

**The Bristol TreeForum asked most mayoral candidates (via email) what their answers were to the following three questions:**

1) Do you agree with the current goal of increasing tree canopy in Bristol?

If so,

2) would you support in principle local efforts to protect more existing trees?

3) and support new tree planting involving the use of public money?

Below are their responses listed in surname alphabetical order.

Kind regards – Clive Stevens (Chair)

**Tom Baldwin (Trade Unionists and Socialists Against Cuts)**

Yes to all 3.

**Tim Collins (Independent)**

I support all three objectives and you can count on my continued support.

**George Ferguson (Bristol 1st)**

Q1) YES – I would like to aim for doubling it in a generation.

Q2) It is a key proposal of mine both to protect and plant new – and if trees have to be replaced for whatever reason that they are done so by enough trees to get early equivalent benefit.

Q3) I support strongly in principle but unlike party candidates am not making any irresponsible revenue promises until I am able to juggle with the budget for which there are inescapable cuts of £28m in Council spending this coming year. Tree planting by communities with special reference to school children is a key policy. I would like every school child in this city to feel ownership.

**Rich Fisher (Independent)**

An absolute yes to all 3 questions. I have been harassing the council over tree preservation for years so this is a subject close to my heart. I hate the way that the planners ride roughshod over trees in the City and appreciate their value on so many levels. Build around trees not through them.

**Owain George (Independent)**

The answer to all 3 questions is yes particularly as i have worked with wood all my life as a furniture maker and carpenter

**Geoff Gollop (Conservative Party Candidate)**

Thank you for your questions. May I refer you to my website where I very publicly state: I will create, expand and restore nature reserves because we share our city with some rare species that need protecting. To make Bristol more sustainable, I will open a community fund to create more allotments, helping more of us grow our own fruit and veg. I will also make Bristol physically green, by promoting Bristol in Bloom, maintaining green spaces, keeping parks clean and seeing more trees planted across the city.

**Neil Maggs (The Respect Party)**

Yes to all 3.

**Philip Pover (Independent)**

So, my answers are: 1) Absolutely! 2) Absolutely! 3) My inclination is again 'Yes, absolutely!' but I am reluctant to make promises until I know the state of BCC finances – remember when this Govt. took office to find a treasury note saying there was no money left! I hope it won't be like that. You will realise, of course, that it is existing councillors who have controlled the recent land sell-offs! I'm sorry I missed the TreeForum talk. I am very aware I don't have all the answers and, if elected, I will certainly need expert guidance on many issues such as this one. I hope your organisation would be willing and happy to be involved in that.

**Daniella Radice (Green Party)**

Q1). Yes & Q2). Yes

Q3). Yes (I am sure you understand the pressure public spending is under at the moment, but trees are important and I support in principle the use of public money for tree planting, without making any specific commitments!).

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***Marvin Rees (Labour Party Candidate)***

I absolutely agree that we need more trees, particularly street trees. They enhance our city and have obvious benefits for biodiversity and improving air quality. To be a truly Green Capital requires us to continuously invest in our green spaces and tree provision.

Neighbourhood Partnerships have a key role in working with Bristol Council officers to identify trees for protection and also where on-going management is needed. Where protection is required, I will ensure that the Council will use all of its available powers to secure that protection.

Finally, I do support new tree planting but this needs to be informed by local needs not just an arbitrary judgement by officers as to where new trees should be planted. I would like to see each neighbourhood having a tree plan which sets out an ambitious programme for enhancing local tree provision and increasing the number of street trees. We can continue to use section 106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy for this purpose too.

***Jon Rogers (Liberal Democrat)***

Happy and confident to reply to all three questions as "yes"! If I am elected as Bristol Mayor I will continue to invest in trees. They are such wonderful value. They help make life worthwhile!

Q1) Yes! I am a member of the administration that brought this in and I am very much behind it. As well as the general health and well-being benefits of trees there is the benefit of shade that is likely to become increasingly necessary with global warming. It is also important that we have a diversity of planting particularly with the rapid spread of diseases.

Q2) Yes. Trees can bring a sense of community and heritage so community support is good. A balance does have to be struck however. For example, disease, danger or unsuitability of situation does need to be carefully considered. If trees are removed, then additional trees should be planted, and I welcome the planning regulations that now insist on this.

Q3) Absolutely. Our leadership of the council has raised tree planting from around 150 a year to well over a thousand and if I am elected Bristol Mayor I will look to increase those numbers further. I am particularly pleased with the street tree planting in many local and strategic highways schemes.

Unfortunately we were unable to make contact with everyone, those we didn't get a reply from or couldn't send an email to are listed below with the reason why.

***Tony Britt (Independent)***, Late entrant, no obvious email address.

***Dave Dobbs (The Birthday Party)***, No reply (questions sent to published email address).

***Stoney Garnett (Independent)***, Late entrant, no obvious email address.

***Spud Murphy (Independent)***, No obvious contact details.

We thank those candidates that replied for taking the time to do so during a very busy period of campaigning and hustings.

We request that you, the voter, pass this document to anyone who is or might be interested in trees, which we think and research shows, are very important to the long term health and well-being of the residents of this great city of ours.