



Bristol Parks Forum

representing resident led parks groups and city wide organisations
involved in protecting and improving Bristol's green spaces

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2014

at Windmill Hill City Farm

<i>Attendees</i>		
Not available		
<i>Apologies</i>		
Not available		
<i>Agenda Item</i>	<i>Discussion Points/ Outcomes & Actions</i>	<i>Actions</i>
1	<p><u>Welcome and Introduction</u> Nancy Carlton, Chair BPF</p>	
2	<p><u>Green Capital Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadline - Intention to bid for Green Capital Funding is Friday 17th October. • Potential bid to put forward is a device which can measure how much pollution that a tree can absorb. The info on the device also indicates the economic and asset value of the tree. The Forum stressed that it is important to get political commitment towards the green issue as this will make a stronger case when submitting the bid. • Green Park Nature Wildlife and Skill Training Programme - council park employees are being trained for health and safety issues. • Work with the Council on recycling in parks – due to limited resources, can only place small bins or plastic boxes by the park entrance. • Capital Partnership – Nature, Wildlife & Green Spaces Group – a much improved website where you can find all the 	

	<p>details on grants from the Green Capital.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood Partnership – there are 14 Neighbourhood Partnerships, and each Neighbourhood Partnership has £10,000 to contribute towards local projects. The Forum encourages individual groups to attend neighbourhood group meetings to find out what activities are already happening before submitting the bid. All the details in submitting the bid can be found on the Neighbourhood Partnership web page. Closing date for St George Neighbourhood Partnership is 27/10/2014. • New AWT nature reserve in the Avon Gorge – programme on the Green Capital can be found on the website. 	
3	<p><u>Forest Schools and Wildlife in Parks – Becky Belfin</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becky introduced herself as the Council’s Nature Conservation Officer. • She gave a brief summary on Forest School which is an educational approach to outdoor learning and play. • Aim – to encourage and inspire people through outdoor learning / activities. • Forest Schools apply to all age groups. Main groups that are interested in Forest Schools are children in pre-school/ primary age, nurseries and childminders etc. • Physical format – Activities usually carried out in a base camp area at the parks/woodlands. These activities normally last for 2 hours or half a day. • Benefits of Forest Schools – Children learn about natural environment through activities. Improved wellbeing of children and young people and greater appreciation of the natural environment. • Main concerns on the Forest Schools – some sites are less suitable to carry out activities for Free Schools, eg. building fires. There are concerns that these activities are carried out irresponsibly. • Proposal - in consultation with Parks Forum, Becky wants to set up a framework that gives permission to groups who are running activities and to make sure the sites that host the activities will meet certain criteria. Part of the framework involves site visits with the council officer and the Park Group to decide which part of the site is suitable to carry out the activities. After the framework has been set up, it will be 	

	<p>on trial for 12 months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone who are interested in involving to set up the framework can contact Becky on becky.belfin@bristol.gov.uk 	
4	<p><u>RHS Britain in bloom South West Awards – Denise James</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denise introduced herself as the regional co-ordinator for Bristol and South Gloucestershire. She has also taken up a secretarial role in South West in Bloom. • Denise talked in great detail about different awards and schemes introduced by RHS Britain in Bloom. They are: Discretionary Award, It's Your Neighbourhood Scheme, Pennant Award, Campaign for School Gardening etc. • The community groups who would like to participate in these schemes can contact Denise on southwestinbloom@aol.com. Alternatively you can visit the RHS in Bloom website for more details. 	
5	<p><u>Managing Bristol's parks & green spaces – Tracey Morgan/Phil Thomas/Richard Fletcher</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracey - restructuring is coming to an end and by the end of October a new structure will be in place. The main focus is preparation for next year in reduced budget and resources. • Phil Thomas introduced himself as Interim Service Manager for Environmental Area Management (Parks and Caretaking). His email is philip.thomas@bristol.gov.uk. • Other new staff who recently joined the parks team are: Clive Smith - Interim Area Manager (South) Pete David - Client & Operations Co-ordinator (Central & East) Tom Penn - Client & Operations Coordinator (South) Sarah Tyler - Client & Operations Co-ordinator (North) • Grounds maintenance will be delivered directly by the Council across the whole city from 1st Feb 2015. From 1st April 2015 parks budgets will be reduced by £500K as part of wider Council savings. • Consultation has taken place and questionnaires/surveys have been sent to ask people their point of view on priorities for grounds maintenance in the coming year. This is to support planned Neighbourhood Partnership influence of grounds maintenance services moving forward. • Forum members strongly questioned the value of the survey as the Council had not yet put any proposed changes for 	

	<p>people to consider and comment on. They were also concerned that this appeared to be the only way some park groups were able to make comments despite being a key stakeholder for their local green space(s).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RF stressed the survey was deliberately broad and enable people not so engaged in green spaces into the debate on their future. Park group representatives will have opportunities to put forward much more informed views. • Update on staff – 17 grounds staff have taken voluntary severance and have left the Council. • Changes – The park keeper post has been deleted from the Council current in-house structure. However it is expected that some green space will continue to be maintained with a resident ‘site presence’ where this is an efficient way of maintaining the site. • Forum raised their concerns that the maintenance teams may visit the sites but may not have the knowledge of what needs to be done at the sites - particularly where they are mobile and replacing a park keeper. • RF said that maintenance teams will still be area-based and they still have the right skill sets to deal with local park issues. It is not intended that grounds operatives will move area because local knowledge is still needed, though this will need to happen in a few cases. However with the loss of some experienced operatives through voluntary redundancy there will be some impact. • Grass cutting – a new system will be introduced based on 12-cut, 8-cut, 3-cut and 1-cut regimes. • There are concerns about lack of project officers to oversee park improvement projects as they are frequently either being delayed. Tracey stressed that there are 4 project officers in the department and all projects are being prioritised. Managers will make sure the project officers have the right skill sets to deliver the projects. 	
6	<p><u>Reports from Park Groups & AOB</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks Groups Canford Park – floodlights at the tennis courts – residents who lived in nearby streets have lodged objections against a plan to install the floodlights at the Canford Park’s tennis courts. Tracey said there are still a lot of meetings and discussions on this issue. The Planning Committee responsible for the application will consider all aspects, including feedback from members of public before making 	

	<p>any decision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Federation and National Petition – the Forum is calling on all groups to promote the National Petition and ask them to sign the on-line petition. • Volunteer Awards – members are encouraged to put all the nominations in for the Awards. • Dog walkers – Concerns on irresponsible dog walkers. There are occasions that the dog walker walked about 26 dogs at a time and some of the dogs were not on the leads. <p>Forum suggests that the Council need to enforce these irresponsible dog walkers or to introduce licence to walk dogs.</p> <p>Tracey will take all the comments in and get someone to write a paper and report back at the next meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree planting – have raised £17,500 to plant 58 big trees. 	<p>Tracey will report back at the next meeting</p>
<p>7</p>	<p><u>Bristol Parks Forum AGM</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal of change – to propose the Committee can speak on behalf of the Forum. • Accessing the bank account – to propose the Committee can operate the bank account on behalf of the Forum. • Election of Chair – Mark Logan, Snuff Mill Action Group • Election of Vice Chair – Sam Thomson, Friends of Horfield Common • Election of other committee members, all existing committee members were re-elected <p>Dates for future meetings in 2015 – 31st January, 18th April, 27th June and 10th October.</p>	
	<p>If you can't make any meeting but would like your points to be considered please email info@bristolparksforum.org.uk</p> <p>Bristol parks Forum – www.bristolparksforum.org.uk</p> <p>Date for next meeting – Saturday, 31st January 2015, 9.30-12.30, Windmill Hill City Farm</p>	