



Bristol Parks Forum: 18th June 2016

Windmill Hill City Farm

Attendance

BPF Committee: Rob Acton-Campbell, Hugh Holden, Derek Hawkins, Sam Thomson (arrived late)

Park Group Representatives: Representatives of over 20 park groups

Bristol City Council: Cllr Marg Hickman (Cabinet member for Neighbourhoods), Di Robinson (Director for Neighbourhoods), John Walters (Area Manager South)

Guest: Jon Attwood (Learning Everywhere)

Apologies: Mark Logan, Fraser Bridgeford, Sian Parry, Lindsay Hay (Neighbourhoods), Jane Cunningham.

In Mark's absence the first half of the meeting was chaired by Rob, the second half by Sam. Minutes taken by Susan.

Matters arising/Outstanding Actions from previous meeting:

Clear flowchart required of process for parks investment spend (see minutes of 16th April item 2).

Action for Di Robinson and Bristol Parks Forum committee.

1. Learning Everywhere www.learningeverywhere.co.uk

Jon Attwood gave a presentation of this project which has now reached its legacy stage. Partners included Plymouth University and Natural England. The project covered how to encourage schools to work off-site, discovering what teachers needed.

Those present were asked whether they knew who, in the education system, was using their park, what for and how regularly. Some groups were involved with local schools, some not, some schools carried out visits independently without contact with volunteer groups.

Discussion points

- There is work to be on how the Parkhive app can be used to support learning. It could be used to include information about what learning resources are available on site e.g. circle of logs suitable for seating in outdoor classroom

Action - Sam to circulate dates by which and to whom updates to the Parkhive app should be sent, including any corrections and updates.

- Risk assessments – many schools now have an annual sign off slip for parents covering all activities within a 2-3 miles radius of the school. While an initial risk assessments have to be done for routes to and from a site and the activity thereafter this just needs to be reviewed for changes.
- Contacts with schools – schools have teacher briefings. For groups wanting involvement from schools being able to attend a teacher briefing to describe what they and their space can offer is a way of making contact.
- Pinpoint mapping system – for teachers wanting to know names of tree species in Bristol Parks the pinpoint mapping system supplies names of all planted trees. <http://tinyurl.com/stqptrees>

2. Bristol Parks Update

2.1 Structure

Di Robinson, Service Director for Neighbourhoods and Communities will have responsibility for Parks and Green Spaces from September.

A structure chart will be issued soon

Action – Di Robinson

Di's current responsibility for Regulatory Services will move to a colleague.

A Head of Service for Parks and Green Spaces position will soon be advertised for external recruitment.

Caretaking is moving back to Housing. Clive Smith is moving from Landscapes to Caretaking. Rob Stephens, who has a project management background, is taking responsibility for Landscapes

John Walters, South Area Parks Manager, attended the meeting. He, Richard Fletcher and John Williams are the Area Parks Manager for Bristol.

All trees, including street trees, will come under Parks responsibility, as will Play and play safety inspections.

Landscapes and education are being brought back to be part of Parks.

Discussion points

- Hugh raised the issues of the lack of grounds maintenance using the example of St Mary Redcliffe roundabout, a focal tourist point, not having an attractive aspect.

- Wendy from Avon Gardens Trust raised the importance of maintaining the landscape of Bristol's Victorian Parks and offered the resources of their garden historians.

2.2 Budget

Savings of £44 million are required across the council from a £348 million budget.

2.3 Professional Dog Walking

Dog Control Orders will end in October 2017 and will be replaced by Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO). <https://www.gov.uk/control-dog-public/public-spaces-protection-orders>. With PSPOs the maximum number of dogs that can be walked at one time can be specified. Current thinking is that 4 is a reasonable maximum.

For a list of locations where dogs can be off lead currently see the schedule on <http://preview.tinyurl.com/offleadok>

For a list of locations where dogs are excluded currently (except for guide dogs) see <http://tinyurl.com/dogsexcluded>

There are no plans to charge professional dog walkers. It was recognised that dog walkers with more dogs than they can control is an issue.

It was stated by one attendee that public liability insurance will not cover a professional dog walker for walking more than 4 dogs. This was later found to be incorrect as at least one insurance company is offering cover for up to 6 dogs.

<http://www.petbusinessinsurance.co.uk/pet-business-insurance/dog-walking-insurance/#>

2.4 Byelaws

The Department for Community and Local Government have still not given the go-ahead for bye laws to go to full council. Discussions are ongoing. It is hoped they will go to full council on 13th September. The matter is dependent on the Secretary of State giving assent.

3. Parks Investment

2015-2016 work, mainly addressing safety issues, is complete. By 31 March 2016 £500,000 of play investment had been delivered.

Phase 1 of 2016-17 £450k access works addressing issues such as signage and handrails will be complete by October. Tenders will be invited in September for the next phase to complete in February.

£100,000 has been allocated to end of life play removal. This will be the removal, but not replacement of play equipment that has reached the end of its life. This will be handled sensitively with clear information about nearby play equipment, much of which will have been installed since the end of life item.

£500,000 - £1,000,000 will be spent on reactive safety works. Bristol Parks Forum and Neighbourhood Partnerships will be consulted over this. Parks will produce shortlist for consultation- tenders going out in September – work to be completed by Feb 2017.

Discussion points

The issue was raised that park groups can often do work themselves but their money could be made to go further if Bristol City Council made the purchase of materials for them. Collaboration is needed.

4. Power Tools Training

The course for power tools training on 20th June is fully booked. The course on Tuesday 21st June has been cancelled due to it not being a convenient date for people who wish to attend. Tom Penn will be arranging further courses. Anyone who wants to be trained to carry out work on their park as part of their volunteer group and has not yet contacted Tom was encouraged to do so.

5. Cycling and the creation of cycle routes in Parks.

Alison Bromilow pointed out the issues where cycle route are introduced through parks, site conditions and potential safety issues are not necessarily assessed and the impact on other users of a space. She instanced the example of Redland Green where a tarmac cycle path was introduced that went down into a valley and cyclists perceiving a need for momentum to ascend the succeeding slope, descends at speed.

Alison suggested that where cycle routes were introduced into parks it should be made clear that the priority should be for the park users not the cyclists.

Park groups were asked to give examples from their own parks where there were issues caused by cycle routes through parks, on designated cycle routes or informally on paths, to establish whether this was a city-wide issue.

Action - ALL

Di Robinson asked whether Bristol Parks forum had access to Cycling City for route consultation prior to development. She was advised there was no consultation with the Bristol Parks Forum. Di to follow up to establish a mechanism for consultation.

Action – Di Robinson

6. Reports from Park Groups

6.1 Castle Park

The buildings and land for Castle Park have now been purchased. No clear proposals have yet been published. Bristol Parks Forum members were asked to email any views to info@bristolparksforum.org.uk

Action - ALL

6.2 St George Fundraising and Projects update

Rob Acton-Campbell summarised the approach taken in St George where using £10,000 of St George Neighbourhood Partnership fund a professional fundraiser was employed and given a brief to find funding for play areas, paths and more in Dundridge Park and Meadow Vale Park. More than £200,000 of funding has been gained. Further money from the St George Neighbourhood Partnership was used as match funding to release money from landfill grants. A group in St George, Friends of Troopers Hill experienced in grant applications, were also successful with 2 landfill grants and used £15,000 of St George Neighbourhood Partnership funding to result in funding an £80,000 project.

6.3 Park Run

There are currently no plans for charge to be made by Bristol Parks for users such as Park Run.

6.4 Festival of Nature

There was good feedback from those who ran the stand at the Festival of Nature. Lots of interest particularly sparked by the map of all Bristol's green spaces on the table. Some visitors said they would be happy to pay for that map and plan visits to different green spaces. There was admiration for the Discover East Bristol map and enquiries whether funding could be available from Bristol City Council towards similar maps to cover other parts of the city.

6.5 Bristol in Bloom

Stephen of Bristol in Bloom appealed for the support of the Bristol Parks Forum in spreading information on Bristol in Bloom can offer. This year they have been asked by Bristol City Council to focus their efforts on South Bristol. The volunteers of Bristol in Bloom advertise categories in which businesses and individuals can submit their gardening efforts for assessment. Each applicant will have their entry assessed, have feedback from the assessor and be assigned a level of how well they have done in that category. In the past Bristol in Bloom have assisted Bristol City Council in putting together an entry, as a city, into South West in Bloom whose assessors would assess them as an entry for Britain in Bloom. Bristol City Council will not be making an "In Bloom" entry this year.

Sadly at the time of writing your minute taker cannot find a working Bristol in Bloom website promoting what they do.

In recent years some areas of Bristol have organised local initiatives to encourage business and local people to have pride in their achievements. Two example are HEFs (Hillfields, Eastville and Fishpponds) in Bloom, chaired by Mark Logan and St George in Bloom, chaired by Grenville Johnson, <http://www.stgeorgeinbloom.org.uk/page6.html>. Similarly to Bristol in Bloom they arrange for local people and business to have their gardening achievements assessed by volunteers while at the same time putting a partnership entry into South West in Bloom for their individual areas. Both groups have done extremely well. Last year St George in Bloom was recommended by South West in Bloom for inclusion in the Britain in Bloom UK finalist category.

It is to South West in Bloom that many park groups will have applied to be assessed for an Its Your Neighbourhood Award <http://www.southwestinbloom.org.uk/Its-Your-Neighbourhood.aspx> and/or a Pride in Parks award <http://www.southwestinbloom.org.uk/Pride-In-Parks.aspx>. The closing date for the Pride in Parks award is shown on their website as 10th June, and this year there is a fee to enter of £20.

South West in Bloom award ceremonies move location around the South West and are often oversubscribed. Whether winners of awards can attend the South West in Bloom award ceremony or not in previous years Bristol recipients of South West in Bloom awards have been invited to Bristol in Bloom award ceremonies to celebrate their success locally.