

Bathwick Hill Resident's Association newsletter

November 2019

Next meeting Thursday November 21st.

Our Autumn event at St Mary's Church Hall Bathwick Hill, is primarily a social event, but it is also an opportunity for you to meet our ward councillors. They will briefly introduce themselves and then answer questions. If you have any pertinent local issues you would like to raise please let us know in advance.

We will also have a raffle in aid of the Canal Trust, our donations are particularly targeted at repairs to the towpath between Bathwick Hill and Widcombe. If anyone would like to donate a raffle prize, please let us know.

Entry is £5 per person, and the raffle tickets will be 5 for £5 (£1 each). We can only accept payments in cash.

There will be drinks and refreshments from 7:00,
The councillors will speak from 7:30,
There will be further opportunities to socialise and have refreshments after, and we hope the councillors will be then be available for one to one chats.
Close 9:30.

We do need to have an idea of numbers, so please can you let us know if you would like to attend by emailing bhraevent@gmail.com or your names, post code at 5, Sion Pl. Bathwick Hill. All payments should be made in **cash** on the night

Other News

Our last event was the Abbey Tour on September 18th

A group of 18 doughty BHRA members and friends donned hard hats and fetching yellow high vis vests in order to have a private tour of Bath Abbey Footprint Project. Because this huge project is ongoing and going through different phases, even those of us who had been before found it very interesting.

Dr Oliver Taylor was our excellent tour guide and a very knowledgeable one at that. It was quite extraordinary to learn what huge numbers of people are buried beneath the Abbey floor and how this, plus some ill-advised Victorian underfloor heating works, has led to the Abbey floor needing urgent and huge scale works to stop it from caving in. Whilst they are at it, they are installing a new eco-friendly underfloor heating system using Bath's hot springs. Hooray! Am I the only Bathonian who cannot understand why we don't use the millions of gallons of hot water gushing from our hot springs to heat more things in the city? Anyway, Ollie Taylor has offered to do another tour for us next year which will focus on the many beautiful and varied ledger stones laid into the Abbey floor. The history of these stones is fascinating so, if there is enough interest from BHRA members, we might have another tour. In the meantime, thanks to everybody who came and I hope that you enjoyed it as much as I did.

News from Federation of Bath resident's association

Meeting the new council. Following the Council elections Fobra Chairman, Robin Kerr and deputy Chairman, Nick Tobin have met Council Leader, Dine Romero, and Councillors Butters (Transport), Crossley (Leisure) and Ball (Planning and Housing).

Topics discussed included – Housing - Social; Short term letting – Air BnB; Party Houses; Student housing and policy; The Council's financial plans; Stadium on the Rec; Transport

Governance review, including revision of the Bath City Forum, which provides for discussion of City issues separately from those of Banes as a whole.

Councillor Romero has asked to talk at a future Fobra meeting about the Council's plans and this is being arranged. Robin Kerr and Nick Tobin also met our MP, Wera Hobhouse, and topics discussed included those raised with the Council.

Transport: clean air zone. The existing Class C scheme has been confirmed by the new Council. Private cars are excluded from charges. There is a small extension from Sydney Road to the canal at Bathwick Hill. This is to reduce the impact of signage and cameras on the amenity of the area and to align with the existing residents' parking zone.

Rec and new stadium proposals. The Chairman attended the Annual Meeting of the Rec Trust, which owns the most prominent and important piece of open land in the World Heritage City. He found the governance of the Trust opaque and has raised this with the Leader of the Council and our MP; noted that objections to the Scoping Report for the Environmental Impact Assessment had been removed from the planning portal and advised that the full planning application had been put back, probably to December.

Please note Opinions across Bath are very divided on the stadium proposal and in the light of this your BHRA Committee has concluded that it should not itself take a position, whilst noting that when the planning application is made individuals are free to object if they so wish.

University of Bath The University has asked to become an Affiliate member of Fobra and has been warmly accepted. This closer relationship should facilitate discussion on topics of mutual interest, including future policy for student accommodation.

New police station in Manvers Street : This should open by mid 2020. Twenty constables from the Neighbourhood scheme will be based there plus frontline staff.

Bristol Airport expansion : If the current plan goes ahead, there could be an average of 11 flights per night over Bath between 11pm and 6am, a time when flying at Heathrow is much more restricted. Fobra agreed to object.

Seagulls : These are a continuing nuisance, especially in the city centre. The Council reports that numbers are slowly falling, thanks in part to the Council's egg oiling programme, to the increasing elimination of food from refuse bags, to the flying of the Council's Harris Hawk, and to campaigns to cease feeding the birds. However this is an international problem (even in Paris!) and seagulls are prepared to fly up to 50 miles for food. In Bath the next target is the commercial waste bags put out in the city every evening

Winter Reception: This will take place on 12 February at the Victoria Art gallery and is an excellent opportunity to meet the new Lib Dem Council and Cabinet members. All Fobra members are encouraged to attend. Further details in due course.

National Trust Local Forum

The forum meets 3 times a year, all local residents are welcome and one of the committee members attends if possible. Currently they are looking at improving sign posting on the Skyline walk. Also we have posted a list of NT activities on the web site.

Bath University Local Forum & The Buses

We attend the Local University forum, also 3 times a year & open to all local residents. We post relevant information on the web site as and when we hear it.

We believe the buses have coped better with the influx of students at the beginning of the Uni year. There has been a change to the bus service :

- There is capacity for both the U1 and U2 routes;
- The U3 (previously U1X) will now run all day between approximately 07:00 and 19:30;
- There will be a more reliable evening operation.

The University has also invested in directly employing two Transport Customer Liaison Officers, in addition to the one we already employ, who will help improve the effectiveness of the bus operation.

Our main concern is the continued use of bendy buses and their undependability. Regarding the pollution this will have to be dealt with as you know locally with the clean air zone and nationally by the regulations reducing emissions from public transport (as long as these survive Brexit) and we have recently contacted James Freeman, Manager of First buses in the area, this is what he said :

We seem to have an altogether better operation this year, if feedback from users is any judge.

We have the same number of bendibuses in service this year as last (we use a maximum of 12 out of 14 on any one day at the busiest times, like now), but you may have noticed that the U3 runs all day which means that bendies are in use all day this year, which wasn't necessarily the case last year.

These buses are efficient people-movers but they are getting old. We plan to retire the two oldest ones in the spring and we are clear that the rest need to be replaced, too. The BaNES CAZ proposals will see to that, because they are Euro III and therefore will attract a £100 per day penalty in the City Centre.

We did look at re-engining these bendybuses with brand new Euro VI engines, but that would be a case of “new wine in old bottles”, and would mean we’d be stuck with bendies for many years to come.

So our best plan looks like replacing them with new double-deckers. Since the spring we have been working very closely with the University to work out how best to renew the rolling stock on these Unibus services. As yet, this process hasn’t delivered a solution but I think it will do

First Bus has made further information available on this website: www.bathunibus.com

LAST BUT NOT LEAST –

Tesco Car Park – Use it or Lose it

This is now open, please use as Tesco is monitoring it to see how much it is use it

Planning applications

Paul Jackson has very kindly volunteered to regularly collate planning applications that could be pertinent to Bathwick Hill residents. We can publish these on our web site and alert you to the applications. Normally if you are neighbouring the property concerned you will be informed by the council. This information will be purely for your information and it will be up to you to make any comments on the application as an individual.

As we have previously said we do not take sides in private planning applications, we only make comments supporting or objecting on behalf of the Resident’s Association if we can see a serious impact on the hill as a whole.

This is a trial and we will review it at the AGM planned for Thursday March 19th 2020. Please put the AGM date in your Diary, we will confirm it in our next newsletter with the agenda.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS, IF YOU WOULD LIKE PLEASE LET US KNOW.