

13 February 2012 - No 91

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PROWG Meeting

The Public Rights of Way & Greens committee is next meeting on Monday 20th February 2012 at 2pm. The papers for the meeting are now on the website at:
www.bristol.gov.uk/committee/2012/wa/wa005/0220_a.pdf

The committee will be making a decision on the Town Green application for Filwood Park. It will also be considering a revised procedure for considering Town Green applications following the consultation last year. The papers also include an update on other Town Green applications. The application for Grove wood will be considered at a future meeting.

Public Statements to BCC

You may have noticed that the public statements to last month's Cabinet and Full Council meetings have not appeared on the BCC website. This is due to the policy being changed by the Council's Democratic Services officers, apparently on the advice of the Data Protection Officer and following complaints that names and addresses of those who have made statements in the past can still be obtained through Google and other internet search engines.

It seems that Councillors have been told about this change of policy by email but were not involved in making the decision. The BPF committee have raised concerns that not publishing statements on the website (which Councillors claim to have taken into account in coming to decisions) is making the democratic process less transparent. It could also be seen as suppressing criticism of the Council. There may of course be legitimate reasons why some people would not want their contact details published and it would be wrong if they were put off making statements because they thought that would happen, but it must be possible to put a system in place that allows for that possibility.

Cllr Jon Rogers has said that he will raise this issue with his Cabinet colleagues and get back to us.

Litter Picking Day

I have received a couple of emails asking for clarification about what we are proposing for the litter picking day. The idea was for groups to organise events in their own park, but if there is somewhere else in your area that your group thinks needs a litter pick then that would be fine. Alternatively if there is some other clean up type task that needs doing then that would also work eg painting, fence repairs, bench repairs - you would obviously have to find funds from somewhere for any materials. The main idea is to promote parks and park groups.

We are suggesting the weekend of the 19th & 20th May, please let me know if you would like to join in.

Wild City Project

The first Wild City Newsletter with details of some of the events from the first year of the project can now be downloaded via <http://tinyurl.com/WildCity01> or from the project's webpage at www.bristol.gov.uk/wildcity

At the recent Wild City steering group meeting there was a mention of the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' which can be seen here: <http://neweconomics.org/projects/five-ways-well-being> It seems to me that joining a park group is a good way to achieve them!

National Conference of Gardens Trusts

Later this year Avon Gardens Trust will host the annual National Conference of Gardens Trusts. Based in the World Heritage City of Bath, the conference will run from the 7th to 9th September, and its theme of Polite Society will be explored through visits to designed landscapes in and around Bath, including a rare opportunity to view Badminton, seat of the Duke and Duchess of Beaufort.

As one of 35 County Gardens Trusts represented by the national charity, The Association of Gardens Trusts, Avon helps to promote the enjoyment of our garden heritage among the general public through educational initiatives, conservation, planning and garden research.

The Conference is not just restricted to members of the County Gardens Trusts but open to anyone with an interest in Garden History. For further details please contact Ros Delany on 01275 371398 or rdelany@virgin.net or visit our website www.avongardenstrust.org.uk

TreeBristol

There was a report on the recent orchard planting at Brandon Hill and St John's Burial Ground in the Evening Post (featuring a photo of Fraser) which can be seen here: <http://tinyurl.com/77w638d> The Council's press release is here: www.bristol.gov.uk/node/10357

There are several more tree planting events coming up, see www.treebristol.com for details. The next one is on Thursday, February 16 at Trymside Open Space, Sea Mills.

Events and Media Coverage

A reminder about Green Connect South West a free networking and learning event for parks groups, community groups and parish councils. It is being held at Bridgwater College & Walled Gardens at Cannington near Bridgwater Saturday 25th February, 10am-3pm It is past the official booking date, but if you want to go they might be able to find you a space. More details and a booking form can

be seen at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/GreenConnect.pdf

The CPRE are holding a training event for the Localism Act on 24th March in Bristol, details are here: www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/CPREflyer.pdf

Steve England has yet again been in the Evening Post, this time talking about his childhood experiences at Stoke Park <http://tinyurl.com/7nbqo2v>

Last Friday there was an item on Parks on BBC Radio 4 in You and Yours, you can hear it at: www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01bmq2n#p00p2jzj

Tomorrow (Tuesday) a live Q&A session is being held by the Guardian on how to secure funding for community and voluntary organisations: <http://tinyurl.com/89ehw2a>

Rob Acton-Campbell
BPF

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

2012 meeting dates: Sat 21st April, Sat 14th July, Sat 13th October
(all 9.30 to 12.30)

28 February 2012 - No 92

In this update: Green Space Disposals - Site Allocations - PROWG Meeting - Decision time for wildlife - Avon RIGS Group Blog - Litter Picking Day

Green Space Disposals

The March round of Neighbourhood Partnership meetings are being asked to make decisions on green space disposals. It is actually the Neighbourhood Committees that will make the decision.

The meeting dates can be seen at <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/CommitteeMeetingFinder> and the details for the meetings will have the reports that list the decisions to be made. Of course some NPs such as Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill which do not have much green space do not have any spaces listed for disposal.

As I write the reports for two meetings where disposals are to be considered are on the website:
St George: www.bristol.gov.uk/committee/2012/ne/ne014/0313_8.pdf

Filwood, Knowle and Windmill Hill: www.bristol.gov.uk/committee/2012/ne/ne010/0313_10.pdf

The others will follow over the next couple of weeks.

Site Allocations

The next phase of the Site Allocations consultation, the Preferred Approach consultation, will be published on 23 March 2012 and will be open for comment for eight weeks. This is the maps that were last consulted on at the same time as the Area Green Space Plans. The Site Allocations both lists sites for possible development and allocates land to particular uses in planning terms.

One of the issues that the BPF committee has raised in the past is that all parks and green spaces that are covered by the P&GSS and that are finally listed to be retained should also be allocated as important green space on the Site Allocations maps. This will give these spaces some protection in the future even if a future administration (or Mayor?) decides to go back to the way things were done before the P&GSS was adopted and tries to sell off spaces one at a time for development.

We are pleased to see in the reports on disposals the following statement:

"If sites are not declared surplus, and still required for recreational purposes, it is expected they will be designated as Important Open Space in the Site Allocations and Development Management, Development Plan Document (DPD)."

More information on the Bristol Development Framework of which the Site Allocations is a part can be seen at www.bristol.gov.uk/bdf

You may also be interested in the Bristol Central Area Action Plan Options Consultation. This document, published for consultation on 24 February 2012, makes some initial suggestions for site allocations and other policies for development in the centre of Bristol. A draft Public Realm and Movement Framework for Bristol City Centre is available for comment at the same time. See www.bristol.gov.uk/page/bristol-central-area-action-plan

PROWG Meeting

One of the spaces sold off by the Council before the P&GSS was adopted in February 2008 was Filwood Park. As expected the PROWG last week (20th Feb) agreed with the Inspector's recommendation that the application for a Town Green for Filwood should be rejected.

The PROWG also considered the revised procedure for deciding on Town Greens following the consultation last year. The BPF committee issued a public statement on this and I am pleased to say that the committee accepted our suggestions for changes. Probably the most important issue is that the procedure makes clear that all TG decisions involving land owned by BCC will be decided by an independent inspector.

Links to the minutes of the committee meeting and the BPF statement can be found at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/index.htm#tg

The minutes start with an announcement about the Judicial Review at Ashton Vale being withdrawn, as you will no doubt have seen from the press coverage this was a bit premature.

Decision time for wildlife

There is an article on the Avon Wildlife Trust website about the threat to wildlife areas from a Government review of wildlife laws.

You can see the detail at www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/news.htm - it is below the article about frogs and wildlife ponds.

Avon RIGS Group Blog

As well as their importance for wildlife some of the green spaces in Bristol are also designated as RIGS. RIGS are 'Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites'. The Avon RIGS group's aim is to identify, survey, protect and promote geological and geomorphological sites in the area of the former County of Avon.

If you are interested in the geology or geomorphology of your site then you might be interested in the group's blog at <http://avonrigsoutcrop.blogspot.com>

Litter Picking Day

I am pleased to say that several groups have now said they are interested in taking in part in this over the weekend of 19/20th May, so it looks like it will go ahead. There will be more details in future updates.

Rob Acton-Campbell

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