

Bristol Parks Forum – Meeting 17th October 2020

Responses to request for information from Groups on Climate and Ecological Emergencies

In June and August 2020 the Bristol Parks Forum held two online Zoom meetings for Forum members to discuss and find a way to respond to the declaration of Climate and Ecological Emergencies by the City Council.

One of the conclusions of that work was Parks Groups would be asked to provide examples of how they are responding to both emergencies now, and what they are planning to do in the future.

A request for information was made in Parks Forum update No 281 on 6th September and groups given until 20th September to respond. The time period was short so that any information could be made ready for the October Forum meeting.

It could be that due to the constraints of the short timescale for responses; and arranging things during the Covid-19 pandemic, that some groups were unable to reply in the time.

9 groups responded to the request. A response from another group was taken from the August meeting minutes.

Group	Source	Climate Change	Ecological	Other points
Narrowways Millennium Green	August Meeting	Now: Grass cutting regime now by hand scythes	Now: Fenced off area to “rewild” without human interference	Site is run by a Trust.
Badock’s Wood	Email 17/9	Now: Installing signposts to encourage people to use the site to walk to places. Working with community centre and GP practice to develop family quizzes and trails through the wood to give people the opportunity; and giving electronic copies of routes leaflets to GP surgery – to encourage people to walk around the site. Future: May set up working group to examine how best to respond.	Now: Prioritise updating of management plan and reviewing it in light of emergencies. Plan to run to 2030. Agreed that Glyphosate should not be used on the site. Organised hand weeding of some areas Organised free walks and quizzes to tell people about the wildlife present Future: May set up working group to examine how best to respond	AGM in October will be considering resolution to recognise the emergencies and respond by taking action.
Manor Valley Wood	Email 23/9	Future: Building connections between climate, ecology and other topics in our planning and practical work.	Now: Has an action plan which is being implemented. Future: Working groups looking at links with wellbeing; and education Auditing and working with others to identify nature networks. Reflecting Nature Recovery in all our planning and deliberations	Debated both issues in public forum in March 2020. Surveying members and users to understand future impact.

Group	Source	Climate Change	Ecological	Other points
St Andrews Park	Email 22/9	Nothing reported	Now: Areas being developed to enhance their biological diversity. Regular maintenance carried out to maintain wildlife interest – pond and wildflower meadow. Bird boxes made by community. List of birds in park made. Stopped use of glyphosate. Information boards and posters support wildlife. Future: Creation of another wildflower meadow. Replace failed trees with native trees.	Not sure bird boxes located in park?
Victoria Park	Email 20/9	Nothing reported	Nothing reported	Ecological emergency added to agenda of next meeting
Friends of Brandon Hill	Email 20/9	Nothing reported	Now: replaced neglected planting with bee friendly plants. Parkwork created wildflower area around renovated water feature.	
Friends of Castle Park	Email 14/9	Nothing reported	Now: spreading wildflower seeds. Working with others to maintain areas of flowers and vegetables which are good for insects. Future: increasing areas of wildflowers.	Have regular discussions about park management Resisting unnecessary development of green space

Group	Source	Climate Change	Ecological	Other points
Friends of Castle Park (continued)			Changing grass cutting regimes in some areas.	
Friends of St Georges Park	Email 13/9	Nothing reported	<p>Now: Reviewing activities. Carrying out a bioblitz. Rewilding south side of the park.</p> <p>Future: Using surveys to look at management plan to support and improve ecological value of the park – including further rewilding areas.</p>	
Friends of Troopers Hill	Email 13/9	Nothing reported	<p>Now: Surveying habitats for species and taking on board management recommendations. Reduced herbicide use on the site to just for Japanese Knotweed.</p> <p>Future: Explore actions to help ecological emergency on site and with neighbours.</p>	Ecological emergency will feature on future meeting agendas.
Northern Slopes Initiative	Email 22/9 and 25/9	<p>Now: Using hand and rechargeable tools. Planting trees.</p> <p>Future: More tree planting</p>	<p>Now: Created reptile hibernacula from dumped rubbish. Keep sites available for people and wildlife. Planted native flowers, bulbs and trees.</p> <p>Future: More wild flowers, bulbs and tree planting.</p>	<p>Need to widen range of people involved in the group and its work from local area and wider.</p> <p>Trying to protect sites from development.</p> <p>Ecological strategy and building houses on green spaces contradictory.</p>

Analysis:

- Climate Change crises action reported by half of the groups (50%) who have reported. – other groups not reporting. It is possible that these groups and others may already be doing things which they are not aware could positively help with the crisis. Three groups (30%) have plans for the future. It should be noted that some ecological activities reported may have some benefit for climate change.
- Ecological emergency – 9 (90%) groups reported are working now – 7 (70%) have plans for the future.

Possible Future Actions:

- 1) The Parks Forum committee to decide whether against the other priorities in the Forum Vision, activities on climate and ecological emergencies can either support or should replace existing priorities.
- 2) A formal motion should be passed (as Badock's Wood are doing) by the Forum acknowledging the situation and asking the Forum members, the City Council and others to undertake actions in our green spaces to help with the emergencies.
- 3) Groups should be encouraged to look at, consider, and deliver actions in line with the Climate Change and Ecological Emergencies strategies. Apart from the benefits of taking action to tackle these emergencies; doing so may provide opportunities to access funding, and promote their site/group/work.
- 4) Groups should be encouraged to tell their stories of why they are undertaking actions, so that others may benefit what they have learned.
- 5) Ideas from Groups be shared from other parts of the West of England and beyond as part of an exchange of ideas.

Len Wyatt 27 September 2020 updated 3rd October.