

03 April 2011 - No 59

Bristol Parks Forum Sat 16 April, Windmill Hill City Farm

The proposed agenda for our next meeting is here:

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BPFAgend160411.pdf

Charges for Park Permits and Event Licences

Following the good news that the limits for events covered by Park Permits have been increased to include events with up to 200 people on site at any one time, there is less good news in that the charge has been increased by 50% to £30. The BPF committee has complained about this. We understand that the new rate was 'signed off' by Cllr Simon Cook as executive member for Culture, Sport and Capital Projects. This has highlighted the fact that these decisions which impact directly on parks are currently outside of the control of Bristol Parks or the executive members responsible for parks. We have asked Tracey Morgan to look at whether licensing of events for parks can be brought back under Parks control.

A schedule of charges for events for 2001/12 are here:

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/EventFees2011.pdf

AGSP Responses - Political Parties

You will see from the agenda that we have invited representatives from the political parties to talk to the Forum. This follows the open letter we wrote in February and their responses. We have now received an updated response from the Green Party.

BPF letter: www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BPFLetter110211.pdf

Green Party response (updated): www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/GreenResponse.pdf

Liberal Democrat response: www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/LiberalDemocratResponse.pdf

Labour response: www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/LabourResponse.pdf

Conservative response: www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/ConservativeResponse.pdf

Section 106 & Community Infrastructure Levy

One of the funding streams for the P&GSS is Section 106 money, this is money paid by developers to mitigate the impacts of their development.

The funding for s106 parks money is allocated in accordance with the agreed split [below] and the local element is applied to a park within 1 mile of the development that generates the s106 money.

33% devolved to NPs to spend on funding capital projects (i.e. not running costs)

33% for maintenance of green space. (NP can influence spending of this money)

13% to provide and maintain citywide sports pitches (decisions on this are not devolved to NPs)

6% to provide improvements for destination parks such as Ashton Court and Blaise Castle (decisions on this are not devolved to NPs).

15% will be applied to scheme delivery costs (not devolved to NPs)

The 33% for maintenance is intended to maintain the new infrastructure put in place, it is not intended to be used for general maintenance.

Figures were given to the last round of NPs for the sum currently in the pot to be devolved - that is money from past projects that has not yet been spent. The figure used in the P&GSS includes the estimated future s106 income over 20 years of the strategy. This was based on the number of houses that the BDF Core Strategy envisaged would be built and the rules set down in planning document SPD 4 for how much money developers can be asked to pay. It also made an allowance for the fact that planning officers and Councillors at planning meetings do not always insist on the maximum contribution being paid.

The Government is currently introducing a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which will probably run alongside s106 but it is unlikely that the overall sum taken from developers will increase. It seems the CIL will give Councillors more flexibility so they could give more money to parks, but equally they could give less.

Alison has prepared the following bullet points to summarise the CIL:

- * Community Infrastructure Levy was introduced by previous Labour Government on 6 April 2010.

- * Coalition decided to keep it (despite previous opposition) with a few minor changes.

- * CIL must be operative by 2014, (as long as Core Strategy of Local Development Framework is adopted). Bristol Core Strategy programme shows adoption in summer 2011.

- * CIL will work like a development tax. Local Authority will have to work out a schedule of contributions for each type of development eg Class A1 retail, Class B1 Business, B2 Industrial, D2 Assembly and leisure.

- * The level of contribution will be on a square metre basis (index linked from date of introduction of CIL to date of planning approval).

- * Developments over 100 square metres liable for CIL and single residential units also even below this size.

- * Conversions, affordable housing and development by charity for charitable use all exempt.

- * BCC will propose charging schedule ie level of contribution for each type of development and consult on this with public including developers.

- * CIL all goes into a central pot, which BCC will be able to allocate as it likes; money is no longer tied into locality of development as s106 is.

- * CIL is not ringfenced but must be used for provision/ improvement/ maintenance of infrastructure, not eg staffing costs.

- * CIL divided between portion kept for major infrastructure projects and portion devolved to neighbourhood of development.

- * There is no rule about proportion of division; but must be 'a meaningful proportion'

- * The meaningful proportion of CIL to go to the neighbourhood will be allocated through Neighbourhood Partnerships under present Bristol organisation.

- * BCC can change the proportion; possibly each year as part of the budget setting review.

Localism Bill

You may have seen that Lockleaze has been chosen as one of the pilot areas for local development plans under the localism bill - it will be interesting to see how this works.

Naturally Bristol

One of the trainees at the Bristol Natural History Consortium is writing a blog with her views of various green spaces in Bristol. It is interesting to see spaces from some else's view point.

<http://naturallybristol.com>

Rob Acton-Campbell

BPF

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

Meeting dates: 16 April, 16 July, 15 Oct

12 April 2011 - No 60

Bristol Parks Forum 9.30am Sat 16 April, Windmill Hill City Farm

The proposed agenda for our next meeting is here:

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BPFAgend160411.pdf

The following Councillors have agreed to represent their parties:

Cllr Lesley Alexander - Conservative

Cllr Mark Bradshaw - Labour

Cllr Gary Hopkins - Liberal Democrats

We also hope to have a representative from the Green Party.

The intention is for each to have 5 minutes to explain their policy on the AGSPs and P&GSS, and then 10 minutes to take questions from the floor.

Hugh has asked that they follow the following restrictions:

1. Councillors will speak in alphabetical order
2. Councillors will explain what their party will do, but not what the others won't !
3. Councillors may not ask questions of other councillors, nor comment on their statements .

The meeting will, as usual, be minuted and recorded for reference purposes.

Public Rights of Way and Greens Committee Meeting 18 April 2011

Details of this meeting can be seen at <http://tinyurl.com/prwg180411> Statements to the meeting have to be in by 12pm on Friday 15th April 2011.

There are two items of particular interest. The first is item 5, which sets out a proposed revised procedure for determining Town or Village Green applications. This suggests that some public

inquiries might be held in future by a sub-committee of the Council rather than by an independent inspector. It is clear that the aim of this is to reduce cost.

The other item on the agenda that is worth a look is item 7 which gives an update on current rights of way and Town Green applications. Appendix B lists Town Green applications which have been accepted as valid but not yet determined by the committee. I have used this to update the notes on our website at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BristolTG.pdf

In the section on rights of way there is a report on the recent appeal regarding footpaths at South Purdown, one of which was successful.

While on the subject of Town Green applications, the inquiry for Grove Wood opened last week and was adjourned after 4 days. It is expected to start again in July. Keep an eye on <http://snuffmills.blogspot.com/> for details.

Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy

The Inspector's Report into the Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy has now been received. The report contains the Inspector's recommendation that the submitted Core Strategy is sound and should be adopted, subject to changes, and the reasons he has come to this view.

The Inspector's report is available to view on the Council's web site via www.bristol.gov.uk/bdf The Inspector gives an interesting summary of where we are with proposed housing numbers in Bristol through to 2026 and suggests that demand for houses will outstrip supply (the supply figure includes 1,100 units on open space). The Inspector also insists that the Council keep development on Green Belt land as a contingency in case sufficient houses cannot be built elsewhere.

The Core Strategy, incorporating the Inspector's recommended changes, will be presented for adoption to a meeting of the full Council in June/July.

BCC Website

As I've mentioned before the BCC website is being upgraded.

One of the changes is an improvement to the planning website at www.bristol.gov.uk/planning You can now register with the site and track planning applications so that you get updates. You can also select an area on a map and get notified of planning applications in that area.

Another section of the site you might be interested in is www.bristol.gov.uk/knowyourplace This was launched a few weeks ago and amongst other things allows you to overlay new and old maps of Bristol to see how areas have changed. A good site to visit if you are interested in the history of your park or your area.

The Bench Issue 64

The latest edition of GreenSpace's newsletter 'The Bench' can be seen at

<http://green-space-updates.org.uk/JEZ-EE8X-232WRVWM87/cr.aspx>

Nature Blogs

In the last update I mentioned <http://naturallybristol.com> There is also a nature blog specifically for Brandon Hill at <http://brandonhillnature.wordpress.com/> Many groups also of course have updates of nature sightings on their own websites. Links to group's websites can be found via <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/parks.htm> which I try to keep up to date - please let me know if you find any links that need updating.

Rob Acton-Campbell

BPF

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

Meeting dates: 16 April, 16 July, 15 Oct

16 April 2011 - No 61

Bristol Parks Forum Sat 16 April, Windmill Hill City Farm

The minutes from the meeting will as usual be prepared for us by Catherine. They will be posted on our website and distributed once they have been checked by the committee.

On behalf of the committee I would like to thank the Councillors who attended as representatives of their political parties. I've decided it best not to try to summarise their positions here because I would probably get something wrong!

Below are links to further information on two of the other items that were discussed and a request for volunteers. Our website at <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk> also has these links and information on other items covered.

Park Keepers Questionnaire

As Pete Clark mentioned Bristol Parks would like your views on the hours that Park Keepers and other Grounds Maintenance should cover. There are no plans to change the overall hours worked but it might be possible to change the time or days that Park Keepers are in parks and it might also be possible to change the timing of visits from other staff, for example litter clearing teams.

The questionnaires are available via the links below and should be returned to tracey.morgan@bristol.gov.uk or Bristol Parks at Colston 33, Colston Avenue, Bristol BS1 4UA

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/ParkKeepers.doc

or

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/ParkKeepers.pdf

Public Rights of Way and Greens Committee Meeting 18 April 2011

Details of this meeting can be seen at <http://tinyurl.com/prwg180411>

The BPF statement to the meeting submitted by the committee is at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BPFStatement150411Final.pdf

Notes on current applications are at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BristolTG.pdf

Volunteers Wanted

We need volunteers to assist Roland in representing the BPF at the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces see <http://www.green-space.org.uk/community/nfpgs/> for more details.

We also need volunteers to man a BPF stand at the Bristol Festival of nature over the weekend of 17th & 18th June see <http://www.bnhc.org.uk/home/festival.html> the opening times are Saturday 10.00am - 6.00pm and Sunday 10.00 - 5.00pm. This is a good opportunity to promote your park group and green space as well as representing the BPF.

For both the above please email info@bristolparksforum.org.uk For the festival we will try to split the time into 2hr slots so please let us know which times you would be available.

Rob Acton-Campbell

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www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

Meeting dates: 16 July & 15 October

16 April 2011 - No 62

Public Rights of Way and Greens Committee Meeting 18 April 2011

The committee decided to defer any decision on the revised procedure for Town Greens pending further consultation. Minutes of the meeting will be at <http://tinyurl.com/prwg180411> soon. There is a report here: <http://tinyurl.com/3u6t5re>

RHS It's Your Neighbourhood Campaign

Your group might want to join the this campaign. Although it is advertised primarily for community gardening, park groups are able to join. It is also another route to get good value insurance cover.

www.rhs.org.uk/Gardening/Community-gardening/It-s-Your-Neighbourhood

Community Projects

Your group may have received an email from David Bowers who works as a mosaic artist under the name of Mosaic Madness. David worked with the Gores Marshalls to create a 2.4m diameter floor mural. This floor mural consists of 25 mosaiced floor slabs with the themes of a new park logo, nature and the local history/environment. The slabs were then designed and created by children from 4 local schools, of Luckwell, Ashton Vale, Compass Point and Ashton Gate. Steve of the Gores Marshalls has confirmed 'we were very pleased that we had used Mosaic Madness for this project'. David can be contacted on 07900280297.

This has got me thinking that there must be a lot of artists, storytellers, walk leaders and others that park groups have used and who they would recommend to other groups. I would like to put together a list including contact details of those in park groups who can give a reference. This would then form a useful resource for groups planning projects in the future.

If there is anyone you have worked with that you would recommend please send me the details and I will put them together and post the list on the website.

Guided Walks & Events

Two Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC) walks:

Redcliff Evening Stroll Thursday 12th May

Led by Roy Gallop, we shall learn about parts of Redcliff and the waterway around Bathurst Basin. Meet at Bathurst Basin alongside the Louisiana pub at 7.00 pm. We shall finish at the Ostrich pub at around 8.30pm. There will be a charge of £1.50 per head for this event, payable on the day. No need to book, just turn up on the day.

Wildflower Discovery Walk Thursday 9th June

Led by Pam Millman from the Bristol Naturalists Society, we shall learn about the wide variety of wild flowers growing on the riverbanks. Meet at 7.00pm at Gaol Ferry Bridge (Cumberland Road side). We shall finish by 9.00pm. There will be a charge of £2.00 per head for this event, payable on the day. No need to book, just turn up on the day.

A Friends of Troopers Hill Walk:

Sunday 22nd May 10.00am to 4.00pm - Avon Valley Walk

A guided walk through local green spaces along the Avon Valley and Brislington Brook. There is the opportunity for lunch at Beeses Riverside Bar & Tea Gardens - or bring a picnic.

There is no charge for this walk, but we need to limit numbers and make arrangements for lunch. Please email events2011@troopers-hill.org.uk or phone Judith on 0117 955 9819 to book your place. You can see the route at www.troopers-hill.org.uk/AvonValley

A Friends of Badock's Wood Event:

A reminder that on Saturday 7th May midday until 4.00pm

There will be a Woodland Activities Fun Day at Badock's Wood. There will be fun activities, including puppet shows, games, face painting, woodland crafts, walks, environmental and wildlife information and activities. The event will be held at the Northern Gateway to Badock's Wood, off Doncaster Road, Southmead, Bristol. It's being organised by Friends of Badock's Wood with Bristol City Council as part of the Big Lottery funded improvements to the woodland's Northern Gateway.

Local MP, Charlotte Leslie, has very kindly accepted an invitation to officially declare the new Gateway "open" at around 1.00pm.

Publicising Events

If you have events to publicise you might be interested to know that the BBC is launching a new website at www.bbc.co.uk/thingstodo It is in its 'Beta' form at the moment but you can register as a partner at activitymaker@bbc.co.uk and when it is fully up and running you will be able to submit your events to the site.

Green City Bats

A message from Dan Merrett
Count Bat Project Co-ordinator
dmerrett@bats.org.uk

Hello all,

Hopefully you all recall last autumn registering your interest with the Bristol Green City Bats project. For some of you this will be the first contact you've had since then, as the project has largely been hibernating with the bats. However with the warmer weather we're springing back into action with a final flurry of two free 'Bats in Your Parks' training sessions for Friends-of group members before our current funding runs out.

As more and more of you are finding out, bats can be found in Bristol flying around even the smallest of our parks and greenspaces, and the training will be an opportunity to learn more about your local bats.

The two sessions will cover the same information so you need only attend either one or other. They will start with an indoor introductory talk on bats and specifically the bats found in Bristol, then discuss batty events you can hold in your parks such as bat walks, bat surveys and bat fun days to attract more people to your site, before turning our attention to using bat detectors and identifying bats by the echolocation sounds they make. Weather permitting we will then head outside to find some local bats using the bat detectors and practice our identification skills.

The first session is hosted by the Northern Slopes Initiative and will be held on Tuesday 3rd May at The Park community centre on Daventry Road, Knowle BS4 1DQ. It will start at 7:30pm and finish at 9:30pm

The second session is hosted by the Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge and will be held on Wednesday the 11th May starting slightly later at 7:45pm and finishing at 9:30pm. The venue has yet to be finalised but will be in the vicinity of the top of Whiteladies Road.

Both sessions are free and informal however places are limited so booking is necessary. You can book by replying to me (Dan Merrett) at this email address saying which session you would like to attend. Please forward this email to any interested members of your group, but not to the general public as the sessions are specifically for those people who are involved with a local greenspace.

We have a number of bat detectors and other resources that groups will be able to loan this summer for checking out the bats in their local parks or running batty events for their local community, and we hope this training will allow you to make the most of this. There are also a few of you who have yet to be sent the free Bristol Green City Bat information pack, but I will be posting these out next week.

As mentioned these will be the final two events of the current Bristol Green City Bats funded work, following on the heels of last years walks and training events, however the wider national Count Bat project (of which Green City Bats forms part) continues to run until early next year so I will still be able to support groups with information, resources and the loan of the projects 8 bat detectors. We will then be seeking further funding for additional bat work in the region.

Thanks for your continued interest and I'll hopefully see you at one of the sessions in May

Volunteers Still Wanted!

We need volunteers to assist Roland in representing the BPF at the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces see <http://www.green-space.org.uk/community/nfpgs/> for more details.

We also need volunteers to man a BPF stand at the Bristol Festival of nature over the weekend of 17th & 18th June see www.bnhc.org.uk/home/festival.html the opening times are Saturday 10.00am - 6.00pm and Sunday 10.00 - 5.00pm. This is a good opportunity to promote your park group and green space as well as representing the BPF. It would be a shame to have to cancel our stand due to lack of support.

For both the above please email info@bristolparksforum.org.uk For the festival we will try to split the time into 2hr slots so please let us know which times you would be available.

Don't Forget - 'Park Keepers' Questionnaire

Please complete a questionnaire whether or not you have a Park Keeper in your park or green space.

The questionnaires are available via the links below and should be returned to tracey.morgan@bristol.gov.uk or Bristol Parks at Colston 33, Colston Avenue, Bristol BS1 4UA

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/ParkKeepers.doc

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