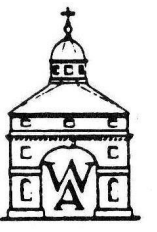


# Widcombe Association

## October 2007 Newsletter



[www.widcombeassociation.org.uk](http://www.widcombeassociation.org.uk)

### Development on our Doorstep

The Widcombe Association's Autumn Meeting will be held on  
**Thursday November 8th at 7:30 pm**  
**at Widcombe Junior School**

There will be two important presentations on developments which already affect our area:

**The Future for Bath Vision**  
 with Jeremy Smalley  
 Assistant Director for Development and Regeneration at  
 B&NES  
*The Council's blueprint for B&NES future development*

**SouthGate**  
 with John Munce  
 Development Manager at Multi Development  
*How the development will bear upon the approach to  
 Widcombe from the City*

Please take this opportunity to hear about changes that will have a considerable bearing on our surroundings

The meeting will begin at 7:30 with a brief EGM for members to elect new committee members followed by refreshments with some more pictures of Beating the Bounds

**Guest tickets £3**

#### Chairman's Report

Each half-year it is difficult to say what the Widcombe Association has achieved because many things remain unresolved while others change as we proceed. Certain undeniable successes however emerge in nearly every Newsletter and this time I must highlight Beating the Bounds of Widcombe, a resurgence of an active Rossiter Road sub-committee with its goal in sight, and the revival of the shopping mix in Widcombe Parade.

We welcome all new members and hope you will be active in our community. Membership numbers remain healthy which means that our influence carries weight and that we can offer varied activities to engage all members. But the wide range of events and issues all require organisation and for that we must thank the hard-working Committee without whom no meetings, festivals, campaigns or entertainments would happen.

Again our Committee numbers are down and we urgently need more help. Do you have an interest in the history and architecture of Widcombe? Could you set up exhibitions for us to accompany our meetings and events? We have exhibition boards with lighting and an archive room in the St Mark's centre with many maps and pictures. We urgently need an old plan

chest to keep those materials clean and safe so if you have one to spare, please let Samy Ramasamy know and we will put it to good use. Are you a collector, photographer, artist or writer who could add to that collection? Better still, would you be willing to join the Committee and fill a long vacant role? We are in dire need of a Membership Secretary and there are three other vacancies. Please contact Ro Emsley, the Secretary, or me if you would like more information.

You may see in the new parking arrangements some bays reserved for Car Club. We opposed losing them for residents or shoppers and were overruled. Club membership enables use of a car on a pay-as-you-drive basis and can be community run. If you are interested, contact Planet Car Club (317024).

Following the May elections, we have two new Widcombe Councillors: Brook Whelan, Con, (337355) and Ian Gilchrist, Lib Dem, (334775) should you wish to contact them. They have already been charged by us, together or individually, to follow up the major issues of Rossiter Road and Abbey Cemetery and have both been very quick to act over some minor problems. You may find it useful to know the major duties of Cabinet Members: Cllr Haeberling, leader; Cllr Hanney, resources, property and safety; Cllr Pritchard, housing, health and adult education; Cllr Hawkins, economic development and major

projects; Cllr Watt, children's services; Cllr Gerrish, planning, transport, highways, tourism, leisure, culture, environmental services, licensing and libraries. Cllr Gerrish has been very supportive on Rossiter Road.

Returning to our triumphs, we congratulate and thank Sarah Lewis for leading us around the Bounds. There was an element of a gamble in arranging such a venture. Would people come? Would we cover our costs? What about safety? Would boys volunteer to be beaten? There were dozens of questions but with the performances of the Naturals and, in particular, Lady Margaret in her five different frocks, plus the wonderful weather and community spirit, 200 and more people had a fantastic day. So thanks go to Sarah for the brilliant organisation and also to our helpers, sponsors, guides, St Matthew's, Widcombe Junior School, the Paragon School, our Police Community Service Officer and all members who made it succeed.

Sarah carried the major responsibility for the varied programme in our Festival. But she needs a second in command in case she herself cannot always be available. If you would like to support her, please let Sarah know. She is sadly about to lose the help of Caroline Davies who is leaving the area; she has been evident in many activities not least as

#### FedBRA

We regularly send WA representatives to the meetings of the Federation of Bath Residents' Associations. Since March, we have had a presentation on the Joint Waste Management Planning Strategy for our area and the options available for dealing with our waste.

The planning issues for all the major developments in Bath take up much of the time. For different reasons, the extension to the Holburne Museum, the Dyson School of Design and Rugby at the Rec have all met with negative responses from the Council. No alternatives have been suggested and we are concerned that Bath should not turn its face from new opportunities.

The risk of flooding is high on the agenda and we expect to hear from an expert soon. Another area of great concern is licensing. Legislation as it stands allows licences to be issued where no planning permission has been granted. This is patently absurd and needs rectifying. Residents have very little say in the matter and the Licensing Committee often ignores their wishes. Traffic and levels of air pollution in Bath are deeply worrying and a serious long term threat to the health and wellbeing of residents. Urgent action is needed.

These and other issues such as the Green Belt, Student Housing and Anti-social behaviour are discussed at the meetings, which take place every two months, and appropriate action is taken, often in the form of letters to the relevant authority. When we need to canvass opinion, as with the Rugby questionnaire, we do our best to consult you.



#### Rossiter Road

A sub-committee of the Association has continued to press Bath and North East Somerset Council to proceed with the enhancement of Widcombe Parade by moving through traffic to a two-way Rossiter Rd, retaining Widcombe Parade for local traffic and pedestrians. Hopes were raised when the scheme was included in the Local Transport Plan bid for central government funds. However, in the Bath 'package' it was considered to be delivering insufficient traffic benefits, so the Rossiter Rd project was dropped from the bid.

The Council has identified local funding for a reduced scheme and this is the subject of discussion between the Council and the sub-committee. It is the Council's intention to test this modified scheme with the prospect of carrying it out within the next two or three years. Although it has been included in the budget, there has been no commitment to date by the newly elected Council to the project.

Over the summer meetings have been held with our local councillors, Ian Gilchrist and Brook Whelan, and with Councillor Gerrish. The two Widcombe councillors are both pressing for the project to be implemented and Cllr Gerrish has declared the political will to proceed.

At the behest of the sub-committee, a question is to be submitted by the local councillors to a meeting of the Executive Group of the Council at its November meeting, seeking commitment to the inclusion of the Widcombe Parade area as an Air Quality Management Area.

The sub-committee is monitoring progress and will continue to lobby the Council for a firm commitment to a satisfactory scheme.

*Michael Wrigley*

#### The Widcombe Association Committee

**Mayveen Blackwell 429729**  
 (Chairman)  
**Rosemary Emsley 333865**  
 (Secretary)  
**Rupert Rhymes OBE 834188**  
 (Vice Chairman)  
**Richard Wales 422677**  
 (Treasurer)  
**Sarah Lewis 315491**  
 (Events)  
**Brenda Beeton 317026**  
 (Abbey Cemetery)  
**G.Ramasamy (Samy) 429463**  
 (Traffic, Highways, Local Planning)  
**Stuart McAndrew 835677**  
 (Traders, Streetscape, Police)  
**Robert Hornyold-Strickland 484282**  
 (Planning, Major Projects)

#### New Look Garden Group



Hello, my name is Alex Nash and I have taken over from Ainley Wade organising the Widcombe Association Garden Group. Firstly, a big thank you to Ainley for all his hard work over the past three years. Garden meetings will now take place in the café at the **Prior Park Garden Centre**. What better venue could there be than at our local Garden Centre? We are very grateful to the management. Meetings will be held as usual at 7:30 pm on the last Monday of the month in October, November, January, February, March and April with two outings in September and May.

The new programme of events commences on October 29th with an illustrated talk by Mary Payne who recently won a gold medal at the Hampton Court Flower Show. She will be talking about her experiences creating the winning garden. Later in the year, Charles Dowding will be telling us how he grows organic vegetables the 'no dig' way. Charles recently appeared in the Independent on Saturday interviewed by Anna Pavord and has written a book about organic gardening which he will be signing and selling on the night.

Forthcoming meetings will be advertised in the Garden Centre. The Garden Group will now be called the **Widcombe Association Garden Club** but welcomes everyone, not only Widcombe Association Members.

Wine and nibbles will be available and there will be a raffle. A free garden gift will be given to everyone who comes to the first meeting on **29th October**. We look forward to seeing you.

*Alex Nash*

#### Social Events

Our stated aim to provide activities to foster community spirit and encourage people to mix keeps our social events near the top of our agenda. Even our Spring and Autumn General Meetings end with a party! We hope to make members and others aware of the beauty and history of our area and we could not have chosen a better way for people to meet and make new friends than this Summer's venture of **Beating the Bounds**.

Another event new this year but also to be repeated was the **Widcombe Art Trail** which revealed so much local talent.

The popular 18<sup>th</sup> Century party at **Lyncombe Court** raised £540 for the Radcliffe Hospital Cancer charities, £160 for the WA Abbey Cemetery Action Group and £100 towards St Matthew's Church repairs.

Our **Christmas Lights** will be switched on at a more ambitious ceremony this year followed by a concert on 8<sup>th</sup> December. Full details of this, the **Mummers** on New Year's Day, and other events are in the yellow 'What's On' supplement included in this issue.

We are already organizing fixtures for Summer 2008, and rely so much on people's goodwill in opening homes, gardens and schools as well as their help in leading walks, giving talks and preparing exhibitions. Funds we make are usually for some local cause. Please contact Sarah Lewis (315491) with suggestions and feedback as well as offers of help with organization.

*Sarah Lewis*

a Wobbler. Thank you and best wishes, Caroline. We are grateful to Annette Whateley who has agreed to assist with box office.

When we asked what retail mix you would like in Widcombe Parade in the Regeneration questionnaire, you wanted exactly what we now have: a variety of useful outlets, to do local shopping, stop for a meal, a drink or a rendezvous and to enjoy being in Widcombe. Well, we have just that and it is up to us to see that we keep it, so please use your local sources; there will be more parking spaces and the only problem will be the traffic. But brazen it out for the moment because the Rossiter Road scheme is going ahead.

The Rossiter Road sub-committee of Samy Ramasamy, Mike Barnes, Mike Wrigley, Don Lovell, Jon Adams and Steve Osgood has re-assembled and, with me, held four meetings to set the reduced scheme back on course. The work should be completed in 2010/11 and we shall then be able to enjoy our village street without unbearable traffic, pollution and noise.

Planning issues have been mushrooming around us and we were very relieved when Robert Hornyold-Strickland joined the committee to deal with the major schemes. After personal letters to members, several responded to offer their occasional help and with them, Samy dealing with minor local issues, and Martin Ireland, a member who used to be on the committee, very usefully providing lists of latest applications with comments, we are now almost up to speed on that quarter of our remit. We cannot however relax; new Western Riverside applications are in, all previous submissions are not to be taken into account and we have to submit comments all over again officially before 5<sup>th</sup> October.

We were to have heard about the Dyson School at our Autumn Meeting but after a glitch over educational establishments being developed on a flood plain, the site went to tender and Bath Spa University School of Art and Design won. There are no plans yet.

I hope to see you on 8<sup>th</sup> November.

**Mayveen Blackwell**

### Greenway!

We were asked earlier this year to support Greenway!, the association which campaigns for improved safety around Greenway Lane and relief from the increased traffic caused by commuters and school runs. We too have sought improvements over the same ground. They conducted traffic counts and surveys of residents' opinions which were presented to B&NES but future alterations on Wellsway mean that no definite changes can be agreed at the moment. We shall continue to listen.

### Licensing

Many column inches have covered the Chronicle about the problems of unruly behaviour associated with excessive drinking in the city. Recently the Council approved plans for a saturation zone for certain city centre areas whereby the number and regulations governing licensed establishments is more strictly controlled. Although the Association suggested that Widcombe Parade should be part of such a zone this has not been accepted.



### Treasurer's Report

I took over the role of Treasurer, in July, from Sarah Lewis who had been bravely filling the gap following Ian Gilchrist's resignation. My first priority has been to transfer our accounting records to computer, a lengthy process that is not yet complete. Also I am investigating the possibility of collecting subscriptions by direct debit, rather than by standing order. This would have the twofold advantage of simplifying administration and enabling any future subscription increases to be implemented without the need to seek fresh standing order mandates from our members.

I am pleased to say that the Association is in a satisfactory financial situation, with just over £4,000 in our bank accounts, after allowing for accrued interest and uncleared cheques. In addition we have limited funds in the WA Abbey Cemetery Action Group Account.

**Richard Wales**

### The Widcombe Association Committee

At present, the Widcombe Association Committee consists of nine people. Our job would be much easier with several more volunteers. In particular, we desperately need a membership secretary. This needs to be somebody who is familiar with EXCEL, which we use to store our data. The job entails printing out labels for the twice yearly newsletters and sending out membership details and cards. The busiest time is probably January when renewals are due. We cannot function properly if someone does not come forward soon.

The committee meets only once a month on the first Tuesday evening. **If you feel you could help the WA with this or in any other way, please contact the secretary at [roemsley@hotmail.com](mailto:roemsley@hotmail.com)**

Remember, this is your association and we try very hard to look after your interests as you can see from the rest of this newsletter. We need your help to do this.

### Local Issues

We always ask you at the AGM for your three most important local issues. At the top of your list this year is the Rossiter Road scheme, followed by other traffic and safety issues, particularly around Greenway Lane and Lyncombe Hill, and then antisocial behaviour in Widcombe.

We do keep these at the forefront of our efforts throughout the year.

If you have an issue or problem affecting just you or which is very localised, such as rubbish in your street or a hole in the road, then your first port of call should be the Council (switchboard 477000), followed by our councillors – Ian Gilchrist 334775 or Brook Whelan 337355. If the problem persists after both these routes have been followed, then we will see if we can be of any help through any of our contacts, but we should be the last resort rather than the first in this type of situation.

### Membership Report

We are sorry to lose Ian Sharp as our Membership Secretary. He has had to resign due to other pressures but we thank him very much for all his hard work. Angela Frith, a former Membership Secretary, has stepped in for a month to keep records up to date and we thank her very much but we urgently need a new volunteer.

Our membership currently stands at 640 private members, 357 households and 23 business members. Numbers have fallen slightly, possibly owing to the change of date for the membership year. Please remember this now runs from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December. If you do not already pay by standing order, you can download the form from our website or ring the Chairman or Secretary for a form.

Please mention us to local friends and neighbours, especially newcomers to the area and suggest they look at the website or phone a member of the committee.

**Rosemary Emsley**

### Community Makeover - You can help!

The Bath Chronicle and Barclays are running a competition in which local good causes can win funds for a makeover. Both St Mark's and St Matthew's have been shortlisted to compete for the winner's prize of £10,000. To vote for one of them, please collect tokens, including bonus tokens, from the weekly Chronicle, every Thursday between 27th September and 18th October. Send in your voting slip by 26 October, midday, to the Chronicle but **keep your tokens**. The winners will need to collect them and send them all in together to verify their claim. These local facilities surely deserve our help with necessary improvements, so please start collecting now!

Please send tokens to Angela Frith, Ashley Lodge, Prior Park Road for St Matthew's and to Jenny Urquhart c/o Acorns at St Mark's.



The turnover of shops and businesses in Widcombe continues with Solicitor's Own Software and the Veterinary Surgery closing, but new arrivals with smart facades have raised the overall attractiveness of the parade. In particular the floral display outside the Bus Station Florists gives a real lift to that end of the parade. Other new arrivals are the "Widcombe Gift Company", "Roundabout the House", and the up-market boutique "She". The Petit Cochon restaurant has been sold and re-opened as Bramley's, specialising in modern British cuisine, and the old vet's premises is now "The Widcombe Pantry" selling a range of foods from delicatessen to local fruit and vegetables.

Progress replacing the lamppost outside the White Hart with the original design has unfortunately ground to a halt. However, the council (Charles Jones) has assured us that the Widcombe post bracket will be manufactured as part of the work required to re-instate some half dozen lampposts across the city; the Manvers Street lamppost is scheduled for 2010, so we are probably in for a long wait.

### Two Tunnels - threat or opportunity ?

Regular users of the old Somerset and Dorset railway line in Lyncombe Vale may not be aware of the proposal to re-open the Combe Down and Devonshire tunnels and create a cycle route into the city. Notice of the 'open days' for the tunnel have been a little haphazard. Whilst the proposal obviously has its attractions if you use this area for recreation (dog walking or just enjoying the tranquility of this nature haven) are you satisfied that what the promoters describe as 'shared use' will come with no attendant vandalism and antisocial behaviour? Whilst the police are quoted as being in support of such projects elsewhere, there are surely questions to be asked about safety in a reopened mile long tunnel. It would seem that the trackbed would be provided with a hard surface to benefit users; is there a danger that the latter will include motor cyclists who have previously used the area for scrambling?

South of Midford the track has already been made into a cycle route but for some reason (local landowner objections?) dogs are banned. No assurance has been given about the Lyncombe Vale area remaining open for such exercise.

Local residents don't want to appear negative but do have serious reservations which don't seem to be addressed other than by reference to examples far away (one in America!) Why don't you let your local councillors know your views?

(Of course if Dr Beeching hadn't intervened, there would be trains on the line and we might be campaigning for a local halt to get us into town!)

### Halfpenny Bridge



The Association has made various representations to the Council about aggressive begging and other antisocial behaviour in the area around the Halfpenny Bridge (so named as the halfpenny was the fee in its toll days). Recent correspondence has made it clear that the area is included in the planning of the new transport interchange around Bath Spa Station but we need more comments from members to convince the authorities that there is a problem to be addressed (and money spent!) What do you think?

How do you feel about the bridge receiving a makeover to highlight its Victorian structure with lighting to give a greater sense of security? Could some clever lighting not enhance the area and encourage us to begin to appreciate the River Avon rather than leave it unappreciated, channelled between its steel lined banks? Perhaps there is a local trader out there who would like to start lighting up Bath's bridges!

### Traffic, Safety and Parking

After the railings at the school crossing on Pulteney Road were crushed, parents, supported by Ian Gilchrist sought a safer crossing. WA thought that the railings and children were less vulnerable in daylight school time than when railings unexpectedly appear in front of drivers in poor light conditions. The crossing itself will not be changed but the protruding railings will be painted white and another "Keep Right" sign will be installed to warn motorists on the eastbound carriageway.

Speeding down Ralph Allen Drive should be reduced by the recently introduced reactive sign near the Abbey Cemetery gate. This is not the only position where we have constantly requested a deterrent and our pleas have now at last been heard for one above the Macaulay bend on Widcombe Hill. A temporary one is to be installed straight away and will be replaced by a permanent one at the start of the next financial year. Speeding throughout Widcombe is one of your most important issues and we do try to press for solutions.

We can hardly crow about the new parking arrangements after a wait of four years or more for them to be finally passed and implemented. They will provide more spaces for residents and shoppers and improved traffic calming. Enforcement will start in October.

**Samy Ramasamy**

### Law and Order

Those of you who were able to attend the AGM in April will have been introduced to **PC Gerry Monks**, our new Community Beat Manager. He replaces PC Paul Honeychurch, who has been promoted to sergeant. The police have asked for the public's assistance in reporting any instances of misbehaviour or crime, and you can do this by dialling:

**999** for crime or suspicious incident *in progress*  
**0845 456 7000** to report crime or incident  
**01225 842496-7 0887** to leave a voicemail

Gerry can be contacted by email : [gerry.monks@avonandsomerset.police.uk](mailto:gerry.monks@avonandsomerset.police.uk)

PC Monks is supported by our Police Community Support Officers, **David Hall**, who was very helpful in ensuring that the Beating the Bounds was the safe success that it turned out to be, and now a new PCSO, **Nigel Penny**. They prefer to tour the beat on foot or bicycle and are establishing good relationships and an active presence throughout Widcombe. Gerry has been following up the rough sleepers found in St Mark's and Abbey Cemeteries. Incidents in Widcombe Parade and Armes Court are fewer now. The team is targeting speeding on our roads and flouting of weight restrictions. Reports of activity in Widcombe can be found on the Avon and Somerset Police website.

### Let us have your Email address!

I now have the email addresses of about 190 members. These will only be seen by the committee and only used if there is urgent information to impart, opinions to be canvassed or to inform or remind members of impending events. It is a speedy and cost free way for us to contact members with this facility.

If you have not yet let us have your email address or if you change it at any time, please let me know at

[roemsley@hotmail.com](mailto:roemsley@hotmail.com)

**Rosemary Emsley**

