



MEADOWS NEWSLETTER

August 1, 2016

Number 13

Hello,

It's been a busy week again with a lot going on. Most of you will have received some of this already on the email chain. However, in regards to the next steps it would be useful if people could think about what they would be prepared to do and what they think will work. Would people be up for another big meeting soon? It would be nice if we could pre-empt having to chain ourselves to trees when the bulldozers come in ☺. The email chain has been updated so please use the one attached to this newsletter to keep the ideas coming in.

So let's start with the good news!

TEA AND CAKE at Dolphin House

Lots of people turned up to sit in the sunshine and enjoy the delicious cakes, beautiful garden and lively conversation at Dolphin House last Saturday.

Jane and George say:

Just to let you know we have raised a total of £677.43p from the coffee morning/afternoon teas. Big thank yous to all who contributed and attended, a great result.

Breakdown; Food - £454.43

Raffle £117.00

Commission from painting/print sales £106.00

We had a great time and enjoyed chatting and meeting people.

The money will go towards the fund set up for judicial review.

PLEDGING

Money continues to come in via the website in the form of pledges to cover costs in the event of judicial review. If you haven't already pledged it would be great if you could and please encourage friends and neighbours ☺.

Here is the link to the website:

http://bathamptonmeadowsalliance.org.uk/?page_id=460

THE SAFER CYCLING PROTEST

...outside the Guildhall last week was well attended despite Bath seeming to have a pathological hatred of cyclists. Interestingly there were also two other protests

taking place so there was a sizeable crowd and press coverage. Although there were a few of us 'Meadowers' present, there could have been more. Might be worth thinking about next time there is a related protest

<http://www.bathchronicle.co.uk/protestors-pack-pavement-outside-guildhall-before-meeting-of-bath-and-north-east-somerset-council/story-29538713-detail/story.html>

And now the not so good news.....

The council seem to be willfully blundering on, intent on spending millions of pounds of tax payers' money to build a park and ride that they cannot seem to justify. Site F is still firmly on the cards ...

Here is Alison Millar's Statement to scrutiny 25th July 2016

I was very dejected indeed when I read Response 5.5 from Cabinet on page 48 of your papers. No response at all the scrutiny statement that 'the population has concerns around the meadows proposal' and, even worse, that they will be "considering how to meet the need for a P&R to the east of the city and this will be discussed at a future meeting".

There has to this day, never been a clear needs analysis/compelling case put forward to justify a P&R to the East and it is this Panel's job to have got to the bottom of that. The whole thrust of the getting About Bath Strategy was that evidence should be provided of the need for a park and ride to the east. Anecdotal evidence or urban myth that it is needed just will NOT suffice. The whole case has been based on wildly differing forecasts from a succession of external consultants presented to Councillors in a piecemeal way, rather than in a single compelling document.

At the time of the consultation last year, it was stated that the car park was required to improve congestion and pollution.

Then there was the CH2MHill report which showed that an Eastern park and ride would lead to a negligible improvement in pollution at times and a worsening of it at other times.

That complicated report appears to have been quietly shelved in favour of Mott McDonald (for a second time), presumably because it did not provide evidence of need. Their report showed an entirely different pattern to

peoples' behaviour than that which we know to be the case. For example, it showed people staying late into the evening in car parks in a way which we know is not the case because the evidence collected from the barriers in the car parks does not support this. At one point we were very loosely told that the justification for this car park was all the new housing that Bath will have to provide, but not knowing as yet where that will be sited!!!

And let's not forget, not a single person has ever been asked about whether they would use an Eastern P&R. The surveys carried out in 2009 and 2014 were conducted right across the city and didn't include any specific P&R questions (just start point, destination and whether they paid for parking). BANES still do not, to this day, really know why people are in their cars and therefore cannot be sure of what problem they are solving.

We do know for sure that the school run constitutes a third of Batheaston traffic. Who can challenge the fact that getting around the city at rush hour is a breeze currently compared to term time? And what about the lorries, each of which produces the emissions of 5 cars. Ditto for them.

*We do in fact know however that park and rides aren't well used in Bath (on average 41% full daily) and that **planned overspill** is what is needed.*

Equally if the devolution deal is accepted later this year, then there is a fresh new chance to look at buses, which were beyond the reach of the 2014 transport strategy. Until the impact of potential public bus solutions are understood then there should be no costly and irreversible decision taken on a large-scale P&R.

So there we have it. The Cabinet still desperately juggling sites on which to place a car park which will cost the public purse £10 million when we have no solid slate of evidence that a park and ride would address the issues. But even more meaningful for me is the fact that I, as ward member am accosted on this issue daily, not only where I live but as I travel around the City. I have yet to find ONE SINGLE PERSON who believes that putting a park and ride on the meadows is the right thing to do. Cabinet members – yes. Officers - yes. People living in Bath and beyond – not one. This is borne out by the fact that almost 12 and a half thousand people have signed the petition opposing the concreting of this green space to date. And that is because it flies in the face of common sense. So I would ask this panel to demand a body of evidence, carefully and accurately written regarding the case for a park and ride to the east – and the sooner the better.

CORE STRATEGY/PLACEMAKING

It is an interesting consideration that if the P & R is part of the Core Strategy Placemaking Submission then it may be that the Council feel they 'cannot' rather than 'will not' reconsider without having to reconsider their strategy?

A Government Inspector is to examine the B&NES Core Strategy/Placemaking Submission soon and Joanna Robinson (Conservation Officer for the Bath Preservation Trust) has sent a 16-page Paper on what the Inspector is to be examining. Matter 15 is of specific interest and the paper is attached to this email. Queries about the strategy can be sent to Chris Banks, the coordinator for the inspector, at: bankssolutionsuk@gmail.com.

THE WAY FORWARD ...

These events have sparked a lively debate on the email chain about what to do next. Interestingly many of the proposals have already been tried which only goes to highlight the fact that between us we have attacked this from a lot of different angles already yet many of the Council have their own agenda which does not include listening!

What does seem apparent is that we need to try some different angles and that the time for being polite is coming to an end 😊 Suggestions have included a large protest – maybe to coincide with the Inspector's visit?, checking to see if there is any wildlife on the meadows that should be protected, drawing up a list of quotes from influential people about the unsuitability of the p and r, a mass camp out on Site F, a council tax strike and writing to the new Secretaries of State. It would be useful if people could consider these options and any more they can think up and make their feelings known. For any of these to work we need to show numbers.

COUNCIL TAX STRIKE?

As law abiding citizens who believe that taxation is for the good of society, most of us would be against this on principle. However, they are asking us to pay for something we don't want, do not believe will benefit society and they are not listening to the arguments against although they are supposed to represent us. There is a long history of people protesting by withdrawing taxes.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_historical_acts_of_tax_resistance#UK_council_tax

Recently, a group of students orchestrated a rent strike against super high rents at London universities which were making the unis a lot of money and were not only preventing poorer students from attending uni but driving up rents in the private sector which affected many non-students as well. The strike started small but grew and they won. They also got a lot of very embarrassing press coverage for the uni. Universities are supposed to be about providing an education not making money; Councils are supposed to provide services for the people who live in that area not bend to the need and greed of shoppers and large businesses.

A council tax strike would be very easy to orchestrate – you simply cancel payment through the bank. However, we would need a number of people to start it off to make it effective. Looking at the Chronicle the fines for not paying are not (despite the headlines) huge and it takes them a long time to get around to taking people to court!

<http://www.bathchronicle.co.uk/court-orders-hundreds-of-banes-council-tax-dodgers-to-pay-costs/story-29564846-detail/story.html>

MASS EMAILING TO NEW SECRETARIES OF STATE

Pete and Ruth Wardle made the following point:

We have a new Cabinet in Westminster and ministers have been in their posts for just a couple of weeks. Four ministers in particular could be made aware of the threat to Bathampton Meadows because the issue seems to fall within their remits. I'm suggesting that we could email each of them individually and ask them to use their influence with BaNES Council to stop the Park and Ride. For starters I have suggested some points that could be raised with each Cabinet minister but I'm sure there are things I might have missed.

I know that Westminster tends to keep local government issues at arms length but I think that BaNES ill-judged plan to build a park and ride on Bathampton Meadows raises concerns of National importance which each of these ministers should be made aware of.

Mass emailing of ministers can yield results. It is a tactic used successfully by 38 Degrees.

Chris Grayling, Transport Secretary: chris.grayling.mp@parliament.uk

Needs to know that BaNES expensive P and R plan is based on a flimsy premise that it will ease Bath's traffic congestion problems, whilst hard evidence and expert opinion suggests the opposite. And that major national routes converge on the city.

Sajid Javid, Communities and Local Government

Secretary: sajid.javid.mp@parliament.uk

Needs to know that BaNES Council plans to spend more than £10 million of council tax money on building a Park and Ride in an environmentally sensitive area, and which, according to even their own consultants, will only reduce rush hour traffic by 4% in ten years time. An irresponsible use of public funds which the minister needs to be aware of.

Andrea Leadsom, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Secretary: andrea.leadsom.mp@parliament.uk

Needs to know that BaNES are ignoring DEFRA guidance that Park and Rides do not reduce air pollution and can increase health risks. Also that the proposed car park site is on Greenbelt farmland in an environmentally sensitive area, threatening wildlife and increasing flood risks.

Karen Bradley, Culture Secretary: karen.bradley.mp@parliament.uk

Needs to know that BaNES proposed Park and Ride will blight the beautiful eastern approach to Bath, our only UNESCO World Heritage City. Also that the proposed Greenbelt site borders a Conservation Area and the Cotswold AONB, and that the plan is strongly opposed by the National Trust and Bath Preservation Trust.

DROP IN AND SEE BEN HOWLETT?

Message from Sian

Just had this email from Ben4Bath about his next surgery - with 2 key councillors in attendance as well.....

which might be of interest to anyone that does have Ben as their MP

but those of us that aren't might also like to make an appearance outside the venue????

just a thought!

Dates for your diary

On Saturday 6th August I will be holding a drop-in surgery at St. Mary's Church Julian Rd, Bath, BA1 2SF between 10am and 12pm

It is an opportunity to meet me for an informal discussion about concerns you may have about a particular policy, or if you have a case against a Government agency with which you require assistance.

Lansdown councillors Anthony Clarke and Patrick Anketell-Jones will also be attending, to assist with any local Council issues.*****

MEDIA

Building an otter holt on Bathampton meadows

<http://www.bathchronicle.co.uk/volunteers-build-new-otter-home-at-bathampton-meadows-nature-reserve/story-29532399-detail/story.html>

Interesting read about public transport

<http://www.bathchronicle.co.uk/chronicle-comment-alex-brown-asks-will-the->



[devolution-deal-save-public-transport/story-29557899-detail/story.html](http://www.bathchronicle.co.uk/devolution-deal-save-public-transport/story-29557899-detail/story.html)

Just goes to show we are not getting through ... (written by a Tory Councillor and got to be worth a response)

<http://www.bathchronicle.co.uk/park-amp-rides-certainly-not-under-used/story-29557476-detail/story.html>

<http://www.bathchronicle.co.uk/time-to-ponder-effects-of-a46-a36-link-road/story-29533193-detail/story.html>