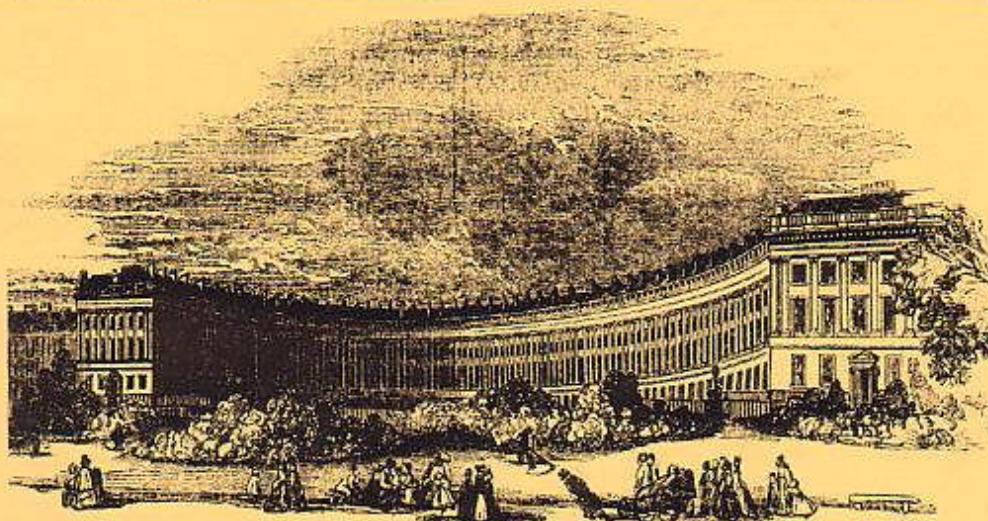


THE ROYAL CRESCENT SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NUMBER 53

SPRING 2004



***ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
AT 6.30PM ON SUNDAY 25TH APRIL 2004
IN THE ROYAL CRESCENT HOTEL***

● ALL RESIDENTS WELCOME ●

IN THIS ISSUE:

***SPRING OUTING: BOAT TRIP 16TH MAY
HISTORY OF THE RAILINGS
SOCIAL NOTES***

Letter from the Editor

Dear Residents and Members,

This issue has lots of information about the environment of the Crescent, from the history of the railings and the future of Julian Road, to the events planned in the Royal Victoria Park during the summer.

Our advertisers have again helped to make the *Newsletter* self-financing, and my thanks go to Jennifer Bereska for her help in bringing this about.

The Social Committee is working both on a Spring Outing, page 6, and a Late-Summer Party on the Lawn, so please look out for information about these in the future.

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Published by the Royal Crescent Society

Hon. President

Sir John Barraclough, KCB, CBE, DFC, AFC, FRSA

Hon. Vice-Presidents

The Right Hon. The Earl of Stockton

Mr. Michael Daw

<i>Chairman</i>	<i>Stephen Little</i>
<i>Vice-Chairman</i>	<i>Tim Forester</i>
<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Jennifer Bereska</i>
<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Ian Woodhouse</i>
<i>Editor</i>	<i>Stephen Conlin</i>

The restoration project for the Lawn Railings and Ha-ha is currently entangled in the red tape of contracts, deeds and general legal niceties, but it is pleasing to have got this far and to know that things are still progressing in the right direction, albeit slowly. The same can be said of the **Crescent Lawn Company's** application for charitable status, which is currently still under consideration by the Charity Commission. Our President, Sir John Barraclough, was unable to attend the Society's September meeting which paved the way for the Society, B&NES and the Lottery Fund to move on to this stage, but he has asked to convey his approval and appreciation of the work being done by the CLC.

The historical research on which the restoration specifications will be based is believed to have been completed, and we await with interest the resultant report. The Society's archives, dating back to 1825, were a major source of reference and have now been deposited at Bath City Archives at the Guildhall so as to be more readily accessible to residents and others with an interest in the Royal Crescent.

The Society's long-held ambition to see the pavement on the south side of the Crescent changed from tarmac to pennant stone, to match the wider pavement on the northern side, was to have been kept in abeyance until the railings had been re-aligned during their restoration. It was recently realised that it would be more sensible for this to be done at the same time, but approaches to various relevant departments of B&NES have met with plenty of moral support but no financial support. The World Heritage Site Management Plan I referred to in the last newsletter suggests it is almost mandatory for B&NES to undertake relaying the pavement, but it seems there is no budget set aside to support the Plan, in spite of the considerable effort presumably expended in drawing it up. The Society will continue to press this issue.

On pages 14 and 15 of this newsletter you will find a proposal for much-needed improvements to Julian Road and Crescent Lane, behind the Royal Crescent. A public meeting is to be held sometime in May – meanwhile any comments, for or against, can be passed to me, preferably before the meeting of the Parkside Group of local councillors and representa-

tives on April 21st when the scheme will no doubt again be on the agenda.

FBRA, the Federation of Bath Residents' Association, is currently working on a document entitled Better for Bath, which is intended to represent Bath residents' aspirations for many aspects of the city's future. We print some points from the draft at the end of this issue. The final version will eventually be available on [www.BetterforBath.org]. It will form part of the Local Strategic Plan which is being produced in line with government policy for local authorities to guide their long-term planning.

The growing popularity of the Bath Half-Marathon has prompted the organisers to invite comments from residents affected by the inevitable disruption. Next year's running will be on March 20th and may involve more road closures; contact details for any suggestions can be obtained from the Society.

Those of you with e-mail will know how useful it can be for disseminating news and information. Please let the Society know your address when renewing your subscription and/or Lawn Fund contribution to enable the Society to communicate with you more fully.



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The Royal Crescent Society

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2004

6.30 p.m. Sunday 25th April in the Royal Crescent Hotel

All residents

*- whether members, potential members or non-members -
and Friends of the Society are warmly invited to attend the
30th Annual General Meeting of the Society*

This is an opportunity to hear about and influence matters affecting all our daily lives. Everyone attending may take part in the discussions, but only paid-up members may vote on motions and on the election of the Society's Committee. Membership can be renewed or taken up using the enclosed form or at the Meeting.

Membership of the Society and support for the Lawn Fund

All residents are invited to start or renew their membership of the Society, which was founded in 1973 and exists to preserve and enhance the amenities of The Royal Crescent and its surroundings and to promote the interests of Members.

All residents (INCLUDING LIFE MEMBERS) are also urged to contribute to the Lawn Fund. This Fund was established by the then residents in 1825 to meet the requirements of the original Deeds and Leases conveying the site of each house from John Wood to the first owners/developers in the 18th century. It is now (since 1974) administered by the Society to meet the costs of maintaining the railings, the ha-ha wall, and the private Lawn in front of the Crescent. The Society has now registered the title to the Lawn and its boundaries, which is held by the Crescent Lawn Co. Ltd. on behalf of the Society's members.



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Forthcoming Events in the Royal Victoria Park

APRIL

Thu 1 - Sat 17: Rogers Fun Fair -

MAY

Sat 1 - Mon 3 Bank Holiday: Annual Bath Spring Flower Show

Fri 21 - Sun 23 May: Rogers Fun Fair

Fri 21 May: Bath Festival Opening Night Celebrations

Sat 22 May: Childrens Dancing In The Park

Sunday 23 May: Band Concert by Avon Fire Brigade

Sunday 30 May: Rotary Clubs Family Fun Day

JUNE

Sun 20 June: Band Concert by Bristol East Band

Tue 22 June: Bugatti Owners Club International Rally

JULY

Sun 4 July: Band Concert by Paulton Concert Band

Sun 11 July: Band Concert by Zephyrian

Sat 24 July: Guitar Festival, provisional date

Bath In Bloom - Floral Events:

Mon 12 July: free guided walk of the Park and Nursery

Sun 16 July: Botanical Gardens Event

SEPTEMBER

Sun 5 September: Band Concert by Redland Wind Band

Tue 21 - Sun 26: Cottle & Austen Circus

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JULIAN ROAD, BATH - EASY PARKING

The Royal Crescent Society

*Boat Trip on the 'John Rennie' from Sydney Wharf
into the Limpley Stoke Valley from 2.45pm to 5.30pm
on Sunday 16th May*

Price per person £15 includes trip and cream tea.

Further details to follow.

You may buy tickets at the Annual General Meeting on 25th April.
Information from Jennifer Bereska 338501 and Michelle Little 310180.

Opening Night Celebrations of the Bath Festival

Friday 21 May from 6pm

Fireworks at 10pm, Royal Victoria Park, admission free

From the Festival organisers:

Join thousands of people for Bath's biggest free family party. The Opening Night of Bath International Music Festival is a highlight of the city's calendar. Come and enjoy a picnic and free party in Royal Victoria Park in an event featuring musicians appearing over the seventeen days of the Festival. This year we've made a few changes, and as always, there will be surprises in store.

Opening Night Procession:

A carnival of music and dance from The Circus to Royal Victoria Park starting at 6pm. Young people from local schools and community groups have been working hard to create a blaze of colourful costumes.

Splinter X and Bath Spa University College Undergraduate Orchestra:

Splinter X, a small ensemble of young musicians from Creative Factory, Bath Festival Trust's unique improvisational youth orchestra, are joined by music students of Bath Spa University College, to play their own brand of original material, embracing a whole range of musical styles and influences.

Guinness World Record Attempt:

We have teamed up with Bath's saxophone shop and school *BlowOut Sax* to make an attempt on the Guinness World Record for Largest Saxophone Band - the current record stands at 321. Hundreds of saxophone players will try to make it into the record books.

Bath Philharmonia:

Jason Thronton conducts Bath's own resident professional symphony orchestra in a programme of popular favourites that will have you waltzing around the Royal Crescent. From the evocative Spanish rhythms of Bizet's *Carmen* suite, to Finlandia, this selection of well-loved classics brings some of your favourite melodies to our summer stage.

The Collection at the Opening Night Celebrations will be in aid of The Bath and North-East Somerset Fund.

A Brief History of the Railings

My previous articles (see Issues 51 and 52) concerned the lawn, the ha-ha and the "paddock" beyond the ha-ha. Finally, I propose to tell you a little of the history of the railings themselves. As in my previous articles, the information is gleaned from the records of the "Committee for the Improvement of the Royal Crescent" set up in 1825 by six residents of the Crescent.

As we know from the sample Indenture of Release dated 20 December 1766, it was incumbent on each owner of the 30 houses which comprise the Royal Crescent, to create "iron rails or pallsadoes" to enclose the lawn. However, by 1836 these original railings were in such a bad state of repair that it was deemed necessary to replace them altogether. The firm of Edward Lye and Sons were contracted to supply and erect wrought iron railings to run from Brock Street to Marlborough Buildings. The specification also included the erection of 155 yards of the original railings across the top of the ha-ha. Indeed J. Newman's lithograph dated 1850 shows such railings across the top of the ha-ha. It is not possible to say when they were removed; probably during one of the 3 periods when our records are missing, as there no further mention of them. Their removal must have improved the appearance of the lawn considerably as it was then once again possible to enjoy an uninterrupted view from the houses, across the lawn to the paddock and the Royal Victoria Park beyond. Indeed the idea of an uninterrupted view fulfills the purpose of a ha-ha - to give a view from manicured lawn to fields of pasture beyond.

Unfortunately the provision of the new railings was by no means the end of the story. They required painting regularly every three years. In 1843 they were painted green, in 1892 they were maroon and in 1896 a chocolate brown. These are the only years when the colour is specified in the records. Railings in Georgian times were often painted dark blue or dark green. I had understood that railings were nearly always painted black after the death of Queen Victoria, but I have recently been told that this is not necessarily so.

Apart from regular painting, the gates, locks and stone bases frequently needed attention. In the years covered by our records (1825 to 1899 with 3 gaps of several years unaccounted for) the locks were dismantled and repaired 12 times and all were replaced in 1893. New or extra keys were provided 4 times. The stone bases were repaired twelve times, and the rail

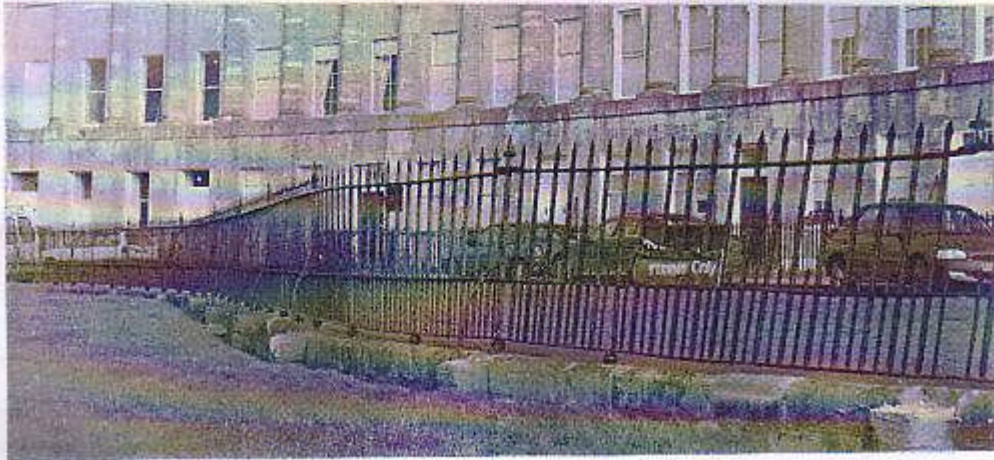
ings themselves repaired, renewed or 'set upright' eight times. Exactly what happened in 1871 that caused the need for the bases needing repairs and the railings setting upright, is not explained. It is a relatively frequent occurrence nowadays; bad driving of one type or another destroys the railings, but in the days of horse and carriage???

As you can imagine, maintenance of railings, stone bases, gates and locks, not to mention the continual repainting meant that there was a considerable demand on the financial resources available to the Committee. No wonder the Treasurer made such careful records of the payment from each house each year.

When our new railings are installed they will be painted black (in keeping with all the surrounding railings). Thankfully, with the improved paint formulas of this century, they will no longer need to be repainted every 3 years as in Victorian times.

Jenny Hardisty

The archives of the Royal Crescent Committee have now been placed in the Guildhall Archives for safe-keeping on permanent loan. This means that anyone who is interested has access to them. The records cover the years 1825, 1836 to 1858, 1870 to 1899 and the year 1905. If anyone has any idea where the records for the the missing years are, please get in touch with the committee of the Society.



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To Stephen and Michelle Little of Number 22 on 13th January 2004 a son, Charles Dirom.

New residents

The Society welcomes Colin and Rachel Clarkson-Short to Number 29.

The Spring Outing

Please see page 6 for the advance notice of this boat trip into the Limpley Stoke Valley with a cream tea on the afternoon of Sunday 16th May.

Information from Jennifer Bereska 338501 and Michelle Little 310180.

Late Summer Event - an evening party on the Lawn

Would anyone be willing to help with the provision of canapés for this occasion? Please get in touch with Jennifer or Michelle as above.

The Society's Marquee

This useful shelter, be it from sun or rain, is available for hire from Stephen Little, Number 22, telephone 310180, or please get in touch with any other committee member. Terms: £25 hire for three days with a £100 returnable deposit to cover possible damage.

The Festive Dinner

On 4th January 2004 the Festive Dinner was held in the Royal Crescent Hotel. Pre-dinner drinks provided by the Hotel began at 6.30pm in one of the attractively furnished rooms at the front of the hotel. The company then moved across the garden to the restaurant where tables of eight persons admired the beautiful centrepieces provided by the Hotel.

The first course consisted of finely sliced marinated salmon, Chablis, and a soft herb dressing. The main course was roast Scottish sirloin with *dauphinoise* potatoes, fine beans and mushroom *jus*. The pudding was very popular, a *marjolaine* of chocolate with a citrus dressing. Coffee and *petits fours* were served at the table. The Hotel kindly provided complimentary mineral waters throughout the dinner.

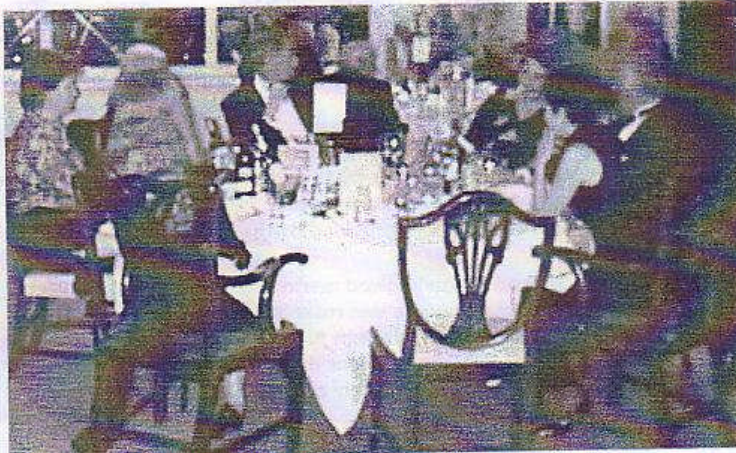
The Festive Dinner *continued*

The Society gratefully received the following prizes for the raffle, which raised £185 towards the overall profit of £318.39.

Bath Races - Two Badges for the Premier Enclosure
Bath Racecourse

Voucher for The Royal Crescent Club 'Life Treatment' including lunch for two people
The Royal Crescent Hotel

The Society also raffled the following items donated by individuals:
Voucher for Hair Treatment ● Halliwell's Film, Video and DVD Guide - 2004 ● Halliwell's Who's Who in the Movies - 3rd Edition ● The Royal Horticultural Society Diary 2004 ● The Royal Crescent in Bath - 12 souvenir cards ● Panettone (Italian fruit cake) ● Gourmet Gift Basket ● Bottle of Champagne - Brossault Brut ● Bottle of Vouvray - 1999 ● Bottle of Cabernet Shiraz - 1999 ● Bottle of Chateau de Ricaud Loupiac - 1987 (dessert wine) ● Pair of Royal Albert Whisky Glasses (boxed) ● Two Irish Linen Hand Towels (boxed) ● Drawer Lining Paper and Bath Salts ● Box of Hand Soap



The Old Grey Box: Episode Two of our exciting saga

Observant residents will have noticed that the telephone box at the east end of the Crescent is still red, despite the equally red faces at BT (Kiosks & Payphones, Customer Services Department) at having changed the colours of this Grade 2 Listed Building in July 2003 without the necessary Statutory Consents (see Winter 2003 *Newsletter*, Issue 52, sent to Members).

Further gentle enquiries in March 2004 have revealed more administrative malfunctions. The order had gone out ("in November") for the original colour specification to be restored to avoid the imposition of shaming Enforcement Orders on BT, by B&NES. The record shows also that the contractor had reported ordering the paint and had been asked to supply an implementation date. He didn't reply and the administrative tool which set all this in motion, called an 'Issue', was forgotten and incorrectly 'closed'.

But, behold, BT was meanwhile 'altering its Processes' on how to control 'Issues' because through bitter experience it had realised that many orders sent out for painting work were being reported by Local Authorities and others as not completed - even though BT's contractors had allegedly bought the paint! So our box was not alone in being forgotten, but more significantly its Issue did not get reviewed in the Process alterations. Until our recent further gentle enquiry, that is.

So, a new Issue has now been raised for the re-paint, reports made to the Team Leader (wow!), assertions made that this new Issue will not be closed until the job is completed, special monitoring set up to establish this and more cries of "Oh, dear!" again sent echoing down the halls of BT. It would probably not be advisable to hold one's breath in anticipation.

Correction: the box was installed in 1955, not 1952 as reported in the previous article.

Michael Daw

A Plan for Julian Road

Recommendations from a study by

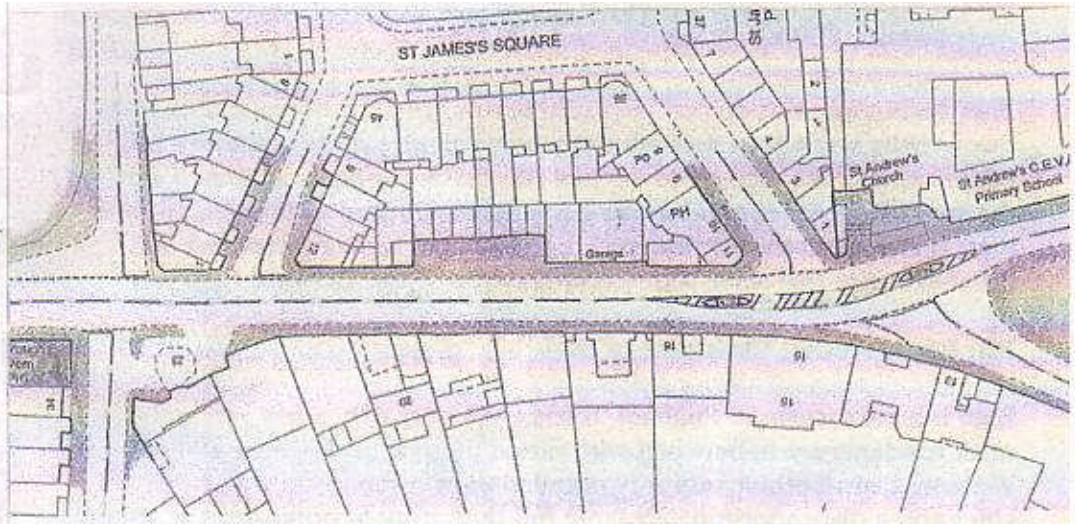
Jeremy Johnson-Marshall & Ben Hamilton-Baillie

Julian Road, Crescent Lane and their surrounding streets form an integral part of the Georgian city of Bath. Yet modern interventions, decay and neglect have resulted in a streetscape that compares poorly with the quality recognized by the World Heritage status. Neither are the current arrangements safe or efficient. The understandable attempt to reduce speeds and modify driver behaviour through the use of large intrusive signs has failed to make a significant difference. It is unlikely that conventional traffic calming, such as humps and chicanes, would be acceptable or appropriate.

The conclusion is either to accept the unsatisfactory status quo, or adopt a different approach. The principles adopted in these initial proposals outline a new set of principles intended to guide future measures in this context. The proposals themselves suggest one example of how such principles might be applied, and help explore their implications. They aim to transform Julian Road from a piece of anonymous highway to becoming an integral and distinctive part of the city of Bath. Traffic speeds are modified by encouraging the maximum visual and psychological contact between drivers, their surroundings, and the activities of people in the public realm. In place of a linear corridor segregated from its context, Julian Road becomes a series of coherent spaces responding to their surroundings.

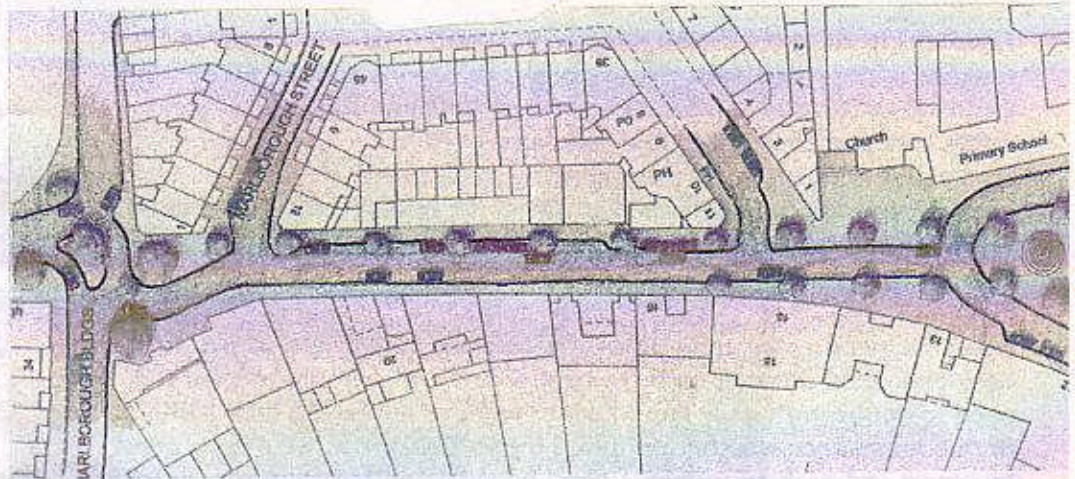
This report represents a new starting point rather than a conclusive design. There is a great deal of work still to be done before any physical measures are carried out. If there is general public and professional support for the underlying principles, it is recommended that an appropriate team be assembled and commissioned to prepare the scheme in more detail. Such a team should cover a wide range of skills and professional disciplines, including highway engineering, traffic safety, cost appraisal, urban design, planning and landscape architecture.

Comments for or against, preferably before the meeting of the Parkside Group of local councillors and representatives on April 21st, can be passed to Stephen Little, No. 22 Royal Crescent, who has some of the document



The current arrangement of Julian Road

The new plan would alter the layout of junctions and suggests the planting of trees



Better for Bath

Part of a draft document from the Federation of Bath Residents Associations, FBRA

This document should soon be available to anyone by downloading from our website www.BetterforBath.org which will give details of how to get paper copies. The expectation is that *BB: Better for Bath* combined with the strength of other good policy documents will lead to funding of fundamental change in the service level received from local government and other agencies that serve the residents of this World Heritage City.

BB: Representing Residents of Bath

Bath is a microcosm of England. It has a few very rich, a few very poor and most residents are in-between with varied lifestyle preferences and origins. We have a small ethnic minority population in comparison with other UK cities and a disproportionately large full time student population of about 15000 who are from all backgrounds. Its cosmopolitan, sometimes sophisticated and sometimes rough. Bath has about 40,000 registered dwellings and a resident population of about 85,000. 85% of the population is in private owner-occupation and 15% live in rental accommodation from private or social landlords.

BB: Residents' needs

Residents need to see 'Small things done well'. This means care and maintenance of the pavements, the roads and the drains and the hidden infrastructure of the City. It means good house-keeping; cleanliness, good order, safety, care and civic pride. Residents also need to see 'Big things done professionally' with better motives allowing some profit, yet with good design, good ideas, timeless solutions that reflect the heritage and utilise good modern engineering and architecture, done in a neighbourly and consultative way, but done nevertheless.

Residents need a safe and viable infrastructure for the City of Bath. Residents need through-traffic to be diverted under or around the City. We need to get on with daily life, to get to work or leisure on time without undue impedance whether on foot, bicycle, bus or car. We need a good transport and parking system, a good hospital and health clinics, an active fire service and Fire service, a consistently high standard of schools, a

University that does not create pressures that exceed the ability of the City to retain its unique character. Residents need good neighbourliness between residents, businesses and visitors meaning such things as a right to sleep, the right to live peaceably in one's home, the right to live without smells, fumes, vibration, excessive noise, rowdiness, fear or crime and a right to park a vehicle safely.

Wish list of Short, Medium and Long Term projects and goals:

Do small things well, particularly city housekeeping:

Clear all blocked drains

Clean up public buildings

Clean windows

Improve and renew pedestrian lighting

Remove unnecessary street clutter

Modernise and make a fair car parking regime

Do big things Professionally:

Encourage the redevelopment of Southgate

Demolish and do-up the bus station and rail station

Encourage sensitive development of the whole Western Riverside site

Seriously examine and evaluate the suggested two long by-pass tunnels

Demolish and rebuild some hideous eyesores around the city

Find some new ways across the river for pedestrians

Involve Intelligent Residents in Intelligent things:

Change the times of the bus gate to core shopping hours only

Find a new home for the Rugby Team

Implement new Licensing in sympathy with residents

Reconfigure the way traffic is allowed (or not) into the city centre

Reconfigure a number of traffic black-spots

Make the city more liveable:

Provide regulation that will clean the air of particulates from diesel

Regulate weight and size of vehicles to prevent noise and vibration

Step up and perhaps enforce some recycling activities

Maintain the footpaths and keep people safe on them from fast traffic

Maintain a vibrant but respectful cultural economy

Regulate anti social behaviour

Control licensing to avoid saturation

