

Hello everyone

Welcome to the very first Chair's report.

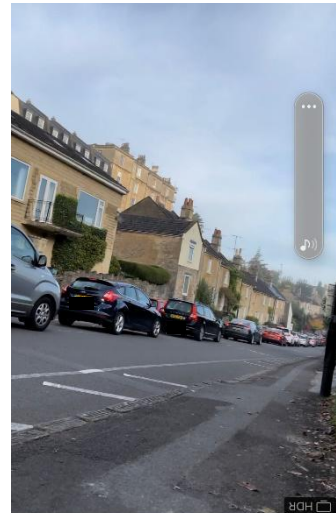
It has been my pleasure to Chair the Entry Hill Community Association's during its inaugural year. Due to Covid restrictions, the AGM and my Chair's report has been significantly delayed, I have 21 months of activity to report onso please get comfortable.

Traffic and Safety:

The road safety issues were and are still by far the biggest concerns raised by Entry Hill residents over the last 21 months. This was the initial reason why the Entry Hill Community Association formed in February 2020.

Our two ward councillors - Winston Duguid and Alison Born - had been made aware by residents that speeding, parking issues and reckless driving were long standing problems on Entry Hill.

Traffic calming and traffic reduction was discussed with our local ward councillor Winston Duguid, and from this Winston organised a meeting in February 2020 at St Luke's Church in Bear Flat. This was led by an active traffic enthusiast who presented a possible solution for Entry Hill, in the form of a low traffic neighbourhood (LTN).



We have more information about LTNs on the EHCA website, but effectively an LTN places barriers across the road (modal filters) in residential areas to prevent traffic passing through. The council has legal powers to install a LTN by means of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO). This allows for temporary barriers to be installed for a period of time to test whether they are effective. The emphasis on ETROs is that they are experimental – they need to remain in place for long enough to properly test whether they work for the communities involved but they can be reversed if they are shown not to be working. We are aware that LTNs are often controversial. They have been removed in some cases but in many more examples, local communities have found them very successful in the longer term



During the summer of 2020 Winston and I met with a member of the BANES Traffic and Highways team. We walked the length of Entry Hill discussing various safety issues and possible solutions. Traditional traffic calming methods such as speed humps are not appropriate for Entry Hill because it is so steep. The removal of much needed parking spaces for residents to put in road narrowing with changing priorities; or to allow passing areas for cars is also not a viable solution. We are particularly concerned at the safety of pedestrians and cyclists crossing the bridge, where the road and the footpaths are narrow.

In the Spring of 2021, Winston Duguid submitted an application for Entry Hill to be one of the Bath neighbourhoods to be considered for a trial of the liveable neighbourhood concept, which includes traffic reduction in residential areas, including the use of LTN schemes. (This had formed a key part of the manifesto on which the Liberal Democrat Party had been elected.) Entry Hill was one of 15 neighbourhoods selected by the Council to be consulted on a liveable neighbourhood scheme (out of 48 neighbourhoods which had submitted a liveable neighbourhood application). This means that an ETRO could be made for Entry Hill and modal filters fitted for a trial period of 6 months to 1 year, to test if this barrier system would be an effective solution for the traffic problems in our area. We have received confirmation that the liveable neighbourhood public consultation should begin week commencing November 22nd 2021.

Residents Parking Zone (RPZ):

The residents living north of the bridge on the lower part of Entry Hill have suffered with parking issues and traffic problems for many years. Pedestrian safety is affected by the increasing number of vehicles that mount the pavement to pass each other. Following discussions with Winston, we hope that they will have the opportunity to be consulted on a new RPZ in 2022. The RPZ would include the section of Entry Hill from the bridge to its junction with Greenway Lane and could possibly also include the lower part of Wellsway, Entry Hill Gardens and Lynbrook Lane. Residents living in this area of Entry Hill (including some EHCA Committee members) have been actively communicating with the Widcombe and Lyncombe ward councillors and with BANES Transport Department. Currently, Bear Flat has a RPZ and Greenway Lane will follow shortly.

Covid-19 - March 2020 lockdown:

The EHCA had a group of volunteers ready to help anyone in our neighbourhood who needed support. Thank you to everyone who offered to support residents in the area.

During the first lockdown there was a notable increase in the number of people out and about, often in family groups, walking up and down the hill. This gave a very good impression of what Entry Hill could be like with less traffic.

The golf course site became a peaceful escape for more of our residents - with many not realising that non-golfers were allowed to walk on the site. There were also quite a few cheeky games of golf being played - and the snow day saw lots of families in the area enjoying the open green space that the former Entry Hill Golf Course site offers.

The Future of Entry Hill Golf Course:



Prior to the formation of the Entry Hill Community Association in February 2020, BANES Council had announced that the Entry Hill Golf Course would close, as the Council could no longer afford the subsidy of £70k-£80k per year to keep it running.

BANES Council needed to find a new leisure operator for the site, that would relieve the Council of the financial burden and also help to deliver their new policies linked to the declaration of Climate and Ecological Emergencies and their strategy for improving health and wellbeing by getting ‘more people more active more often’.

There were two rounds of consultation about the future of the site in 2019/2020 - a two-day drop-in event at the Odd Down Sports Ground and an online-consultation undertaken by the Council’s contractor, Lemon Gazelle. This process became controversial as some respondents to the online survey were found to have responded from locations throughout the UK, as word spread through on-line cycling forums to encourage support for what was described as a ‘family cycling centre/mountain bike park facility’.

However, regular players from the Entry Hill Golf Club created a petition to keep golf at Entry Hill and received over 1000 local names, addresses and signatures in support of retaining golf. A sports consultancy company also believed there was the potential for golf to be a success on Entry Hill (as users of the site felt the golf course had been neglected for some time) and approached the Council at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. The company was very interested in operating Entry Hill Golf Course and there was strong support within the community to keep golf at the site.

The future of Entry Hill Golf Course was discussed at Council’s Cabinet meeting in July 2020. As Chair of the newly formed EHCA, I spoke at this Cabinet meeting (and the February 2021 Cabinet meeting). Our local ward councillor Winston Duguid also spoke at the July 2020 Cabinet meeting in favour of keeping golf at Entry Hill. At the council meeting it was decided the fairest solution was to hold an open procurement process and to tender for a new operator for the golf course site. Other interested parties had emerged, including a proposal from Avon Wildlife Trust in partnership with Forest of Imagination to develop an event centre with a nature and sculpture park.

Although the sports consultancy company eventually withdrew from the process, another golf operator came forward. During the procurement process representatives from the EHCA Committee met with both the Avon Wildlife Trust/Forest of Imagination bidders and the golf bidders. The representatives of the EHCA felt that both bids would be a positive addition to the area and would bring new energy and vibrancy to the golf course site and our neighbourhood - whilst keeping disturbance to the site and our neighbourhood minimal. These were the only bids that EHCA had been directly aware of, although there were strong rumours circulating throughout this period that the site was to become a mountain bike park.



Eventually 5 bids were submitted for a variety of leisure operations on the Entry Hill site, with 3 more in addition to the AWT/FoI and golf bids that the EHCA Committee had been aware of. In February 2021, the Cabinet awarded the tender to operate the site to Company E who became their preferred bidder. 10 days later, the identity of Bidder E was revealed and a 'Family Cycle Centre' (as described by the Cabinet member for Community Services at the time during an interview with bathnewseum, February 26, 2021) was to replace golf at Entry

Hill and would be run by Pedal Progression Ltd - a small bike-hire and coaching company from Bristol, who specialise in bike skills and off-road cycling (particularly mountain biking). (We have recently learned that this was in fact a joint bid from Pedal Progression



Ltd and a company called Architrail Velosolutions Ltd, who design and build facilities such as mountain bike trails and pump tracks. They had been advising the Council on the potential to develop a bike park on the Entry Hill site since 2019.)

Subsequently representatives from the EHCA have had numerous meetings with the council and have received independent advice from a range of local professionals. The EHCA Committee also asked the community for feedback about the proposed mountain bike park on Entry Hill and we incorporated all of this into our 'Principles for Development' paper. This was submitted to the Council, and they agreed to take it into account in the further development of the proposals for Bath Bike Park, as it is now called. The Principles for Development paper is available to read on our website and is a useful guide to what local residents should expect from any development on the Entry Hill leisure site.

Please click on the link below to view the Principles for Development paper.

https://bab2f715-4ab1-4321-a18a-098e1865a379.filesusr.com/ugd/a5b25e_70a04c31ea624664a8be7037fa96fa4a.pdf

Further public consultation has taken place over the summer of 2021 to help shape the Bath Bike Park. There has been more controversy surrounding this, as the site map published as the basis for the consultation was changed late on in the process, to a version which included the fence surrounding the bike tracks, which had been omitted previously. We received no proper explanation of why this was done, although recently we were told that the original map had been used 'in error'.

We asked that the consultation be rerun, but BANES officers and councillors did not feel that this was necessary as it would not alter the consultation results. We have raised our concerns that the consultation did not make clear that the cycle tracks are a 'pay-to-ride' facility and that the omission of the fence adds to the potential confusion over this.



The results of the consultation have not yet been made public – EHCA Committee members and other volunteers involved in the discussion process have seen the draft consultation results and we expect that these will be published soon.

The new version of the Bike Park design and the pre-planning application is due at the end of November / December, with a full planning application being submitted early 2022. All site and traffic survey results will be available to view on the Council's planning portal. We hope to hold a community meeting to discuss the final Bike Park proposal.

Pedal Progression/Architrail Velosolutions have not yet signed a contract with the council.



They are still the 'preferred bidder'.

EHCA Committee members and volunteers are still very concerned at the likely impacts of the Council's proposals to develop a commercial leisure facility on Entry Hill.

We will continue to keep up the pressure to try to make sure that the local community ends up with the best possible resources on the Entry Hill site; that noise nuisance is minimised and that additional traffic and parking issues are properly dealt with.

The EHCA Website:

Our website administrator has done an amazing job of creating the website and keeping the website up to date and as accurate as possible. The EHCA website is an excellent resource for our community and is updated regularly. We would like to have more content from our community – there is room for more images and information about the history and environment of Entry Hill. We would also like to have more ‘blogs’ with thoughts and opinions on a range of subjects. Please get in touch if you would like to submit something for the website.

Social Media:

The EHCA has a Facebook page and a twitter page. We try to tweet regularly or re-tweet tweets that relate to Entry Hill or in keeping with the community spirit.

Community Speed Watch:

Speeding is still a major safety issue within our community. One of our EHCA Committee members has contacted Avon and Somerset Police and will shortly become the co-ordinator for the Entry Hill Community Speed Watch. Thank you to our organiser and the volunteers who have stepped up to form this group.

Current Members:

All adults who live on Entry Hill are automatically awarded membership. We currently have 74 Entry Hill residents who receive email communications from the EHCA Committee and 31 non Entry Hill residents who receive updates - a significant number of these residents requested community updates due to Bath Bike Park.

Bank Account/Monies:

We have recently opened a bank account and our treasurer will report more detail at the AGM - and this report will be minuted. We are currently reliant on the generous contributions of the Committee members and volunteers to meet the costs of printing, website etc and we are very grateful for this.

I would like to thank the wonderful EHCA Committee for all their support and work over the last 21 months and I would also like to thank our residents who have kept the traffic, parking, safety issues and the future of the golf course site at the forefront of the local ward councillors and BANES council. The coming year will be very busy and The EHCA Committee and community volunteers will continue to focus on traffic and safety on Entry Hill and Bath Bike Park.

The work, time, dedication, commitment and support from the EHCA Committee, residents and volunteers in our community has been extraordinary.

Thank you everyone.

Best wishes

Katina Beckett

Chair

The Entry Hill Community Association.