

CHRIS BAINES
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISER, WRITER AND BROADCASTER

Jan Ormondroyd
Chief Executive
Bristol City Council
The Council House
BS1 5TR

Dear Chief Executive

Ash trees in Redland Green Park

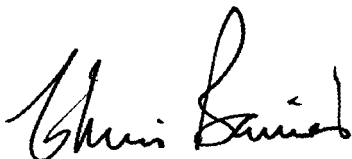
I am writing to express my surprise and my serious concern that Bristol City Council may be planning to remove the group of mature ash trees at the heart of Redland Green Park. Mr Vissilli Papastavrou encouraged me to visit the trees and they seem to be exactly the kind of living landmarks that a modern and conscientious city such as yours should be protecting and celebrating. They will have been a distinctive feature of the Redland landscape for centuries. They appear to be very sound and they are growing in a particularly unthreatening location. I urge you to protect and care for the ash trees, instead of destroying them.

Through my involvement as a trustee and adviser to the Heritage Lottery Fund over the past ten years, I have enjoyed first hand experience of the exceptional record that Bristol has in conservation. As a regular environmental broadcaster and member of the BBC Breathing Places Campaign steering committee I have always regarded your city as a world class centre of excellence in appreciation of the natural heritage. Your parks department is one that I have admired and promoted as a member of the CABE Space steering panel, and Bristol's policy for the care of ancient trees has often been quoted as a model of local authority good practice. I find it surprising that such an excellent policy document (copy enclosed) should appear to have been removed from the city's web site.

I work as a sustainability adviser to central and local government in the UK, and I address conferences world wide on the positive role that urban green space can play in moderating the effects of climate change. There is wide scale recognition that big trees are able to enhance the health and well being of urban communities. They help to filter pollution and purify the air, they intercept rainfall and reduce the risk of flash flooding, they provide shelter and shade, counter the rise in the urban heat island effect and they provide critically important habitat for wild creatures such as tawny owls and bats. For all these reasons, the big trees in a neighbourhood will also add as much as 15% to property values.

There is very considerable local support for the care and protection of the Redland ash trees. Their destruction by the council would be an extraordinary and irreversible error of judgement. It would damage the enviable environmental reputation of Bristol City Council, and it would set a very unfortunate precedent. I urge you to exercise wise and well informed judgement, and conserve these ancient ash trees and the rest of Bristol's urban forest canopy for the benefit of generations of the city's residents, visitors and admirers.

Yours sincerely



CHRIS BAINES

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