

MEMBER ADVOCATES – ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2022-23

Councillor Neil Butters – Member Advocate for Rail Liaison

MetroWest - More Frequent Services

Have lobbied for some time for half-hourly services at Oldfield Park and Keynsham. New timetable coming in on 21st May will deliver that and more, eg: 5 trains 7-8 am towards Bristol. Some 36 trains per weekday each direction at OP and K. Some 24 trains per day each way at Freshford.

Saltford

Continued to press for revived station.

Rail in Wales & West 2023

Invited to attend *Modern Railways* Fourth Friday Club conference, Bristol. Also, visit to St Philip's Marsh Diesel Depot. (28/29 March.)

GWR Annual Community Rail & Stakeholder Conference, Bristol

Invited to attend on 27 June. Explained would no longer be a councillor, but invited anyway!

Public Transport Consortium

Co-opted member of national executive. Useful – two-way - source of information.

Councillor Jess David – Member Advocate for Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery

- Took part in monthly meetings with officers and attended meetings with stakeholders.
- Contributed to policy work including the development of the B&NES Ecological Emergency Action Plan, WaterSpace Study workshop (Nov 2023).
- Hosted a web event on the ecological emergency as part of B&NES Climate and Biodiversity Festival, and took part in other events.
- Supported community projects to benefit nature working with Your Parks, the council's parks team and other community-based organisations.

Cllr Alan Hale – Member Advocate for Road Safety

It has been a busy year.

I have continued to give advice and support to the ward councillor regarding the perceived dangerous junction near Queen Charlton as the situation has not yet changed. The councillor continues to receive questions from time to time.

Charlton Road in Keynsham continues to suffer both excess speed and HGVs breaching the weight limit. I have been in correspondence with the police but with little success.

I have continued to lead the Keynsham councillors to resolve the appalling catalogue of casualties caused by the cycle lane configuration in Keynsham High Street. A recent Freedom of Information request revealed that in just over a year there have been 59 casualties in High Street due to the cycle lane causing trips and falls resulting in broken bones, lost teeth, serious cuts, bruises, dislocations and facial injuries.

I have remained available to councillors to give support and advice on road safety matters throughout the year. I have also responded to questions from members of the public who had noted my advocacy.

Councillor Yuktेशwar Kumar – Member Advocate for BAME issues

The Race Panel was established in October 2020 and several enthusiastic and learned members from cross sections of the society joined the panel. The panel has met almost every month since then without any cost to the council. In 2022-23, the panel invited several guests and scholars who work on race & gender issues to speak at some of the meetings. The panel members are extremely active and share various informative articles and events among the group which is then cascaded further. The panel's remit includes:

- Educational inequalities
- Employment inequalities
- Financial inclusion and poverty
- Hate crime and preventing discrimination
- Health and well-being inequality

Some residents also raised the issue of discrimination etc. and the panel listened to their concerns and guided them in the right direction.

It was also disappointing to note that several panel members resigned from the forum in the latter half of the year.

Councillor Ruth Malloy – Member Advocate for Great Spas of Europe and Twinning

The Great Spa Towns of Europe

The Great Spa Towns of Europe Association (GSTEА) was officially launched in April 2022 in Spa, Belgium. All eleven spa towns have now joined, with Bath's membership confirmed in February 2023. The GSTEA's purpose is to facilitate the ongoing management, conservation and promotion of this UNESCO serial, transnational World Heritage Site. The GSTEA General Assembly meets twice a year: the first meeting was held in Frantiskovy Lazne, Czechia in September 2022 and the second one in Bath in March 2023. Her Excellency Laura Davies, UK Ambassador to UNESCO, attended and presented BaNES Council Leader Kevin Guy with the official UNESCO certificate, confirming the city of Bath's inscription on the World Heritage List as one of the eleven Great Spa Towns of Europe.

Twinning

Last year Bath and Alkmaar celebrated 75 years of friendship. A commemorative paving stone was uncovered in Alkmaar by Mayor Anja Schouten and in May 2023 a 'twin' paving stone will be uncovered here by the Mayor of Bath. In November 2022 officers from Alkmaar municipality came for a 3-day visit to exchange ideas with their BaNES counterparts on the subject of sustainability, with the added aim of encouraging more links between citizens' groups in both cities. Three twinning associations were present at the Christmas Market in December 2022: Braunschweig, Alkmaar and Aix-en-Provence. Everyone agreed it was very worthwhile, not in terms of sales (making a profit was never an aim) but as a way of promoting twinning to people visiting the Christmas Market. Bath-Beppu Friendship Association has been busy with events at Widcombe Social Club and the BRLSI. The Bath-Aix en Provence Twinning Association (TA) also regularly holds meetings at the BRLSI and has a full programme of activities. Bath-Braunschweig TA was asked by Braunschweig municipality to find hip-hop performers to attend their biennial *Kulturnacht* in June 2023; the invitation was passed on to Bath Spa University. Discussions continue with both Bath universities to find placements for their Turing Scheme students in our twin cities. However, this is proving more difficult than expected and it's unlikely that any students will go to Alkmaar this summer. Finally, the Lord Mayor of Braunschweig is due to visit Bath in November, having had to postpone his visit three times, on account of the covid pandemic and the death of our late Queen.

Councillor Sarah Moore – Member Advocate for Accessibility

Over the past 12 months I have been fortunate to talk with various groups and individuals that represent our residents who have a variety of access concerns and had some very informative discussions.

This has included in person meetings with residents with visual impairments and mobility issues and I have had a walk and talk meeting across Twerton which has highlighted a large number of issues that need to be resolved and am hoping to do this across the authority over the next 12-24 months, joined by the relevant ward members.

Other accessibility issues have been highlighted across the authority area and I am looking forward to working with the Cabinet Members and officers to start addressing these as soon as possible.

Councillor Alastair Singleton – Member Advocate for Renewable Energy

The last year has seen significant and accelerating progress towards our ambitions to see at least 300 MW of renewable energy installed across B&NES as part of our 2030 Net Zero goal – and this in the face of continuing constraints from a dysfunctional electricity grid distribution system.

As Advocate, I have continued to co-ordinate our support for the Local Electricity Bill, and worked with partners across the district to support and encourage development of technically sound and appropriately sited renewable energy projects. This work has included liaising with local Community Energy groups, colleagues, officers, academics and others to raise the profile of rapid take up of renewable energy as a critical element of the B&NES climate strategy, as well as providing suggestions and input for the WECA Climate Emergency Action Plan.

Successes for the year include the first round of the WECA-sponsored Solar Together group buying scheme, through which over B&NES 300 households were able to invest in PV and battery storage. We are keen that the exercise should be repeated this year, and there are encouraging signs of similar localised initiatives taking shape within our area. Some excellent commercial and private renewables schemes have come through the planning process and the Council has completed some admirable projects on our own estate.

Less positive is what can sometimes appear a glacial pace of progress in tackling elements of the Council's campaign in the face of a rapidly worsening climate crisis, and two major disappointments remain outstanding at the end of the year. These are the challenges of resolving the stalemate at the disputed Resourceful Earth site near Queen Charlton, and crystallising action to sanction the long-promised

community-owned solar array at the B&NES-owned Riverside View development, providing cheap clean energy to the neighbouring Keynsham Leisure Centre.

I must pass on the baton to others to see those through.

Councillor Shaun Stephenson-McGall – Member Advocate for Engagement with students

Together with Cllr Romero I have sat on the Student Community Partnership Board and attended or held a 'watching brief' for its sub-committee / groups / Forums on Housing, Personal Safety, River Safety and Green (Group). The SCP includes Bath College and Norland College as well as the two University's and their Students' Unions. I liaise regularly with the Community Coordinator, SCP, and her Team, who are based at the University of Bath site at Dartmouth Avenue, Oldfield Park. Cllr Romero and I have spent much time trying to secure and agree a long-term financial funding strategy for the SCP including for the Community Wardens which were initially funded through a successful Bath CIL bid.

Councillor Chris Watt - Member Advocate for Looked After Children

No report was supplied.

Councillor Ryan Wills – Member Advocate for Rural Communities

I have aimed to represent and raise the matters and issues for our rural communities. I have attended events held by the Rural Services Network including their annual conference in addition to seminars for specific topical policy areas. These has included net zero, the economy, connectivity and transport. have also then raised these issues and others with Cabinet members, helping us to ensure that we fully consider how decisions may affect rural areas differently.