

CARA

CIRCUS AREA RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION LIMITED

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (on behalf of the Committee)

BARRY GILBERTSON

AGM, 9th July 2020

Our Constitution requires an annual report from your Committee at the AGM, and it is traditional for the Chairman to deliver the report, on behalf of the Committee.

This report is compiled at the end of my fourth and final year as Chairman of CARA.

I have set out, below, the long list of topics, on which we have together (as a Committee) had an interest or some influence since last year's AGM.

First, though, **it is important to thank the Committee**, for all their support and thoughtful approach to the many topics at hand, for their hard work and for all the different stuff they do on your behalf, and on behalf of all residents in our catchment area, expending considerable amounts of their own time as volunteers.

Take a bow, please, your Committee 2019/20 : Anne Love, Bernard Horn, George Feiger, Malcolm Baldwin, Mike Richardson, Richard Brown, and Ron Temperton. Equally, we must not forget to thank our Social Events team of Rosie Tunstall, Santosh Chaston and Caroline Brown. Thank you all.

When I was originally asked to stand as Chairman, in 2016, I had three guiding principles. These have been woven into all we have done on your behalf across the three years. They are:

1. We are a Residents Association, not a political party or a political lobby group
2. Everyone serving on the Committee should have a role, a responsibility or a series of tasks to do – if not, why be on the Committee?
3. We will always strive to **do the right thing**, not only for the members of CARA, but for all the residents within our CARA catchment area, and for our fair City of Bath.

For all four years of my Chairmanship, the Committee has worked on the simple principle of each member of the Committee having a delegated responsibility, with appropriate and relevant tasks to do during the year. Here is a list of the Committee's tasks and responsibilities...

CARA Committee 2019/20		www.carabath.com	
Barry Gilbertson	Chair	Bernard Horn	Secretary
Richard Brown	Vice-Chair :Traffic & LTN	Anne Love	Waste
Malcolm Baldwin	FoBRA and LTN	Mike Richardson	Treasurer
George Feiger	Traffic and Pollution	Ron Temperton	City Centre Action Group and Council Events Liaison

Here are this year's topics...in alphabetical order.

Many of these headings are contained within the reports (below) from individual Committee members. Where additional notes are shown under a topic, then this is often because it is a matter that has been on my personal agenda or list of tasks as your Chair.

If you would like more detail on any one of the topics, please ask by email or letter now. We may be able to answer some questions directly at the AGM, but also plan to collate all questions and answers in order to circulate a fact sheet and Newsletter after the AGM.

AGM : *the re-arrangement of our traditional AGM into the virtual format we have been obliged to adopt this year. Thank you for your patience as we deferred the AGM (in accordance with our Constitution) by two months in the hope of being able to meet in person by July. Sadly, it is not to be. As stated elsewhere, it is hoped that CARA may be able to hold an in-person social gathering in the Autumn.*

B&NES Councillor meetings and/or email correspondence *with our four Ward Councillors: Kingsmead - Sue Craig and Andy Furse & Lansdown - Mark Elliott and Lucy Hodge. Also with Dine Romero (Leader of the Council) and Richard Samuel (Deputy Leader) and Joanna Wright (Cabinet responsibility for Traffic matters). Email contact with various other Councillors on behalf of CARA and our neighbourhood.*

Bath Bridge & Bath Transport Alliance

Bath City Forum, *before it's demise*

Bath Festivals

BIGHA and BASCA

Bollards : *Working with the Council to introduce bollards to double-yellow line sides of three roads : Brock Street, Gay Street and Rivers Street. The latter has been the least successful due to the narrowness of the road width, meaning that the bollards are irregularly spaced, but the other two streets are working effectively to prevent pavement parking, with the consequential increased vehicle weight loads over our often-fragile vaults under the pavement and road surface, and reduced pavement width for prams, pushchairs, wheel-chairs and, now, socially distanced pedestrians.*

Carols in the Circus : *CARA presented two cheques to the Salvation Army representing the £1225 raised by our 2019 'Christmas Carols on the Circus' and £300 raised by Circus Restaurant from their sales of mulled wine at the event.*

City Centre Action Group (CCAG)

Circus : **dogs, trees and grass**

Coaches

Constitution : *no further action has been taken this year.*

Committee 2019/20

We have met six times during the year, with each meeting lasting between 90 and 120 minutes, each time with a full agenda of updates and discussions. Members are always welcome to attend Committee meetings as Observers. Please just ask our (soon to be elected) new Chair or Secretary.

CoronaVirus : **see also Volunteers**

Taking the initiative and the lead in the organisation, and co-ordination, with the Secretary, of CARA's volunteer help roster, together with providing support to residents 15 times in the early days of lockdown. We also formed an Italian Speaking group and an Online Writers group providing contact and support to various individual members.

Events - CARA

Our Social Events team organized a series of successful events through the year, each well-supported by members, including Summer Drinks & Canapes in the Museum of Bath Architecture (MoBA); Carols on the Circus (actually on the Piazza outside the Assembly Rooms due to the weather conditions); a lecture on Bath's World Heritage, at MoBA, Christmas Lunch; New Years Eve drinks; and this AGM, of course. We are happy to hear of other new ideas, to improve fellowship and social inclusion.

Events – organized by others on our patch, or nearby

We have worked with Royal Crescent Society and Marlborough Lane and Buildings RA on the various issues affecting our residents, such as Pub in the Park, Luna Cinema and a Concert for the people of Bath.

Facebook

We have maintained our Facebook page and, although not especially active, we do have a slowly increasing number of "Likes" and visitors to the site. We similarly encourage members or potential members to refer to our website www.carabath.com for information about CARA.

Filming (and B&NES Film Unit)

Federation of Bath Residents Associations (FoBRA)

FoBRA's 32 member residents associations represent an aggregate of more than 5,000 households right across the city of Bath. FoBRA have been very active on a range of issues including Hotels, Housing, Parking, Party Houses (and AirBnB), Planning, Pollution, Public Realm, Student Housing and Traffic : most of these issues affect CARA members in some way.

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Graffiti

Working with Bath Business Improvement District (Bath BID) and the Council for the prompt removal of unsightly graffiti as soon as it is noticed. It is an ongoing, and seemingly never-ending battle.

Gravel Walk

Gulls

History of CARA : *we remain keen to find any records, press cuttings or photographs from CARA's history.*

Litter Pick – *due to be held in March but cancelled due to the CoronaVirus lockdown.*

Member of Parliament

Wera Hobhouse MP – we have met with MS Hobhouse on various occasions in support of our residents generally. She is accessible and ready to hear CARA's views, concerns and issues in a constructive way (and how she can help and support).

Members

Helping, confidentially, three members on difficult issues within the properties where they are tenants, one involving drug users in the building.

Membership

Newsletters and e-Bulletins

Since May 2016 AGM we have distributed the following Newsletters (hand-delivered to all 840 residences within the CARA catchment area) and e-bulletins (to all CARA members by email):

2016-17 : 1 Newsletter and 5 Bulletins

2017-18 : 2 Newsletters and 12 Bulletins

2018-19 : 2 Newsletters and 19 Bulletins

2019-20 : 2 Newsletters and 32 Bulletins, significantly increased during the Lockdown

Noise and Pollution

Bath Breathe : We contributed to the various pollution consultations, having taken into account the views of those members who responded following requests to do so in various bulletins.

Other Residents Associations

We have worked alongside our various neighbouring Residents Associations on a range of matters.

Parking

Party Houses

Despite much lobbying and working groups, the Council say that they cannot take any action against noise or other disturbance caused by party houses unless they receive complaints on a regular basis for each property causing the disturbance. We can give you the right email addresses to whom you can complain. NB: No complaint; No enforcement.

Planning

Policing

Skating Rink

Telephone Kiosks : *promoting adoption by others where disused and where illegally commandeered for drug exchange.*

Traffic Management

Upper Town RAs

Whilst all RAs have differing issues and concerns, there is, I believe, much to be gained from sharing best practice. CARA is fortunate to already work alongside FoBRA and CCAG. During the year we have led, and promoted, an informal group now known as UTRAs or Bath's Upper Town Residents Associations, comprising the Chairs of Ainslie's Belvedere & Caroline Place, CARA, Catharine Place, Camden, Cavendish Road, Cavendish Crescent, Lansdown Crescent, Marlborough Buildings, Royal Crescent, St James's Square, Sion Hill & Summerhill Place, TARA, PERA, The Vineyards. The group is not a rival to FoBRA but a gathering of interested Residents Associations north of George Street, whose problems, issues and best practice may be specific to our area, rather than the whole of Bath.

Volunteers : see also CoronaVirus :

Taking the initiative and the lead in the organisation, and co-ordination, with the Secretary, of CARA's volunteer help roster, together with providing support to residents 15 times in the early days of lockdown. We also formed an Italian Speaking group and an Online Writers group providing contact and support to various individual members.

Walking Group

First walk undertaken just prior to Lockdown, thanks to Rosie Tunstall's initiative.

Waste Bins & Collections

Please note that the Council have started applying £60 fines to individuals caught disposing of domestic waste in litter bins or leaving domestic waste out on days other than collection days.

Website

Our thanks to Sam Brown who is our webmaster, updating our site regularly with Minutes, Newsletters and Bulletins.

Xmas Market

So, from this long list, and my short highlights commentary within the AGM (I will not be reading out the whole report!), I hope you will see that your Committee has worked hard on your behalf, during the past 14 months.

The big wins this year have been:

- 1. The coach ban being made permanent**
- 2. The new residents-only car parking spaces and bollards**
- 3. Our preparatory work on the Low Traffic Neighbourhood proposal**
- 4. The 52 Volunteers who made themselves available to support neighbours and others during the pandemic**
- 5. Our leadership of UTRAs**

Three members of your Committee are standing down this year. Anne Love who has made such a difference on waste and litter after 3 years on the Committee; Bernard Horn our hardworking Secretary, after 3 years in the role and; finally me, as your Chair. It has been a privilege to work on your behalf over the past four years (plus one year as Secretary before then). The Committee has, over the past four years, made a significant difference on many topics. Mostly, it is fun to do, with a fair degree of satisfaction.

There are many things still to be done – the list changes every year. The most important, and perhaps the most challenging task for the new Chair, and the new Committee, will be the creation of the CARA (incorporating Catharine Place and Royal Crescent) Low Traffic Neighbourhood (or "LTN") to eliminate rat-running vehicles, to deter parking by non-resident and non-permitted visitor parking (or so-called destination parking), and thereby increasing our resident-only parking spaces from 12% now of car parking spaces available within CARA, to 25% initially and greater percentages thereafter as the LTN proves it's worth.

Thank you for all the support you have given to me personally over the years and for your support to the Committee in all our endeavours on your behalf.

Barry Gilbertson

**Chairman, CARA 2016-2020
On behalf of the Committee
Circus Area Residents Association**

barry@barrygilbertson.com

June 2020

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Richard Brown : Vice-Chair : Update on priorities for the year, and traffic management generally

Traffic management. CARA has previously reported that, after over 20 years of effort by CARA and its members, B&NES Council introduced a bus restriction (including coaches) in The Circus area effective May 2nd 2019. This means that bus/coach access to the CARA catchment area is limited to 'authorised buses' only. The only authorised buses are the red hop-on hop-off tour buses, that are regulated as a bus service, and the only permitted coaches are those directly accessing commercial premises within our residential area. No buses/coaches are allowed to 'sightsee' or to park. Since the ban came into operation, it has taken some time for coach firms and coach drivers to become used to the new traffic regulations. Although we saw continued coach activity over last summer, our survey data shows that (pre-Lockdown) coach numbers are down by 85% to 90%. Although pleasing, we continue to work hard to ensure that the traffic regulations are respected. We try to identify all coaches that enter the area, record their details and liaise with the coach firm to advise them formally of the traffic arrangements and request that they use alternative routes for their visits to Bath. For those firms that persist in using our residential area in defiance of the ban, their details are submitted to the Police for action to be taken.

Parking. Parking is a key priority area for CARA to benefit both our members and other local residents. CARA has had some good success to date. We continue to work hard for our members and other residents in our catchment to increase the permanent parking options exclusively available to them in The Circus area. Recent developments and ongoing discussions in this area are:

- a. **New ban on inner Circus parking.** Earlier this year, B&NES removed parking around the entire inner ring of The Circus by 'double-yellow line' restriction. We believe that the aim to deter destination parking will, in combination with the initiatives below, ultimately improve our parking to the benefit of members and other local residents.
- b. **More Permit Parking spaces.** In the last two years, we have secured 'Residents Permit Parking' spaces across all three terraces of The Circus with others in surrounding streets. We now have 50 'Resident Permit Parking' spaces across our catchment area. However, this still represents only 12% of our on-street parking capacity. As such, we have recently approached B&NES with the request to double this parking provision to 25% of on-street capacity. We await their response.
- c. **Visitor Parking permits.** Since 4th March 2019, residents have, under a 12-month trial scheme, been able to apply for electronic visitor parking permits that they can use for their guests to park in the Lower Lansdown Central Zone. Residents are eligible for up to 100 hours per annum of visitor parking permits. We are in discussion with B&NES to make this scheme permanent and, in due course, to increase the number of hours under the scheme.
- d. **Control/reduction of 'Hospitality' parking permits.** Currently hotels/guest houses have access to multiple 'hospitality' parking permits (one permit per bedroom) that allow their guests to park on the streets and in 'Residents Permit Parking' spaces. These permits increase materially the competition for parking spaces. We are speaking to B&NES about the control/reduction of these permits (introduced without consultation a few years back). We believe that they should only be valid in car parks and park & ride parks.
- e. **Investigating a Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN).** Last year, CARA sought members' views on their appetite for the introduction of an LTN in the CARA catchment area. LTNs are one route to enhancing local air quality and traffic management within appropriate catchment areas. They may be defined as: "*Groups of residential streets, bordered by main or distributor roads (the places where buses, lorries, non-local traffic should be) where 'through' motor vehicle traffic is discouraged or removed. There are lots of ways you can make a low traffic neighbourhood but the main principle is that every resident can drive onto their street, get deliveries etc but it is harder or impossible to drive straight through from one main road to the next*".

CARA is working with B&NES on early-stage planning of a local LTN scheme. At present, there is no formal plan in place, solely the concept, and members will be kept fully advised of developments so that they can continue to have their say on the issue.

The Circus lawn (care and maintenance). At the AGM last May, members expressed some concern about the general condition and appearance of the Circus lawn. This is in addition to the lack of meaningful management of the London Plane trees that were planted in the very early 19th century. The Committee is reflecting on our options for work to be done. Understandably, the lawn receives a high amount of 'footfall' and ensuring access to the centre of the lawn, under healthy and safe trees, is important. The Council has no budget to carry out any work.

Public realm. CARA continues to promote sensitive maintenance of the public realm. An example in the current year was the road reconstruction and resurfacing in The Circus (June 2019) recommended to the Committee by one resident, pursued with the Council and implemented, to the benefit of all.

Noise. In November last year, CARA worked with residents at Miles's Buildings on addressing regular late-night loud music coming from the gardens of the bars on George Street. As a result, B&NES' Environmental Protection team visited the establishments and found them to be in breach of licensing conditions. Appropriate action was taken and we are pleased to report that there has been a reduction in noise levels coming from the bars. We shall work with the residents in the event of future breaches.

Bulletins and Newsletters. Since the AGM in May 2019, we have issued 2 'hard-copy' Newsletters that we distribute by hand to all members and other local residents. We have also issued 32 'soft-copy' Bulletins that we e-mail to all members.

Bernard Horn : Secretary's Report for 2019/2020

The role of secretary for CARA was taking it's usual course : liaising with the Treasurer regarding new members and those members leaving, making sure the Agenda for each committee meeting covered the necessary matters, recording the meetings with accurate minutes which are then posted on the CARA website, despatching the bulletins including hand-delivering to those who do not have email addresses. And then Covid 19 came along...

Working with the Chair and other colleagues we put together a list of volunteers who were all willing and keen to assist those neighbours and fellow CARA members who told us they needed support in some form. Whilst in reality the requests for help were minimal it was encouraging to see so many people coming forward to offer their services

We also increased the number of Bulletins during the peak weeks of the crisis to share with all the CARA family various helpful tips and suggestions which we became aware of – many members were kind enough to express their gratitude for the weekly updates.

My role as Secretary is now finishing. It has been a pleasure to be involved in our active association and to learn from the other committed and involved committee members – and most importantly to “meet” friends and neighbours as part of the role

Mike Richardson : Treasurer's Report

You will already have seen the short-form accounts, distributed to all members earlier this month. I hope the accounts are self-explanatory and represent a very satisfactory financial position for the Association.

It has been a very typical year apart from the large amounts of money received from the two film companies during the year by way of compensation for the inconvenience caused by their filming.

Please let me or the secretary have any questions you would like to ask for answer at the AGM or in any other way.

Malcom Baldwin : FoBRA and Low Traffic Neighbourhood

Throughout the last year I have represented CARA's interests at all FoBRA (Federation of Bath Residents' Association) meetings. Some of the main subjects for discussion during the year have included the Clean Air Zone (CAZ), general traffic management, key planning issues such as those relating to Bath Rugby Club Stadium and its proposed plans for the recreation ground, and initial discussions relating to the possible introduction of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods within the city.

I have supported our Transport Lead - Committee Member, Richard Brown, in initially extending residents-only parking facilities in the outer circumference of The Circus, whilst latterly also opening up dialogue with our local councillors and the appropriate senior Council Officer to extend greater levels of residents-only parking areas more extensively throughout other areas of our CARA catchment zone.

I have had the opportunity to negotiate, on two occasions during the year ,contributions of a total, to CARA funds, of circa £7,000 from film companies who were either filming within the CARA area or in close proximity to it. These funds now being available, at the discretion of the full membership, for future use to be decided at an appropriate time.

George Feiger : Traffic and Pollution

During the past year I have focused my actions in two areas. The first is support for Malcolm Baldwin and Richard Brown in the development and promotion of the Low Traffic Neighbourhood proposal for Bath. This has had two dimensions. One is pulling together evidence on the harmful effects of traffic and particularly diesel traffic from buses (but also cars) on the environment and public health. The other is evidence from other cities around the world that have implemented LTNs, to show that they not only achieve their desired environmental effects but actually lead to better local business as people walk by rather than drive past.

The second area relates to the peculiar division of authority over traffic regulation, whereby some powers reside with the local Councils but key ones remain in the hands of the national government and its highways agencies. I have undertaken what I can only describe as a dogged pursuit of our local MP, Wera Hobhouse, to facilitate her understanding of the seriousness of the issues and the necessity for central action. This focus is important not only because she is our MP and so our conduit to that national government, but because she is a Liberal Democrat and we have a Liberal Democrat Council and the declared pro-environment policies of the Liberal Democrat party.

Both of these activities are works in progress.

Anne Love : waste and litter

I have continued to monitor the waste, litter and rubbish issues in the area particularly the abuse of the street bins. I spent time with, and guided the new Councillor David Wood (cabinet members for Neighbourhood Services) on a walking tour of the CARA area to highlight the problems of Air B&B and student properties. I managed to persuade him of the need for continued weekly waste collection from the city centre area.

I have also researched safe and secure on-street bicycle storage facilities as part of the low traffic neighbourhood schemes described elsewhere in the report.

Ron Temperton : City Centre Action Group (“CCAG”)

Activity with the CCAG has included the following topics that affect the three city centre Resident’s Associations – CARA, The Abbey Residents Association (TARA) and Pulteney Estate Residents Association (PERA).

What alternative routes are being planned for pedestrians, cyclists and cars when the Cleveland Bridge is closed for repairs? What will the environmental impact be considering this will closure coincide with the changes in Queens Square?

The Bath City Forum is now defunct but to date there has been no consultation with RA’s about its replacement. What is the current position?

Clean Air Zone. When is now likely to be implemented? Is further work being undertaken on an Eastern park and ride? How does the CAZ fit with the planned car park as part of the redevelopment of the Recreation Ground?

City centre commercial waste. The accumulation of euro bins for commercial waste at the junction of Gay St and George St, and at Spring Gardens continue. When is the council to get a grip on the problem and rectify it?

Hotel Parking permits. Hotels are profiteering by selling parking permits that they purchase (at heavily discounted prices from B&NES) at vastly inflated prices to guests. There has been no follow up to the trial that required guests to purchase permits direct from the Council, thereby increasing badly-needed Council revenue.

At our most recent meeting with the Leader of the Council, the scale of the current financial situation was explained and that a new review of all the Council’s activity was being undertaken to identify where savings might be made. In truth scope is limited.

CARA – Chair’s Report on behalf of the Committee

Barry Gilbertson

Chair, CARA, 2016-2020

June 2020