



CARA News

Spring 2021

The Circus Area Residents Association (CARA) represents the views of local residents and local businesses.

CARA:

- **C**onnects you with your community.
- **A**rranges a calendar of social events. Meet your neighbours and make new friends.
- **R**epresents the collective interests of its members on local issues.
- **A**dvises and updates members on news and issues. We issue regular e-Bulletins and twice-yearly Newsletters.

Note from our Chairman

Welcome to our latest issue of CARA News.

There is no time quite like Spring particularly as we have now emerged from what, for many, has been the darkest and seemingly longest of Winters. To digress for a moment from more normal matters and on a genuine but serious note, after such a difficult year for many, one can easily appreciate some sentiments expressed by Larkin in his poem "The Trees":

The trees are coming into leaf
Like something almost being said,
The recent buds relax and spread,
Their greenness is a kind of grief.

We reflect therefore at this time on members, neighbours and friends for whom the period from which we are now emerging, hopefully on a more permanent basis, may have been particularly difficult.

In terms of our on-going activities, as your committee, we have continued to concentrate on the priorities that have been particularly set to generate the most significant improvements to our overall neighbourhood. In that respect, improved traffic management alongside enhancements to our 'public realm', as indicated in the more detailed reports in this Newsletter, continue to be the focus of our attention (see later: 'Update on our priorities').

The potential implementation of a Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) in our catchment area - a key element in B&NES Council's 'Liveable Neighbourhoods' strategy - following consultation late last year with local residents, is now subject to awaited feedback from the Council and its respective officers. We very much hope that some initial indication of feedback might be forthcoming during next month. However, it should be remembered that a number of residents associations within the city have also initiated LTN proposals and along with them we await, reasonably patiently, the outcome of our Council's and its officers' deliberations.

Whatever the outcome of our own detailed proposals, additional consultations will be a feature of any trial adoption of particular LTN schemes together with the initiation of appropriate Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders by the Council. We will certainly continue to keep you abreast of these particular matters as they develop.

The impending change in leadership of the Council, likely to be implemented during next month, we sincerely hope will in no way impede the apparent enthusiasm by our councillors of transforming their mandated policies into real and positive action, not least in their long-anticipated delivery of the 'Liveable Neighbourhoods' strategy.

Remaining on general transport matters, CARA committee members have recently undertaken a number of meetings with both Voi e-scooters (a Scandinavian company undertaking a trial of its scooters in Bath and other cities) and the Council to make what, we hope, might be accepted as positive suggestions to better regularise the use of these electric scooters. Our current suggestions, during this initial one-year trial period for these scooters, includes a combination of reduced maximum speed limitations in designated streets together with a more enforceable ban of their use in what are primarily pedestrian thoroughfares. More general 'scooter/rider abuse' is also an important element in our ongoing discussions. We are actively chasing a response from Council to our proposals to which Voi themselves appear considerably sympathetic and will update members once a formal response has been received.

Finally, in recent communications with the Council we have highlighted our concerns in respect of the need for effective 'management', wherever possible, of what is likely to be a tourist 'tsunami' throughout the forthcoming summer season in Bath. The dual impact of general 'staycation' activity and additional interest in our city, not least our own neighbourhood, from filming activities such as 'Bridgerton' will inevitably create much more visitor footfall than normal.

Whilst the above will provide some very welcome additional visitors and trade for local businesses, which we very much support, we have highlighted to the Council our concerns that this may justify more effective and imaginative 'visitor management' than has been necessary in previous years. By such positive action and with appropriate Council support, we believe that the results could be beneficial in their nature to both residents and local businesses alike. Be assured that we will continue to monitor this situation and liaise with the appropriate Council departments as the forthcoming seasonal weeks unfold.

With best wishes,

Malcolm – Chairman.

Update on our priorities

1. **Traffic management.** Traffic Management is a key priority area for CARA. This reflects an intent to address the above-average vehicular movements largely 'rat-running' and congestion in our residential area with resultant high pollution levels. In 2019, we secured a bus/coach restriction in The Circus area limiting bus/coach access to 'authorised buses' only. We are now focused on reducing the level of 'rat-running' traffic as follows:

- a) **Low Traffic Neighbourhood.** Since our consultation last November in respect of a potential Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) for our catchment area, your CARA Committee has considered the many comments and suggestions provided to us by our members and other local residents and stakeholders.

With B&NES Council having 'signed off' its 'Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy' for implementation and inviting proposals from local communities, we have discussed with our Ward Councillors the rationale for an LTN and a refined 'concept' that we believe will both reduce 'rat-running' traffic and, as discussed below, 'destination' parking. This refined 'concept' introduced an entrance at the western end of our catchment area and a one-way Gay Street with 'left-turn only' at the George Street junction. Also included within the documentation for their consideration was an additional option to reflect particular concerns expressed during our consultations in respect of the need for more improvements to traffic flow in Bennett Street. This refined LTN 'concept' would improve the 'liveability' of our neighbourhood and increase parking options for all residents.

We have submitted, with Ward Councillor support, a request for an LTN and are in a position to have more detailed discussions with the Council and its traffic planners on our refined 'concept'. However, all of this work remains 'work in progress' and will involve the opportunity for further input from members and residents in general at some later stage if our LTN suggestions are viewed favourably by B&NES.

We shall continue to keep members and other local residents updated on our ongoing discussions.

2. **Parking.** Parking is a key priority area for CARA to benefit both our members and other local residents. Currently, 'Resident Permit Parking' spaces represent only 12% of our c.400 on-street parking spaces in our residential area. As such, we are continuing to work hard for our members and other residents in our catchment area to increase the permanent parking options exclusively available to them. Recent developments and ongoing discussions in this area are:

- a) **More Permit Parking spaces.** CARA's LTN concept, as described above, includes a proposal to achieve a dominance/totality of 'permit-only' on-street parking spaces. It cannot be right that other residential zones in Bath are reserved entirely for residents whereas we have only a small number of dedicated permit spaces available.
- b) **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 to increase the number of hours under the scheme.
- c) **Imminent consultation.** B&NES Council has announced that it is to consider introducing a series of changes to on-street parking across Bath and North East Somerset. These proposals are designed to improve air quality ensuring a safer environment for pedestrians by reducing the risks to them posed by air pollution, while also meeting the council's wider transport policy aims including reducing congestion and vehicle intrusion into neighbourhoods.

Of particular note for CARA members are proposals to:

- Introduce emissions-based parking permits for all residents' parking zones. The proposal would see a vehicle placed in a charging band according to its recorded emissions with the DVLA.
- Extend on-street parking tariffs and residents' permit operating hours to include Sundays.
- Review hotel and guesthouse permits to reallocate the parking to car parks and to include the introduction of digitised permits. *Currently hotels/guest houses have access to multiple 'hospitality' parking permits (one permit per bedroom) that enable guests to park on the streets and in 'Residents Permit Parking' spaces. These permits increase the competition for parking spaces. We have been lobbying B&NES about the control/reduction of these permits (introduced without consultation a few years back) as we believe that they should only be valid in car parks/park & ride parks.*
- Increase Residents' parking visitor permit charges by 50p a day in year one with subsequent rises of 25p a day in years two and three.

If the proposals are approved by Councillors, there will be a public consultation later this year. CARA and its members will be able to comment at that time.

3. **The Circus lawn (care and maintenance).** At the AGM in May 2019, members expressed 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.
4. **Public realm.** CARA continues to promote sensitive maintenance of the public realm. In particular, we continue to monitor and eradicate wherever possible unsightly (is there any other sort, other than maybe the occasional Banksy!) graffiti intrusion. The corner of Upper Church Street and Julian Road we refuse to be defeated by: the rear garage walls as well as the large generator are currently 'restored to health'. The smaller street-side 'power' boxes are more of a challenge but we are working on it!

Other local issues

- **AGM.** We typically hold our members' Annual General Meeting in May. However, due to the Coronavirus and necessary social distancing requirements, last year's meeting was held via 'Zoom' on 9th July. Given ongoing uncertainty about when and how we can meet and with 'full' release from lockdown not anticipated prior to mid-June it is likely that we shall not be able to hold our AGM until perhaps early September 2021.

We shall keep members informed of our plans relating to our AGM together with all appropriate information in respect of annual Committee elections and other related AGM matters in due course.

- **CARA Litter Pick.** CARA volunteers undertake occasional litter picking gatherings to help keep our neighbourhood clean and tidy. Forward notice: At present, our next litter pick will be on Sunday 4th July. We meet on the paved area at the front entrance to the Assembly Rooms at 9.30 a.m. for about 60 minutes, or so (this will give us considerable space to ensure appropriate social distancing prior to setting off in couples and small groups). Our previous litter picks have been a great success.

Website: www.carabath.com

Would you be interested in joining us? All equipment including day-glo tabards, sacks, gloves etc. will be provided. E-mail: Sabrina at sabrinaearnshaw@gmail.com. See you there!

CARA social events

- CARA typically has a full and varied social calendar led by the monthly 'Ladies social', the annual Georgian Garden Summer Drinks Party, a Christmas lunch party and the ever-popular 'Christmas Carols on The Circus green'.

Due to Coronavirus restrictions, we have been unable to arrange any events in the recent past.

However, we very much hope that we might be able to hold an outdoor social event, subject to prevailing social distancing conditions at the time, on the evening of Thursday, 1st July. Please 'pencil' this in your diaries and we would hope to finally confirm venue and arrangements at least a month beforehand.

CARA Committee 2020/21		Our email addresses are on our website www.carabath.com	
Malcolm Baldwin	Chairman/FoBRA	Sally Rothwell	Licensing/Public Realm
Richard Brown	Vice Chairman/Traffic	Stephen Taylor	Planning
Sabrina Earnshaw	Environmental Services	Ron Temperton	City Centre Action Group
George Feiger	Traffic	Rosie Tunstall	Social Secretary
Mike Richardson	Treasurer		

CARA membership is open to all. The cost is only £7.50 per household/business per year. A membership application form can be found below – please join us! The more members we have, the more influence we have in improving our CARA catchment area for all of our residents.

CIRCUS AREA RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION (CARA) Membership form

I wish to join CARA.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ E-mail Address _____

STANDING ORDER INSTRUCTION FORM

Please complete details to instruct your Bank/Building Society to make a standing order payment. We will do the rest.

To the Manager, Bank/Building Society _____

Postal Address _____ Post Code _____

Name of Account to be debited _____

Sort Code _____ Account Number _____

Please pay to the credit of CIRCUS AREA RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION LIMITED at Lloyds TSB Bank plc, 47 Milsom Street, Bath, BA1 1DN, Sort Code: 30 90 54 Account No: 56601468 on receipt of this order and on 1st April each year the sum of £7.50. I will inform the Bank/Building Society in writing if I wish to cancel this instruction.

Signature _____ Date _____

Please cut out and return the form to Mike Richardson, CARA Treasurer, 10 Crescent Lane, Bath, BA1 2PU

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) - Data Protection Act 2018. Please note that, in order to communicate with members, the personal details above are kept on our records. We do not disclose this information to any 3rd party.