

2 February 2009

Hi,

Community Park Managers

As reported at our last meeting, the new structure for Bristol Parks has been confirmed and the process of making appointments to the new roles is underway. The Community Park Managers (CPM) role will no longer exist, instead their role will be undertaken by Area Park Managers (APM), Community Park Officers (CPO), Head Gardeners, various other roles in 'Estates' (for 'Destination Parks') and in Quality and Monitoring roles.

The current CPMs have to go through the process of applying for these new roles, though there is a process of 'ring fencing' which means that those in jobs that are disappearing get first chance to apply for similar new roles (at least that is how I understand it). All this means that the current CPMs are uncertain as to their future and as part of the process have been served notice of possible redundancy.

It was overwhelmingly agreed by the meeting that we should send a message of support and thanks to the CPMs. Hugh therefore sent the following message on behalf of the BPF:

"Members of BPF were surprised and saddened at our meeting last Saturday to learn the entire Operations Team had been served "Notices of Possible Redundancy". We wish to place on record our thanks and appreciation for all the hard work you and all your colleagues have put in over the last 6 years ; we are well aware that it hasn't been the fault of the CPMs that the 'one stop' system has not lived up to expectations , and we all value the close personal relationships we have built up with our respective CPMs. On behalf of the Parks Forum I'd like to wish you all the best for the future , and express our hope that all of you who choose to do so find roles within Parks which make *full* use of your many talents and skills."

Invitation to Inaugural meeting of Play Bristol

The BPF has been invited to attend the inaugural meeting of Play Bristol on 12th February 2009 at 7:30pm in The Park in Knowle. If you are interested in going along, or know of someone who is keenly interested in play that might like to attend, please let us know. There will be a guest speech from Dr Martin Maudsley...

BIG Thinking

BIG Lottery is holding a consultation on how lottery funding should be spent between now and 2015. GreenSpace (<http://www.green-space.org.uk/>) is calling on its members and supporters to respond and make clear the demand for further funding for parks and green spaces.

GreenSpace's statement on the BIG Lottery consultation:

The importance of parks to people's everyday lives was highlighted in the findings of GreenSpace's 2007 Park Life report, with 83% of respondents viewing their parks and green spaces as being the focal point for their communities. This clearly illustrates the importance of parks and green spaces to communities and is further backed up by research by MORI, on behalf of CABE Space, that showed that 91% of residents believe that public parks and open spaces improve the quality of their

lives.

Early indications from unpublished studies currently being undertaken around Comprehensive Area Agreements, examining satisfaction with local areas, indicate that they will show that communities place as much importance on the quality of their local green spaces as they do the quality of housing in the area.

It is commendable that the Heritage Lottery Fund and BIG Lottery have recognised the significance of parks to communities, and have combined funds over the past three years to award over £150m to parks and green space. This has enabled considerable funding to continue for parks in the face of lottery funding being siphoned away from the main funds to support the Olympics.

To date only around 1- 2% of UK parks have benefited, but there is still high demand as funding programmes are significantly oversubscribed. It is therefore important that the lottery continues to fund public park projects in order to make a difference to the daily lives of communities.

The support and hard work of community and 'friends of' groups has been crucial to the work done to restore our parks and green spaces. Their achievements show how committed communities and local authorities are to working together to ensure quality parks and green spaces that are accessible to all.

GreenSpace is keen to see further funding to ensure these partnerships can continue to grow. We are calling on both community groups and local authorities to respond to the consultation and emphasise how much can be achieved by working in partnership, how the lottery can support this, and how much this can mean to the lives of the individuals who use the green space.

The consultation offers the opportunity for those that have successfully bid for lottery funding to convey the importance of this funding, what has been achieved, and how by working in partnership the community is at the heart of each project. We would also urge those considering applying for funding in the future to be explicit in the need for further funding opportunities, and to put forward the potential for effective partnership working.

This is an excellent chance to prove the demand for funding for parks and green spaces, and to ensure that the public's lottery ticket money really is spent where it will benefit everyone.

Make your voice heard by going to www.big-thinking.org.uk by February 27 2009.

FREE 'Play by Design' training course

Below details about a FREE 'Play by Design' training course at Trafford Hall, near Chester, 9-11 March 2009. This course is for groups involved in regeneration projects which include designing an inspiring play area.

On this course you will:

- * Look at how design affects the quality of play
- * Understand how to engage children and incorporate their design ambitions
- * Visit inspiring play areas and meet the parents and children who use the space
- * Look at the age range of those who will use the play area and understand the impact that will have on design

- * Explore the advantages and disadvantages of both pre-produced play equipment and user-designed or bespoke play equipment
- * Set out an action plan for your play area that can be taken back to your local community

This 3-day residential course will be held at Trafford Hall, home of the National Communities Resource Centre near Chester. The training is free for members of community groups involved in local regeneration projects. Participants are invited to attend as a group of 3 to 5 people working on a specific project, and can include young people from the age of 14 years upwards, attending with accompanying adults. Paid workers may apply for a free place if accompanying a group of volunteers.

For further information visit, www.theglasshouse.org.uk

Kingswear Road and Torpoint flats redevelopment

The Council has released the following press release about this planned redevelopment.

<http://www.bristol.gov.uk/redirect?oid=PressRelease-id-29420065>

The area that the FAT architects will be considering as part of this consultation will include part of the Northern Slopes proposed LNR. The Northern Slopes Initiative (www.northern-slopes-initiative.co.uk) will be involved in the consultation and will keep the BPF up to date. The press release has details of an open day on 14th February which anyone with an interest in the area can attend.

Town Green Application Workshop

We have had a lot of interest in this, Fraser will be in touch with those who have said they would like to attend.

Rob Acton-Campbell
BPF

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

BPF Meeting Dates: 16th May, 25th July, 31st October

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Town Green Application Workshop

The Town Green workshop was well attended and those present found it most useful. As all budding town green applicants were not able to make it that Thursday night another session will be arranged within the month, most probably on the 5th March (date and venue to be confirmed).

Stoke Park

There is a proposal that this area should be taken over by Bristol City Council and managed by Bristol Parks; this is likely to be considered at the next Council Cabinet meeting.

There is a briefing paper with more details here:
<http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/StokePark.pdf>

We understand that Bristol Parks are in favour of this proposal and it has been suggested that the BPF should also make a statement in support, but we would like to get your views. This is one of those issues where the timing means that there won't be a chance to discuss it at any of our meetings so if you do have a view please let us know by replying to this email.

P&GSS 'White' Areas

One of the concerns that was raised at our last meeting when talking about Area Green Space Plans was the 'white' areas; those areas that are green publicly accessible open space but are not included on the P&GSS maps (see <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/parks.htm> for links to the maps).

If they are Council owned and publicly accessible then they should be on the map regardless of which department claims 'ownership' of them. The maps should be corrected as part of the AGSP process or the BPF can formally ask the P&GSS board to add them.

Many are privately owned, Ashton Vale fields and Grove Woods are two that were also discussed at the meeting. Stoke Park is currently another, though it will be shown on the P&GSS maps if the above proposal is accepted. Some of these 'white' areas may have been submitted to the BDF in the 'Call for Sites' as possible development sites; one at Novers Hill was highlighted at the last BDF public event, see <http://tinyurl.com/cawhdx> The BDF will be publishing a schedule of sites submitted via the Call for Sites in March, when it does I will send you the link. Of course just because a site has been submitted doesn't mean it will be developed, but it will mean that the potential for development will be considered.

These private sites will not be considered by the AGSP process but their existence is likely to influence people's views of the sites that are in the process. If you have a large area of private woodland near your house (whether or not you have access to it), you might be less concerned about the loss of an adjacent area of council owned scrub land than you would be if the private woodland was an industrial estate. But will it still be woodland in 10 years time?

The next stage of the BDF is the 'Site Allocations' which will be consulted on at the same time as the AGSPs and is supposed to establish planning policies for specific sites, including protection of areas sensitive to change. So it will be important that you get involved in both consultations if you value your green space. More details at <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/bdf>

The question is whether this will give these sites sufficient protection? If you have any thoughts on this issue please let us know.

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Kingsweir/Torpoint/Marksbury Road/Novers Masterplan Northern Slopes, South Bristol

The start of the consultation on the Kingsweir/Novers masterplan is tomorrow; Saturday 14th February between 11am and 3pm at the Sports Hall, Marksbury Road, Bedminster.

It is a "tell us what you what" consultation - and definitely includes the green open space areas of Kingsweir and Novers SNCIs, part of the proposed Northern Slopes Local Nature Reserve.

The NSI (www.northern-slopes-initiative.co.uk) are encouraging as many people as they can to go along and say what they think to the Council's team and consultants - FAT and HTA.

NSI are very concerned that the emphasis may be on open space, rather than green space. They understand that open space can cover all sorts of areas, from parks to civic squares to the type of green space they have - but they want to make it clearer that they wish to see green space being maintained and enhanced. With potentially an outline planning permission going in to the Council in June this year for the area; there isn't long to influence positively what is going on.

Park Groups and Events

I asked in an earlier email about Park Groups experience about organising events. Small scale events are a great way to promote both your parks and your groups and to attract more members. From the feedback we have had it is clear that the paperwork involved in getting a Site Licence is discouraging this from happening.

To this end the BPF committee have put a proposal to Bristol Parks to simplify the system (and remove the charges) for Parks Groups to run events in their own parks. Our proposal can be seen here: <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BPFEventsProposal.pdf>

Peter Wilkinson has reacted very positively and we will be holding some meetings with Bristol Parks in March to discuss this. We hope to have an agreed proposal before the next BPF meeting.

Where to Find Peace & Quiet in Bristol?

Stephen Crawshaw the Programme Co-ordinator for Air Environment at the Create Centre has sent me details about the current consultation on traffic noise. There is also an interactive map where people can add their favourite quiet place. This could be a park, cemetery, woodland or other open space. The idea is to build a map of green space in the city that is valued for its acoustic qualities. The noise consultation will feed into the noise action plan for the city and help us in developing a noise strategy for Bristol. Steve also hopes that it will add some useful information from park users for use in the AGSPs.

The links to the map and the debate are below, when you add your park to the map there is also a chance to write a comment about it. So where is your favourite quiet place?

<http://www.bristolstreets.co.uk/#tmQuiet/>

www.bristol.gov.uk/noisedebate

Parks & Green Spaces Strategy Funding

In response to a request by GreenSpace (<http://www.green-space.org.uk/>), who want to use it as a case study for a conference, I have put together a document setting out the events of last year and how the BPF influenced the final outcome on the funding of the P&GSS. The document is here: <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/ParksFunding.pdf>

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Park Groups and Events – BPF Survey Please Reply!

Further to our proposal to simplify the paperwork and remove the licence fee for park groups organising events on their own parks (see <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BPFEventsProposal.pdf>). Peter Wilkinson would like to know what effect the changes are likely to have. Can you please let me have a response to the following questions by the end of the month (please include the name of your group in your reply).

- 1) How many events is your group likely to organise on your park this year if the current system requiring completion of this form: <http://tinyurl.com/ckf66h> and payment of a minimum fee of £42 is enforced?
- 2) Would you consider organising more events if you did not have to pay a fee and if the paperwork was simplified in line with the BPF proposal?

Railway Path Chocolate Factory Site

The planning decision on this site was deferred until April pending "further negotiations". There is a BBC report here: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/bristol/7897766.stm>

We are also still awaiting a decision on whether the Council are prepared to sell / lease the P&GSS land that Squarepeg wanted for their development.

Stoke Park

We are seeking further information as to what impact any acquisition of Stoke Park by Bristol Parks is likely to have on the AGSP process for the local area. Questions have also been raised as to whether the land would be better protected in Council ownership or under the proposed 'Greenbelt Company'. There is a briefing paper with more details here:

<http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/StokePark.pdf> Please let us have your views so we can decide whether the BPF should make a statement on this to the Cabinet meeting on 26 Feb when it will be considered.

Bristol City Council and the Sustainable Communities Act

There is a briefing on the Sustainable Communities Act and how you can get involved on 12 March from 11 am - 12 noon, Room 15 in the Council House, College Green to be hosted by Councillor Terry Cook, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Involvement and the Deputy Chief Executive, Jon House.

To book a place on the briefing please contact:

Richard Green

Administration Officer

Policy and Scrutiny

U15, The Council House

Bristol, BS1 5TR

0117 92 22742

richard.green@bristol.gov.uk

What is the Act and why should you get involved?

Developed by a coalition called Local Works following a five -year campaign, the Sustainable Communities Act gained Royal Assent in October 2007. It aims to promote the sustainability of local communities and it 'begins from the principle that local people know best what needs to be done to promote the sustainability of their area, but that sometimes they need central government to act to enable them to do so' .

It gives local communities the ability to put forward policy suggestions to central government, via their council, before 31 July 2009 to promote the sustainability of their area.

Anyone can submit a suggestion, but it is likely that suggestions will be made by organised groups such as community groups, resident associations and local branches of national organisations. Local Strategic Partnerships can submit suggestions.

The remit for suggestions is broad and must aim to improve the economic, social or environmental well being of an area or areas in Bristol. Social well being also includes suggestions that will promote participation in civic and political activity

Further information

On the 26th February the Council's webpage on the Sustainable Communities Act will go live. The page will give information about the Act and how you can go about making suggestions.

The Act and guidance from the Department for Communities and Local Government is available at www.communities.gov.uk

For further advice about the Act and how you can be involved please contact Graham Starmer, Programme Co-ordinator, Sustainable Communities on 0117 922 4917 or e-mail graham.starmer@bristol.gov.uk

South Bristol Developments

Area Green Space Plan, Knowle West Framework, Torpoint Flats, Rapid Transit, Football Stadium and associated housing, Yanley Urban Extension, South Bristol Link Road, SNCIs designated for housing ...

Just some of the issues on which the community of South Bristol are currently being consulted. There has been an email discussion started by the Bristol Neighbourhood Planning Network aimed at getting all interested groups together to see if there can be a unified response. If your group has not seen these emails, but you would like to get involved then please email me and I will pass your details on.

BPF Meeting Minutes

If you are on the Bristol Park's mailing list you should have received the minutes of our last meeting from Catherine. They are also now on our website here:
<http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BPFMin240109.pdf>

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Change of Administration

As you may have heard Helen Holland and the Labour Group resigned at tonight's Council Meeting following the adoption of Liberal Democrat amendments to the budget. Barbara Janke was elected as Leader of the Council. We await with interest to see what changes this brings about for Bristol's Parks.

Stoke Park

As I mentioned previously the acquisition of Stoke Park by Bristol City Council is due to be considered by cabinet on Thursday. The BPF committee has agreed a statement to be submitted to the meeting and it can be seen here:

<http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BPFStokeParkResponse.pdf>

Of course tonight's events might change that meeting.

Events

Several people have mentioned that there needs to be more clarity first as to what constitutes an 'event' and then how to define a 'small' event. As I understand it at the moment guided walks, including things like owl prowls, fungi forays etc, are not considered to be 'events'. If you have received the Health & Safety training to run practical activities then you can also lead guided walk and be covered by the Council's insurance. Anything else potentially is an event and would need a site licence. It is issues like these that we hope to get clarified with the Parks Events Officer when we meet next month.

Local Nature Reserves Officers

Members of various nature reserve groups met last night with Helen Hall to discuss Bristol Parks' Access to Nature bid which is applying for funding for two Local Nature Reserve Officers to replace Sally Oldfield. This was a very positive meeting which looked at ways of continuing Sally's excellent work. While it is disappointing that such valuable work has to depend on repeated grant applications there was a strong agreement that the groups would support the bid in any way we can.

Community involvement in open spaces

Friends of Troopers Hill were joined on our work party on Saturday by Sam Kirwan. Sam is doing a PhD at the University of Bristol and he is spending this year talking to members of park groups as part of his research, which is on community involvement in open spaces and how it affects and engages with anti-social behaviour.

Sam had emailed info@bristolparksforum.org.uk saying:

'Ideally I'd like to talk to people in their park, whether walking or working there, to have a leisurely and spontaneous view on their experiences and thoughts on the park and how it is used by the community. I was wondering whether any of you would be willing to be interviewed, as I'd be really interested in hearing your experiences of representing and helping all groups across the city through the Parks Forum, and how this relates to the work you do or have done in your own park.

It can take place wherever and whenever is convenient for you. Anything that is said will be kept anonymous, that is no names or identifying features will be used, and you will be able to read anything that is written. I was also wondering if there would be any way I could use the forum to reach people who might like to talk about their park and the experiences they have had. I would

really like if possible to support the forum in return, whether through any volunteer work or simply by presenting the findings there when they are complete.'

If you can spare the time to speak to Sam he would very much appreciate it, his email address is deferred@gmail.com

Ashton Park: Proposals for a new Bristol neighbourhood

An exhibition will run from Thursday 26th February to Sunday 8th March (12 – 5pm) at the Main Gallery, The Architecture Centre, Narrow Quay, Bristol about this proposed city extension to the South West part of Bristol. 'This exhibition sets out our emerging development framework for the scheme with homes, workplaces and community facilities'.

Green Capital result

Bristol lost out to Stockholm and Hamburg in the first European Green Capital Awards. Bristol's bid can be seen here: <http://tinyurl.com/cfqbvt> and makes interesting reading. Strangely I can't find a mention of the plans to sell off parts of Castle Park for development even though the centre of the City has less green space than required by the P&GSS. Perhaps the new administration will change those plans?

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