

BACKWELL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 20 February 2018 held in the Sixth Form Lecture Theatre at Backwell School at 7.00 pm

Present: The following Committee Members attended: Keith Riches (Chair), Gill Collinson, Chris Elliott, Terry Merrett-Smith, Angela Ribbon-Miles, Mike Rose, Mike Veal, Sue Veal, Geoff Wells, Valerie Wells. A further 114 BRA members and non-members attended.

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Apologies were received from Committee members Richard Barclay, Kevin Crawford, Margaret Kemp, Bruce Stewart and Ian Tapping and members Richard and Sue Ivens and 10 other members.
2. **Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 21 February 2017:** No points were raised and the Minutes were agreed.
3. **Chairman's Report:** Chairman Keith Riches gave the following report: -

I will start this report as usual with the objectives of the Association, as set out in our Constitution. "BRA will work to safeguard and promote the collective interests of Backwell Residents in matters concerning social, economic and community life and the character of the village. The Association will support or oppose development affecting Backwell having regard to residents' interests and the local environment."

The Officers and Committee of the Association as elected at the last AGM have remained unchanged throughout the year. Bruce Stewart the former Chairman and Secretary was again co-opted for the benefit of his enormous experience in Backwell Planning matters and once again I wish to thank Sue Veal for her hard work as co-opted Minutes Secretary.

The full Committee met monthly throughout the year and in addition, because of a number of important ongoing and pressing issues, the smaller Executive Committee had interim meetings. Committee members live in various parts of the village and have good links with many other groups and organisations and we maintain a close liaison with Backwell Parish Council to whom we lend our support whenever appropriate to our objectives. A rota of BRA Committee Members ensures attendance as observers at all BPC Full Council and Planning Meetings. We frequently make statements during Public Participation.

We have given great priority this year to keeping our members informed of topical issues and for this we are grateful particularly to Geoff and Val Wells who are both active members of the Executive Committee. In particular, Geoff

has been the principal architect of our Bulletins and Newsletters and has maintained regular contact with the local press. Val, ably assisted by Gill Collinson, has been responsible for membership recruitment and distribution of leaflets and bulletins throughout the year. Usually our bulletins and newsletters go to our members, but when relevant they go to most or all houses in the village. This is a big task, which is not routinely done on a voluntary basis by any other village organisation. We thank our team of willing volunteers who undertake these distributions. I would also like to thank all the other members of our Committee for their unfailing support and hard work throughout the year. Probably the busiest member of the Committee has again been our Planning Specialist Mike Rose, who was previously a member of the Steering Group which developed the Backwell Neighbourhood Plan, and who was heavily involved as a member of the Parish Council Working Party co-ordinating the village's opposition to the Appeal by Charles Church against North Somerset's decision to refuse planning consent for a large housing development on Farleigh Fields. I would like to thank all those members and others who submitted comments on the Public Inquiry and in particular those who agreed to speak at the Hearing in March last year. A decision by the Secretary of State on the Farleigh Fields Appeal has been deferred a number of times which has been very frustrating for all those involved in this process. We heard last week that the decision is delayed again, until 28th March – all very disappointing but on the other hand the factors being taken into account might eventually help us. The Farleigh Fields decision may also have an effect on the outcome of the campaign by Backwell Parish Council against the proposals in the West of England Joint Spatial Plan to build 700 houses to the west of Backwell at Grove Farm. This issue will be dealt with in detail after the formal part of this meeting. Thanks, are also due for the continuing hard work of our Secretary Mike Veal, Treasurer Kevin Crawford, Assistant Treasurer Terry Merrett-Smith, our Membership Secretary and Website Manager, Margaret Kemp and our Social Media Manager, Angela Ribbon-Miles. I also wish to pay tribute to one of our members - Chris Perry. He did a fantastic job of masterminding our Neighbourhood Plan, and then stood down from the Parish Council and had a couple of quieter years. But last year he got stuck in again and did a huge amount of work on the Farleigh Fields Appeal Working Party. Finally, I would like to thank Richard Gaunt, who once again has audited our accounts and has agreed to continue for the current year.

We are aware that some folk consider that BRA devoted an undue amount of time and effort to opposing the development of Farleigh Fields. Whilst it is true that this issue has demanded a lot of our attention BRA now feels that the proposals in the Joint Spatial Plan represent an ever-greater imminent threat to our environment in terms of traffic congestion, pressure on infrastructure and loss of amenity.

We have been involved in many other issues throughout the twelve months since our last AGM. These include the Moor Lane development proposed by Taylor Wimpey, where we have supported the Parish Council in seeking satisfactory conditions attaching to the approval, by being involved in meetings with the developers and North Somerset Council. A decision on this application has now been published by the Council and we are pleased that some of our concerns have been addressed. Some aspects of the consent are classed as reserved matters for later determination. We were also involved in the Liaison Committee for the Household Waste Recycling Centre and made representations regarding the attendant issues of movement of heavy vehicles in Dark Lane during School start and finish times.

Biffa, the new Managers of the Tip, appear now to have addressed this issue and the general management of the Tip seems to have improved somewhat but the restrictive opening hours continue to cause congestion at certain times. The Liaison Committee seems to have fizzled out recently despite efforts by BPC and BRA but we will continue to monitor complaints by members and make representation as necessary.

Other issues which have demanded our attention have been road safety in Station Road, monitoring of and comment on various individual Planning Applications, liaison with North Somerset MP Liam Fox and North Somerset Councillor Karen Barclay, and commenting upon the West of England Joint Spatial Plan.

We are also represented on the Stancombe Quarry Liaison Committee and Community Fund from which several Backwell organisations have benefited, notably, the Parish Hall, the WI Hall, Backwell School, Backwell Junior and Infants School, Backwell Playing Fields and Backwell Junior Football Club. Very recently one of our Committee members, Chris Elliott brought to our attention a Public Consultation concerning the Great Western Rail Franchise. One proposal being considered is to split the Franchise between two Companies; this raises concerns that the rail service from Nailsea and Backwell Station will be adversely affected, especially direct commuter services to London. BRA has submitted comments in the consultation process expressing our concerns.

We welcome the recent emergence of Backwell Resistance, a social media based organisation spearheaded by Lorraine Hopkinson-Parker. Lorraine, with others, has drawn a great deal of attention to the JSP proposals and is campaigning against the development at Grove Farm and a major new road across Backwell Common, through the Nailsea/Backwell strategic gap and eventually connecting with the M5 at Clevedon. We have formed a close

relationship with Backwell Resistance whose objectives we share and we look forward to liaising with them and Backwell Parish Council over the coming months and sharing the cost of employing professional consultants in opposing these plans.

I have no doubt we face many other new challenges in addition to those already mentioned, but potentially the largest one is airport expansion. Quite apart from the inevitable impact immediately around the airport, especially for Downside, there is every likelihood that wider infrastructure changes could affect the village.

The last issue I will mention is the thorny subject of the S106 process which has had quite an airing recently on social media. We have written several letters to North Somerset Council on the subject and so has the Parish Council. Mike Rose is available to ask questions later, but I would particularly like to advertise that the Parish Council is holding an open meeting about this issue in the Parish hall at 6.45pm on 1st March.

BRA is essentially a pressure group which supports the Neighbourhood Plan and seeks to act in the best interests of Backwell as a whole. There are lots of things we cannot fix, but we will keep trying. The BRA Committee remain committed to preventing the over-development of Backwell. We do need to hear the views of our members and I hope that you will feel free to join in the Open Forum session later on. Thank you.

4. Membership Report: Geoff Wells reported that as at the 31 December 2017 there were 382 paid up member households. This year to date, 230 households have paid, of which 50 are new members and many further subscriptions have been received this evening. There are also known to be a number of electronic subscriptions in the pipeline and we are optimistic that a membership of at least 400 households will be achieved this year.
5. Honorary Treasurer's Report and Audited Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2017: Terry Merrett-Smith exhibited a summary of the audited Accounts for the twelve months to 31 December 2017. These are available only to BRA members who may apply to the Secretary if they require further information.
6. Election of Officers:
 - 6.1: Hon Secretary - Mike Veal was proposed by Judy Thomas, seconded by G Wells and was unanimously agreed.
 - 6.2: Hon Treasurer - Kevin Crawford was proposed by Richard Ivens, seconded by K Riches and was unanimously agreed.

7. Appointment of Auditor:

Richard Gaunt who was thanked for fulfilling the role of Auditor agreed to continue in 2018. His re-appointment was unanimously agreed.

8. Any Other Formal Business: There was none.

The formal proceedings of the Meeting were concluded at 7.25 pm and Presentations with slides were given and an Open Forum held to discuss a range of current issues.

The notes of these Presentations which are attached as Appendix 1 do not form part of the formal Minutes of the Annual General Meeting.