

02 August 2010 No 25

More Good News, Wild City Success

I was extremely pleased to receive news from Richard Ennion that the Wild City Project bid to Natural England was successful.

The award is in full ie £250,000 grant (£336,000 total project value). Richard will now start to set up the project including appointment of a Wild City Project Officer, which will be a three-year post.

The project will be based on Bristol's current and potential Local Nature Reserves with the main focus on the 'Key' sites and a lesser involvement with the 'Network' sites. However, by raising the profile for wildlife in the City I'm sure the project will also benefit many sites not directly involved.

The Key Wildlife City Project Sites are:

Lamplighter's Marsh

The New Cut

Northern Slopes

Hengrove Park Mounds and Hawkfield Meadows

Callington Road, Local Nature Reserve (LNR)

Eastwood Farm, LNR

Stoke Park

The Wild City Network Sites are:

Lawrence Weston Moor LNR

Badock's Wood, LNR

Narrowways Millennium Green

Manor Woods Valley LNR

Stockwood Open Space LNR

Troopers Hill LNR

Royate Hill, LNR

A big thank you to those involved in achieving this success and bring this extra funding to Bristol. Richard and Helen Hall have put in a lot of work over the past two years and it was obviously a good move on their part to bring in Richard Aston and Chris Giles to put together the final application.

A special mention also to Sally Oldfield worked extremely hard during her last month in Bristol to

put together the phase 1 bid. This new project will build upon the great work Sally did as part of the Nature in the City Project.

The appointment in the new post will take a couple of months at least. More details will be available soon at www.bristol.gov.uk/wildlife

Bristol Clean & Green and the Community Payback Teams

A message from Denise James.

I am not sure whether you are aware of the works that I have been carrying out through Bristol Clean & Green and the Community Payback Teams (Probation Service). We are currently working with the Probation Service on Sat, Sun, Mon & Tues, with teams of up to 8 offenders. Types of works include, litter picking, fly-tipping removal, painting benches, railings etc.

I am in the process of looking for additional works for them to carry out in and around Parks and Open Spaces. To date they have carried out works in:-

Temple Church Park - refurbishing benches, cutting back epicormic growth

Castle Park - Painting railings, litter picking, painting bandstand and litter bins (ongoing works)

Malago Greenway - cutting back overgrowth

Black Path - litter picking

College Green - painting of railings by Cathedral Garden, epicormic growth

We would like to expand the project and I am sure that Parks Forum members would have suggestions for further works.

Regards

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AGSP Easy Guide

Alison has written an 'Easy Guide' to Area Green Space Plans. In particular this highlights the criteria that were adopted as part of the P&GSS for site disposals.

Alison's guide can be seen at <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/AGSPeasyGuide.pdf>

The criteria are set out in Appendix 5 of the strategy which can be seen here:
www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/PGSSApp5.pdf

The full strategy is here: www.bristol.gov.uk/parkstrategy and a reminder that the AGSPs can be downloaded from here: www.bristol.gov.uk/agsp

If you or your group are responding about a space proposed for disposal then your comments are going to be most effective (ie most difficult to refute) if they are based the adopted criteria.

While the plans for disposals have hit all the headlines it is important to remember that these sites represent only some 3% of the total area of parks and green spaces that the strategy covers. For most of the remaining 97% there are investment plans which have the aim of bringing Bristol's parks to a much higher quality standard. The consultation asks for you to say which of these plans you consider to be the most important. It is the results of this consultation which will drive spending on parks over the next few years and in particular the release of the Section 106 money. Much of this money is already in the Council's coffers from developments that have already taken place so will not be impacted by the current cuts. If you want to have a say in how your park is to be developed over the next 20 years then now is your chance!

H&S Training 12th August 2010 9.00-13.00 at the Netham

Unfortunately due to low attendance, Parks may have to cancel this course. If you would like to attend, please let Catherine know by midday on Wednesday 4th August
catherine.newman@bristol.gov.uk

This course is well worth attending if you think you may want to lead guided walks or work parties / task days on your park. It is also a good introduction to the principles of Risk Assessments which will also help if you intend to hold events. There is no charge for park group members.

This course can also serve as a refresher if your current certificate is nearing or is more than 3 years old. At the end of the course you get a piece of paper saying you are a competent person!

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The Bench

The Bench is a monthly newsletter produced by GreenSpace with news relating to parks and green spaces throughout the country. It also includes information about grants and courses that might be of interest. They have now started distributing the Newsletter via a link to the website and say that they are keen to share its information with as much of the parks and green space sector as possible, so I thought I would start including links in these updates.

The latest edition can be seen at www.green-space.org.uk/TheBench_56.html

Lottery Grants Available

Tracey Morgan is finalising a list of projects that are ongoing or planned in parks, many of these are funded by Section 106 money and I hope to include it in my next update. As mentioned at our last meeting there is also money available from the Lottery for projects and often park groups can apply for this directly.

One of the items featured in The Bench highlights grants available from The Heritage Lottery Fund www.hlf.org.uk. Another potential source of funding is 'Community Spaces' which is a £50 million open grants programme managed by Groundwork UK. The programme helps community groups in England create or improve green, open spaces to enhance people's quality of life. Community Spaces is funded by the Big Lottery Fund. Grants start at £10,000. See www.community-spaces.org.uk for more details, they are apparently keen to fund more projects in Bristol.

Obviously if the work is planned on sites owned by Bristol City Council you will need to discuss the project with your APM/CPO first. The list that Tracey is preparing will include the names of the project officer responsible for each of the projects. The idea is that all future projects will also have a nominated project officer who will be responsible for getting the work completed and will be the main BCC contact point for that project.

Spaceshaper: Free Taster Session

Spaceshaper, and the newly launched Spaceshaper 9-14 aimed at young people, are practical toolkits that not only measure the quality of a public space, but crucially, capture the views of those who use the space and manage the space in the process. The toolkits are produced by CABE.

There is a free taster session at the Architecture Centre on Tue 7th September, more details on the event and how to book are here: www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/SpaceshaperEventFlyer.pdf More details about Spaceshaper are available here: www.cabe.org.uk/public-space/spaceshaper

Reasons to Support the Area Green Space Plan Consultation

Given all the negative publicity around the AGSP proposals I thought it was worth reviewing why the BPF agreed to support the P&GSS in 2008 in the full knowledge that it would potentially lead to the sale of some green space. Having started to write something I found that it got too long winded, so I have simplified it into a list of twenty reasons to support the strategy and the consultation. They can be seen here: www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/20reasons.pdf

Playful Picnics

Gynormous Rawkus will be delivering a series of events called "The Playful Picnics" across five Bristol Parks & Green Spaces over the next 4 months.

These events are intended for all the community to come together, get creative and share a picnic in their local parks.

All the events will take place from 12-3pm

The full list:

Urban park Barton hill ,making giant cardboard houses and bbq - 13th August
Mina Road St werburgs, boat making and racing plus storytelling - 15th August
Urban Park Easton bike decorating and cycle maintenance - 18th September
Troopers Hill St George Kite making and flying - 3rd October
St Georges Park fun with willow - 7th November

These events are supported by Bristol City Council's Community Festival and Event Fund which you will remember was boosted by money previously used for events from the Parks budgets. These are exactly the sort of events that I think should be encouraged for Bristol's parks.

South Bristol Riverscapes

Although the South Bristol Riverscapes Project has ended the website at www.southbristolriverscapes.org.uk is still up and running and the groups that were involved in the project will continue to add new content.

South Bristol Rivers Mammal Survey, May 2010 is now available and there is also a detailed survey of Brislington Brook.

Beeses Beer & Cider Festival

Last year Beeses Riverside Bar & Tea Gardens donated over £1,000 to be shared between Friends of Troopers Hill and Friends of Eastwood Farm from ticket sales for their Beer Festival. This year they have again promised to donate half of the proceeds from ticket sales to the two groups.

So although I wouldn't normally advertise commercial events I am happy to say that if you like real ale and cider then please go along to Beeses on Fri 3rd, Sat 4th or Sun 5th September. More details are here: www.beeses.co.uk/beerfest.php

Beeses also hold regular quiz nights and Friends of Troopers Hill will be entering a team on Thurs 26th August, so if your group wants to challenge us then please come along!

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Area Green Space Plan Consultation <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/agsp>

The drop in sessions for this consultation start again next week after a break for the school holidays, the list is at <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/siteallocations>

While the suggestions for site disposals are getting all the press coverage; it is important that Park Groups and their members also respond on the investment proposals. You can respond by using the online questionnaires, the paper questionnaires (which are available as pdfs) or by email to Park.Strategy@bristol.gov.uk

Ideally Richard Fletcher and the team would like responses from every park group and individual responses from every member of the group.

There was an interesting article on Green Spaces by George Monbiot, published in the Guardian 9th August 2010. This sets out the case for having green space in cities but also says:

'Most importantly, the houses face inwards, and no cars are allowed inside the square: the roads serve only the backs of the buildings. The square is overlooked by everyone, which means that children can run in and out of their houses unsupervised, create their own tribes and learn their own rules, without fear of traffic accidents or molesters. They have a place in which to run wild without collecting ASBOs.'

Which is obviously a strong statement in favour of the idea of building houses facing into parks as suggested by the 'Backland Sites' policy on page 26 of the Parks & Green Spaces Strategy (www.bristol.gov.uk/parkstrategy). You can see the whole article at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/MonbiotTurningEstatesIntoVillages.pdf

Events

The BPF members of the working group on events had a constructive meeting with Peter Watts and Louise Baker of the Events Team on Monday. The main points that came out of it were:

There is a new events toolkit on the BCC website, it can be seen at <http://tinyurl.com/2wx78vm> and gives lots of information about what you need to consider when planning events.

From September there will be a new 'Park Permit' scheme for small events with a two page

application form. Unfortunately this only applies to events where less than 100 people are expected. Events with less than 50 people don't need any form of license, so the scheme will not apply to many events at the moment, though it is hoped to increase the limit to 200 people. The sticking point seems to be the Safety Advisory Group for Events (SAGE), it was also this committee who insisted on additional questions to make Peter's one page form into two pages. SAGE is made up of Council Officers, Police and people who work for the Fire Brigade and Ambulance Service.

Events with less than 200 people expected to attend can still be covered by the Council's insurance as part of the £20 licence fee. It needs to be an event organised by a local group and also one that doesn't include funfairs, a stage setup, fireworks or other higher risk activities. The 200 limit is a guideline and does not mean that the insurance is invalid if more people than you expect turn up. If you have any doubts about whether your event would be covered then email Peter at P.Watts@bristol.gov.uk and he will advise you.

The new application form for events as now been through the 'Equalities Team' and should be in use soon. This will replace the outdated form currently in use which causes Peter a lot of extra work because it doesn't ask the right questions.

Walk 4 Life Day

A message from Nic Ferris Walking for Health Bristol.

Walk4Life Day takes place on the 26th September 2010 across England. The idea of the day is for organisations involved in walking to come together and get as many members of the public out walking as possible.

In Bristol walkers from many groups as well as independent walkers will be coming together to stroll around the historic floating harbour. We expect 200 - 400 walkers to attend and ITV are coming along to cover the event!

Sunday 26th September

Meet at 10.30 am in Millennium Square for a 10.45 am walk start.
2 mile (1 hour), flat walk. Wheelchair accessible. Buggy Friendly.

Return to Colston Hall Level 1 (12 - 1.30pm) where there will be stands and information relating to walking. The bar will be open so bring some money for refreshments.

Pedometer and T-shirt give away on the day!

Group leaders: Get in contact with Kate James on 07844206727 by September 15th if you want free t-shirts (yellow ITV / Walk4Life) for your group to wear on 26th.

Put the date in your diaries!

Tell other walkers!

Get in touch for your free t-shirt!

And... if your able to help us out on the day with walk leading or marshalling then please get in touch with me (Nic Ferris) by Tuesday 14 September,

Nic Ferris contact details 07810 506738 or nicola.ferris@bristol.gov.uk

Community Wildlife programme

This is another lottery grant programme that groups can apply for, it will fund projects that bring local people together to discover, enjoy or protect the wildlife in their local area. Grants of up to £10,000 are available. More details at www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_community_wildlife

Change of APM – East Area

Jamie Roberts has taken up a temporary secondment to Waste Services so John Williams has taken over as Area Parks Manager for the East area for the time being. John previously worked as a Project Manager and his projects included some of the Play Pathfinder schemes.

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