

**Minutes of the Camden Residents Association AGM 2019  
Claremont Community Centre 21/11/2019**

**1. Welcome by the Chairman**

Jeremy thanked Niall from the Claremont Community Centre for making us welcome, and thanked both Camden residents and people from neighbouring areas for coming to the meeting.

**2. Election of the Committee**

Jeremy introduced those who were standing for the Committee, Jeremy Labram as Chair, Nigel Pollard as Treasurer, Bob Williams as Website Manager, Chris Smith, Gloria Goodsell, Frank Benyon and John Long. Janet Anderson and Caroline Groom were standing down, and so we are looking for a Secretary. There were three new candidates, Rachel Demuth, Debra Scott and Louise Coates. The new committee was elected unopposed by a show of hands. Further details can be found [here](#).

**3. Treasurer's Report**

Nigel Pollard explained that he had been required by RBS to change our account to another bank and had changed to Santander. This had resulted in a payment of £750 from RBS for our trouble. Otherwise there had been little change in the financial position of the CRA and the financial report would be published on the website.

**4. Chairman's Report**

Jeremy introduced the discussion of the proposed Low Traffic Neighbourhood using a [slide deck](#). He explained the efforts that had been made in the past to improve pollution and road safety on the Camden Road, and that despite this how things were worse than ever. Hopes that we would see a reduction in polluting traffic with the introduction of the Clean Air Zone were dashed when cars were not included in the scheme.

Jeremy said that he was now very optimistic about the possibility of improvement. There was now a different situation, he saw it as a planetary alignment. There were several events involved.

1. The coming of the CAZ, despite it not having a big impact on Camden Road because cars were not involved.
2. The Climate Emergency announcement by BaNES, with the recognition that massive changes in lifestyle were necessary for all of us.
3. The new Liberal led administration took over at the Council in May 2019 with four years before worrying about the next election
4. Joanna Wright, a Larkhall resident and transport activist was elected as a councillor and was appointed Joint Cabinet Lead for Transport.
5. There was a massive car crash in Prospect Place which led to local councillors and residents looking at the problems again and pushing for an LTN.
6. There is now local action in the form of 8 young mothers running 'walk to school buses' from parts of Camden up to St Stephens School.

He continued to say that the main objective of the LTN is to stop rat-running through NE Bath. Camden is probably prepared to host the necessary bus-gate on behalf of the area. It is a balance of benefit in returning the area to a thriving neighbourhood and the slight inconvenience of the bus-gate for residents.

He then invited Joanna Wright to talk through her plans and vision.

**5. Joanna Wright's presentation of the LTN proposal**

Joanna said that her interest had arisen when she had carried out research locally in Larkhall as to how children got to school, counting some 40,000 car journeys over two weeks and finding that traffic volumes were significantly lower when children were not at school. Car journeys could be much reduced if the problem of how children get to school was addressed.

She pointed out that we have all become cocooned in a car culture.

This, she said, had costs in terms of

- a) health (pollution, safety, inactivity)
- b) social justice (discriminating against women who are less likely to own cars, people under 18 and poorer people)
- c) The erosion of community in areas with through traffic
- d) The degradation of the environment.

Joanna said that she had found inspiration from Clyde Loakes, a councillor at Waltham Forest in London who was instrumental in designing what was called a Low Traffic Neighbourhood. After 14 years of implementing single measures which were frustratingly ineffective, the LTN introduced radical transformation by changing spaces and changing the ways people behaved.

She said that she and the Council were in the early stages of planning an LTN. It had to be delivered properly and it was important that the community was behind the idea or there would be no political will to carry it through.

The idea of an LTN was that traffic would be allowed in and out of the zone but not through it. This would result in many car journeys being longer, hopefully many people finding it quicker to walk. This might mean bus gates (only allowing buses through) at rush hour or throughout the day, and bollards. The idea was to keep traffic to the main roads around and between LTNs. There were problems establishing an LTN on roads with 30mph limits and she was of the opinion that a 20mph limit should apply throughout Bath.

She said they were looking carefully at 'micro-mobility', including cycling and e-scooters, and she was well aware of problems because of the hilly nature of the city.

## **6. Discussion of the LTN**

Frank Benyon chaired the discussion involving a panel of Councillors Tom Davies, Mark Elliott, Lucy Hodges and Joanna Wright, and our Chairman Jeremy Labram.

He began by dividing it into two parts

- i) do we agree that there is an unacceptable situation regarding pollution and road safety in our area?
- ii) What do we see as the definition of an LTN? What do we think of the different solutions envisaged?

There was a show of hands regarding the first point, and it was unanimously agreed.

Resident 1 (Geof Ward) asked how the CAZ was to mesh with the LTN. As cars were not now included in the CAZ he was concerned about the remaining turn around traffic in Belgrave Crescent. As there was no bypass, cars were being forced through the centre of the city.

Joanna replied that over 8,500 people had objected to class D being included in the CAZ. It was very unpopular and she felt too that it would unfairly penalise poorer people. The government objective was essentially to get people to upgrade their cars. She agreed they should have been braver. Nor, she complained, had the government delivered the money for the CAZ, and set strict conditions, leaving the Council little discretion regarding boundaries and so on.

Resident 3 ( David Kernek) spoke about the large number of people needing public transport and about the need to stop traffic from further afield, mainly Wiltshire.

Tom pointed out that an LTN would be prioritising bus through travel with bus gates operating for all or part of the day.

Resident 4 asked where there were examples of LTNs.

Joanna said Waltham Forest provided good examples. We could look at them on the [livingstreets.org.uk](http://livingstreets.org.uk) website (links from the CRA website)

Resident 5 (Paul Brokensha) asked if a bus-gate would not cause even more problems on Bennet's Lane and Snow Hill.

Mark replied that any design will have to address these sort of problems. It is all still at the planning stage. These issues will be carefully considered in the designs.

Resident 6 asked if various designs had been professionally modelled and whether there was Council money for this.

Joanna replied that they were not yet at this stage.

Resident 7 (Lydia Halcrow) said that it was clear that there was a huge amount of support for this and asked what we as a neighbourhood could do to help.

Tom replied that we could all subscribe to the CRA campaign; we can write to councillors and do anything else to register our support. When the first design is shown there must already be seen to be community support.

Resident 8 asked about problems on Eastbourne Avenue.

Joanna said that a Temporary Road Traffic Order could be brought in for 6 months to try out a plan. Then if it were a disaster it could be changed, or we could build on a success.

Tom said there were many other areas of Bath wanting to bring in LTNs and we must be the ones shouting the loudest if we wanted it to happen

Resident 9 asked that if the scheme were brought in piecemeal, were not other areas going to be upset. Isn't it better to do it as a whole?

Joanna agreed that it would be messy but she just didn't have the budget to do everything at once. But areas such as Weston and Camden were far enough apart no to affect each other.

Resident 10 ( Gloria Goodsell) asked about the difference between the CAZ and the LTN.

It was explained that the CAZ was about clean air but would now allow all cars through, only some commercial vehicles being charged. In the LTN there would be barriers to traffic but no charging.

Joanna spoke about her frustration with the bus service. Buses were deregulated and private, heavily subsidised by the Council though they have no control over routes, fares, times or frequency. We must all use buses more or the bus companies will just withdraw the service.

Car travel on the other hand is indirectly subsidised through taxation paying for road building and maintenance.

Resident 11 ( Nigel Pollard) felt that the West of England Combined Authority should be encouraged to take over buses in the same way as Transport for London.

David Kernek challenged the Council's relationship with WECA which he believed did not favour Bath

Tom said that much of the Council's funding came through WECA at the moment and they could not pull out now.

Mark agreed that central government had progressively removed funding from Councils, and most of what there was now came through WECA.

Resident 12 asked Joanna if she could not say more about the LTN, but she replied that she could not give any details at this stage.

Resident 13 (Debra Scott) asked that because the scheme was so far in the future, and the traffic problem was so bad on Camden Road, was no money available for quicker improvement?

Joanna said that she really sympathised with Debra and was very angry about car drivers, but this dangerous behaviour was taking place all over Bath. Tom emphasised that we have got to have a material shift to another solution. The Council has a very small budget and repeated interventions have not had enough effect. Joanna agreed we must do something bold and strategic.

Resident 14 asked whether the police should be involved over driving or parking on pavements. Joanna did not think that driving on the pavement was illegal. The law was complicated, but anyway the police did not have time to be involved.

Resident 13 suggested a protest walk down the centre of the road.

Resident 15 said we should learn from what had happened in Waltham Forest and become better informed. Apparently some 50% of displaced traffic had not been displaced, but had disappeared, which was very encouraging.

Resident 16 said that the way forward must be to find what room there was for manoeuvre without regard to national government, for example, park and ride and incentivising car sharing, including a car sharing app for schools.

Jeremy said that the CRA would carry on blogging about the LTN and would pass on news as soon as we get it. He asked for another show of hands as to the support for the LTN concept, now it had been discussed further. This was overwhelmingly affirmative.

He thanked Joanna and the other councillors.

Joanna promised her 'sound and earnest consideration' and action 'pragmatically as fast as possible'