

08 August 2011 - No 74

In this update:

School Expansion Sites - Investment in Parks - World Parks Day Conference - Our Rivers - Herbal Walk - GreenSpace News - Vote for Troopers Hill

School Expansion Sites

The Cross Party Working Group has endorsed the decision taken by Cabinet in December that two sites at Abindgon Road and Begbrook Drive which were listed for possible disposal in the AGSP Ideas and Options papers should be used by schools.

There is a report from the Evening Post here: <http://tinyurl.com/42hxgvf> The comments include a letter from Cllr Gary Hopkins clarifying the decision process.

Investment in Parks

Two news stories highlighting investment in Bristol's parks.

The first is funded by National Lottery Community Spaces programme at Poets Park, Horfield. Evening Post report here: <http://tinyurl.com/42pawyb>

The second story again features Steve England who was at an event today to celebrate the opening of a new play area at Monks Farm Park, Maskelyne Avenue.

The press release can be seen here: <http://tinyurl.com/3lh7owd>

NFPGS World Parks Day Conference - 17 September, Birmingham

The press release for this event can be seen at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/NFPGSconfpressrelease.pdf

Our Rivers

A message from Kathy Derrick, Sustainable City Group, Bristol City Council

If you love your river let 'Our Rivers' know at www.ourrivers.org.uk

I was reading this article 'Ofwat has been slammed for causing higher prices and failing to protect rivers' at <http://tinyurl.com/6293rbf> and took the link to 'Our Rivers' and found they are doing a national survey on rivers you might like to add to, become a friend of on facebook, share your pictures on Flickr and tweet about what's happening on Bristol's rivers.

Kathy Derrick, Sustainable City Group, Bristol City Council

Herbal Walk

Kathy is based at the Create Centre which has its own website at www.createbristol.org The website has a link to their programme of events, the next of which is:

Enjoy a Herbal summer walk with Max Drake - Saturday 13 August, Create Centre, 2-4pm, £5. Smeaton Road, Bristol BS1 6XN
To book please contact Max at www.urbanfringe.org or tel 0117 927 6527

Join herbal expert, Max Drake on a fascinating herbal walk along the river at Create and discover the medicinal and therapeutic properties of an array of riverside herbs. Includes herbal sampling and tea making!
NB weather permitting.

Another opportunity for a herbal walk: Wed 14 September (5.30)

GreenSpace News

You can see the latest edition of 'The Bench' here: <http://tinyurl.com/bench68>

Vote for Troopers Hill

I try not to be too biased towards Troopers Hill in these updates, but we did get a mention in the Evening Post again at the weekend with a story about our bees - <http://tinyurl.com/3cbdzyt>

If you agree with me that it is a wonderful place then there are two chances to vote for us:

www.thegreatexhibition2012.co.uk/greats/troopers-hill-nature-reserve

www.keepbritaintidy.org/GreenFlag/GreenFlagAwardSites/SouthWest/Default.aspx?parkID=640

Though there might be other sites in Bristol that you prefer ...

Rob Acton-Campbell

BPF

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

Next BPF meeting date: Sat 15 October (AGM)

NFPGS World Parks Day conference - 17 September, Birmingham

16 August 2011 - No 75

In this update:

Cabot Tower Reopens - National Conference for Park Groups - Green Volunteers Bristol - Current National Consultations

Cabot Tower Reopens

Evening Post story, with a quote from Fraser: <http://tinyurl.com/3jujrjo>

Bristol247.com story: <http://ow.ly/64hmQ>

National Conference for Park Groups - 17 September, Birmingham

The deadline for application forms to attend this conference is fast approaching (Wednesday 24th August) it would be good to have a strong representation from BPF members.

This free one-day conference, which will take place on World Parks Day, will focus on discussing and debating key issues such as health benefits of green spaces, nature and biodiversity and finding funding for your green space, amongst other topical subjects. Delegates who attend will be able to share and hear about best practice, network with other groups and walk away with some new knowledge and skills.

More details and application forms are at:

www.green-space.org.uk/community/nfpgs/conference.php

There are subsidies available to cover travel costs.

Green Volunteers Bristol

This is a new volunteer recruitment and support project that may be of interest to your group. It is being run as part of the European Year of Volunteering 2011 by Bristol Natural History Consortium, Bristol City Council, Volunteer Bristol and Voscur.

Through the project they hope to increase the number and quality of volunteering opportunities in and around Bristol and further develop the city's strong environmental community.

By registering your volunteering 'vacancies' with Green Volunteers Bristol (for free) your opportunities will be available to some 2500 registered volunteers on the Volunteer Bristol database as well as being listed through their own portal and the national Do-it database.

Volunteering opportunities that parks groups might want to promote could include helping at events or at work parties. I am told that the turnover time from registering a opportunity to it appearing on the website is usually a couple of days. The one I entered for Troopers Hill last week isn't shown yet but I am assured that it is being processed.

There is more information at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/GreenVols.pdf or on the website at www.greenvolunteersbristol.co.uk

Current National Consultations

A reminder of the two national consultations taking place with relevance to green space to which you may wish to respond:

From Defra on Town Greens which can be seen at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/consult/2011/07/25/town-village-greens/>

The draft National Planning Policy Framework from the Department for Communities and Local Government:

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/draftframework

Both consultations close on 17 October.

The summary of the options put forward in the Town Green consultation are:

Do nothing

- No change (chapter 5.2): The existing registration system would remain unchanged.

Refining the registration system

- Streamline sifting of applications (chapter 5.3): This proposal would enable registration authorities to reject applications at an early stage where insufficient evidence had been submitted or where there was strong evidence that the application could not meet the criteria for registration.
- Declarations by landowners (chapter 5.4): Landowners would be given the opportunity to make a statutory declaration to negate any evidence of use of a claimed green during the period while the declaration remained in effect.
- Character (chapter 5.5): New legislation would add a 'character' test to the existing criteria for the registration as a green. Only land which is unenclosed, open and uncultivated would be eligible for registration.

Taking account of the planning system in shaping local places

- Integration with local and neighbourhood planning (chapter 5.6): This proposal would take decisions on the future of sites into the planning system. It would prevent registration of land which was subject to a planning application or permission for development of the site, or which was designated for development or as a green space in a local or neighbourhood plan.

Contributing to costs

- Charging fees (chapter 5.7): An applicant would be required to pay a fee when making an application. Legislation would allow each registration authority to set its own fee subject to a prescribed ceiling. It is not intended that the fee would allow for full cost recovery. Fees could be refundable if the application were granted.

The National Planning Framework says:

130. Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Identifying land as Local Green Space should therefore be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, and planned so that they are capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

131. The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to a centre of population or urban area
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance because of its beauty, historic importance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of its wildlife
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land; and
- if the designation does not overlap with Green Belt.

Rob Acton-Campbell

BPF

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

Next BPF meeting date: Sat 15 October (AGM)

NFPGS World Parks Day conference - 17 September, Birmingham

26 August 2011 - No 76

In this update:

BPF Meeting 16 July - Big Tree Plant - New Council Website - National Conference for Park Groups - Threat to Green Spaces? - Bat Discovery Nights - Beeses Bar & Tea Gardens - St Phillip's Greenway

BPF Meeting 16 July

The minutes of our last meeting are now on our website at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BPFMinutes160711.pdf

Big Tree Plant

An easy way to support tree planting in Bristol

A request for support from TreeBristol - please email before 1st September.

In partnership with TreeBristol, the Forest of Avon Trust (our local tree planting and woodland charity) is submitting a funding application to the Big Tree Plant. See <http://forestofavontrust.org/>

The Big Tree Plant is the Government's national tree planting campaign to encourage people and communities to plant more trees in England's towns, cities and neighbourhoods. See <http://thebigtreeplant.direct.gov.uk/index.html>

Our bid is ambitious, we are pursuing funding to plant 10,000 new trees and create 4 new mini woodlands across Bristol over 3 years.

What you can do to help:

We need your support to strengthen the bid and demonstrate that the people of Bristol support our aims.

Please email a simple statement of support to Emma at Forest of Avon Trust emma.whitaker@forestofavontrust.org before the 1st September.

Longer statements and/or details of locations in you think are in need of trees are also most welcome.

Thank you for your support,

Best wishes,

Josie
TreeBristol Officer

New Council Website

The long promised new Council website went live last week - which gave me a couple of hour's work to update the links from the BPF website.

The new mapping system is a huge improvement and as far as I can see all of Bristol's green spaces (as defined by the P&GSS) are now shown. So for the first time there is an easy way to find your local park.

Either go to www.bristol.gov.uk/explore-bristol-city - Bristol City Council managed parks & green spaces are marked with a tree symbol.

Or use www.bristol.gov.uk/my-neighbourhoods enter your address and use the 'My Nearest' tab. Parks & Green Spaces are listed under 'Environment'. You can then click on the map link on the list to get a map showing the location of the park. The map options allow you to see a 2010 aerial view or look at older maps.

If you want to bookmark a link that takes you directly to your house then use the following link, replacing the y with your house number and BSxxXX with your postcode (there is a comma between).

www.bristol.gov.uk/my-neighbourhoods?postcode=y,BSxxXX

There are lots of other layers on the map with useful information.

As part of the changes the redirectors (see www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/redirectors.pdf) were supposed to keep working - unfortunately only about 50% of them seem to have survived the change.

The number of pages on the site has also been reduced and the separate pages for the following spaces seem to have disappeared: Mancroft Avenue O/S; Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve; Mina Road Park; Narrowways; Riverside Park; Gores Marsh Park; Northern Slopes; Hartcliffe Millennium Green; Highridge Common; Willmott Park; Stoke Park.

National Conference for Park Groups - 17 September, Birmingham

The deadline for application forms to attend this conference has just passed but they will probably accept a late application if you get it in quickly.

The programme is now on the web at:

www.green-space.org.uk/community/nfpgs/conference.php

There are subsidies available to cover travel costs.

Threat to Green Spaces?

I have mentioned the two national consultations taking place with relevance to green space to which you may wish to respond:

From Defra on Town Greens which can be seen at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/consult/2011/07/25/town-village-greens/>

The draft National Planning Policy Framework from the Department for Communities and Local Government:

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/draftframework

There has been a fair bit of press coverage about the planning framework and its plan for sustainable development. There are campaigns against it at the CPRE <http://tinyurl.com/3bfcypq> and RSPB <http://tinyurl.com/3qkgtgv> amongst others. While developers seem to welcome it <http://tinyurl.com/3ftklfs>

The BPF committee is intending to respond on the Town Green consultation, please let us have your views and tell us whether you think we should respond as a forum on either or both.

Bat Discovery Nights

Wildways! is the South Glos equivalent of Bristol's Wild City Project, though it has a slightly different focus. They are organising bat walks at Conham by the River Avon on Friday 9th September, 7.30pm - 9.30pm and at Willsbridge on Friday 23rd September, 7.00pm to 9.00pm

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/AvonWillsbidgeBats.pdf

Beeses Bar & Tea Gardens

The Conham bat walk is on the first day of Beeses Beer Festival, see www.beeses.co.uk/beerfest.php

This gets a plug from me because a proportion of the money for the tickets is kindly donated to Friends of troopers Hill and Friends of Eastwood Farm. So you can drink beer and support a good cause.

St Philip's Greenway

Staying by the River Avon, one of the less well known green routes in Bristol is the St Philips Greenway from near Temple Meads to near the Showcase Cinema. This is part of the River Avon Trail, there is also a missing link from the Showcase to Feeder Road where the path has become overgrown. In the P&GSS this is called 'River Avon Trail Central' and can be found on the map on BCC website here: <http://tinyurl.com/RATcentralMap>

A local resident is trying to get a group started to care for this stretch of river bank and he has paid Avon Wildlife Trust to produce a wildlife survey, which can be seen at the links below. www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/StPhilips/EcologicalSurvey.pdf

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/StPhilips/Figure1.pdf

If you know of anyone who would be interested in joining a group to look after this space please let me know.

Rob Acton-Campbell

BPF

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

Next BPF meeting date: Sat 15 October (AGM)

NFPGS World Parks Day conference - 17 September, Birmingham

AGSP Investment Plans