

Minutes of the Camden Residents Association AGM 2018

Claremont Methodist Church Hall 22/11/18

1. Welcome by the Chair

2. Adoption of New Constitution

The Chairman explained that on the administration side the committee has looked hard at how we run the organisation, how we relate to our residents and how we can most easily comply with this year's data protection regulations. This has resulted in a brand-new constitution which means we no longer have members as such. Residents and others can associate by subscribing to the website using just their email addresses. That is all we need to know about our associates and the only data we hold.

We have also been much more explicit about what officers and committee members responsibilities are. As a result, despite three other committee members resigning this year after probably 25 years of excellent service between them, we have found a surfeit of fresh candidates which is so very heartening. The Chairman expressed the hope that the CRA continue to engage ever more fully with its residence and fulfils its mission of making life better for those living on or near Camden Road.

The Committee have recommended that this new constitution is adopted. By a unanimous show of hands with blue voting cards, the new constitution was adopted.

2. Minutes of the 2017 AGM. These were approved.

3. Chairman's Report

Jeremy continued to give the Chairman's report for the year. (This is on the website)

The main points were:

1. We published our report entitled "Tackling Congestion and Poor Air Quality in Camden, Bath – Jan 2018). We created a blog site, to which residents could subscribe on 19th January to draw people's attention to the report. We now have 137 subscribers, which is a fair proportion of the 400 households in Camden.
2. March brought heavy snow and a new vision for a car free Camden on the same day that Transition Larkhall ran their highly successful Transport Briefing with Wera Hobhouse. Our snow patrols were out deicing and clearing snow.
3. Just after Easter we got the first sight of the Council's plans to lower the levels of NOx in the atmosphere. One of our aims in our new constitution is 'to make information available of interest or concern available to all residents through the web-site and other media'. As far as the CAZ is concerned we have blogged 40 times, asserted our views in writing and attended every meeting opportunity.
4. We were also very proud to see one of our own councillors, and a previous chair of the CRA, elected as Mayor.
5. After a bit of a break 'Wild Camden' will get back up and running next year with a lot of people interested in putting some time and effort into making the area below Camden Crescent a bit neater. We've also ran our first litter pick for some time and in one hour cleaned the street from one end to the other.

4. Treasurer's report.

The year to date has been reassuring in financial terms.

CURRENT ACCOUNT

Subscriptions raised through the 'Newsletter' were £135 (2017-18: £94) with additional **donations** of £61 (2016-17: £18).

We also received a **grant** from B&NES to help with our website design and ongoing maintenance of £500.

This has all helped our Current account, that ended last year in a c.£300 deficit, and this year has become a surplus of c.£620.

SAVINGS (Hedgemoor Railings) ACCOUNT

No change at c.£ 5,600.

The full detailed accounts can be viewed on the website

5. Election of committee members and officers

The officers were re-elected without opposition.

A ballot was conducted for the election of committee members. The results were announced at the end of the meeting:

6. Ad hoc Discussion: of Ward Boundary Changes

Firstly, in answer to a question on the Council structure, Mark Shelford explained that under the Cabinet system in the Council, the Council leader allocated certain portfolios to particular councillors.

Peter Norris complained that a number of houses, including his own, in Upper and Lower Camden Place, had been moved from Lansdown to Walcot ward without consultation.

He went on to explain that both parliamentary and council boundaries were periodically reviewed, which happened about once every 10 years in Bath. This was done by the Boundary Commission for England. There were a series of consultations. In his own constituency there were anomalies meaning that communities were split in serious ways. Some of his recommendations were accepted, others not. The boundary commission made the final decision.

Lin Patterson, councillor for Lambridge, said that there was a consultation and Lambridge mounted a huge campaign. It was well documented in the Chronicle but she admitted there was a problem with publicising the consultation.

Richard Samuel, councillor for Walcot, said that the Boundary Commission had received hundreds of representations. He had made the CRA aware of the consultation. The number of councillors was being reduced from 65 to 59. One basic premise was that no ward should straddle the river. He had responded twice with recommendations. The final decision was that Camden Crescent remained in Lansdown, the rest of Camden in Walcot.

Jeremy pointed out that we had covered the subject in our blog and that it had generated some comments.

Nigel Pollard said that it had been well publicised, it was well covered in the Chronicle and it had been on the Council website.

7. Camden and the Charging Clean Air Zone Discussion

Jeremy explained that the proposed CAZ would essentially split Camden. There were those who were in it and those who were out.

He urged everyone to fill in the questionnaire on the Council's website. There were 3 days left before the consultation ended. The CRA would respond based on the evening's discussion.

Mark Shelford, council member responsible for Highways and Transport, was asked to speak for a few minutes about the CAZ.

He explained that the European Commission and Client Earth had won an European Court case against the British Government over levels of pollution, forcing it to take immediate action to reduce levels of particulates and NO₂ in various cities, including Bath. Clean air, he said, was seen as separate from congestion. Cleaner vehicles would not end congestion, and other measures were needed.

The Council was charged with presenting a business case to the Joint Air Quality Unit by the end of December, on the basis of which they would be allocated funding for setting up the scheme.

Briefing notes had been sent out and there had been various consultations around the area. The basis of the scheme was:

- a charging clean air zone
- class D to charge HGVs, buses, taxis, pre euro4 petrol cars, and pre euro6 diesel cars.
- larger vehicles to be charged £100, small vehicles £9 per 24 hrs.

There would be concessions for blue badge holders etc, emergency vehicles etc. and also local concessions.

There had been over 6000 replies to the consultation and a body of evidence was being built up.

Public transport and traffic management were also being considered. Measures being considered, though dependent on funding, were as follows:

- free school transport.
- Improvements to the rural bus network
- P&R east of Bath
- P&R in local market towns
- Airport buses connecting to strategic bus routes
- Traffic management such as bus gates on potential rat runs
- Working with the RUH on helping their work force get to and from work
- Working on a complete review of parking zones in the city.

Mark spoke of both the challenge and the opportunity the CAZ presented. Since the CAZ had to be delivered, it made it possible to find funding, perhaps through WECA, to make wider changes to transport in the city.

Questions from the floor

1. Paul Brockenshaw questioned the 24 hr period running from midnight to midnight, pointing out the problems of shift workers or people staying out late at night. Mark said that it had proved impossible to bring in a rolling 24hrs system, but that something had to be worked out with regard to shift working. Any ideas were welcome.

Mark explained that where the zone began, there had to be an alternative road for traffic to take. Paul suggested that if the CAZ boundary were set at junctions on Lansdown Road this would have the same effect as including Camden Road.

2. Paul went on to say that if he were driving to the RUH with a non-complying car, he would have to drive some 10 miles to get around the zone, adding even more to pollution. Mark replied that we have to deal with the pollution hotspots and this will inevitably mean some people will have a longer drive.
3. Nicholas Magniac, whose house in Malvern Villas backs on to Belgrave Crescent spoke about vehicles avoiding the zone at the top of Gays Hill, having to turn down Gays Hill and back through Belgrave Crescent. Others at the meeting seemed to agree that it would be impossible to turn a truck round at this point, but there seemed no other alternatives throughout the length of the Camden Rd. It was hoped that good signage would make this happen very rarely.
4. Another Camden resident spoke about the way the scheme would impact unfairly on people with low incomes. He suggested phasing in the scheme, first for large vehicles, hopefully hitting the targets. If not, cars could be included.

Mark pointed out that there were legislative issues. The scheme had to deliver the required results by the end of 2021. All the signage would need to be changed if the scheme were changed. In principle he thought it a good idea.

5. Deepali Gaskell spoke about the CAZ not tackling congestion. She asked whether parking spaces on the south side of Camden Crescent had been considered in order to slow down traffic.
6. Ros Rylands asked whether residents were to be given special rates, and how people on low incomes were to be compensated.

Mark said that they were indeed working on a range of local concessions, help for people on low incomes, and help for changing to compliant cars. A residents discount had been modelled but it did not achieve compliance with the targets.

7. Ros also suggested a rationing of journeys, which Mark thought was good idea which should be suggested.
8. David Kernek welcomed the fresh consideration of local bus routes, the good thing about the CAZ being that it would encourage more people to take the bus. He asked whether the Council would consider reinstating the subsidies on buses which had been cut so drastically in recent years.

Mark replied that he thought that public transport only works if properly subsidised. Through WECA and the Joint Air Quality Unit (set up jointly between Defra and the Dept Of Trade and Industry) there would hopefully be funding. WECA was due to bring out its new bus strategy, but this was late.

9. Gloria Goodsell asked if there were any strategy for Belgrave Crescent, which was just outside the proposed zone. Jeremy pointed out that where the zone began there had to be an escape route. Bennett's Hill, Tynings Rd, all would be impossible.

Mark said that we were all faced with this problem. We must gather evidence to suggest where the zone should begin.

10. Peter Gooch said he thought it would only be a problem for a short time.

11. Adrian Chalkley made the point that it was not the number of journeys that was significant, but the time spent stationary, with engines running, at peak periods. He questioned the need for a high cost infrastructure scheme.

Mark replied that all non-charging methods had been looked at, but none would achieve compliance. The worst offenders were buses.

He had been working with First Bus about bringing in green buses. However, procurement time was 2 -3 years. In the meantime he felt they should be charged. However, the cost would be passed on to passengers, making fewer people use the bus, making them less viable.

12. Adrian asked about the possibility of restricting HGVs or vans as well from using Camden Road in the rush hours. Mark said that some form of bus gates might be possible.

13. Joy Russell did not like the idea of bus gates and being unable to drive her car on Camden Rd at certain times.

14. Tom Davies asked, whether in view of the consultation ending on Monday would there be time for all the comments to be processed.

Mark replied that it could not be guaranteed. It might be possible to ease future deadlines.

15. Andrew Galway said that as Camden Road was split by the zone, it might be better to take it out entirely, having the start at Lansdown, forcing traffic to turn right at the junction.

16. Mark Ellis suggested the eventual solution was electric cars. Was any money set aside for electric chargers?

Mark Shelford replied that there was funding offered from JAQU and they had asked for 120 within Bath. A priority was chargers for car clubs, then centralised rapid chargers in car parks taking 20 minutes. Eventually there would be very quick, 5 minute chargers at fuel stations, and facilities for changing batteries.

17. Frank Benyon asked about the possibility of modifying the charge for cars with more than one occupant.

Mark questioned whether the camera technology was good enough at the moment to cope with this. But P&Rs were going to charge by car rather than by person.

18. Frank also spoke about the absence of an eastern P&R. Mark replied that they were looking at various options. In addition WECA funding meant that they could look at more and smaller sites, perhaps on existing bus routes.

19. Jeremy Labram spoke about pressures on parking from residents in the CAZ trying to park just outside, or from commuters not wanting to enter the zone. Fairfield Park and Larkhall would be badly affected. Richard Samuel added that the roads off the

London Road were already badly affected by commuter parking and the whole parking regulations would have to be recast to deal with this problem.

Mark said that they were indeed looking at all parking zones.

20. Geoff Wood said that we had all been encouraged to buy diesel cars and there ought to be a national scrappage scheme. Jeremy said that it was possible to swap a diesel car for a similar petrol car of the same age for not much cost. Rob Appleyard pointed out that Bath was now one of 61 cities bringing in CAZs, which might severely dent the used car market for diesels.

Summary

Jeremy summed up the main issues identified for Camden residents.

- i) Need for help for people on low incomes, not just those on benefits.
- i) Problem with Belgrave Crescent, possibility of vehicles trying to turn
- ii) Eastern P&R
- iii) Parking zone changes to ease pressure on car parking spaces just outside zone

8. Election Results

The result of the election was given and the new committee members given as

Frank Benyon	30	elected
Gloria Goodsell	33	elected
Caroline Groom	33	elected
John Long	26	elected
Chris Smith	38	elected
Bob Williams	31	elected
Deepali Gaskel	14	

The meeting finished at 9.30pm with thanks to Mark Shelford and all those attending.