

Rec Trust - statement to Council 10th Oct 19

Chair and Councillors,

I was recently invited to the Annual Meeting of the Rec Trust. In case anyone has forgotten, this is the body which owns the Rec, the largest and most significant piece of open land in Bath, and the place where application for a very large rugby stadium may shortly be submitted. I attended the meeting as I wanted, on behalf of the residents of Bath, to hear what the Trust thought of the Scoping Report recently submitted by Arena1865 as the basis for its request to B&NES for a Scoping Opinion setting out the framework for the stadium's Environmental Impact Assessment. This is because, if the Environmental Impact Assessment isn't right, the planning application won't be either.

The Trust Chairman firstly refused to take questions, on the grounds that it wasn't that kind of meeting. When we asked where questions could be asked, he replied, "At the AGM", but added that the AGM was private so we couldn't attend. Under pressure, he did permit a few questions, and mine was one of them. However, his unsatisfactory reply was that they would consider the issues and answer in writing. I can let you see his answers, but they are bland, uninformative and useless.

The operation of the Trust seems to be completely opaque and it's unclear even how the Trustees are selected and appointed. This is not the way for a public body in charge of an asset so important to Bath (and to the World – after all, it is a World Heritage Site) to act. I call on you therefore to invite the Trust to mend its ways, to become more open, and to revise its Governance policies in line with modern practice – and to do this very, very soon.

Robin Kerr, final, 7th Oct 19