



MEADOWS NEWSLETTER

March 2017

Hi everyone,

Welcome to the March newsletter and thank you to everyone who came along to our meeting last week. There was, as ever, lots to go through! This meeting agreed that to enable people to plan, there would be a meeting at 8pm on the last Thursday of each month going forward – please put in your diaries!

We are focused as a campaign on two levels. While we await the outcome of the recent placemaking plan submission and whether there will be hearings, locally we continue to prepare for planning, which we are expecting to happen in 2017 and to raise the funds that fighting this professionally will cost. Also, we continue to spread the word across Bath that the Meadows matter and that paving them won't benefit anyone's quality of life. Indeed and aside from the sheer madness of trying to destroy our setting, by spending all their money on a vanity project for the future, there is nothing left in the budget pot to actually fight the causes of congestion and air pollution today. Please continue to help us spread these messages when talking to friends across the city and beyond. This is especially the case if you know people voting in the upcoming Walcot by-election. You never know where the conversation might lead you! Our key messages remain on our homepage:

<http://bathamptonmeadowsalliance.org.uk/>

Regionally we are meeting each of the West of England Mayoral candidates for the May 4th election. So far, the LibDem, Green, Labour have said that they would protect the Meadows and Independent John Savage has tweeted that it should not be built if the local area is against it. PLEASE VOTE. This is a genuinely exciting chance to influence the current plans as the elected Mayor will have powers over transport spending usually taken at national level. While you may see written that any decisions taken in the past year cannot be undone, we're not convinced that there has been any actual decision for a 4th P&R other than for a preferred site. Even this isn't concluded yet. It would seem there is enough up for influencing that voting is well worth while!!

This Saturday, 1st April, The Circus 10:45 am. PLEASE MARCH on April Fools' Day with other Bath campaigns

On Monday 27th March, we delivered our joint petition to the Council setting out that we have no confidence in them to take decisions that are in the best interests of those who elected them. This is joint with our friends from Save Bath Library, Bath Against Cuts, Stop the Arts Cuts (Theatre Bath) and Save Bath Community Academy.

The petition calls for a public meeting with the leadership of the Council to discuss these issues away from the Council chamber, but so far we are being offered a 'debate' in full council. This isn't about another 3 minutes each to get our messages across, it is about a long-overdue proper debate.

Please come out this Saturday, 1st April, 10:45 at The Circus, Bath to show that we are angry and will not be fobbed off! See our press release at the end of this newsletter.

Fundraising

There is lots in the pipeline here and we always need people to lighten the load with organising. The fun run is first on 23rd April. Here is what is coming up:

- **Fun run booked for Sunday 23/4/17.** Please share and register now at http://bathamptonmeadowsalliance.org.uk/?page_id=1428
£10 for adults under 12s are £5. Please can you also say if you wish to help on the day through the website.
- **Pub Quiz** - Bathford and Batheaston - Alexis Pavlou has put up his hand recently to check out the potential at local pubs and Stuart Feasey is also on the case
- **Boot sale** - Amanda Tarrant will liaise with George Riley
- **Art sale** - Jane Riley/Fiona/Louise are looking at this. Thank you to Bathampton PC for donating some local maps for this – Emma has them if you would like one in advance of this, £10 each
- **Sealed Knot event** - Lisa Brown will make inquires
- **Auction of promises** - Lisa Brown is keeping a list of offers. Please let us know if you have any ideas or skills for sale!

In the news

There has been much lively debate this weekend online around Tim Warren's East of Bath P&R letter in the Chronicle. We suspect the letter was timed to try to influence the upcoming Walcot by-election and we put out a press release at the weekend, also picked up. Please get involved online – we often get free coverage of our points when online comments are picked up for the print version. If nothing else please like/dislike and share!

Tim's letter

<http://www.bathchronicle.co.uk/opinion-the-eastern-park-and-ride-by-tim-warren/story-30221698-detail/story.html>

Our press release was woven into this article

<http://www.bathchronicle.co.uk/furious-campaigners-call-out-council-for-misleading-the-public-over-east-of-bath-park-and-ride/story-30225881-detail/story.html?afterReg=Y>

Our rebuttal to their response:

We note that the Council has said that it stands by its figures, however the number of passengers 'stood by' is an annual figure and there has been no attempt to dispute our point that this total is totally distorted by the Christmas Market. This clearly shows that the Council knows it doesn't have a leg to stand on and is relying on people to take their number at face value. We urge people to visit the Council Cabinet report from 25th January to see the chart for themselves (Figure 6 at paragraph 4.46). We have always said that the Council needs to look at overspill parking for known events.

Despite what the Council has said, we hold the raw data concerned and it is impossible to strip out passengers alighting at public bus stops along the route because the ticket readers only record ticket types, for example concessions, not where people get on and off. We have now challenged the council to produce the analysis they have performed behind their figures.

By scrutinising and calling the Council out on their figures, we have moved the debate around park and ride on from a claim of 'immediate benefit' to congestion and pollution in the November 2015 Full Council report to it being part of a 'jigsaw puzzle' of a solution 'for the future'. People should trust that we take the presentation of accurate data very seriously, which is why we get so incensed when we see the Council putting out such spin.

We have sent a broader summary letter that we hope will make it into the print version this week.

As we write, the petition has also been picked up:

<http://www.bathchronicle.co.uk/april-fool-s-day-march-against-arts-cuts-park-ride-and-library-service-changes-in-bath/story-30230901-detail/story.html>

Petition Press Release

Campaign groups across Bath deliver joint petition demanding that council leaders attend a public debate with angry residents

A petition signed by more than 1% of the B&NES electorate has this morning (27th March) been sent to the council, calling for the Council leader Tim Warren and his cabinet to attend a public meeting to debate controversial proposals such as relocating the central library and the proposed new Park & Ride on Bathampton Meadows, which have deeply angered residents across the city.

More than 1,600 people have signed the petition saying they have no confidence in the current leadership of B&NES 'to take decisions in the best interests of those who elected them'. Instead, they say, policies that the council leadership is pursuing, like cutting the arts budget by 100%, will 'irreparably damage the city they are meant to protect, and go against the clearly expressed wishes of residents'.

The petition is the latest in a series of protests and campaigns against this council's leadership and their policies over the past 12 months. In scenes not seen in Bath for many years, hundreds of people have taken to the streets to protest against deeply unpopular council measures, like the plan to move the central library allegedly to save money while at the same time proposing to spend at least £16 million on a Park & Ride that campaigners say won't help the city's chronic problems of congestion and pollution.

"Enough is enough," said Caroline Ambrose, of the Save Bath Library campaign. "20,000 people have signed our previous petitions, but the council has ignored them. They've evaded our emails and refused to engage or properly discuss proposals that will affect thousands of people in this city. Instead they give us seriously misleading and completely inadequate statements; but no business case, no proper public consultation. No business would be run like this. It is completely unacceptable and it is time that the leadership of B&NES council was held to account."

This latest move brings together for the first time the campaign groups Save Bath Library, Bathampton Meadows Alliance, and Stop Arts Cuts, under the umbrella 'Bath Deserves Better'.

Bathampton Meadows Alliance campaigner Emma Adams said: "We have come together because there is so much frustration at what this council is doing, and they are just not listening. We know that resources are tight in the current climate, but the way that they are spending millions with one hand while cutting 100% of their arts budget with the other is just not acceptable. The arts in Bath are one of the reasons that tourists come to this city; and so is the beautiful setting of Bath, which this council is proposing to spend millions of pounds cementing over when they know it won't help air pollution on the London Road, or congestion."

"The people of Bath are saying, we do not agree with what you are doing. Stop. We are demanding that they come to a public meeting, with an independent chair, to have a proper discussion about the way forward, not some council debate where members of the public are silenced after three minutes. People are losing confidence in this council, and they must start listening to the people who elected them."

Under the council's constitution, a petition signed by 1% of the electorate automatically triggers a full debate at council; or the other options that the council can adopt are a public meeting or an enquiry.

The newly-formed umbrella group, Bath Deserves Better, says a public meeting is the only option that will ensure a proper open debate; and have promised a big protest next weekend, on April Fool's Day, to back up their demands.

For further information:

Louise Hidalgo m 07800 835 325

Dionne Pemberton m 07710 535 930

Final thought!



Don't forget the Fun Run! Sunday 23rd April.

Please share and register now at

http://bathamptonmeadowsalliance.org.uk/?page_id=1428

£10 for adults, under 12s are £5.

Please can you also say if you wish to help on the day through the website.