



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 16th May 2009 AT WINDMILL CITY FARM, BRISTOL

Attendees	
<p>AA - Alan Aburrow - Friends of Badock's Wood, AB - Alison Bromilow - RCAS, AC - Andre Coutanche - Malago Valley Conservation Group, AS - Angela Stuckey - Callington Road Nature Reserve, AD - Ann Devereaux - Mina Road Park, AW - Anne White - Filwood Park, BB - Ben Barker - Dame Emily Park Project, CN - Catherine Newman - Bristol City Council – Admin Officer, CH - Cheryl Hawkins - Friends of Stoke Lodge/ Grove Woods, DH - Doreen Hancock - Ashton Vale Heritage Group, DH - Derek Hawkins - Friends of Stoke Lodge/ Grove Woods, ES - Eileen Stonebridges - Friends of Old Sneed Nature Reserve, FB - Fraser Bridgeford (Chair) - Castle Park / Friends of Brandon Hill, FS - Francesca Shaplong - Avon Wildlife Trust, GB - Gill Brown - Civic Society, GH - Cllr Gary Hopkins - Friends of Redcatch Park, GT - Gordon Tucker - Civic Society, HH - Hugh Holden (Vice Chair) - Mina Road Park Group, HW - Heather Williams - Hartcliffe Millennium Green, JC - Jo Corke - Friends of St Andrews Park, JM - John Mayne - Friends of St Andrews Park, JT - Julia Tutton - Northern Slopes, LG - Lois Goddard - Redland Green, MC - Marie Jo Coutanche - Malago Valley Conservation Group, MG - Marion Green - Malago Valley Conservation Group, ML - Mil Lusk - Buried Treasure/ Northern Slopes, NC - Nancy Carlton - Kingfisher Group, NV - Nicola Vincent - Friends of Brandon Hill, NS - Nigel Stoneman - Wilmott Park Group, PB - P Brace - Mina Road Park Group, PW - Peter Wilkinson - Bristol City Council - Park Service Manager, RB - Richard Bland - Friends of The Downs, RF - Richard Fletcher - Bristol City Council – AGSP Manager, RH - Richard Howell - Friends of St Andrews Park, RAC - Rob Acton-Campbell - Friends of Troopers Hill, SS - Sheila Stevens - Bristol in Bloom, SF - Sue Flint - South Purdown, SAC - Susan Acton-Campbell - Friends of Troopers Hill, SP - Sian Parry - Avon Wildlife Trust, VP - Vassili Papastavrou - Bristol Street Trees, VS - Vi Showering - Friends of Redcatch Park</p>	
Apologies	CC
<p>BJ - Becky Johnson - Grounds4Change, LS - Lorraine Smith - Grounds4Change, LA - Cllr Lesley Alexander - Activate Fishponds, PS - Peggy Stemberge - Avon Gardens Trust, RH - Richard Hall - Friends of Stockwood Open Spaces, SD - Sharon Dallin - Ashton Vale Heritage Group</p>	

Agenda Item	Discussion Points/Outcomes & Actions	Actions
1.	<p>Park Re-Organisation</p> <p>PW presented an overview of the new Parks structure that came into operation on 1st April.</p> <p>PW acknowledged that embedding the new service has been challenging as not everyone is in post and understands that not all park groups have had a clear point of contact during this interim period.</p> <p>Update on vacant posts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Park Officer (CPO) - Central and North Interviews for these posts are taking place next week. In the meantime Chris Hammond is the point of contact for the North area and Claire Adams for the Central area. • Area Park Manager (APM) - Central Claire Adams, former CPM for the East will be covering Caroline Hollies maternity leave with support from Chris Hammond. • Parks Operations Manager (POM) Robert Thurston has been appointed and is due to start on 8th June • Community Development Officer (CDO) Raquib Khander has been appointed and is due to start in June • PW will be interviewed for his position as Parks Service Manager in June. <p>Changes to roles and responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APM As business unit managers the APM's have ultimate responsibility for everything in their area. • CPO The CPO is no longer responsible for grounds maintenance and quality monitoring. Their role involves working with the community and engaging with external organisations to support community projects and programmes. The CPO will be the first point of contact for park groups. • Head Gardeners 	

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	<p>Head Gardeners directly manage a team of gardeners, the role has become less operational with more time spent supervising the team. Head Gardeners are currently undergoing training for their new role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Park Keepers The majority of their role will involve carrying out horticultural and ground maintenance works whilst 20% of the role will involve community engagement, organising events, partnership working with police, etc. CPKs will either cover a number of small sites or will be based in one large park i.e. St Georges Park has a full-time CPK. • Horticultural Services Team Jane Robson has been appointed as the Interim Horticultural and Support Service Manager. This consists of the landscape team and Blaise nursery. The landscape team are skilled in construction work (play pathfinders) and horticultural and provide services to parks, education and housing. A review of this team will identify what services they can provide within Parks that will offer best value for money. The review will also look at the purpose of the Nursery, taking into account the benefits it can offer the service and trainee scheme. HH commented on poor quality off work that have been carried out at the wrong times by the landscapes team. HH to email PW specific details. • Quality Monitoring Team This is a new team, led by Paul Manton. The team will provide consistent monitoring, which will truly reflect how in-house maintenance compares to contractors. <p><i>Please refer to the parks structure chart for a detailed description of the roles and responsibilities within the new Parks service. This is available on the Parks Forum website:</i> www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/ParksStructure160509.pdf</p> <p>Operations team The service has been divided into 5 operational areas - North, Central, East, South and Estates and the boundaries now align with</p>	<p>HH</p>

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	<p>the neighbourhood partnership areas. The North and East areas will be maintained in-house and the Central and South area will be maintained by contractors.</p> <p>Business Team</p> <p>There will be an admin and finance review across the council. Jane Greenaway has recently joined the team and will be responsible for marketing/ services to schools, cafes in parks, etc.</p> <p>Natural Environment Team</p> <p>The team will be reduced in September once the 3 year review of council trees has been completed. The service will then be managed in line with Parks operational areas.</p> <p>There is a new Woodland and Wildlife team that will continue the work started by Sally Oldfield.</p> <p>Josie Sadler is still the first point of contact for tree planting queries.</p> <p>Parks Projects</p> <p>The parks project team have successfully completed the majority of play pathfinder sites across the city, PW did however, acknowledge the problems experienced at St George Park.</p> <p>Questions and Answers</p> <p>Will Stoke Park be managed as an Estate? It will be managed as an estate and a Stoke Park Ranger will link in with Duchess Gate and Snuff Mills/ Oldbury Court.</p> <p>Who can we contact for updates on Cabot Tower? Property Services are working with English Heritage to repair the damage to Cabot Tower, however the CPO can be contacted for an update, until someone is appointed to the post, Claire Adams is the contact.</p>	
	<p>Quadron Startup comments and feedback</p> <p>PW asked the forum for feedback on Quadron's performance. Overall the park groups in the south seemed impressed, groups commented that the quality of work has been good so far. However, the following concerns were raised:</p> <p>Nigel Stoneman - Wilmott Park Group</p>	

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	<p>NS has noticed an increase in vandalism in Wilmott Park, Withywood Park and Hartcliffe Millennium Green now that the CPK is covering a wider area.</p> <p><i>PW stated that there were three Park Keepers covering the southern part of the contract area, but in fact there are only two - dividing their time between the key green spaces in Withywood, Hartcliffe and Whitchurch. There was initially an intention to have 3 staff covering these sites but one post had to be removed from the contract at tender evaluation stage to bring the costs in line with budget.</i></p> <p>PW agreed to discuss this further at the next park group meeting.</p> <p>Julia Tutton - Northern Slopes</p> <p>JT advised that the locks to the entrance of Wedmore Vale O/S need replacing.</p> <p>Ben Barker - Greville Smyth Park Group</p> <p>BB raised concerns about the proposal to hold a funfair in the park. PW explained that the funfair has already arrived which would have been agreed by Pete Clark and Julian Cox. BB said the park group were informed of this proposal but the questions they raised were not answered.</p> <p>PW to find out why the park group and residents were not fully consulted.</p> <p>Vassili Papastavrou - Bristol Street Trees</p> <p>VP asked what measures are taken to protect important trees when heavy vehicles are used on park land. PW confirmed that this is covered as part of the licence agreement and a bond is in place to cover any damages.</p> <p>Dorren Hancock – Ashton Vale</p> <p>DH reported back that when the grass was cut 6 weeks ago, it was completed by different people over several days</p> <p>Central Area</p> <p>Ann Devereaux – Mina Rd Park Group</p>	

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	<p>AD raised concerns that work to thin out bushes on Sevier Street in St Werburghs was carried out during the nesting period.</p> <p>It was also noted that Continental Landscapes performance in the Central area has improved since Quadron took over the South area.</p> <p>Central Contract Time Line</p> <p>Peter outlined the time-line for the new contract which is to be in place by February 2010 when the current contract in the central area ends.</p> <p>There will be an opportunity for the forum to select a representative to be involved in the selection process. This will be a similar role that Roland did for the south contract. Roland estimated that the time involved was approximately 5 days.</p> <p>BPF members will also have the opportunity to check the maps/specifications for the parks that will be covered by the central contract. PW is happy to arrange further meetings to accommodate this. During the meeting the following people expressed an interest in this process: AB - RCAS, HH - Mina Road Park Group, LG - Redland Green, Friends of Brandon Hill.</p> <p>If anyone else would like to be involved, please email catherine.newman@bristol.gov.uk</p>	
	<p>AGSP - Update for each area and implication for downturn</p> <p>RF provided a brief update on the Area Green Space Plans. The public consultation has been postponed to January 2010 due to the delay in the Bristol Development Framework's call for sites allocation programme.</p> <p>Core sessions have taken place in most areas and it is anticipated that all site specific sessions will take place by the beginning of July, before the summer holidays. Some of these stakeholder sessions maybe carried out by consultants. RF acknowledged that the process has slowed down recently and apologised for the lack of communication, explaining that this is due to current staff shortages. RF hopes to send out the next set of invitations next week.</p>	

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	<p>Questions and Answers</p> <p>How will the possible development in Stockwood and Hengrove for urban extensions link with AGSP's?</p> <p>RF confirmed that they will be talking to planning officers and park officers in other LA's to ensure a joined up approach to developments.</p> <p>Does concept planning provide a general agreement between park groups and the Parks Department?</p> <p>RF explained that concept planning involves working with landscape design to look at how best to work with space and facilities available but it is not as detailed as a park improvement plan.</p> <p>How do you engage with mothers of young children and teenagers as part of the consultation?</p> <p>During the consultation for Brislington East and West, RF consulted young people through visits the local secondary school - BEC, attending local scout clubs, etc.</p>	
	<p>Town Green - Applications Update</p> <p>Filwood Park</p> <p>Local residents are planning to submit a Town Green Application for Filwood Park as they feel that obtaining town green status is the only way of protecting the area from regeneration developments.</p> <p>Castle Park</p> <p>The Town Green Application for Castle Park has been considered but a decision was not made due to lack of information.</p> <p>Cllr Hopkins commented that whilst he understands why groups submit Town Green Applications it can cause unnecessary conflict between Councillors and campaigners.</p> <p>Cllr Hopkins stated that it was the current administration's aim to restrict development at Castle Park to the area of the existing buildings. However, when pressed, Cllr Hopkins would not give a firm commitment to restrict development to the existing footprint.</p>	

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	<p>Applications for Grove Wood and Ashton Vale have also been submitted. Application for Briarleaze in Whitchurch has been deffered.</p>	
	<p>Festival of Nature</p> <p>The Festival of Nature is taking place on 6th and 7th June.</p> <p>FB asked for volunteers to help out on the stall over the weekend.</p> <p>Please contact FB if you are available to cover a 2 hour slot.</p>	
	<p>AOB</p> <p>Rapid Transit Routes</p> <p>Members of the forum expressed their concerns for transport developments in South Bristol and the difficulties they are experiencing communicating with the numerous developers and consultants. Ann White stated that political support was required to help stop plans for a rapid transport route through Hengrove Park and requested that public views are heard and discussed by the cabinet . Cllr Hopkins indicated a preference for proposed routes to follow existing transport corridors i.e not to cut across parks.</p> <p>Chocolate Factory Update</p> <p>Cllr Hopkins provided an update on the chocolate factory, reporting that the decision to sell the larger area, 'plot 2' will now be a considered by executive members. Gary stated that there would now be a separate consultation on this land through the Ask Bristol e-consultation process.</p> <p>Big lunch</p> <p>BB informed the forum that 'The Big Lunch' is being held on 19 July. Communities in BS3 are proposing to have picnics in the major parks. BB encouraged other park groups to hold similar events in their areas to increase the number of park users. For more information visit: www.thebiglunch.com.</p> <p>Love Parks Week</p> <p>The love parks week</p> <p>Love parks week is being held during 25th July-2nd August. For more information visit:http://www.loveparksweek.org.uk/</p>	

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	<p>Save our Green Spaces campaign</p> <p>SF advised the forum of the 'Save our Green Spaces Campaign', a campaign to protect all green spaces but in particular green belt land from housing applications. AB agreed to find out more information so the forum could decide whether they would like to support this group.</p> <p>Tree Forum</p> <p>Hugh advised that the Tree Forum is working towards producing a tree strategy. Park Forum members are welcome to become involved with this. More details are available on the website: www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/trees.htm</p>	
	<p>Date of next Meeting</p> <p>Saturday 25th July</p>	