**BACKWELL RESIDENTS’ ASSOCIATION**

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 5 April 2022 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, Barbara Harland, Angela Ribbon-Miles, Mike Rose, Mike Veal, Sue Veal, Geoff Wells, Valerie Wells. A further 70 BRA members and non-members attended.

Chairman Keith Riches opened the Meeting as follows: -

“Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen and welcome to the BRA AGM – how good it is to be here again after last year’s virtual AGM.

Before I talk about BRA, I hope you will forgive a short digression. The pandemic has resulted in challenging times for us all during these last two years. Infection rates are still high, but thankfully for the most part Covid is now causing far less serious illness. Many folk in various groups and organisations gave up their time to support Backwell residents through the worst of it – a wonderful community effort. Unfortunately, another serious international situation has arisen, together with the prospect of huge increases in the price of fuels, food, services etc which will affect everyone. In the context of all this, our local planning issues might seem rather trivial but they could have a significant impact on every aspect of life in Backwell, so we will press on and address them as best we can.”

1. Apologies for Absence: Apologies were received from Committee members Kevin Crawford, Chris Elliott, Margaret Kemp, Bruce Stewart and former Committee member Terry Merrett-Smith and members Julie Ratcliffe, Nicola Everitt, Mary and Colin Walkington, Mark Mallett, Myna Legg, Chris and Jo Perry, Richard Parsons, Christina Greene and Drummond Forbes
2. Minutes of ‘virtual’ Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 23 February 2021:

No points were raised and the Minutes were unanimously agreed.

1. Chairman Keith Riches gave the following Report:-

“Our constitution says that “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. Furthermore, BRA will support or oppose development affecting Backwell having regard to residents’ interests and the local environment.”

The Officers and Committee have remained largely unchanged throughout the year, except that our Assistant Treasurer, Terry Merritt-Smith retired after many years service to BRA, for which we are most grateful. Terry has recently suffered ill health – we hope he stays on the road to recovery and wish him well for the future. Terry’s role has been taken over for the time being by our Secretary, Mike Veal. The Committee was also joined by Sally Heslop who volunteered last March. Sally produced some significant reports on environmental sustainability and we are grateful for her input. Unfortunately for us she has now resigned as she will shortly be moving away from Backwell. On a brighter note, we are delighted that Backwell’s former District Councillor, Karen Barclay has volunteered to join the BRA Committee and she has been proposed for election this evening.

Our full Committee held monthly meetings throughout the year, many on a virtual basis although we are now back to ‘live’ meetings. The smaller Executive Committee had many interim meetings and a rota of its members attended every full Backwell Parish Council meeting and Planning Committee meetings when appropriate. We continue to lend our support to the Parish Council whenever we have shared objectives. Just a short advert – one excellent way to serve your community is to become a Councillor. Please contact the Clerk, Jane Stone.

We try to keep our members informed of topical issues, mainly by e-mailed bulletins, our website and Facebook. We also produce an annual hard copy newsletter which is distributed to every house in the village and beyond. For all this we are especially grateful to Geoff and Val Wells. Geoff is the principal architect of our Bulletins and Newsletters and also produces articles for the Village Magazine. Val, ably assisted by Gill Collinson, has been responsible for membership recruitment and distribution of Newsletters. Sending over two thousand newsletters is a big task, which is not routinely done on a voluntary basis byany other village organisation - we thank our team of more than thirty willing volunteers.

Thanks are also due for the continuing hard work of our Secretary Mike Veal; Minutes Secretary, Sue Veal; Treasurer Kevin Crawford; our Membership Secretary and Website Manager Margaret Kemp; our Social Media Manager Angela Ribbon-Miles and Chris Elliott who co-ordinated our virtual meetings when we were unable to meet physically, and even a recent ‘hybrid’ meeting! Several of these Committee Members have jobs, Angela has a young family and many of them do other voluntary work for the village. Barbara Harland has worked tirelessly on BRA ‘s opposition to the expansion of Bristol Airport and she will be talking to you about the current situation later in this meeting.

Probably the busiest member of the BRA Committee has again been our Planning Adviser, Mike Rose who has, with our Planning Consultant, Lucy White been the main contributor to our submissions to North Somerset Council on several important Planning Applications. As if this is not enough, Mike has also supported the Parish Council on a number of planning related issues. Mike will be speaking to you later.

We are indebted to all the members of this amazing team.

You may think that the pandemic resulted in a lower level of activity by developers but this has certainly not been the case. Persimmon, Taylor Wimpey and now Octavia Homes have proposed some major schemes in Backwell. So, the BRA Committee has been very busy resisting overdevelopment in our village. And of course, there is the Local Plan. More on all this shortly.

During the year we have also maintained regular contact with our District Councillor, Bridget Petty. We have corresponded with, and met our MP, Liam Fox. We also continue to work with Backwell Resistance on relevant issues.

Mike Veal and Councillor Bob Taylor have continued to represent the village on the Stancombe Quarry Liaison Committee & Community Fund from which several Backwell organisations have benefited.

Finally, I would like to add our thanks to:

Richard Collinson for his IT expertise with maps and things.

Richard Gaunt who once again audited our Accounts and has kindly agreed to continue for the current year.

Peter Speight who has deployed his drone and produced some excellent aerial pictures.

The school for allowing us to use this lecture theatre and all the obliging members of staff.

Ladies and gentlemen - BRA is a pressure group which seeks to achieve what we believe is in 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 (for example traffic and transport) but we will keep trying to do our best for the village. The views of our members are always welcome and I hope that you will join in the Open Forum session later on.”

1. Membership Report: Geoff Wells gave the following report:-

“Our membership numbers have been very steady around the 440 mark, over the last 4 years, with only one small dip in 2020, no doubt due to the lockdown. Results on numbers so far this year suggest that for 2022 we will go above the 440 level.

We have a powerful and respected voice, given that nearly a quarter of Backwell households pay the BRA £10 subscription. This is impressive for a purely voluntary organisation. Many thanks for your continuing support, and generous donations.

We very rarely trouble the membership with surveys, given that the best way to express your views is to respond to our planning authority, North Somerset Council.

However, in February of this year, the Local Plan process, for the first time, proposed actual development sites and housing numbers (a total of 1120) for Backwell. Given the importance of this document, we decided to test the reaction of members with this simple question.

**“If this Draft Plan is implemented in Backwell for 2023 - 38 the impact on Backwell would be?”**

This resulted in the following response:-

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Very Good | Good | Bad | Very Bad |
| 0% | 0% | 7% | 93% |

Almost 200 households responded to this email straw poll and overwhelmingly said that if this plan was implemented for the period 2023 to 2038 it would be **very bad** for Backwell. We are grateful to everyone who made their views known, which is a helpful backcloth to our work on this Local Plan, about which you will hear much more later.

BRA has never been busier than we have had to be lately. Our 14 Committee members have diverse talents and personalities, who work together with much effort and dedication. The role of the chair is to pull all the strands together. Keith deserves special thanks for continuing to make it such a good organisation for us to work in. Thank you, Keith”

1. Honorary Treasurer’s Report and Audited Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2021: On behalf of the Treasurer, Kevin Crawford, the Secretary, Mike Veal, exhibited a summary of the audited Accounts for the twelve months to 31 December 2021. These are available only to BRA Members who may apply to the Secretary if they require further information. He also highlighted some major items of expenditure on large projects since 2020 as follows:-

Rodney Road Planning Application: £3,087, Farleigh Fields Planning Application: £2,672, Bristol Airport expansion – support of NSC refusal: £1,000, Moor Lane Planning Application: £700, Draft NSC Local Plan: £1,000.

The audited Accounts were unanimously approved.

1. 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 Mike Rose, seconded by Mike Veal and was unanimously elected.

6.3: Committee Member – Karen Barclay was proposed by Keith Riches, seconded by Barbara Harland and was unanimously elected.

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

Committee Member – Margaret Kemp was proposed by Chris Elliott, seconded by Keith Riches and was unanimously elected.

Committee Member – Angela Ribbon-Miles was proposed by Sue Veal, seconded by Gill Collinson and was unanimously elected.

Committee Member – Keith Riches was proposed by Barbara Harland, seconded by Valerie Wells and was unanimously elected.

Committee Member – Mike Rose was proposed by Keith Riches, seconded by Valerie Wells and was unanimously elected.

Committee Member – Geoff Wells was proposed by Mike Veal, seconded by Chris Elliott and was unanimously elected.

Committee Member – Valerie Wells was proposed by Gill Collinson, seconded by Kevin Crawford and was unanimously elected.

1. Appointment of Auditor:

Richard Gaunt was thanked and kindly agreed to continue in 2022. His re-appointment was proposed by Mike Rose, seconded by Valerie Wells and unanimously agreed.

1. 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 on these Presentations and on the Open Forum and Question and Answer session attached as Appendices 1-4 do not form part of the formal Minutes of the Annual General Meeting.