

FBWRA Chairman's Report for March 2021 Committee Meeting

Chaville Court- update received and circulated. Enquiry from resident to our website – passed to Harry.

Cycle Lanes in High Road- Further FOI response received- not yet fully studied, but, contrary to previous reply to us the consultation/study period will run to March 2022, not 2021.

Parking Charges in Parks- FOI- response that Council anticipate £150,000 net income p.a. from charging. Minimal cost to establish.

Council websites - submitted FOI request - responses received but not yet reviewed.

Council Engage Barnet website - submitted FOI request- response received but not yet reviewed. Low response rates to many consultations.

Congestion in FBL and FBR - FOI request response received. I was not satisfied with it in relation to FBL and sent in another. This prompted an email from the Council correcting the earlier response- specifically, there are no proposals being worked on to reduce congestion in the upper part of FBL. Likewise, no proposals for dealing with congestion in FBR other than adjustments to traffic lights and minor junction modifications both at FB Town Hall. Consequently we should consider proceeding with the petition proposals

Website update- planning applications list feature working smoothly. Waiting for new figures on website usage to see if members are looking at the lists. I have started work on the general update. Maria has added the map showing our area.

FORAB – participated in February meeting. Minutes circulated. No subscription is being charged this year. I have asked FORAB's Chairman if we can post FORAB minutes on our website. Response awaited.

Mailchimp – Membership Secretary and I have resolved various cases where email addresses for member were not receiving our emails.

Planning -

Barnet House – I and others participated in the on-line presentations by the developer/ design team. The design is an improvement on the previous proposal. Parking and housing mix are issues. No information about affordable housing component.

St John's Church Hall- planning application not yet decided by the Council. 75 public comments objecting, none in support.

143 Friern Barnet Lane- planning application not yet decided by the Council. 25 public comments objecting, 10 in support.

North Finchley Town Centre Regeneration –No response to my application to be appointed to the Partnership Board- no response so far. Consequently I have sent in a FOI request about progress in establishing it generally.

Turnover of planning staff- FORAB were told by Fabien Gaudin (Barnet's Head of Planning) that 7 planning officers worked on applications for Chipping Barnet area. Of these 5 were newly in post. There is a loss of continuity and knowledge of the history of sites.

Extra floors on houses and flats- the new planning procedure, where permission is automatic in some cases, does not apply to buildings originally constructed before 1948. This greatly reduces the problems with the procedure in our area.

Parking Surveys for planning applications- FOI request essentially rejected. I have appealed to the Council's in-house review system.

Housing statistics – this from FORAB's Chairman – “On Barnet website you will find the 'Housing Strategy March 2019'. On page 13 there is a table setting out the requirement for 2019-41. This shows 23% as 1/2 bed units and 77% 3 bed or more. There is other interesting stuff in the report, but it completely dodges the elephant in the room - how to deliver the larger homes.

For past performance and the figures I have previously used I have an extract from the Authorities Monitoring Report 2017/18. I have not checked if this is still available on the council site. That includes a table of residential completions 2011/12 to 2017/18 and shows 80% were 1/2 bed and just 20% 3 bed or more. I doubt these proportions have changed much in the subsequent years. I suppose there might be further reports for 18/19 and 19/20. This is such a crucial issue there ought to be something in the draft Local Plan but I think so far it has been dodged there as well.”

Advertising on banners on lamp standards – there are a number of applications for consents. The applicant is an advertising company with a contract with the Council.