



**Minutes of Bristol Parks Forum meeting**  
**Windmill Hill City Farm**  
**19<sup>th</sup> April 2008**

**BPF**

**Parks and Green Spaces Strategy update - Fraser Bridgeford**

- In Jan 08 BPF registered an objection to the amount of green space needing to be sold to fund PGSS.
- BPF met with Cllrs and members of CLS management to discuss funding arrangements.
- BPF requested 80% of revenue to be reinvested into Parks Service - compromised on 70% - now written in to strategy and adopted.
- Discussions were also held to clarify how the 'value' of land will be assessed - now written into PGSS.
- Execution of value assessment is now part of Area Green Space Plans.
- c90 acres likely to be sold. The Area Green Space Plans team will ensure that these are the right acres.
- 90 acres is not a target figure - if AGSP comes up with less than 90 acres suitable land, less will be sold and budget will have to be re calculated.

PGSS - finished article is out on website [www.bristol.gov.uk/parkstrategy](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/parkstrategy) - some available on CDs.

**Questions and comments - PGSS:**

- Suggestion that funds raised for PGSS, particularly 'life cycle' maintenance costs, go into an endowment fund and be managed independently from the Council (eg Arnos Vale).
- Funds may be ring fenced now, but Council administration priorities may change in future and put funds at risk
- Are we setting a precedent by selling land to pay for parks - danger of parks having to fund themselves in the future – i.e. it is used as an excuse to cut back on core funding.

FB - Land disposal only set up to support the PGSS

RAC – the figures are not self contained – there will still be core funding from council. Still need an ongoing £4.2M for lifecycle costs after 20 yrs - the idea is that £3.2m will be profit raised from the life cycle fund generated by land sales but still £1m from Council core budget.

RAC

- Of the £10M (of the £87M) that is being invested in new capital, £10 million is coming out of the Parks core budget.
- No day to day maintenance money is being generated from land sales.

- £87M is investment in new capital projects to improve parks over next 20 yrs, - all new money. Idea of lifecycle costs is to protect that new equip.

Lifecycle costs can come from income from investment of capital

Request to get details from Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust to learn more about their financial structure. Contact Quartet Foundation - a big, independent grant provider and endowment fund manager in this area. Alison Bromilow knows new contact.

Q - Do we have a paper trail of all decisions?

AB - Financial plan is minuted in Officers Report and PGSS is officially agreed document

### **Area Green Space Plans**

*Richard Fletcher - Presentation*

### **Street Tree Forum - Hugh Holden**

- Trying to get to the bottom of why people are so unhappy with Council's management of street trees.
- Not bad management as much as poor PR
- Now statement from Richard Ennion explaining clear policy (Rob AC can put on BPF website)

Membership -

- Agreed political representation from each of the parties
- Also suggest rep from each Neighbourhood Partnership Area
- HH representing BPF and Bristol Civic Society - request for volunteer to represent BPF at meetings. Christopher Baggott volunteered.

### **National Open Spaces Forum**

- National Charity - 'Green Space' - creating a national forum of Park Forums
- Aims include getting councils to increase parks funding
- HH attended steering group meeting in March
- Bristol is way ahead of most Parks depts in country re PGSS - re working out funding and including Parks groups, councillors and Parks officers
- Request for someone to take on role to attend quarterly weekend meeting (B'ham or London ) and report back (all expenses paid – by Parks).

### **Festival of Nature - weekend of 7<sup>th</sup> June**

BPF are planning to have a stall for both days - Fraser will set up but would like volunteers to staff the stall over the two days.

### **Bristol Cycle Path**

- The cycle path is in the main considered as a publicly accessible green space and comes within the parameters of the PGSS. Bristol City Council and the West of England Partnership have developed plans to run a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route down part of the existing Bristol to Bath Railway Path. (A cycle/walking track would continue to run alongside the bus lane.)
- Fraser on committee to campaign against proposed Rapid Transit Route.

- Lots of publicity around campaign.
- Evening Post recently reported that the plans have been shelved. However this does not mean they are cancelled – merely postponed.
- There is now a change of focus away from the Railway path to areas that will be affected in the south of city - the campaign continues and Fraser will keep BPF informed of progress.
- see [www.railwaypath.org](http://www.railwaypath.org) for proposals and updates

### **BPF vote**

Does the Forum broadly object to changing of the cycle path into a BRT route?

### **All in favour except one**

Suggestion to invite a council rep to next meeting to explain/update

## **Community Parks Group Projects Protocol**

### **Sue Lutkenhouse**

[sue.lutkenhouse@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:sue.lutkenhouse@bristol.gov.uk)

Parks Projects Co-ordinator - runs team that co-ordinates and implements the major capital projects in Bristol Parks.

- Park groups often choose to access funds not available to the council to improve their park and have particular schemes in mind.
- There can be frustration when groups have an idea and there are funding opportunities but have a problem when they encounter Parks Dept.
- **Community Parks Group Projects Protocol** has been developed to find a way to work together to find agreement over route to project development.
- Principle - key person is CPM - they must know your vision, your objectives and can identify support you need from Bristol Parks (BP) to achieve this.
- Bristol Parks inevitably has limited capacity to support groups so there must be a way to let park groups know its priorities for park improvements. Area Green Space Plans identify where Parks should spend its money – there is some potential for a discrepancy between this and park groups' priorities.
- The Protocol acts to help park groups identify what support they need to deliver a project and what Bristol Parks can offer. It identifies what projects are and puts a programme in place to identify what resources required and how we can respond to it.

### **Summary comment**

There was a great deal of disquiet about the Protocol and whether it was simply adding an even greater burden on to park groups; asking them to deliver projects when they have already worked hard and given a lot of time as volunteers to raise funds. Many objections were raised and it was agreed that a delegation of Forum members would send a formal response on the Protocol to SL setting out amendments if necessary or recommending the Forum supports/doesn't support it.

### **General comments**

Concerns over CPM workload - can this doc be used to support the case of heavily stretched CPMs?

SL - This protocol is to address that problem

- Something needs to be written in about time scales - especially re funding applications.
- Most difficult money to get is that needed to do a feasibility study - protocol suggests group has to do/pay for this
- needs full discussion with all parties to find a way to work together
- Needs to be a partnership document
- Legal side - insurance implications of claims etc
- Extent to which groups able to do preliminary work should be looked at

SL - This protocol is all about raising these issues before they become a problem.

Protocol is win-win situation for BCC - groups have to find all the money.

SL - This is just for projects coming through Friends groups - not S106 or Parks funding capital projects.

What about match funding?

SL -Need to let BCC know before you apply for funding if you need match funding from the council.

Groups don't understand implications of taking on work that could go wrong - should be underwritten by BCC

SL - Equally important BCC understands implications of project.

RF - Protocol is about managing capacity to deliver projects - trying to get two parties together to decide who takes responsibility for what - if a community organisation has to take on responsibility then it may be possible to get advice and add the cost of doing this to a funding bid. It cannot be assumed that BCC can automatically manage a project - especially if there is the possibility of asking in a funding application for a budget to employ a project manager or consultants. However it may be possible for BCC to manage projects if there is capacity available. Particularly with regard to PGSS delivery, it is anticipated that BCC officers will have many projects to deal with in the near future.

Comment - Enthusiasm of groups will be greater than the capacity of BP to respond so there needs to be some process by which the relationship can be managed - this should include the possibility for BCC to say no. Either - we don't like your proposal and will not support it, or we like the proposal and will support it at some time in the future.

Suggestion:

For smaller projects - need a fast track approach - smaller document - less complicated

Request for volunteer to write up BPF response to protocol. John Richfield, Cheryl Ann Tucker and Tony Lewis volunteered.

Eileen Stonebridge will feed in to SL thoughts about how the Your Heritage funded project went at Old Sneed Park.

## **AOB**

### **Does Parks Forum have a budget for expenditure?**

Yes. Bristol Parks holds a budget for the Forum – which currently ‘costs’ about £5000 pa. This is to fund its meetings, other core costs and the ability to maintain and improve its network. Funds to help the campaign to support the Bristol and Bath Railway path could not be made available from this budget – outside of remit.

Q - Dave Williams

Acquisitions – does Bristol Parks have the budgets to acquire land when the possibility arises?

RF – In theory, this could be possible if opportunities arise when, according to the standards in the PGSS, an area is shown to be short of green space or where there is a strong argument to save the wildlife or historical value of a space.

### **BPF committee**

- Request for volunteers to come forward to support the Forum’s work – only five people took part in the negotiations with the council on the PGSS.
- **Does BPF agree to increasing the no of elected reps beyond two (Chair and Vice Chair) to spread the load and responsibility.**
- **YES**

Suggestion - to pull together other people/organisations to share expertise eg - Allotments Assoc, City Farms Federation - c26 Community gardens and City farms in city - Wildlife sites groups

### **June meeting**

- suggest one off extended meeting to cover agenda
- agreed 9.30am - 1pm if we need it

### **Grounds Maintenance Procurement Review Update**

- Attach paper RF provided.
- RF to find out about how schools grounds maintenance contract will be managed if it is in house
- HH requested BPF has a rep on interviewing panel for Tender interviews
- Q: Are Continental Landscapes invited to tender? A: Will not be excluded from tendering.

### **Community Action Toolkit**

- A useful document for would-be park groups
- Will go online next week but can request copy from Bristol Parks.

**Date of next meeting – Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> July**

**9-30am to 1-00pm at Windmill Hill City Farm**

**If you have any agenda items you want included please contact Richard Fletcher on 0117 922 3896 or [Richard.fletcher@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:Richard.fletcher@bristol.gov.uk)**