



Bristol Parks Forum

Minutes of meeting 24th June 2017

Redcatch Community Centre

Attendance: Over 35 people representing over 25 parks and other groups

BPF Committee: Rob Acton-Campbell, Hugh Holden, Mark Logan, Siân Parry

BCC: Richard Fletcher, Councillor Asher Craig.

Notes taken by Siân

Matters Arising/Outstanding Actions

- **Meeting with Cllr Craig:** Committee met with Cllr Craig and officers before Forum meeting; also Scrutiny representatives
- **Volunteer Strategy:** No timescale as yet.
- **Workshops on parks proposals-** imminent
- **no capital update for BPF website-** RF to provide
- **feedback on FON stall-** Groups to report to Committee
- **power tools (strimming) training-** Groups to contact BB if interested, possible training course to be held in August- becky.belfin@bristol.gov.uk

1. BPF Issues

Rob and Mark reported on the situation with BPF funding, terms of reference and campaigning petition set up. Suggestions made included the need to ensure the wording was the same for online and paper petitions, that people gave permission to use their signatures and collect emails for future use. It was pointed out that parks funding cuts is a national issue and is being faced by other cities.

Actions

- Donations needed to fund meetings etc- Groups asked to donate at meetings
- Alternative venues to be explored in N Bristol- SP to check Greenway Centre Southmead etc
- ToR- flexibility re Committee arrangements agreed
- Petition- aiming for 3500 signatures to trigger Full Council debate. BPF Committee to consider further actions e.g. encouraging members to hold 38deg picnics

2. Redcatch Park

Mike and John welcomed everyone to the Community Centre and outlined their work on the Community Garden within the adjacent park. The garden has been created on the old bowling green and the Group has raised all the funding needed including Tesco sponsorship to grow produce, run a café and hold events. They have a 10 year lease but are still negotiating with the Council about this. Anyone interested in finding out more can contact Mike the Chair.

Action

- community garden model for future funding- to circulate info to Groups

3.NSI/VPAG Cycle Route

Len of NSI reported on the current situation. NSI are unhappy with the portrayal of the area which is unduly negative from the pictures in the consultation. There is a 15m wide construction corridor proposed, see leaflet distributed. The pros and cons of different surfacing materials have been discussed. Planning application responses are due in the next 2 weeks. The Forum discussed the lack of strategic priorities and consultation processes for Cycling Ambition, the overarching project which has received central government funding. There has been no interaction with Parks during the process.

4. Cost Neutral Parks

Cllr Craig outlined the process Parks are going through to achieve a cost neutral budget by 2019, this will encompass a sustainable Parks service and cover costs and achieve the objectives set out in the P&GSS (currently being revised). The goal is to maximise funding income and business opportunities. Currently, proposals make up £2.9m including service reductions and income generation, which is short of the £4.5m target.

Cllr Craig went through the proposals which were detailed at the recent Scrutiny meeting. She acknowledged that BCC has less than 2 years to meet their target and she might have to ask for an extension. Current discussions are being held with the National Trust on the possibility of establishing a Parks Trust via NT support; in addition, she will with public health consider contributions to the Parks budget and with the Downs Committee to access a fair proportion of the income from events held on the Downs.

Q&A

London boroughs using profits from waste company to fund other service areas. Also, bin-emptying in parks could be transferred to Bristol Waste.

Parking profits from Bristol Zoo generates some income which should go to Parks

Value of parks to health, 10x cost/benefit (WENP Conference)

Dog waste removal- Parks could explore dog licences and have segregated areas for dog walkers, with significant fines in place- New York model

Donations to Parks-set up a system so this can happen from businesses/Chamber of Commerce etc in return for green space benefits. NY example of Bloomberg funding to improve health and well-being of \$0.5bn

Parks Trust- would be ring fenced funding and have Trustees on Board. Who would own land ? BCC would still own land but there are different models/approaches. The details would need to be examined closely. Arnos Vale/Colston Hall e.g.s, but fundraised local monies removed from budget. Some Trusts e.g. Milton Keynes have multi-million pound dowry. Do BCC have the competence to do this ? Concerns raised about the size of a possible Trust and the types of park involved e.g. Downs LNRs- Management plans are not being implemented and small groups cannot do this without BCC involvement

Licence fees rise for Redland Green fair makes it untenable for future. Also St George.

Support for extension to budget process. What happens regarding possible land sales within P&GSS?

Suggestion that budget target should be £8m rather than £4.5m as the latter includes recent reductions and a very low benchmark with which to deliver an adequate service.

Action

- Cllr Craig to hold regular meetings with BPF Committee, first to be within a month (before end July)

5. Street Trees Budget Cut

£185k cut on maintenance budget. The process was flawed as the implications are not understood by BCC of lack of pollarding of 4-5000 street trees.

Action

- BPF to attend emergency tree forum meeting 4th July.

6. Canford Park

This issue has been raised earlier, essentially LTA are offering money to maintain tennis courts in certain parks along with coaching, but there is no free public access. There is a split of opinion within the Friends Group as the WOT society take a pragmatic view.

Action

- FOCF to send BPF summary of on-going issues for circulation

7. AOB

- BPF- to continue on-going campaigning role with Groups' involvement & support
- BPF- to continue liaison with Cllr Negus and Scrutiny Committee
- Public toilets closure in parks- BPF/ Groups to include in any campaigning activity
- Merchants Venturers' role on Downs Committee and retention of income- to be explored
- Petition wording- concerns expressed by HH
- Stoke Lodge- T&VG status; Cotham School have requested JR which is scheduled for 21/22nd Nov