

## **BACKWELL RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION**

### **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 21 February 2017 held in the Sixth Form Lecture Theatre at Backwell School at 7.00 pm**

Present: The following Committee Members were present: Keith Riches (Chair), Rachel Beckingsale, Gill Collinson, Chris Elliott, Margaret Kemp, Terry Merrett-Smith, Angela Ribbon-Miles, Mike Rose, Mike Veal, Sue Veal, Geoff Wells and Valerie Wells. A further 88 BRA Members attended and 4 non-members.

1. Apologies for Absence: Apologies were received from Committee Members Richard Barclay, Kevin Crawford, Bruce Stewart and 12 other member households, together with Bob Taylor, Chair, BPC and Vicky Angear (Press)
2. Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 17 November 2015: No points were raised. P Collinson proposed and J Beringer seconded that the Minutes be approved and this was unanimously 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 largely unchanged throughout the year except that our Membership Secretary, Margaret Kemp, took over the additional role of Web Manager from Chris Elliott who had heavy work commitments. Our thanks to both of them. 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. One further member was co-opted onto the Committee. Rachel Beckingsale joined us in January and made a valuable contribution throughout the year but she has decided not to stand for re-election at this meeting due to other commitments. We thank her for her involvement and hope that she will re-join the Committee at some stage in the future.

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.

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 is now heavily involved as a member of the Parish Council Working Party co-ordinating the village's opposition to the Appeal by Charles Church which will be one of the topics for discussion in the Open Forum later in this meeting.

Thanks are also due for the continuing hard work of our Secretary Mike Veal, Treasurer Kevin Crawford, Assistant Treasurer Terry Merrett-Smith, and Social Media Manager Angela Ribbon-Miles. I need to mention 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 kindly offered to get stuck in again and has done a huge amount of work on the Farleigh Fields Appeal Working Party - Chris, very many thanks. Finally, I would like to thank Richard Gaunt, who once again has audited our accounts.

We are aware that some folk consider BRA devotes 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, there continues to be widespread support throughout the Parish for resistance to this development. It is the single biggest imminent threat to our environment in terms of traffic congestion, pressure on infrastructure and loss of amenity.

Nevertheless, we have been involved in many other issues throughout the fifteen months since our last AGM. These include the controversial Coles Quarry revised Planning Application which we have opposed, and 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. We have also been 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 as there is a perceived risk to children. We have also taken part in discussions regarding a 20 mph speed limit and traffic calming measures in Dark Lane.

Other issues which have demanded our attention have been road safety in Station Road, monitoring of and comment on various individual Planning Applications, representation on

the Stancombe Quarry Liaison Committee, liaison with North Somerset MP Liam Fox and North Somerset Councillor Karen Barclay, and commenting upon the West of England Joint Spatial Strategy and Joint Transport Study. BRA has also been represented at a couple of local meetings hosted by The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE).

Last year we were invited to join a new group called North Somerset Village Alliance (NSVA). This comprises fairly new groups in eight or so other villages who decided they would have more clout by working together to resist unwanted development. We decided that, like these other groups, we do not have a mandate to represent Backwell in matters affecting other villages, that we have enough on our plate already, and that we might not always agree with the others! We therefore decided to say “thanks but no thanks”.

I would like to mention something that has happened a couple of times over the last year - anonymous flyers posted through letter boxes in areas of the village. We think anonymity is most unhelpful. BRA documents will always be clearly marked as such. In this modern world of Facebook, Twitter, Instagrams and the like, we are all having to come to terms with the good and bad of such conduits for news and fake news. Again, we will always try to ensure clear ownership of our messages.

The simple way to describe BRA is a pressure group to pursue what we believe to be 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 but 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: Keith Riches reported that as at the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 there were 327 paid up member households. This year, to date, 260 households have paid, of which 45 are new members and further subscriptions have been received this evening.

5. Hon Treasurer’s Report and Audited Accounts for 15 months ended 31.12.16: Terry Merrett-Smith exhibited the audited Accounts for the 15 month period to 31 December 2016. Details are available only to members who should apply to the Hon Secretary if they require further information.

6. Election of Officers:

6.1: Hon Secretary - Mike Veal was proposed by K Riches, seconded by V Wells.  
Unanimously agreed.

6.2: Hon Treasurer - Kevin Crawford was proposed by T Merrett-Smith, seconded M Rose  
Unanimously agreed.

6.3: Committee Members – The following Committee members offered themselves for re-election:-

Gill Collinson was proposed by R Beckingsale, seconded by M Kemp

Chris Elliott was proposed by B Charnock, seconded by A Ribbon-Miles

Both were unanimously agreed.

7. Appointment of Auditor:

Richard Gaunt, who was thanked for fulfilling the role of Auditor, agreed to continue in 2017. His re-appointment was unanimously agreed.

8. Any Other Formal Business: There was none.

The formal proceedings of the Meeting were concluded at 7.22 pm and Presentations with slides were given and an Open Forum held to discuss a range of current issues.

The notes of these informal discussions which are attached as an Appendix do not form part of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting.