



Bristol Parks Forum

representing resident led park groups and citywide organisations involved in protecting and improving Bristol's green spaces

Bristol Parks Forum: 24th February 2018

Attendance: Over 30 people representing 23 parks and other groups

BPF Committee: Rob Acton-Campbell, Derek Hawkins, Hugh Holden, Siân Parry, Sam Thomson, Len Wyatt

BCC: Gemma Dando, Cllr Asher Craig

Apologies: Mark Logan (Chair), Fraser Bridgeford, Cllr Hopkins, Cllr Negus, Kristin, Ruth, Denis and Angela.

Meeting Chaired by Sam Thomson, Notes taken by Siân

1. Matters Arising/Outstanding Actions

- Statements/questions on Parks budget influenced decision-making so thanks to all parks groups who responded.
- Documents circulated and drop-ins organised for consultation.

2. RHS- Sarah Ricketts, Community Outreach Bristol and South Glos.

Sarah introduced her role at the RHS which is a charity, does scientific research and organises shows and has also had an education/outreach programme for the last 2 years. They have a campaign for school gardening which has 35k registrants and 20k schools involved. They train and support volunteers in school gardens and provide CPD for teachers as well as working with youth projects.

The RHS also runs a 'greening grey' Britain project improving biodiversity, mitigating climate change and providing funding for groups to develop greening projects.

Sarah is keen to find out what groups are doing in Bristol and the potential need for support and training e.g. in schools, for sustainable planting schemes and growing food in public spaces.

Presentation: www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/RHSFeb24th.pdf

Email: sahricketts@rhs.org.uk

Open Discussion

RHS can help bring volunteers and schools together as they have the resources to do this. They have a funding scheme of £500 per group which can be bid for; it has a different theme each year.

Sarah has worked with Fairfield School installing a polytunnel and working with local allotment holders to grow food. Working with a local mosque in St Werburghs would be appropriate for potential funding.

They have no access to labour, the focus is on capacity building for local groups. The point was made that parks groups needs to look at attracting young people and a Forum-wide approach on this would be useful. It would also be useful to have a list of organisations such as RHS and what their specific offers are.

3. Update on Parks Consultation, Foundation Bid and Volunteer Strategy- Rob and Gemma

Gemma updated the Forum on the Parks Consultation (presentation to be available soon). The free text responses are still being analysed but will be completed in the next fortnight, and a final report will then be available. Around 2700 people responded in total with organisations also responding such as Avon Wildlife Trust, BNS etc.

Regarding generating income, the least popular proposal was for advertising in parks, whilst the most popular (over 50% agreement) was for improving cafes and concessions. Businesses operating in parks and fee-paying activities scored about 50%, the latter especially popular with young people.

In terms of reducing services, about 50% agreed in reduction of facilities such as for sports unless there was no cost to BCC whereas reduction in hours at Hengrove Play Park was not popular. Grounds maintenance and bedding/baskets reductions scored about 50% but was not popular at a local level, although some people suggested volunteers could do the latter. People weren't keen on reducing park opening times, taking out play equipment where it was not fit for purpose or having a Trust to take on parks maintenance. However, over 50% agreed about local management of parks. The report will be published and go to Full Council or Cabinet. Gemma will brief BPF about the cuts at its April meeting. She also said that the P&GSS is being refreshed and links with a future vision and approach for parks being discussed by BPF later in the meeting.

Rob talked through the proposals for the Foundation bid to NESTA (a summary had been circulated). They included a volunteer co-ordinator which links in with the Volunteer Strategy. The Foundation would work with businesses & others and develop fund-raising to become self-funding after 2 years. It would be independent of BCC and run as a charity with Trustees across Bristol and Bath. The bid is being developed jointly with BCC, B&NES Council as a partner (city of Bath), Bournemouth Council who have already set up a Foundation, Bristol Natural History Consortium (BNHC) already an established charity in Bristol, Bristol Green Capital Partnership (BGCP), and Quartet regarding financial management. The NESTA Stage 1 submission deadline is 27th Feb with Stage 2 submission in April and a decision following.

The model is different from e.g. Newcastle who have gone for a Trust model for some of their parks. The latter takes on all the activities of the parks department including maintenance with 10 years funding from the Council, but is inherently more risky than a Foundation due to the risks if a Trust fails.

Regarding the Volunteer Strategy, H&S training is now available via a [form on BCCs website](#) and electric power tools are also now available.

Open Discussion

The Foundation will raise monies and decide how to spend it, but maintenance will still be done by BCC. The parks consultation showed that the Trust model wasn't popular. The Foundation won't duplicate BCCs activities.

What happens if the Foundation bid isn't successful ? – Continue as BCC plans.

Events/cafe funding can be increased, cf Arnos Vale's success, and events can generate a potential £300k pa. BCC is already starting to incrementally raise money and criteria are being developed to assess cafes/concessions based on quality not price (2 year timescale).

How is BCC differentiating between individual and group responses ? they will be analysed separately but a lot of the themes are similar in both sets of responses.

The Foundation is seen as another layer of bureaucracy – Foundation will be doing things that BCC don't have resources to do. What evidence is there of sources of revenue funding which is a critical issue for local groups ? the Foundation will be a learning model where the funding will be used to identify revenue and share expertise across the cities. A lot of money is already available to fund this sort of work and long-term partners will be sought e.g. via BGCP for revenue funding. If a Foundation isn't successful in raising money, nothing is lost, no risk as there would be for a Trust, if we can't make it work in Bristol & Bath don't believe it can work anywhere.

How will the CIL process application process work for Parks ? there is less capacity for maintenance e.g. 5% maximum. Area committees being set up are not dissimilar to NPs and there needs to be lobbying by parks groups for local monies.

The Volunteer Co-ordinator needs to be job-share to cover the workload.

The Foundation could possibly take on events from BCC.

Regarding large scale events & the Balloon Fiesta, Cllr Craig stated that BCC have agreed terms for 2018 and have requested that the fiesta team consider a range of income generation opportunities which will enable them to cover the full cost of the site fee within 3 years.

Although BCC would have an officer on the Board of Trustees, it would not have any control over the budget and monies would be solely ringfenced to parks. The Foundation is intended to be an enhancement to Parks Services not to replace it. Quartet's role would be to help with financial management; some concerns were voiced about their holding onto money and not distributing it quickly so this would need to be addressed.

BPF would be separate and hold the Foundation to account; Bristol and Bath would have separate strands within the project with separate steering groups.

Rob was thanked warmly with a round of applause for all his work on the bid.

4. Future Vision for Parks- Len Wyatt

Len introduced this discussion which was focused on:

- What should BPF do in future ?
- What should parks look like in future ?

He made the parallel with the cycling lobby which is very successful in Bristol. They have a clear focused manifesto at <https://bristolcycling.org.uk/campaigns/manifesto-page/> with a map of cycling routes they want to implement across the city. BPF's manifesto was written in 2013 www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/information/manifesto/ and is now not fit for purpose as the context we are working in has changed; the Forum has an opportunity given the current situation with the P&GSS refresh, the City Council's current vision and the Foundation bid, to pull together its vision for parks and green spaces in the city and feed this back to BCC and partners.

Open Discussion

Forum members suggested the following ideas:

The ParkHive app gives useful info about the city's parks

We need to influence more

Funding for the Forum needs to be raised via membership

Constitution and manifesto go hand in hand, networking etc. Do we need to apply for monies from the Foundation, how do we exist as a network? Do we pay to be part of the Forum? It needs to be formalised by amending the Constitution.

What about campaigning?

What will BPF's role be? Need a structure diagram with diff orgs in and how they relate to each other i.e. BPF, BCC, Foundation, businesses etc.

Parks have a big focus so difficult to follow cycling model, but health and well-being theme needs to be lobbied for and prioritised

What about dog walkers, need support

Cycles in parks – issues need to be addressed, weight different users in parks and have designations for different groups.

Can we set agendas and see how others respond?

Parks serve local communities and the Forum co-ordinates groups and issues, provides space for discussion, don't need to change the formula

Campaigns on specific agendas e.g. dogs, cycles, needed

All groups to sign up to the approach

Groups fill gaps and only certain areas/communities do this, Forum and Foundations can do this i.e. fill in the gaps across the city

Maybe campaigning could alienate others e.g. cycling groups

Learn from other areas e.g. Burnley. They are promoting wildflower meadows as a principle, putting markers down.

Byelaw consultation- this was done but hasn't made a difference e.g. dogs, cycles. BPF has to be more proactive and hold people to account

Is the Forum for groups or for land? Need to liaise with other orgs which don't have formal groups or are separate. Meetings based approaches are a turnoff.

Position statements needed on key issues, e.g. cycling, income generation, 'red lines'

Follow the 38deg approach to sign petitions etc

Snuff Mills- attitudes to cyclists has completely changed, weren't allowed years ago

Small group discussions needed.

Chart Exercise based on describing what Bristol's parks will look like in 2030 (see Appendix)

5. AOB

1. Local Plan Review - www.bristol.gov.uk/localplanreview

Alison updated the Forum on the Local Plan review, specifically on the green space designation. This is now out for consultation (the designations are shown on the [Site Allocations policy map](#)). Groups need to look at this and see whether their space conforms with the criteria in the consultation, i.e. is it a specially protected green space? This is linked with the Call for Sites recently.

Gemma said that she has already included existing ones in the consultation document but its worth checking in case any have been missed.

2. Proposal to raise monies for BPF

Someone suggested that there should be an annual payment from groups for running BPF. The Committee will send out an email asking groups what they think of this proposal.

3. GDPR (Data Protection Regulations)

Rob updated the meeting about the new regulations and said that although they applied to all organisations, it was unlikely that small groups would be challenged on it. But if groups wanted to use it as a way of refreshing their mailing lists, then people need to be asked to actively say 'yes' to be on a mailing list. A useful thing to do is have an 'unsubscribe' note at the bottom of the email sent out, and Mail Chimp is good to use. Sam can answer any queries as she's been on a course.

Actions

- 1. RHS presentation-**Groups to contact Sarah Ricketts RHS if they would like support and training. Committee to look at how to attract more young people. Committee to summarise list on BPF website of organisations who run similar projects to RHS and what their specific offers are. Sarah's contact details: sarahricketts@rhs.org.uk
- 2. Update on Consultation, Foundation bid and Vol strategy-**Consultation report to be completed by mid- March. Gemma to attend BPF meeting on 28th April and give update on cuts to budget and P&GSS refresh. Rob to send in Foundation bid. If Groups need H&S training, form is available on BCC website and tools now available to borrow.
- 3. Manifesto/ vision refresh-** Committee to decide how to take this forward; Groups to be asked to send in their thoughts on the discussions and the single word exercise.
- 4. Local Plan review- green space designation.** Committee to circulate wording from Alison and urge groups to respond as necessary.
- 5. Proposal for Committee to ask for annual payment from groups to support BPF expenses-** to circulate to Groups asking whether they agree.
- 6. GDPR (data protection)-** if any queries, Sam can address them.

Flipchart – Briefing the meeting:

The first flipchart outlined that while the starting point was the BPF Manifesto 2013 – the question has to be asked:

- Do we need to change? – do we need to change the way we influence?
- Then there were two questions:
- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be in the future?

Flipchart – words to describe Bristol Parks in 2030

Describe your dream for them (not just your own park):

Only one word – maximum 10 letters.

Beautiful	Best/Exemplary	Safe	Poo free
Clean	Cherished	Welcoming	More
Peaceful	Inclusive	Free	Green
Fresh Air	Relaxing	Play	Publicly – owned
Sane	Seasonal	Loved	Friendly
Community	Buzzing	Hub	Solvent
Trees	Viable	Well-being/ Healthy	Sporty
Biodiverse	Loved	Inspiring	

Len Wyatt

25 February 2018