongst other topics under discussion is the proposed electrification of the main line railway through Bath, see below Paul Jackson and Felix Moore's report of the public meeting held in January in the Guildhall.

Some of you will appreciate that my wife and I will be more affected than most of you so we are looking forward to hearing how Network Rail are going to deal with their high voltage overhead cables adjacent to our back yard.

Colin Martin

Bulb planting

The Council offered free daffodil bulbs to local groups, to be planted in public places; Felix Morre and a few local residents helped plant our allocation on the grassy verge of Bathwick Hill opposite Cleveland Walk in record time. The deal is that we must photograph and report the hoped-for result! Sadly some of the bulbs have recently been dug up for the new bus shelter and now we hear the NT is objecting to the bus shelter, although not the removal of our bulbs!

The Web Site www.bathwickhill.info

The new web site has been up with a limited amount of public information. The member pages include our calendar, news and newsletters. All those of you we have emails for will be receiving a login shortly, if you do not have one already. In future the newsletter will be posted and you will be informed by email it is there. The calendar will include our events and others that may affect Bathwick hill or local events such as NT skyline events; there are also links to useful web sites.

To ensure you are enrolled please make sure that we do have your most current email address. If you have not been receiving periodic emails from Claire this might mean that we don't have your email.

If you would like to update you email, post anything on the web site, or make any suggestions please email Sarah or Claire. This is not very hi-tech but we hope it will make the website easy to maintain.

trimmer.sp@btopenworld.com; claire.jackson77@btinternet.com

Smallcombe Cemetery – Bath's Secret Cemetery

On a crisp and sunny Saturday morning in January about 80 local residents were treated to a tour of Smallcombe Cemetery. We learnt about the history of some of Bath's past residents from Dr Philip Bendall, who has transcribed all of the headstones. These can be viewed on a web site <http://www.sydneybuildingshistory.org.uk/cemetery/cemetery.html>

The plans for the cemetery include restoring walls and paths, re-erecting and securing the fallen and unsafe memorials and creating a new style to connect to the Bath Sky-line walk, this walk will go through Smallcombe wood using a

stepped path, up the steep hill through the woods. There will be a horticultural restoration and maintenance programme – to both retain the essence of the 'Victorian Garden' Cemetery but also enable wildlife to flourish. Volunteers will be needed in the future to help with gardening.

The Heritage Lottery Fund is being approached to make a grant for the restoration and your support is needed! Please support this restoration by joining the Friends of St Mary's Churchyards for £5.00 per annum or £50 life membership. To join Please contact Alastair Cowan on 01225 463905 or email alastaircowan@wwclub.net
Claire Jackson

GWR electrification

There was a talk at the Guildhall on this subject, given by a Network Rail spokesman; he declared that the aim was for the job to be undertaken 'in 2015- 2017'. Part of the plan is to cut down any trees within 6.6m (about 20 feet) of the line. However, he agreed that local residents with property adjoining the line had not yet been approached with details of the planned works and he didn't give a date for the expected completion.

Apparently, overhead cables seem a more practical solution than laying a third (electrified) rail, so the track bed will have to be lowered for many stretches, including dropping it by a metre throughout the Box tunnel. This suggests that the works will be some way off...

When Brunel built the Great Western, he wanted people to watch the trains as they passed through Sydney Gardens; his legacy is a dilemma for Network Rail in determining how best to prevent trespassing on the line. They are considering a number of options but do have the heritage in mind and will preserve the high retaining wall and bridges. Nobody proposed covering the line over completely so that the Gardens could become more the way they must have been before Brunel sliced through them!

Paul Jackson and Felix Moore

Report on the work of Fobra (Federation of Bath Residents' Associations)

Fobra has been active on a wide range of topics, including –

a) Proposed new rugby stadium

In November Bath Rugby gave a presentation to Fobra on their project for a new stadium. Whilst the disputes continue over the legal status of the Rec, the Club highlighted the poor state of the current stands, which are also too small; that the proposed new architecture would celebrate the "festival spirit" of match days, and "touch the ground lightly" and the new internal facilities of the proposed west stand, which would include a riverside daytime cafe.

Fobra members were concerned about the size of the west and east stands and whether they could be reduced; whether famous views would be affected; control of riverside crowds and drinking; how seasonal the demountable east stand would be; flooding; wind stability and increased vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Following discussion Fobra submitted to Bath Rugby a list of questions covering the issues raised. A response is awaited.

Reflecting the range of views of Fobra's member residents' associations, particularly differences between those associations which are close neighbours of the Rec and those more distant, Fobra remains neutral on the issue, pending the eventual submission of a planning application.

b) Seagulls : A presentation was made by the council's environmental Protection Manager which concluded that these continue to be a nuisance, culling is considered ineffective as the seagulls are soon replaced by others. Effective deterrents are food caddies, black rubbish bags and ensuring debris is not left after sacks are broken, also netting roof tops where appropriate

c) Placemaking Plan

Banes should soon have a Core Strategy, Fobra believes the latest draft of the Plan is generally satisfactory but has urged that the amount of Green Belt land being sought by the Council for housing should be no more than is strictly needed for the housing deemed essential for approval of the Core Strategy.

e) Student Accommodation

Bath has one of the highest proportions in the UK of students resident in the community as distinct from living in University-owned halls of residence. Concentrations of students living in particular areas of the city deplete the stock of affordable accommodation, adding to commuting and traffic congestion and weakening communities. Recently the

Council has taken powers to limit the concentration of houses in multiple occupation in some areas. As a result some developers appear to be seeking permission to build private "halls of residence" solely for students. Fobra believes there may be a case for Bath, like other university towns, to have a student housing policy and has begun discussion with the Council and the universities.

f) Parliamentary elections

During the run up to the 2015 Parliamentary elections Fobra will invite candidates to discuss issues of concern to residents. The first will be the Conservative candidate, Ben Howlett, later this month.

Whilst these are difficult economic times Bath remains vigorous, attracts investment and is planning for a prosperous future. Fobra continues to work closely with the Council to ensure that residents' interests are taken fully into account in the city's plans.

Colin Clark

Book Group

The Book group will have been going for a year in March. We have 12 members and have all enjoyed reading a variety of books. Others have expressed an interest in joining our group, but we are at capacity, so an option would be to start another book group. If anyone would like to form their own group we can publicise it to members on our web site. We also are happy to share our varied reading list.

Public footpath past Smallcombe Farm

There were moves to shut the public footpath, with a suggestion to fence off part of the National Trust Land to divert it. There were many strong objections to this, and we have just heard that The National Trust after their public consultation the National Trust is objecting to the planned diversion as 28.5% were in support of the changes and 71.5% were against. We were alarmed to find the permissive path closed on Sunday the 12th and Monday the 13th, without diversion signs or any warning to the National Trust Bath Skyline walk ranger. There were many groups of ramblers in confusion. Apparently this is a condition that permissive pathways should shut two days a year, but we were concerned that it happened with no prior warning.

Diary of events:

Thurs 20 March	AGM 7.00 pm, St Mary's Church Hall – entrance at the bottom of Bathwick Hill (see next page for Agenda)
Easter Sat, 10 April	10:00am to 12:00. The National Trust will have " Easter Egg Rolling " on Bathwick Hill Meadows. The Association won't be hosting its own event this year.
Saturday 7 June	Open Gardens 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm We hope to open gardens in the middle part of the Hill – If you can open your garden please let Sarah or Claire know.
July evening	A walk along the canal towpath , date to be arranged. We hope to have a local guide
Thursday 13 Nov	Autumn event 7 – 9.30 pm

Would you like to get more involved in our Association?

We are looking for a few new committee members to join us – being on the committee involves about 4 meetings a year. We share out the roles and are also keen to have new ideas. If you are interested please phone Claire (464228) or Sarah (330928) for an informal chat about what is involved

Bathwick Hill Residents' Association contacts :

Chairman: Colin Martin
2 Sydney Wharf
BATH BA2 4EF Tel:01225 310072

Secretary: Claire Jackson
3 Woodland Place
BATH BA2 6EH Tel: 01225464228

MEMBERSHIP

Once again the tricky subject of membership subscriptions raises its head. The subscription of £5 per household is due in March and can be paid in one of two ways:

- at the AGM in cash
- by standing order (see below) delivered to Andrew Temple-Smith at 2, Dunsford Place, with your name, and post code as a reference

New members: Please apply by email or post your name, address, phone number and email address to Andrew Temple-Smith. Then either enclose £5 cash with it or set up a standing order as below. **We prefer standing orders to reduce administration work.**

Standing order mandate

Please set up an annual standing order for £5 to Bathwick Hill Residents' Association to be paid annually on March 17th starting on March 17th 2014.

To : Bathwick Hill Residents Association , Santander
Account : 48259801 Sort code : 09-01-55
reference : _____
(last 3 characters of Post code and surname)

From my account:

Account name _____

Account number _____ Sort Code _-_-

Please send or take this to your bank. You may also be able to set up a standing order online if you do internet banking. Thank you.

AGM Agenda

Arrivals 7.00-7.30 pm for drinks and nibbles

7.30 pm Welcome from the Chairman Guest Speaker – David Purdon, Chair of Bath food bank

8:00pm AGM

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of minutes from the 2013 AGM
3. Chairman's Report – Colin Martin
4. Treasurer's Report – Andrew Temple-Smith
5. Federation of Bath Residents' Associations Report Colin Clark
6. Annual Programme of Events – Sarah Trimmer
7. Nominations for committee members. We would welcome new committee members, we meet about 4 times a year. The committee current members are:
Chairman – Colin Martin; Treasurer – Andrew Temple-Smith; Secretary – Claire Jackson; FOBRA – Colin Clark; Social – Sarah Trimmer; Others - Basil Snook, Felix Moore
8. Election of the Committee
9. Local Councillors update
10. Update from the local police
11. Any Other Business

Please send nominations for committee places to Claire Jackson Claire.jackson77@btinternet.com 3 Woodland Place, Bath BA2 6EH.