



Bristol Parks Forum

representing resident led parks groups and city wide organisations
involved in protecting and improving Bristol's green spaces

Minutes of the meeting held on 14th July 2012 at Windmill Hill City Farm

Attendees

AA - Alan Aburrow - Friends of Badock's Woods, **AB** - Alison Bromilow - RCAS, **AC** - Andre Coutanche - Malago Valley Conservation Group, **BF** - Bob Franks - Northern Slopes Initiative, **CH** - Cheryl Hawkins - Friends of Stoke Lodge, **CN** - Catherine Newman - Admin Officer (BCC), **CW** - Chris Williams - SMAG, **DM** - David Mayer - Save Stoke Lodge Parkland, **ES** - Eileen Stonebridge - Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve, **GB** - Gill Brown - Civic Society, **GH** - Cllr Gary Hopkins - Friends of Redcatch Park, **HH** - Hugh Holden - Civic Society, **JC** - Jo Corke - Friends of St Andrews Park, **JC** - Jane Cunningham - Walking for Health, **LG** - Lois Goddard - Redland Green Community Group, **MB** - Mary Bannerman - Castle Park User Group, **MC** - Marie Jo Coutanche - Malago Valley Conservation Group, **MG** - Martin Grant - Community of Perretts Park, **MP** - Matt Postles - Bristol Natural History Consortium, **PA** - Pauline Allen - Friends of Brandon Hill, **PC** - Pete Clark - Assistant Parks Operations Manager (BCC), **RAC** - Rob Acton-Campbell - Friends of Troopers Hill, **RBevan** - Richard Bevan - Manager, Park Estates, Play, Cemeteries & Crematoria (BCC), **RF** - Richard Fletcher - Neighbourhood Engagement Manager (BCC) **RS** - Richard Stransom - Parks Operations Manager (BCC), **SAC** - Susan Acton-Campbell - Friends of Troopers Hill, **SE** - Steve England - Stoke Park, **SParry** - Sian Parry - Avon Wildlife Trust/ FoBW, **ST** - Sam Thomson - Friends of Horfield Common, **VS** - Vi Showering - Friends of Redcatch Park, **WP** - Wendy Pollard - Avon Gardens Trust

Apologies

AS - Angela Stuckey - Callington Road Nature Reserve, **DMartyn** - David Martyn - Kings Weston Action Group, **DP** - Diana Porter - Bedminster Down and Upland Society, **DS** - Denis Stuckey - Callington Road Nature Reserve, **FB** - Fraser Bridgeford - Castle Park / Friends of Brandon Hill **LA** - Lesley Alexander - Activate Fishponds, **NV** - Nicolette Vincent - Friends of Brandon Hill, **PJ** - Pam Jones - Service Manager - Environment & Leisure, **RB** - Roland Bruce - Mina Road Park Group, **SD** - Susan Davies - Friends of Redcatch Park, **TM** - Tracey Morgan - Service Director, BCC

Agenda Item	Discussion Points/ Outcomes & Actions	Actions
	<u>Welcome and Introductions</u>	
1. 1.1	<u>Park Group's Current & Planned Activities & Projects</u> <u>Troopers Hill Stepping Forward</u> SAC gave a presentation on the Troopers Hill Stepping Forward Project which enabled the group to make improvements to the steps through lottery funding. The Bristol Physical Access Chain (BPAC) provided advice on access requirements. BPAC can be contacted via Julie Preston. A celebratory event will be held on Saturday 20 th October. More details at http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/steppingforward	
1.2	<u>Castle Park</u> There is £408k of funding available. It was suggested that the neighbouring NP's are consulted with regards to the priorities for the site, although it is not strictly within their remit. Castle Park is in a category of its own as a city centre site.	
1.3	<u>Horfield Common</u> ST provided an overview of things going on at Horfield Common. Funding has been recently allocated for new play facilities and toilets on the site. Future aspirations include improvements to the tennis court and clearing the ditch. ST explained that it's extremely difficult for the Horfield Common Friends Group to operate across 3 neighbourhood partnerships. The AGSP for one NP shows that there is a shortage of green space in that NP whilst the adjoining NP shows more than the basis minimum, so that the decisions about the whole of Horfield Common are taken on contradicting grounds. The City Council has decided to hold a public inquiry about their town green application which the group feels will disadvantage them, given their lack of legal expertise. Further information on the site can be viewed on the Friends website - Friends of Horfield Common	
1.4	<u>Stoke Park</u> SE explained that there has been a deduction in anti-social behaviour and a project is underway to install seating in the woods. Up and coming events include: A fossils and geology walk on 21/07/12 and a history tour on 22/07/12.	
1.5	<u>Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve</u> ES reported that there has been a leak in the dam for sometime. Although the Engineering Consultancy have confirmed that funding	

Agenda Item	Discussion Points/ Outcomes & Actions	Actions
	<p>is available the work is still outstanding. ES commented that it had been extremely difficult to get anyone to do the work because no one wanted to accept responsibility for the repairs. Although there was supposed to be a single project officer for this job, it had proved to be impossible to find out who should be dealing with it. The new system that is supposed to be in place so that park groups know who yo contact to discuss issues like this seems to have broken down.</p> <p>PC agreed to follow this up.</p>	PC
<p>2.</p> <p>2.1</p>	<p><u>Improving & Maintaining Bristol's Parks</u></p> <p><u>Maintenance Contractor's Performance & BPF feedback from emails</u></p> <p>In general feedback was positive, however some concerns were raised about the standard of maintenance in the Central area. RS acknowledged that the Central contractor did fall behind recently which was mainly due to the wet weather. Plans will be put in place to prevent this happening again.</p> <p>It was questioned whether at this stage Parks are considering extending The Landscapes Group's contract. RS explained that this decision would be considered a year before the contract is due for renewal. However, the contract will be monitored against the contract specification up to this point.</p> <p>Members of the Forum again stressed the need for information about what the contract specifications are for maintenance of parks and green spaces, so that they would know whether and when to complain that work was not being done to the required standard.</p>	
<p>2.2</p>	<p><u>Funding & installing new features</u></p> <p>The in-house Landscape and fix-it teams are responsible for installing and repairing new and existing features. These works are prioritised depending on health and safety risks.</p> <p>48 projects will be funded through the Capital Stimulus funding. These projects will either be managed by our internal Parks Projects team or will be procured out to external contractors.</p>	
<p>2.3</p>	<p><u>Contacts in Parks</u></p> <p>There was considerable confusion amongst Forum members as to precisely who does what within Parks. Concern was expressed that although there is a system in place within Parks for dealing with contacts from Friends groups, it did not seem to be working properly.</p> <p>RF and RS explained that If park groups wish to report a straightforward grounds maintenance issue they should contact the Parks Operations team on 0117 92 23719 or</p>	

Agenda Item	Discussion Points/ Outcomes & Actions	Actions
	<p>bristol.parks@bristol.gov.uk .</p> <p>Area Environment Officer's (AEOs) are the first point of contact for all other enquiries. If you are not sure who to contact, contact your AEO and let them do the hard work for you.</p> <p>The current list of AEOs and their contact details can be viewed here www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/AEONoteApril2012.pdf . You can also ring the Team number which is 0117 9221947 / 0117 3521947 or email Neighbourhood.Engagement@bristol.gov.uk.</p> <p>Currently there are only 4 officers covering the city. One officer is on long-term sickness absence and recruitment is taking place now for the 2 vacant posts. Consequently the lack of AEO cover has made it difficult for some Friends groups to communicate satisfactorily with Parks.</p>	
2.4	<p><u>Commercial events in parks, income Vs loss of access</u></p> <p>Discussed the benefits and disadvantages of holding events in parks.</p> <p>The main benefit is the increased income - 85% of the money generated from events goes back into the parks operational budget.</p> <p>In general park groups are happy for events to take place with the exception of events that require complete closure of the park. The Castle Park group were unhappy that the park was closed for a 3 day event. RS has raised these concerns with the Council's legal team and this is being looked into.</p>	
3. 3.1	<p><u>Estates Management</u></p> <p><u>Who does what in Estates</u></p> <p>Manager of Park Estates, Play, Cemeteries & Crematories - Richard Bevan</p> <p>Estates Business Manager - John Williams</p> <p>Responsible for developing the estates and improving the facilities.</p> <p>Estates Management Team Leader - Vacant</p> <p>Responsible for operational, maintenance issues and managing the Rangers.</p> <p>Estates Planning Officer - Vacant</p> <p>Responsible for asset management and developing and maintaining management plans.</p> <p>It is hoped that the vacant posts will be filled by September.</p>	
3.2	<p><u>Stoke Park, maintenance, future plans and funding</u></p> <p>Maintenance of the historic pathways are required. RB stated that he would arrange for Community Payback to complete this.</p>	

Agenda Item	Discussion Points/ Outcomes & Actions	Actions
	<p>There is £1.5m of investment of which £300k will be spent on restoring the historic walls.</p> <p>Other long term goals such as improvements to the main entrances will be considered by the Stoke Park Steering Group. There is currently a management plan in place but this needs to be reviewed.</p>	
4.	<p><u>Cabinet decision on 04/07/12 re allocation of £3.5m for Bristol Parks</u></p> <p>Cllr Hopkins explained that the £3.5 million was allocated taking into account both local opinion and strategic priorities. The criteria used to allocate funding was based on cross party priorities which mainly involved improvements to basic infrastructure and children's play.</p> <p>It was decided that funding for Castle Park would be considered separately as it is not regarded as a neighbourhood park.</p> <p>£1m of s106 funding will be used to support some neighbourhood projects with agreement from the NP, works required in destination parks and youth projects.</p> <p>HH commented that the local NP was not consulted on the £37k of s106 funding that was spent on the Bear Pit.</p> <p>Cllr Hopkins acknowledged that the consultation process wasn't perfect but this was due to tight timescales. Cllr Hopkins advised that now the funds have been allocated, NP's should now decide how this is spent in-line with the original bid.</p> <p>Cllr Hopkins advised there could be additional NP funding available for small scheme projects that were not allocated funding from the £3.5m but instead would come from the Well Being Fund or through S106 funding. Meetings were being organised internally in Parks to set a timetable for the work. Forum members expressed their concerns about the capacity of Parks to implement the £3.5m of spending both in terms of project management and public consultation, especially given the AEO vacancies. Cllr Hopkins also stated that there would be an extra 300k was being made available for project management.</p>	
5.	<p><u>Bristol's Green Flag Parks</u></p> <p>This year 3 more parks - Greville, Redcatch, and Canford were allocated Green Flag status giving Bristol a total of 11 sites across the city.</p> <p>The Green Flag Award is a national recognition of the best green spaces in the country. Community involvement is very important with park groups actively contributing to the management plan for the sites.</p> <p>There were some concerns raised that Green Flag sites receive more funding than other sites. PC explained that it doesn't effect the revenue for other parks. However, it was agreed that this would be</p>	

Agenda Item	Discussion Points/ Outcomes & Actions	Actions
	<p>discussed further at the next meeting. The Forum requested a written report is prepared and circulated prior to the October Forum meeting so that the matter could be considered fully.</p> <p>Management plans were also requested for other sites. PC explained that he believed management plans were created for many sites as part of the Area Green Space Plan. The Natural Environment team are also looking at management plans for nature reserves. The Forum requested that a written report is prepared about management plans and circulated prior to the October meeting so that it can be considered fully.</p>	
6.	<p><u>Trees in Parks</u></p> <p>Tree Bristol have worked closely with Neighbourhood Partnerships in setting up tree planting events across the city. However, tree planting plans were presented to NPs without consultation with local groups or with councillors. Also, only one tree planting plan was drawn up per NP which meant that NPs that contain more than one park would only have trees planted in one park per year.</p> <p>RF provided an explanation as to why a separate consultation was not carried out on the tree planting plans - with time restrictions being the main reason. Information from Park Groups which had been received in the past was taken into account. However, if the planting plans are continued again next year as currently planned, consultation will take place earlier and in a different way.</p> <p>Concerns have been raised by the Tree Forum that tree planting and tree management is no longer managed by the same officer.</p> <p>Trees are managed on a 4 year cycle, however if park groups are concerned about tree management in their Parks they should contact the Natural Environment Team.</p>	
7.	<p><u>Other issues</u></p> <p><u>Festival of Nature</u></p> <p>Feedback was given on the Festival of Nature.</p>	
8. 8.1	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <p><u>Frequency of meetings</u></p> <p>It was agreed that meetings should continue to take place on a quarterly basis. RAC will set the meeting dates for next year but may consider moving to July meeting to June.</p>	
9.	<p><u>Date of next meeting</u> - Saturday 13/10/12</p> <p>Venue - TBC</p>	