

Statement from Luke Emmett

Good evening Councillors and thank you for the opportunity to speak to you at your AGM, I would like to particularly welcome your new Chairman and two new Councillors.

With a new year comes new opportunities and the chance to put behind the issues of the past. How wonderful would it be;

- To assemble at the guildhall without wading through a sea of protestors.
- To read the local news without seeing the Council and Councillors under attack.
- To open your inbox and not see the latest letter of complaint or FOI?

This is not what anyone wants for this great city - Bath deserves better!

Tonight another protest has gathered outside, people extremely frustrated that their experienced, knowledgeable and articulate voices are being ignored by the Council leadership.

These people feel that lip service has been paid to them whenever they have sought to have their points heard.

These are not people who want the city to stay stuck in the status quo - far from it. They want evidence that stands up to scrutiny to be at the core of how the council takes its decisions from now on, and to be presented to them ahead of their views being sought.

Times may be hard, but the people outside refuse to believe that the bank of honesty and integrity is bankrupt and there are insufficient funds in the vaults of opportunity.

1% of the electorate has petitioned you, Cllr Warren, and your Cabinet to attend a public meeting, to discuss our concerns.

I have a statement here from Robin Priestley - Head of Campaigns by You - 38 Degrees:

"38 Degrees petitions are accepted up and down the country by councils, central government and other organisations. From the London Assembly, to councils in Cornwall and Bristol through to Edinburgh, petitions from our website regularly trigger formal motions, debates and votes. A big 38 Degrees petition is a clear sign of public interest in an issue, something that councils and councillors should be paying attention to. In fact B&NES themselves have previously accepted 38 Degrees petitions. When 2400 people signed a petition to save the public toilets, the council accepted the petition and agreed with its aims:

We collect a full name, postcode and contact details for each signature. Whilst we can't share all of this data with councils (due to data protection laws) we're happy to work with councils to ensure that they are happy that the data we collect is valid and true. We're saddened to hear that B&NES council are not prepared to accept a petition signed by hundreds and hundreds of local people, purely because of some small print. This is clearly a big local issue."

We are not a rabble; we are decent citizens who want the best for this city. Many of these signatories voted Conservative and put you into power. Please reflect on that,

two recent election results in Walcot and Newbridge should tell you that citizens want change.

We ask you again...please accept our invitation as an opportunity for a fresh start. This public meeting will go ahead after the General Election and we have a right to expect you, as our leader to attend.

Bath Deserves Better.

Thank you.