

## **Minutes of the Camden Residents Association AGM 2017**

**Claremont Methodist Church Hall 23/11/17**

### **1. Welcome by the Chair**

**2. Minutes of the 2016 AGM.** These were approved.

### **3. Chairman's Report**

Richard Samuel reflected on his two years as Chairman of the CRA and explained that his election as a Councillor for the Walcot ward meant that he would have to resign as Chairman this year. The main concerns this year were the same as last, wild Camden, waste and recycling collections and safety, congestion and pollution on the roads of Camden.

The new refuse collection arrangements were now in place and seemed to be working reasonably well. People could ring the Council if they needed extra recycling containers, or were not happy with the bags/bins provided. At Christmas there was to be more latitude regarding collection of 'side waste' not in the gull proof bags or wheelie bins.

The Council's Air Quality Consultation was due to close in a few days time, and Richard urged everybody to respond if possible. The Council, he explained, had been issued with a government directive to improve air quality in the city, and the consultation would feed into this. He and Lydia Halcrow had met with Council officials and he hoped this had resulted in one of the traffic surveillance cameras being put on the Camden Rd. This issue was to be discussed later.

Richard reported that the CRA website had now been revamped and it could now be more easily kept up to date. There was some new content including a section about the history of the area, and Richard invited people to submit more information about their own houses or group of houses to the CRA.

### **4. Treasurer's Report**

Nigel Pollard explained that the CRA had two accounts. One was a savings account, which contained mainly money that had been donated by councillors for the replacement of the railings to Wild Camden on Upper Hedgemoor Rd. This account remained much as last year and stood at £5604.51. The second, a current account, showed an income of £112 and outgoings of £50 membership of FoBRA, £38 for hire of Claremont Hall, website design £300. The account now stood at £667.46. It therefore looked as though we should be aiming at a yearly income of about £150 if finances were to remain in the same position.

David Kernek asked whether FoBRA was worth supporting. Richard said it was active on many issues, including a recent one where it had successfully lobbied for a reduction in the percentage of houses of multiple occupation which the Council would allow.

Cllr Patrick Anketell-Jones also agreed that FoBRA was very active in representing residents' associations and had regular meetings with the administration. Cllr Tony Clarke explained that Bath was unusual in not having a parish council, and instead FoBRA had various committees considering issues such as planning and transport.

## **5. Election of a new Chairman and Committee**

Only one nomination for position of Chairman had been received.

Jeremy Labram was nominated by Julie Platt and seconded by Janet Anderson.

He was elected by the members present.

Jeremy then introduced himself as a fairly new resident of Camden and said he had been warmly welcomed by neighbours, first in Camden Terrace and then in Prospect Place.

The present committee, with the exception of Gina Tinne, who had stepped down, was re-elected for a further year, proposed by Patrick A-J, seconded by David Kernek. A new member, Nancy Coppeck, was also elected, proposed by Steve George, seconded by Chris Smith.

## **6. Traffic Report**

Jeremy explained that he had worked on the Traffic Report which the CRA had got together and intended to present to the Council, and had collated it. He then gave a presentation on the main points, for further suggestions and amendments.

The draft report is already on the CRA web-site. His annotated short slide deck would also be made available.

Discussion

Graham Groome wondered whether the report was just too long and detailed for its target audience, the Council. Jeremy pointed out that it was nevertheless important to introduce a lot of detailed and well researched evidence and maybe insert a 'Super Executive Summary'.

There was a discussion about the need for cleaner buses. Russell Jackson spoke about the need for negotiation with First Group, and a tougher approach by the Council. Cities such as Nottingham had negotiated much improved buses.

Richard said that he had long realised that the problem went far beyond Camden, it was a city-wide problem that needed a city-wide solution. Our report could just provide one more prompt to the Council. It needed an effort to reduce journeys into and across the city which resulted in traffic spilling out into residential streets.

Someone pointed out that the Ensleigh development on Lansdown would mean even more traffic, as would Riverside.

Chris Smith complained that St Stephens Rd had also become a rat-run to Lansdown, and was particularly dangerous because of the narrow pavements.

Jeremy said that he had noticed that very few cars turned off the A46 at the Cold Aston roundabout to come into Bath past or to the Lansdown park and ride. Lansdown Rd was rarely congested. Cars preferred to come through the backstreets of Larkhall, past three schools.

Despite what Richard said, Jeremy thought Camden Road was a special case, having a problem of speeding when the road was quiet, and pollution and congestion in the rush hours.

Someone questioned whether the level of pollution on Camden Road was actually illegal which was confirmed by Wera Hobhouse.

The effect of the 20 mph was also mentioned, with Tony Clarke stating that research had shown there were more accidents in a 20 than a 30mph zone. Other people felt that even if this were the case, the seriousness of injuries was a great deal more at the higher speed. Patrick A-J said the Council had produced a report on the first 3 years of the operation on the 20mph zones which he would send to Jeremy.

Steve Hacker, a Belgrave Crescent resident said that he was disappointed that very little had been said in our report about the way BC was used by cars turning off Camden Rd to get to Upper Hedgemoad and Lansdown Rd. There had been numerous collisions.

Richard said that he had spoken to Mark Shelford, the cabinet member for transport and he had agreed to receive the report and see what can be done. As to pollution levels he pointed out that the average levels reported masked wide variations, and the peaks were probably beyond the legal levels.

## **7. Our MP Wera Hobhouse's address**

Wera wished us a very successful campaign.

There were always local issues and we were right to get together to push for improvements for our own area. But as a politician she saw the need to look at the wider picture and urged us to look at finding common ground with others where action can be taken together. It is, she said, a good time to lobby for action on traffic, with the Council being forced to take action on pollution by March 2018. She was worried about matters being properly linked up because the Council was having to take action so quickly.

She thought first about public transport, about how the worse it becomes the fewer people use it, and how then bus routes close entirely.

As well as buses, there are good alternatives to the car, especially for young people, walking and cycling. Dedicated cycle routes were a possibility. But there was no quick fix. A lot of car journeys were by parents, and we must somehow encourage families to get children to walk.

The biggest polluters on the London Rd, she said, were diesel cars. Someone challenged this, complaining that it was HGVs. She agreed they were also involved. What was important was that the Council carried out more detailed studies.

Ideas have to come from the grass roots. We have to get a buy-in from as many communities as possible for action to be taken.

### *Discussion*

Russell Jackson complained that Councils run by both the Conservatives and Liberals had failed to do anything substantive about traffic problems in Bath, and they had failed to find any common ground between the parties about tackling the issue.

Wera replied that she thought the lack of action was the result of no penalties being imposed, but that the next few months represented a real opportunity.

Tony Clarke pointed out that the present administration was working to the 'Bath Strategy' introduced by the previous administration and was not being confrontational.

David Kernek regretted to change the Council had made in adopting a cabinet system which diminished the role of ward councillors.

Wera said that we must all work together. This is a matter of our health and that of our children and grandchildren.

Patrick asked Wera to put pressure on the government with regard to NO2 emission hotspots to recognise that average readings do not represent the real pollution, as peak emissions could be the real danger.

Nigel Sherwen said that Larkhall's request for a real-time monitoring device had been turned down because it would cost about £40,000. There were less expensive mobile monitors around the city, and Richard reported there was a real-time monitor in the basement of the Old Bank Antiques on the London Rd.

There were now cameras at various locations to accurately map car movements and to say whether the vehicle was petrol or diesel. This should give us powerful data on which to take action.

Wera finished by saying that we need to take action. The government was providing money, and we need to get hold of it. That is the only way of addressing the problem.

## **8. Wild Camden**

Steve reported that the group were hoping to initiate more community action, perhaps launching a 'Camden Garden Club' in the spring to share the work on Wild Camden. The Council was carrying out periodic pruning and grass cutting. The Council were also looking at repairs to the vaults supporting the road and might at the same time carry out some repairs to the railings.

## **9. AOB**

Gloria complained that Belgrave Crescent residents had not been consulted about the proposed removal of a parking space on Gays Hill at the junction with BC. Richard explained that it had been the subject of a Draft Traffic Order and was done on grounds of road safety. The order had also included the removal of residents parking spaces at Claremont on Camden Rd. The Council had put up notices on lamp posts outside Gays Hill House and Claremont Villas. Richard himself had distributed a letter about it to every house in BC and that section of Camden Road. There had been 56 objections regarding the parking spaces on Camden, only one, he thought, about Gays Hill. As far as he knew, no decision had yet been made.

Steve Hacker said that he thought the removal of the Gays Hill parking space was dangerous as it encouraged car drivers to drive even faster round the Crescent when they could very smoothly turn left at the end.

Deepali spoke about the way the width of the road at Camden Crescent gave drivers the impression they could drive faster than was the case. She also spoke about the need to extend the hours of residents only parking in order to deter people parking on the road in the evenings and overnight when accessing the city centre.