

FEDERATION OF BATH RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS (FOBRA)



Chairman: Henry Brown

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FoBRA

FoBRA is the principal representative voice for residents in Bath. We represent 24 separate residents' associations throughout the City of Bath, in central and outer areas. 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 has identified several issues of concern, which form the core of our lobbying. A volunteer has taken the lead on each area, proposing the FoBRA line, before this is discussed and agreed between the full membership.



Traffic 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. We are urging the Council to manage traffic better and restrict through traffic, to encourage the use of public transport, and to improve facilities for cyclists and pedestrians. Parking also needs to be organised in such a way as to avoid drawing in unnecessary vehicles.

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 poor 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.

Parking. Parking, particularly in the centre, is an issue for a small crowded city like Bath. Residents need to be able to park near their home, but reasonable provision also needs to be made for visitors and business people. 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.



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.

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.

We have pioneered a new way of working with the Council through 'task and finish groups' (TFGs) on specific local issues. The first of these dealt with street cleaning (see above) where one of our members chaired a group containing other residents, Councillors, Council staff and the City Centre Manager. The second TFG is just being set up to look at medium to long term transport options. Residents bring a wide range of skills and know the city well, so are in a good position to identify the improvements that are needed, and the way to bring them about.

