

## FEDERATION OF BATH RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS (FOBRA)



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### FoBRA

FoBRA is the principal representative voice for residents in Bath. We represent 25 separate residents' associations throughout the City of Bath, in central and outer areas, and six affiliates, including both Students' Unions. Residents' associations and other organisations which share our objectives are welcome to join.

We meet regularly with Council leaders, elected members, officers, the Police and other sectors of the community. We make them aware of the views of Bath residents, and aim to ensure that they take our concerns into account.

All members meet regularly to discuss local issues in Bath and to determine the FoBRA priorities. We concentrate particularly on quality of life issues in Bath.

**FoBRA priorities:** Discussion amongst the membership identifies issues of concern, which form the core of our lobbying. A volunteer takes the lead on each area, proposing the FoBRA line, before this is discussed and agreed between the full membership.



**Traffic, Parking and Pollution.** Traffic, congestion and air pollution are the top concern of Bath residents. There is heavy traffic throughout the city centre, which leads in particular to pollution by nitrogen dioxide and particulates. FoBRA has been a major player in the creation of the Council's Bath Transport Strategy to manage traffic better and restrict through traffic, to encourage the use of public transport, and to improve facilities for cyclists and pedestrians and to restrict all but essential traffic in the historic centre. Parking also needs to be organised in such a way as to avoid drawing in unnecessary vehicles.

Residents need to be able to park near their home, but provision for visitors and business people needs to be approached in a different way. Over provision of parking spaces in the centre also draws in more cars, and adds to the congestion and pollution on Bath's roads. FoBRA is in favour of improved Park & Rides on the outskirts of Bath and a range of measures to ensure that residents get fair treatment.

**Engagement** Whether with 'new political groupings and models of public administration' or helping University Students' Unions engage more with residents, FoBRA needs to encourage organisation of resident opinion; ensure resident views remain important to the Council; that protections for residents are enforced; and that promises made to residents are delivered. This includes:

- Meetings by members of FoBRA's Executive and Subject Leads with our MP, with the leadership of the Council, with the Council opposition, where appropriate, with the police, Chamber of Commerce and others in the business community, Bath Preservation Trust, Network Rail, First Bus and First Great Western, the National Organization of Residents' Associations, etc.
- Outreach to nascent residents' associations and other movements of importance to FoBRA, whether members or not, such as Democratic Accountability Bath.
- Involvement with events and concerns in Bath such as the possibility of flooding, Bath City Conference and other governance efforts, enforcement, and occurrences which could affect or threaten the residents of Bath such as Government legislation.

**Night time economy.** Bath has been a city of resort and pleasure since Roman times.

Nowadays there are areas of the city with a large concentration of pubs and bars, and the antisocial behaviour which comes from that. The Licensing Act 2003 makes it difficult for objectors to stop licence applications and variations, but after much pressure from residents and others the Council adopted a Cumulative Impact Policy, which levels up the playing field to some extent. FoBRA urges its members to get involved in licensing cases, and supports efforts by the Police, Council and City Centre Manager to develop a more civilised night time economy.



**Public realm.** Bath and Venice are the only two whole cities to be declared World Heritage Sites by UNESCO. In Bath this is based largely on the uniquely homogeneous built environment. But in recent years the quality of the public realm – the streets, spaces, pavements and street furniture, has declined dramatically, as a result of poor maintenance and a lack of investment. This gives a bad impression to the visitors, on whom the prosperity

of Bath depends. We have supported the Council's wide-ranging strategy to restore the public realm, but the cost of implementing this will be substantial, and it is not yet clear where the funds will come from.



**Street cleaning.** This service has been starved of resource in recent years, and a big improvement is needed to bring it up to the level that residents, businesses and visitors have a right to expect. Residents have worked with the Council to draw up a new blueprint for cleanliness operations in the city, drawing on government guidance and best practice from elsewhere. The Council have welcomed this and are now in the process of implementing the recommendations.

**Planning.** FoBRA takes an interest in major developments in Bath, those which have an impact beyond their immediate footprint. (Where a response is needed to more local proposals, member associations normally take the lead.) There is an inevitable tension in the City between the need to develop to strengthen the economy and to regenerate run-down areas, and the imperative to maintain and enhance the city's heritage. FoBRA has been a major contributor to the Local Authority's Core Strategy and the associated Placemaking Plan.

**A new way of working** FoBRA works with the other pillars of the community in Bath, including the Council, Police, business community and other local organisations to get things done and improve life for residents in Bath. We will be critical if we have to, but our main aim is to be a constructive partner, contributing ideas and joining in the work.

FoBRA has campaigned for years for creation of a collaborative Committee of Councillors and concerned citizens in Bath. This has now started and time will tell if it is effective. It is called the **Bath City Forum**.

