

To the eighty-three percent of the Executive who were elected on a pastoral ticket I ask you to take notice of what those of us live, work and try to relax in this City want for Bath – and what we don't want is a captivating lure in the middle of our town to attract undesirables, layabouts and drunken rabble from far and wide. To do so is defying one of the most elementary considerations of reason, “The demand upon a resource tends to expand to match the supply of the said resource.” If you force this ill conceived notion upon us you might as well rename James Street West after Hogarth's “Gin Lane.” And please don't try and tell us it has been a great success elsewhere. I have scanned the net as far as Wellington, New Zealand on this subject – the authorities, of course, claims success – resident's letters say otherwise. At least it's not only here that the self styled ‘powers that be’ fly in the face of public opinion. This set up has “We are the masters” written all over it.

We are told it is intended that millions of pounds of local taxpayer's money is to be squandered to make the centre of Bath the all night drinking Mecca of an endless number of aggressive drunken beggars who will be on the streets around James Street West half the night foul-mouthing and abusing anyone who declines to donate funds towards the alcoholic drink required to stock your proposed Wet Room. Would you be surprised to know that beggars commute from Bristol each day to harass Bath residents and visitors because the City has a reputation where they come from for being a ‘soft touch’ where, unlike Bristol, the police appear to smile benignly upon them? You are simply dipping your toes into murky waters that you do not understand. We know that many of them are irreversibly, inherently anti-social and disruptive. They are just warts on the backside of society and you talk about educating them. I challenge you to get out and see for yourself what sordid and squalid inner city night life is really like.

What will the scenes be like in the 'The Wet Room' the night when disgruntled guests decide to take the place and each other apart – and believe me, if this goes ahead, it's bound to happen. Imagine the headlines in the tabloids; "Man stabbed during a drunken brawl in a BANES funded night shelter where drinking is encouraged." If put into practice, this ridiculous project will bring financial hardship to local businesses, and distress to residents. What of families with young children coming away from the Odeon cinema complex and residents and visitors visiting local bars and restaurants evenings being threatened by these louts? They are career beggars who can successfully extract from women and old men in excess of £100 in one day by aggression. It is virtually "Demanding money with menaces." Do you honestly think you can educate them to give up that kind of money plus their benefits, plus free lodgings, plus beer swilling facilities to actually work for the minimum wage? This week you reveal millions of pounds of cuts will now have to be made in council services next year. We shall follow with interest, where on the list of options this matter features.

Mike Mapstone

Francine Haeberling - Saltford Ward - Leader of the council
 Malcolm Hanney - Chew Valley North Ward - Resources (and deputy leader)

Vic Pritchard - Chew Valley South Ward - Social Services and Housing

Terry Gazzard - Abbey Ward - Development and Major Projects

Charles Gerrish - Keynsham North Ward - Customer Services

Chris Watt - Midsomer Norton & Redfield Ward - Children's Services