**BACKWELL RESIDENTS’ ASSOCIATION**

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 12 February 2019 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, Margaret Kemp, Terry Merrett-Smith, Angela Ribbon-Miles, Mike Rose, Mike Veal, Sue Veal, Geoff Wells, Valerie Wells. A further 109 BRA members and non-members attended.

1. Apologies for Absence: Apologies were received from Committee members Richard Barclay, Kevin Crawford and Bruce Stewart and 10 other members.
2. Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 20 February 2018: No points were raised and the Minutes were unanimously agreed after proposal by Geoff Wells and seconding by Graham Bowerman.
3. Chairman’s 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 the smaller Executive Committee had numerous interim meetings. 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 Meetings and sometimes at Planning Meetings. We frequently make statements during Public Participation at these meetings. We also try to be aware of relevant issues outside Backwell and committee members have attended meetings with North Somerset Council, Nailsea Town Council, Nailsea Action Group, Wraxall Parish Council and Wrington Parish Council.

We try to keep our members informed of topical issues, mainly by e-mailed bulletins but also the occasional hard copy newsletter. For this we are grateful particularly to Geoff and Val Wells who are both active members of the Executive Committee. Geoff is the principal architect of our Bulletins and Newsletters and has also 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. Distributing a newsletter to every house in the village is a big task, which is not routinely done on a voluntary basis byany other village organisation - we thank our team of willing volunteers.

Thanks are also due for the continuing hard work of our Secretary Mike Veal; Treasurer Kevin Crawford; Assistant Treasurer Terry Merritt-Smith; our Membership Secretary and Website Manager Margaret Kemp; our Social Media Manager Angela Ribbon-Miles and Chris Elliott who prepared a detailed response to a Bristol Airport Noise Consultation. Several of these committee members also have very busy jobs or in Angela’s case a young family; we are especially indebted to all of them. After many years service, our Archivist, Ian Tapping has decided to retire from the Committee due to work commitments but has kindly agreed to retain custody of our document archive to which occasionally reference is needed – many thanks Ian.

I would also like to thank Richard Gaunt, who once again has audited our Accounts and has agreed to continue for the current year.

I wish to pay tribute at this point to our North Somerset District Councillor, Karen Barclay, who has served Backwell for 12 years and who has decided to stand down in May this year when the Local Elections will be held. Karen has fought hard for the interests of the Village throughout this period and we have maintained regular contact with her on numerous issues – many thanks Karen.

Although BRA is a non-political organisation, we will be happy to continue to liaise with Karen’s successor whichever Party he or she may represent and we have already met with two of the candidates to discuss areas of common interest.

One of the busiest members of the BRA Committee has again been our Planning Specialist, Mike Rose, who was previously a member of the Steering Group which developed the Backwell Neighbourhood Plan.

On BRA’s behalf, Mike is a member of the Parish Council Working Party which is coordinating the village’s strong opposition to the Joint Spatial Plan and the proposed development at Grove Farm. Mike will be speaking about this later, together with Lucy White the Planning Consultant engaged by the Working Party. So far BRA has contributed £3500 towards the cost of professional representation and has pledged at least a further £4000 on a matched - fund basis.

The JSP proposals for 700 houses on Grove Farm, the so-called Transport Hub and new spur road are the biggest issues Backwell has faced and it is possible that the eventual cost of representation may be even higher. Replenishment of our funds from renewed membership subscriptions and additional donations is therefore vital and our thanks go to all our loyal members.

We hope that members of Backwell Resistance will also contribute to the Parish Council’s costs.

We have addressed many other issues throughout the 12 months since our last AGM including the Moor Lane development proposed by Taylor Wimpey and industrial development at Coles Quarry. There will be more on these subjects later on from Mike.

Last year we also voiced a strong opinion that road safety improvements in Station Road were necessary - again, more later on.

Very recently we have submitted comments on the Bristol Airport Planning Application – more about this later this evening.

We have continued to lobby for the long awaited improvements to disabled access at Nailsea and Backwell Station which have still not materialised. We have tried to support Lorraine Hopkinson Parker’s one lady crusade against errant Biffa lorries in Dark Lane – an issue which does seem to be much improved.

Mike Veal has been part of the village representation 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. The quarry is generally a good neighbour and we are pleased their open day was a resounding success.

Ladies and gentlemen - the simple way to describe BRA is a pressure group which seeks to achieve what we believe to be the best interests of Backwell as a whole. There are lots of things we cannot fix, and we do not have expertise to cover all issues but we will keep trying to do our best for the village. The BRA Committee remains committed to preventing the over-development of Backwell. The views of all our members are always welcome and I hope that you will feel free to join in the two Open Forum sessions later on. Thank you.

1. Membership Report: Geoff Wells gave the following report which was illustrated with slides.

**Slide 1** – A graph illustrating steady growth of households in membership from 274 in 2014 to 436 at the end of 2018. “As you see our membership numbers have grown in recent years, and current indications are that 2019, with over 200 having paid before this evening, will be at least as good as 2018. These figures are for households, and now show that around 25% of Backwell households have taken the trouble to join BRA, for which we are hugely grateful. Many thanks to our volunteer distributors who support our activities. We also have members from just outside Backwell – in Brockley, Chelvey and Bucklands Batch.”

**Slide 2 –** A diagrammatic map indicating the location of Committee members’ residences throughout the village. “We listen to the views of members, and it

helps that our committee of 15 is as representative as possible So, for example this is where we live – with someone in every quadrant from the main traffic lights.”

**Slide 3** – An illustration of the broad range of backgrounds and experience of Committee members. “We have a mix of age and gender. We have **workers** as a Finance Director, MOD, NHS, and Wholesaler and the **retired** people were previously a Naval Officer, Planning Expert ( qualified surveyor), Bank Manager, Charity Manager, Statistician/Economist, Manager with major Motor Retailer and Teacher. Given the time needed for some of the tasks we do, we have an inevitable bias towards the fully or partially retired, but we do have a mother with 3 young children under 8. Between us we belong to lots of Backwell Clubs and organisations. At this point, I noted that Keith thanked everyone but himself, which is a serious omission. A chairman plays a key role in making the team perform as a unit. We all work hard, but it is a great team to be a part of, and many thanks are due to Keith for leading us so effectively.”

**Slide 4** – An illustration of the two main sources of input to representations made by BRA. “Our membership enables us to have a 2 pronged approach. We have an incredible record of comments made on planning issues, with hundreds of Backwellians regularly voicing their views when the need arises. We are well known at North Somerset for being an active community!! The other prong we have is good quality professional advice. I am not a planning expert, but I have picked up enough to know that having individual comments in numbers AND experts that know what points to make, produces a couple of very sharp prongs. 1+1 =3 when it comes to making an impact. Both of these depend on our numbers, so many thanks for your comments and your £10 membership subs which help to fund expert advisers. It is a huge help if you pay early in the year.”

1. Honorary Treasurer’s Report and Audited Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2018: Terry Merrett-Smith exhibited a summary of the audited Accounts for the twelve months to 31 December 2018. These are available only to BRA Members who may apply to the Secretary if they require further information.
2. Election of Officers and Committee Members:

6.1: Hon Secretary - Mike Veal was proposed by Judy Thomas, seconded by Geoff Wells and was unanimously elected.

6.2: Hon Treasurer - Kevin Crawford was proposed by Richard Ivens, seconded by Keith Riches and was unanimously elected.

6.3: The following Committee Members, having served three years retired and offered themselves for re-election:-

Richard Barclay Proposed by Graham Bowerman Seconded by Valerie Wells

Margaret Kemp Proposed by Bill Charnock Seconded by Gill Collinson

T Merrett-Smith Proposed by David Andrews Seconded by Jane Elliott

A Ribbon-Miles Proposed by Rachel Beckingsale Seconded by Mairead Dent

Keith Riches Proposed by Phil Collinson Seconded by Andy Pitcher

Mike Rose Proposed by Jeanne Craske Seconded by Chris Perry

Geoff Wells Proposed by Graham Hackett Seconded by Pam Marchant

Valerie Wells Proposed by Norma Knight Seconded by Tim Lewis

The Meeting unanimously voted in favour of all the above nominations.

1. Appointment of Auditor:

Richard Gaunt was thanked and kindly agreed to continue in 2019. His re-appointment was proposed by Kevin Crawford, seconded by Mike Veal and unanimously agreed.

1. Any Other Formal Business: There was none.

The formal proceedings of the Meeting were concluded at 7.30 pm and Presentations with slides were given and an Open Forum held to discuss a range of current issues. The notes on these Presentations attached as Appendix 1 do not form part of the formal Minutes of the Annual General Meeting.