

01 February 2011 - No 49

BPF Meeting 29 Jan

As always the minutes of the meeting will be written up by Catherine and I will then add them to the website and include a link in a future email.

Here are some of the main points that came up.

Localism Bill:

See www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/decentralisation/localismbill/

BDF & Site Allocations:

There will be another round of consultation in the summer which will ask people to look at suggested uses of sites that were proposed in responses to last summer's consultation. It will also consider the Development Management Policies.

AGSP Disposals:

Hugh suggested a work group to look at the issues regarding SNCIs, WNSs and trees following the statement issued by the Avon Wildlife Trust that I included in my last update. If you would be interested in getting involved please let me know.

It was confirmed that sites listed for disposal would be maintained by Parks until they were sold. Also Gary Hopkins reiterated that all sites had been considered for disposal and that therefore all sites covered by the P&GSS and not now listed for disposal were protected for at least 20 years.

AGSP Investment:

The next round of Neighbourhood Partnership meetings will be asked to consider a paper on how they want to work with Parks to agree the priorities for investment in their area. The intention is for NPs to agree a list of priorities in time for the June round of meetings.

Stoke Park Acquisition:

The final hurdle is a decision to be made by South Glos about the S106 contributions. This is expected to go through on 17th March. BCC are then planning a celebration event on Sat 19th March.

Steve England gave a presentation about his work at Stoke Park see www.steveengland.co.uk

Bristol Natural History Consortium:

Savita Custead gave us an enthusiastic presentation about the consortium which has been in existence since 2003 and a charity since 2008. The consortium runs the Festival of Nature and has also organised 'bioblitzes' at Blaise and Brandon Hill. More at www.bnhc.org.uk

Parks Restructuring:

Tracey Morgan explained that managers had been appointed to two of the 4th tier posts in the new

structure. Richard Bevan is responsible for 'Estates and Cems & Crems'. Richard Ennion is appointed to 'Horticultural Services'. 'Grounds Maintenance' and 'Neighbourhood Engagement' remain vacant. The process of filling these posts is likely to take some time due to the need to follow council procedures.

Chris Hammond ran through the list of which parks had Community Park Keepers. Working hours of CPK are being changed so that they work longer hours in the summer and less in the winter. There is also a plan to change the hours to cover evenings and weekends but this has not been finalised.

Park Improvements and DDA Compliance:

Alison gave a presentation on this issue and the difficulties at Redland Green where steps have been rebuilt to 'DDA standards' but without any consideration for the visual impact and without proper consideration as to whether they were needed. Since the work (as with most work in parks by the council) did not need planning permission there had been no opportunity for residents to have a say in the design. It was agreed to set up a working group to develop a process to review this type of work. If you are interested in taking part please email me.

Alison's paper can be seen at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/DDAinParks.pdf

More information on disabled access and the BCC access standards are on the BCC website at <http://tinyurl.com/36rh82>

'By all reasonable means; inclusive access to the outdoors for Disabled people' can be found on the Natural England website at <http://tinyurl.com/6errs2x>

May Park Wood:

Andrew gave us a brief presentation about residents concerns that the local school wants to fence off the wood. The Forum agreed to support the group in asking the school to enter into further dialogue with them. More information at <http://schoolwood.blogspot.com>
http://epetitions.bristol.gov.uk/epetition_core/view/mayparkwood

GreenSpace Newsletter 'The Bench'

Issue 62 can be seen here: <http://green-space-updates.org.uk/JEZ-CS1P-232WRVWM87/cr.aspx>

Rob Acton-Campbell

BPF

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Easter Garden

Easter Garden off Blackboy Hill is under threat from a developer. Ownership of the garden is disputed but the local community have been using it as a garden since around 1993.

A planning application has been submitted for the fencing off of the entire garden except for the footpath. More details including the history of the site are on the Friends of Easter Garden website at www.eastergarden.moonfruit.com

You can see details of the planning application (and register your objections, should you wish) via www.bristol.gov.uk/planning (planning application No 10/05468/F) or follow the link from www.eastergarden.moonfruit.com

May Park Wood

We received this report from Andy on Saturday:

We organised a public event to celebrate the wood and talk about its future which was due to take place today. About 40 local people braved the wind and rain to attend, along with Kerry McCarthy MP, Mahmudur Khan (prospective Lab candidate), Steve Comer (Libdem Ward Councillor) and the Evening Post (see stories in Saturday and Monday edition).

Unfortunately when we arrived, the school had already erected a security fence to prevent us from getting into the wood, and there were security guards and officers from the council to make sure we didn't climb over. I was hoping they might come along and spend some time in the wood with us to explain their views and listen to ours - no such luck!

People wrote their wishes for the wood on tags and hung them on the fence for the school to read. We took photos of them which we will publish on our blog - schoolwood.blogspot.com

A neighbour summed up the situation well when he said to me "Why fence it now, in the middle of winter? Why not wait until the summer and give the local community a chance to demonstrate that it can clean up the woodland and make it safe for education and play? And if it doesn't work out, then ok we'll say we gave it a try and it didn't work. But they wouldn't even give it a chance."

Anyway, thanks for the support from the Forum. It was good to be heard. Hopefully in the future the school will agree to enter into open dialogue with us and we might be able to make some progress with them. But for the time being, we're shut out!

Best wishes
Andy

Bristol City Council press release:
<http://www.bristol.gov.uk/redirect?oid=PressRelease-id-36256017>

Evening Post Report Sat 5 Feb: <http://tinyurl.com/4qdlowg>

<http://schoolwood.blogspot.com>

http://epetitions.bristol.gov.uk/epetition_core/view/mayparkwood

Events in Parks

There is another meeting of the BPF working group that has been looking at the licensing of events in parks on Mon 28th February. If you are interested in joining this group please let me know (though numbers are restricted so we might not have room for everybody).

The current rules on licensing are:

For events with 50 to 100 people you need to apply for a Park Permit. The cost is £20 per event. See <http://tinyurl.com/BristolPP>

For all events with more than 100 people attending you need a Site Licence. This is the landowner's permission, licences for selling alcohol or for entertainment have to be applied for separately. For details see the Event Application Toolkit at <http://tinyurl.com/BristolETK>.

Licence charges depend on the size of the event but start at £20 for Community Groups holding events for up to 200 people. You may also be asked for a bond to be held to pay for any damage to the site.

For all events you need Public Liability Insurance, for Community Groups holding events with less than 200 people this can be provided by Bristol City Council and included in the £20 site licence fee.

Don't forget that if you are planning events this year the funding application deadline for the 2011 - 2012 Community Festival and Event Fund is 2pm 18th March. Contact the arts, festivals and events team for more information on events.team@bristol.gov.uk or 0117 9223287

The guidelines and application form can also be downloaded from the links below:

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

<http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/CFEAppForm2011-12.doc>

Walking for Health

Walking for Health groups are of course frequent users of many of Bristol's parks and green spaces. You may be interested to know that they now have a section on their website at www.bristol.gov.uk/healthwalks giving information on possible walks and some brief historical information; follow the link to 'Page 6: Resources for interesting walks'.

They are also asking for notes of walks, if you have a walk you would like to share please contact Nic Ferris on healthwalks@bristol.gov.uk

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BPF Letter ref P&GSS

The BPF committee have sent an open letter to Council party leaders asking for confirmation of their position in respect of those green spaces that have not been listed for disposal.

You can see the letter here: <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BPFLetter110211.pdf>

I will let you know what we receive in reply.

Stoke Park Celebration Sat 19 March

As mentioned at our meeting an event is being planned for 19th March to mark the fact that the Council is acquiring Stoke Park and that all the legal hurdles have been overcome. There will be more details in future updates.

Bristol Garden Life Show 15th-17th April 2011

Your group may have received an invitation to have a free stand at this show from Steve Clampin, Allotments Manager. You can see details of the show here <http://digital-thisis.co.uk/bristol/garden-life-show> If your group wants a stand you should email Steve.Clampin@bristol.gov.uk before the end of the month.

If you are considering having a stand but don't think you could man it for the whole show then please let me know and I will pass on your details to anyone else in the same position.

GreenSpace Community Networking Project 2011

A message from GreenSpace Community Network:

We invite you to take part in our Community Networking Project - a questionnaire which aims to gather data on resources and abilities as well as thoughts, ideas and needs of community-based groups involved within parks and green spaces across the UK.

The questionnaire should take approximately 15 minutes and will help enable us to continue advocating for such groups, form a report for the sector and help us shape our offering for the future. Complete the questionnaire at: <http://tinyurl.com/GSQ2011>

The Community Networking Project questionnaire was originally completed in 2003 when over 1,000 responses were received, helping us to quantify the level and value of involvement and identify requirements for the groups in the future. The report was widely publicised and seen as a benchmark study within the sector.

Did you know... approximately 4,000 community groups with a membership exceeding 500,000 are actively and regularly contributing to the management and maintenance of their local green spaces. In addition to this, thousands of city farms, community gardens and allotment sites operate

on a self-managed basis and many thousands of groups are getting involved in green space in a less formal, more casual and occasional basis. Their contribution has helped to improve, protect and enrich at least 15,000 green spaces of various types.

GreenSpace requests your help in distributing and publicising this important survey
Community group representatives can fill out the survey online before Friday 25 February.

Supporters can help publicise the Community Networking Project by forwarding this email or distributing the press release and/or survey link.

Please get in touch if you have any queries or would like to know more. Thanks in advance for taking part in this important project.

Lucy Fowler
GreenSpace Community Network
0118 946 5114 | lucyf@green-space.org.uk

Civic Day - 25th June 2011
A message from Bristol Civic Society:

I am writing to you about something called Civic Day, which is a national day on June 25th to celebrate civic activity, the brainchild of Civic Voice, the national association of civic societies. see <http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/campaigns/civic-day/>

Bristol Civic Society has been thinking through how it might participate in Civic Day. An idea we are running with for part of what we do is as follows.

- a call for the public to celebrate public space in the city by suggesting they go along to a local public space on Civic Day and have a picnic, read a book, play a game or organise their own clean up.
- this could be tied in with publicity about research about public spaces and their value to people for quality of life. (possibly Henry Shaftoe)
- more ambitiously, with the growing mobile location technology there is scope to ask people to record their location in a Bristol public space on the day and see the spread across the city. or upload pictures of activity in the parks to our flickr or facebook site. (we have a submission in for a project for UWE students)
- possibly a competition for most novel activity or best community effort.

Given the theme of public space, Parks Forum members could play a major role in this. It's probably too ambitious for BCS to do on its own, and anyway Civic Day needn't be the preserve of civic societies. It can involve other community organisations too.

If you and your group would like to get involved please email info@bristolparksforum.org.uk

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Sad death of Alan Barber, former Bristol Parks Manager

You may have heard that Alan Barber - who spoke passionately at our first conference some years ago - died peacefully in his sleep on Tuesday last week following a very long battle with cancer. He was 69.

A few years ago his great contribution to parks in the city and the parks sector as a whole - nationally and indeed internationally - was recognised by naming the refurbished rose garden at Ashton Court in his name, something which made him very proud.

I am told that the funeral is going to be a very close family only private affair followed by a Celebration / Memorial of his life at Ashton Court Mansion. His wife, Jan, has asked if everyone (who would like to) would wear a flower on 4th March, the day of the funeral, as it will bring all parks folk together wherever they may be. Family flowers only, however donations to GreenSpace would be appreciated, this charity was Alan's pride and joy as he was in at its birth.

Area Green Space Plans & Neighbourhood Partnerships

As Richard Fletcher mentioned at our last meeting NPs are to have a say in deciding the investment priorities for the AGSPs. There will be a report included in the agendas for the next round of NP meetings which will appear on the web at least two weeks before the meeting.

This means that your Neighbourhood Partnership will be making decisions about your park! So regardless of your views about NPs it is important that park groups get involved.

The first of these meetings is for Horfield and Lockleaze on 28 February. The details for that meeting are now on the web at www.bristol.gov.uk/meetings so you can see Richard's report to that NP; the reports to the other 13 NPs will be very similar. There is also a report to this round of NP meetings about the devolution of S106 money.

The AGSP report asks the NPs to decide how they are going to make the decisions about investment, so you might also want to get together with other park groups within your NP to talk about this before the meeting, groups that are members of the BPF are listed at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/directory.htm

Information about Neighbourhood Partnerships is at:
<http://bristolpartnership.org/neighbourhood-partnerships>

GreenSpace Community Networking Project 2011

A reminder that the deadline for this questionnaire that I mentioned in my last update is this Friday (25th Feb). You can complete the questionnaire at: <http://tinyurl.com/GSQ2011>

Updated LNR Web Pages

The web pages for the Local Nature Reserves on the BCC website are being updated (7 out of 8 are already live). They now include information on what can be seen at different times of the year.

The pages all now also have their own 'redirectors' or shortcuts; I have added these to the list of park related redirectors at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/redirectors.pdf

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Alan Barber OBE: 11.6.1942 - 16.2.2011 Memorial Service Thursday 3rd March

There is a tribute to Alan Barber on the GreenSpace website at <http://www.green-space.org.uk/news/Alan-Barber-tribute.php> The page also has individual tributes to Alan from around Britain and indeed many other parts of the world.

Please note that the memorial service for Alan will be held in the Music Room at Ashton Court, Bristol at 3pm on Thursday 3rd March. (Not 4th as I put in my last update).

If you would like to attend please email info@green-space.org.uk to give his family an idea of numbers for catering.

The family have requested that everyone wear a flower of some sort on the day as Alan loved flowers.

BPF and the AGSP Process

The BPF committee has been asked by one of our members groups to clarify its position on the AGSPs our reply is below:

BPF supports the process set out in the Parks & Green Spaces Strategy for identifying the most important parks and green spaces in Bristol so that they will be protected from development.

The consultation process gave people the chance to have their say about the importance of green spaces in their area and has resulted in many green spaces being withdrawn from the disposal list.

As a result of this process, inevitably some green spaces have been identified as less important or of 'low amenity value'. BPF agreed to support the principle of selling these on the basis that at least 70% of the sale proceeds are to be reinvested to improve parks and green spaces in Bristol.

BPF has made a point of not commenting on individual site plans; local people are best placed to comment on the 'low amenity value' designation.

BPF committee is pressing for further work to be undertaken to confirm that

- any development will take proper account of the wildlife value of the site and protect important trees.
- any development will be in accordance with the Bristol Development Framework Site Allocations process that considers land use throughout the city.
- spaces identified for disposal will continue to be maintained for people and wildlife prior to disposal.
- disposals will be timed over the next 20 years to achieve the best value.
- local park groups will have a say in where the money raised is to be invested.
- the principles set out in the P&GSS are also applied in Knowle West which has so far been excluded from the AGSP process.

BPF welcomes the local interest resulting from the AGSP consultation process and looks forward to working with new park groups.

Bristol Parks Website www.bristol.gov.uk/parks

There will be a new Bristol City Council website in June and Bristol Parks are therefore trying to update the current Parks pages in order to avoid transferring "old" content to the new website. An example is the new LNR pages that I mentioned last time.

If you have any suggestions on how to improve the Parks web pages please let me know and I will pass them on. The aim is to make the site more user-friendly.

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