



Notes of the Bristol Parks Forum Meeting held 19th October 2019 at Greenway Centre, Southmead

Present: A list of attendees was taken.

**Meeting Chaired by Mark (Snuff Mills Action Group)
Minutes by Frances (Friends of Badock's Wood).**

1. Minutes and Matters Arising

Minutes of the last meeting were agreed and matters arising are all on the agenda.

2. Bristol & Bath Parks Foundation (BBPF)

Rob Acton-Campbell, Secretary of Bristol Parks Forum, explained that he has been appointed Chair of the Trustees of the Bristol & Bath Parks Foundation. The Foundation has a grant of £193,000 (received 18 months ago) to set up a charity.

He introduced Charlee Bennett who has been appointed as Director of the Foundation.

Charlee introduced herself. She had been in post for 6/7 weeks and is new to Bristol and Bath. She is getting to know people and places here and working closely with Sue Sanctuary who was previously the Project Manager soon after the Foundation received the grant and is now the Foundation's Comms & Marketing Officer.

Charlee was previously CEO for CPRE Hampshire.

The Foundation has recruited 11 trustees. They are spending time looking at where the Foundation sits alongside the City council, Bristol Parks Forum and Local groups. They want to identify early pilot projects to gain some track record to show in order to attract larger pots of funding.

The Trustees and Staff are working on a Business Plan to be ready in January 2020.

Charlee would like to meet groups and would like to be invited to groups' meetings as this will help her develop an understanding of what is already going on.

She is also attending Future Parks Accelerator meetings and she can see challenges and opportunities. She noted that getting the Foundation charity developed takes time to set up properly.

Sam, Friends of Horfield Common and Vice Chair of BPF, asked whether the Foundation is project delivery or fundraising. Charlee responded that they do not have the answers yet and need to assess where the cash is coming from and where can add value to avoid replication and repetition.

Charlee explained that they are working closing with Ella Hogg on the volunteering side and should define the role in November. Rob also explained that there will be an agreement between Bristol City Council (BCC) Parks Department regarding projects as they cannot raise money for projects unless they have BCC agreement.

To contact the Foundation the email is info@bbpf.org.uk

3. My Wild City

Presentation from Janice Gardiner, Avon Wildlife Trust. Copy of presentation on Parks Forum website - http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/Oct2019BPF_MyWildCity.pdf

Janice explained that My Wild City began in 2015 as a Bristol European Green Capital funded project to show we can all do things for wildlife; it worked with places like the BRI, schools, Gloucester Road businesses. Post Green Capital funding, after a lot of development time, AWT has been successful, in partnership with BCC, in getting funding from National Lottery Heritage Fund for a 3 year project. The heritage gain is by management of sites to put them into a better condition and make them easier to manage for the future. AWT will be working at 8 sites for this project.

Aims of the project and volunteer opportunities.

Started in May 2019. Some things are possible straight, away others take longer. AWT's approach is based on what they know works at places such as Troopers Hill and Badock's Wood.

The My Wild City project and title has so captured people's imagination that it is being replicated elsewhere.

There will be volunteer days every Tuesday – see presentation for details.

There will be a practical training event on a specific topic, e.g. veteran trees, orchard management etc. Training and Volunteer Days are not confined to people from the 8 project sites but will be open to the Friends of groups across Bristol. Training requests included wildlife monitoring, group management e.g. social media

For information about these days see AWT website.

You can contact Janice using the My Wild City email address - mywildcity@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk

Lois, Redland Green, flagged up that allotments were not on the map of green spaces, yet they are important parts of the wildlife corridors. Information needs to come through to allotment site reps too and Lois urged Janice to add the allotment reps to their information channels.

Janice explained that the value of allotments is recognised through the pollinator forum and strategy.

Frances, Friends of Badock's Wood, explained that they had a group that monitored birds in Badock's Wood through a basic monthly count. A simple process and they would be willing to train other group reps at Badock's Wood.

Sarah, Friends of Eastville Park, asked for more information about the wildlife monitoring training.

Janice stated that there will be a City Nature Challenge in April 2020 and she will try and get some info for that and will talk to Bristol Naturalists' Society (BNS)

Mark, Chair of BPF and Friends of Snuff Mills requested that AWT did not develop yet another App and was assured this was not planned.

Another query was raised as to whether AWT's training would be recognised by BCC; that would be dealt with by Ella Hogg, BCC's volunteer coordinator, under her talk later in the meeting.

4. Can Do Bristol

Nic Ferris, Bristol City Council

Copy of Nic's presentation is on Parks Forum website –

http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/Oct2019BPF_CanDoBristol.pdf

Nic explained that she works for BCC Neighbourhoods and Community Service. She is working on this project, which is a web platform called Can Do Bristol – www.candobristol.co.uk

The website can connect people who are active citizens, organisations and businesses and it is supporting community action.

The website is currently being updated during Autumn 2019 to improve functionality and make it simpler to use.

It has 2 main functions. Volunteering and Opportunities.

The Vision is to enable community action to be more connected.

The website allows people to put their profile up and post volunteer opportunities. You can use the site to create project teams by finding people you'd like to create a team with.

A Time Bank function will be added soon so that people can bank credits for their time and skills.

BCC is the current licence holder funding it.

Campaign: Green, Clean and Healthy – this is the first theme and they will use that to highlight and promote action in Bristol.

Currently has over 1000 members registered.

Promotional work about the site will be starting soon.

Community Conversations function will allow people to put up an idea and other members to comment and rate the idea. She cited litter picking in parks and working with Bristol Waste as one idea.

See presentation for Demo pages and How to sign up

Frances, Badock's Wood, flagged up that litter picking in Bristol's Parks could not be done with Bristol Waste as the waste in Bristol Parks is managed by BCC Parks Department not Bristol Waste. Also activities taking place in Parks needed to be risk assessed and led by leaders trained by BCC Parks in order for them to be covered by BCC Parks insurance.

Joan, Friends of St Andrews Park, queried whether there would be monitoring of the website comments before they appear.

Nic said this would not happen but the website managers can edit and there is also a complaints system.

Nic explained that under volunteer opportunities volunteers can log their hours and have them recognised on their profile page.

Rob suggested this might be a way that Parks groups could advertise volunteer opportunities. Can Do Bristol need opportunities in order to get people interested to get involved and sign up.

5. Parks Volunteering Update

Ella Hogg, Volunteer Coordinator, BCC Parks

Presentation on Volunteering in Parks –

http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/Oct2019BPF_Volunteering.pdf

Ella reported that she had had a very busy first 6 months because there is a lot going on and there is a huge amount of community action going on in Parks, let alone the rest of Bristol.

She explained that her role is funded by BCC but closely linked with Bristol & Bath Parks Foundation. It is funded for 2 years in the first instance. BCC Parks Dept contribution to the Foundation is the funding of her post and she is based within the Parks Team at the City Council. 1 day a week she is based in a Parks Depot

and is therefore able to have direct communications about what groups are doing and what teams on the ground know is happening.

Ella is reviewing why people volunteer in parks. She is also planning more H&S training for volunteers to increase opportunities to volunteer.

She asks that Parks Groups keep inviting her to meet with them as she wants to meet people and hear what is going on.

She is also working with community workers who need to know how to engage with the Council and Parks.

She emphasised that volunteers are not being recruited to take over Parks staff jobs and roles.

She is developing a Volunteer Policy & Charter, primarily intended as an internal facing Council document. She is also supporting Parks teams in their relationship and understanding of the volunteer actions in Parks.

Volunteer Training

She noted that there is a shortage of trained volunteers. H&S Training is imperative for anyone to lead volunteers. She is trying to offer this training once or twice a month. Due to the diversity of volunteers and their range of availability she is trying to offer weekday and weekend training as there is no ideal time for those wishing to be trained.

The next H&S Training Day for volunteer leaders is on 29th November.

Battery tool training is on hold pending having suitably trained staff to train volunteers in their use. Joe McKenna from ParkWork is to train for a City & Guilds qualification to train volunteers.

Staff supported Volunteering

There is a wealth of businesses offering staff time to volunteer and Ella is working with Corporate Groups. If any group has identified a team-based project suitable for 10-20 volunteers please let Ella know. Ella is also working with BCC Parks Teams who can lead these too.

Future

Ella is working with B&NES and S Glos as well.

6. Tribute to Denise James

Mark Logan reported that Denise James had died recently and the Parks Forum sends their condolences to her family. Denise was a Clean & Green Champion and had worked in Parks and Neighbourhoods. After her redundancy from the Council she continued to support Bristol groups until she died.

Mark said that she was an inspiration to him and many others and he was really sad to hear the news.

Susan Acton-Campbell said that Denise was outstanding. She was passionate about volunteering and In Bloom. Susan said Denise had changed what people thought of In Bloom. She had involved so many people in the Its Your Neighbourhood Scheme promoting community involvement, horticultural achievement and environmental responsibility.

Friends of Troopers Hill had first met Denise in 2011. Through Denise they were introduced to the Community Pay Back scheme and arranged for many hours of their input to Troopers Hill, and she also introduced them to other helpful schemes. In 2017 Denise received the Keynsham Good Citizen Award. She was the driving force of Keynsham In Bloom and steered the town to Gold in Bloom.

Denise James will be much missed.

7. Parks Prospectus Project

Hayley Ash, Bristol City Council

Presentation: http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/Oct2019BPF_FutureParks.pdf

Hayley reported that she had a team of 3, herself, Rachel Clarke and Siobhan Lamb.

The project is funded by the National Trust and the Lottery Heritage Fund through a £900,000 grant. Following 2/3 cut in the Parks budget there is a need to look to how Parks can be made more financially sustainable without either government or “one off” funding.

The project has not just funding but also expert support from the National Trust.

The Future Parks Accelerator is funding 8 projects across UK cities – similar but different projects which will be sharing information.

The Project in Bristol aims to compile a comprehensive picture of Parks’ worth – their health, financial, environmental and wildlife value. They will be looking at how they can monetise all of this. For example, with climate change impacts some Parks may save our city from a lot of flood risk.

The project will run for 20 months working with the community to look at new ways of financing parks and business support to look at income generating schemes for the city. Then they will be asking for Expressions of Interest across the city, UK and the world for investment ideas in Parks.

During w/c 11th November 6 National Trust experts will be visiting Bristol to look at probably 20 parks across the city. They will be looking for potential solutions / suggestions and will be providing a new external perspective. The parks they will visit will range from large destination parks to pocket parks.

The Project is setting up working groups:

- Health
- Natural Capital
- Finance
- Engagement

The Project will be working closely with the Bristol and Bath Parks Foundation.

The Project is looking for people to get involved – see invitation to get involved in Hayley’s presentation.

8. Enforcement in Parks and Green Spaces

Lindsay Hay, Neighbourhood Services Manager, BCC

Presentation: http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/Oct2019BPF_Enforcement.pdf

Lindsay explained that the private enforcement contractors for Clean Streets had issued 17,000 fixed penalty notices in the past 22 months. About 100 had been taken to court for non payment.

The previous contractors have been focusing on litter such as cigarette butts but the current contractors 3GS will have a different focus – see pie chart in presentation. 3GS staff wear bright green jackets.

Offences which are on the increase are fly posting, commercial waste and dogs off leads. There is a new “Pooper Snooper” app for reporting dog fouling – see weblink in presentation. Using this will help alert them to any areas where dog fouling is particularly problematic. The 3GS contractors are patrolling parks and handing out poo bags and stickers.

In Bristol Dog Exclusion Zones are children’s fenced play spaces. 28 people have been fined for dogs off leads in these areas in this financial year.

Enforcement are trying to work more smartly with Parks Teams. Staff will be using a “reportable” app so that they can take photographic evidence for the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team and it is geo-tagged. They want to encourage reporting of knowledge of who is doing the fly tipping.

Byelaws

There is an online reporting form on the Council’s website – see link in presentation. Parks issues go to Parks but if someone is continually flouting the byelaws enforcement can go to court but the maximum fine is only £500.

Nick, St George Park, asked which areas the contractors were covering.

Lindsay said they were working outside of the city centre. She has the information of where they have fined people but does not have mapping yet of their patrols. She is hoping that it will be possible to make it so that the public can see where they are working. Monthly enforcement reports go to councillors. They could work in 20 different wards in any given month.

Russ, Castle Park, noted that graffiti is a bad problem. Through the Clean Streets Forum they are encouraged to report this to BCC and to the Police however, the Police are not interested if there is no evidence or knowledge of who has done it.

Lindsay explained that graffiti removal is undertaken by Bristol Waste but they do have a lot to deal with. There are designated teams doing the Big Tidy in certain areas including tackling graffiti and they are monitoring how long it takes, the best way to deal with it and how quickly there is a need to return to site to remove repeats.

Alison, Cotham Gardens, queried how she would know if an exercise group being held several times a week in the parks have permission and if they are a licenced business.

Richard Fletcher, Parks Services Manager, responded. In terms of businesses operating in Parks they are currently not being chased by the Council. The general Council position is that they do not feel they should charge for health activities, but they are collecting contact details.

Alison responded that there might be H&S concerns and Richard confirmed that he would want to know who is doing this and understand the basis on which the group exercise is being held.

Lois, Redland Green raised concerns re dangerous fast cycling down the slopes and logging the route and speed using the Strava app. How can the Council get these commercial apps to remove the routes?

Ella said she had experience of getting Strava to remove routes when she worked for Sustrans.

Susan, Troopers Hill, said she was ecstatic that the byelaws banned BBQs from Troopers Hill; however when the Friends of Troopers Hill contact the Police about the illegal use of BBQs there they do not respond. There appears to be no agreement between Parks and Police about how byelaws should be enforced. She asked if it would be possible to have sample BBQ enforcement for example on a Bank Holiday.

Richard Fletcher agreed to look into this.

Action: Richard Fletcher

Lindsay explained that her staff cannot require people to tell them their name and address but the police can.

Susan replied that the Police have not had any training on Bristol Parks byelaws but Richard said that they have had to agree to the byelaws.

Lindsay concluded by saying that the new Bristol Waste reporting system will be ensuring that people get responses in future.

9. Parks Services Update

Richard Fletcher, Parks Services Manager

Richard explained that the staff structure was now settled and would be sent to the Forum and also put up on the BCC website.

Action: Richard Fletcher

There will be a new Head of Parks post. This will be advertised and in the meantime an interim postholder will take on the role. This post replaces the joint post previously held by Gemma Dando covering both Parks and Neighbourhoods. It is felt that the Parks Service, having previously changed and shrunk, is now seeing work growing and diversifying and that there was more work being created.

The big change in the last Parks restructure was the role of commercialisation for which Sharon Radnedge is the Manager, and she is also managing “Crems and Cems” from which a lot of funds come in to the Parks Service.

Sports Consultation

Richard explained that this had been designed to test options for how they might deliver sports at zero cost. 2 options had been mooted,

- 1) third party operation of sports facilities
- 2) Parks Service charging users at cost which would, for example, lead to football charges being four times the current rate

The consultation responses generally favoured option 1.

However Bowls Clubs have a different operational need. A budget is being sought to upgrade existing bowls clubs first.

This should be brought into the Parks Prospectus work – e.g. under the social investment work. However they do not want the Sports discussions to get in the way of the work of Prospectus.

Alison, Cotham Gardens, asked about what was happening regarding Bristol Waste vs Parks Department managing waste in Bristol’s parks. Richard explained that the conversation about this with Bristol Waste had paused when Bristol Waste was busy and they were looking to restart the conversation, probably in February 2020.

10.BPF Vision Update

Len Wyatt was due to lead a discussion on this with draft position statement documents but due to the large number of presentations there was insufficient time for this item.

It was agreed that this would be the first item on the meeting agenda next time in February. Meanwhile the documents would be available to Forum members to consider prior to the meeting.

11.Parks Forum Annual General Meeting

Mark Logan, Chair, reported that it had been a busy year for the Forum Committee which had been involved in many of the items that had been presented to the meeting. The Committee is meeting regularly with the Council Parks Service, holding open discussions and working in partnership with them and this was of benefit to everyone.

Next year, with the Foundation and the Prospectus, will be a very important year for Bristol City Council Parks and for the Parks Forum, not just in Bristol, but across the country. He felt it was going to be a very interesting year.

Mark explained that we are not here to take over Parks' staff jobs but only to enhance their work.

He urged members to keep reading the Parks Forum emails in full.

Rob Acton-Campbell, Secretary, said that Bristol was one of 13 Rethinking Parks across the UK and 8 Future Parks projects; only 2-3 cities are involved in both.

There will be a lot of eyes nationally on Bristol. He also emphasised that the National Trust and the National Lottery are really looking to protect parks.

Forum Finances

BPF are holding some Bristol ParkWork funds and some for Castle Park. Nothing new to report. Donations cover room hire, teas and coffees. (See Appendix A)

Nominees

Existing Committee with the exception of David are all nominated for re-election. Nick Burroughs from Friends of St George Park has also volunteered to sit on the Committee.

Mark Logan, Friends of Snuff Mills – Chair
Sam Thomson, Friends of Horfield Common – Vice Chair
Rob Acton-Campbell, Friends of Troopers Hill – Secretary
Derek Hawkins, Friends of Stoke Lodge - Treasurer

Committee

Nick Burroughs, Friends of St George Park
Frances Robertson (minutes), Friends of Badock's Wood
Sarah West, Friends of Eastville Park
Len Wyatt, Northern Slopes Initiative

The Forum elected all of the above.

12. Any Other Business

i) Western Harbour - the potential impact on green space was highlighted as something the Forum needs to be aware of and possibly respond to when more details are made public.

ii) Local Plan Review

The review timetable was unsure because it was reliant on the West of England Local Spatial Plan which was with the Planning Inspectorate.

iii) Jane, Walking for Health, said she was gladdened to hear Ella's presentation but was concerned that it was only for a 2 year period. She asked if the Forum can push for the Foundation to ensure the role became permanent. Having worked with Nic Ferris for years on Walk for Health, when it came to an end a lot of communication links were lost.

iv) Frances, Badock's Wood, was concerned to see any loss of green spaces, not just with the Western Harbour development but also loss of part of the area of Glencoyne Square in Southmead. We need to remember that the future will see 100,000 more residents in Bristol and we need to protect our green spaces.

Appendix A
Bristol Parks Forum
Treasurer's Report 2018 – 2019

As at 30th September 2018, cash at bank was £3,811.20
Of this £3,115.00 was held on behalf of Castle Park;
£649.20 was held on behalf of Park Work; and
£47.00 was contributions from BPF Friends Groups

In the 12 months from 30th September 2018, cash movements have been:
Payment for Castle Park costs £(120.00)
Contributions from BPF Friends Groups £30.00
£ (90.00)

As at 30th September 2019, cash at bank was £3,721.20
Of this £3,095.00 was held on behalf of Castle Park;
£649.20 was held on behalf of Park Work; and
£77.00 was contributions from BPF Friends Groups

Contributions from Parks Groups are to help fund BPF meetings.
In addition, Rob Acton-Campbell holds a petty cash fund for the same purpose funded by cash contributions at BPF meetings.

10th October 2019