

8 January 2010 No 1

Happy New Year!

BPF Meeting 16th January 2010

Our next meeting is at the Vassall Centre, Gill Avenue, Fishponds BS16 2QQ

The meeting is 9.30am to 12.30pm followed by lunch and then an opportunity to visit Snuff Mills.

The venue has changed from our last few meetings. Please make sure that anyone in your group who normally attends but does not receive these emails is aware of this!

The official agenda will be sent out by Catherine next week and I shall then post it on the website. The draft is below:

9:30 9:35 Introductions and agenda - Fraser
9:35 10:00 Introducing Tracey Morgan and Parks Organisation futures - Tracey Morgan
10:00 10:45 Neighbourhood Partnerships - how they will work and their impact on parks - Andrew McGrath
10:45 11:00 Area Green Space Plans - Richard Fletcher /Jen Mackley
11:00 11:15 Tea
11:15 11:40 Central Contract decision - Rob Thurston / Tracey Morgan
11:40 11:55 Quality Monitoring and Reporting - Tracey Morgan / Rob Thurston
11:55 12:10 Events - Rob Acton-Campbell
12:10 12:30 AOB
12:30 13:30 Lunch
13:30 15:00 Snuff Mills Tour Steve Mickewright / Chris Williams

Please let us know if you have any AOB items that you wish to add.

We have also now fixed dates for the remaining meetings in 2010 they are:

Saturday 10th April

Saturday 17 July - all day conference to discuss Area Green Space Plans

Saturday 9 October

Venues to be confirmed.

Central Contract

The decision on the 'Central' contract was taken by Cabinet on 23 December; you can see the report to that meeting here: <http://tinyurl.com/yhcaeyf> The recommendations of the report were agreed.

The contract was awarded to English Landscapes www.thelandscapigroup.co.uk (Contractor C in the report). One of their managers has said that he will attend our meeting, however, his wife is due to give birth so there is a chance if the baby comes around the 16th that he won't be able to make it. In any event, as you see from our agenda, Tracey Morgan and Rob Thurston will be talking about

the decision and its impact on parks in both the central region and the rest of the city. A map showing the area to be covered by the central contract was included in Peter's presentation on the new structure to our May meeting last year; which can be seen here:
<http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/ParksStructure160509.pdf>

Cabot Tower – Brandon Hill

There was an article in the Evening Post just before Christmas about the situation with the Cabot Tower on Brandon Hill which has been closed to the public since 2007.

<http://tinyurl.com/epbrandonhill>

Events

The good news from our meeting with Jenny Crook before Christmas is that there will be an opportunity for Park Groups to apply for funding for events from Bristol City Council. This will be for events that meet the P&GSS objectives to animate parks and increase local use. This will be an extension of the current scheme to fund art events.

There are likely to be two windows to apply for funding, probably March for spring/summer events and September for autumn/winter. So if your group is planning events this year you should make sure you have at least outline plans in place by March. The procedure for booking parks for events is also being simplified and as announced at our last meeting BCC are aiming to insure small community events for a nominal fee of £5.

These changes are a direct result of pressure from the BPF and Park Groups saying that they would hold more events if the process was simplified. Events are a great way to publicise your park and your group, so go for it!

2010/11 Budget

If you have not already done so, you can still read about and give your views on the council's draft budget proposals until the 18th January by visiting www.bristol.gov.uk/budgetconsultation

As I have mentioned before the draft budget contains some good news for parks with an additional £250k for the promised 11 additional Community Park Keepers; though I notice that the latest edition of 'Our City' repeats the claim that this will provide a park keeper for 'every park in the city'. Hopefully we will find out at our next meeting how this is going to be done.

Bristol Parks Forum Leading the Country

Something I didn't foresee when we set up our website is that we would attract interest from around the country. We have had email enquiries from Warwick and Bradford, and someone from the Wyre Forest has signed up to this email list.

Fraser and Peter Wilkinson are visiting Plymouth next week to talk to them about how we do things in Bristol and the benefits that we get.

There is no doubt that the relationship that we have with Bristol Parks is something that other areas would like to follow. It seems there are going to be a lot of changes at Bristol City Council in 2010 but I'm sure that by all working together we can build upon what has been achieved over the last few years and continue to bring improvements to Bristol's parks.

Rob Acton-Campbell
BPF

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

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Saturday 10th April; Saturday 17 July; Saturday 9 October

13 January 2010 No 2

BPF Meeting 16th January 2010

The agenda for Saturday's meeting at the Vassall Centre is now on the website at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/#meetings

I hope that if you are able to make it you will also be able to join us for the afternoon walk around Snuff Mills.

BPF Membership Record & Parks Forum Directory Entry

You may remember that in 2007 Bristol Parks produced a 'Parks Forum Directory' - it can be seen at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BristolParksForumDirectory2007.pdf

Many of these entries are out of date so we would like to update it. We would also like to have a more up to date and accurate list of groups who are members of the BPF. In discussions with Raquib I have therefore produced a form which we would like all groups to complete with up to date details.

The first page is contact details for us (and Bristol Parks) the second page is for your group's entry in the Directory ie the details that you want to be published. You can copy and paste from the existing directory if that is easier.

The forms are at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BPFGGroupRecord.pdf and in Word format so that it can be filled in and emailed back to us at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BPFGGroupRecord.doc

This membership list will be kept separately to the email list that I use to send these emails. There is a space for you to give me details of anyone who would like to be added to this list, but I will not remove anyone from this list just because their name doesn't appear there.

Ashton Vale

The 'revised' planning application for the stadium can be seen at www.bristol.gov.uk/bcfcnewstadium The good news is that the 'Southlands' housing which covered a large part of the Ashton Fields SNCI has been removed from the plans. On the other hand their still seem to be suggestions about fitting an arena on the site somehow.

Daisy Field

There is more coverage in the Evening Post this evening about green spaces in Shirehampton. <http://tinyurl.com/y934pa2> The report says that the Daisy Field 'was designated as low value by Bristol City Council'. Of course since the Area Green Space Plan consultation has been delayed we don't know whether that is true or not.

The Society for the Protection of Urban Green Space

We have been asked to support this group's campaign to 'request EU legislation to protect all urban green space including public parks and gardens, sports fields, allotments, children's playgrounds and playing fields and also to guarantee continued public access to these areas'.

This seems to the committee to be a good idea, you can find more and sign up to the EU wide petition at www.urbangreenspacecampaign.org

Rob Acton-Campbell

BPF

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

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19 January 2010 No 3

BPF Meeting 16 January

The Vassall Centre proved to be a good venue (once we got in through the gate!). Catherine will be sending out the official minutes soon and I will then upload them to the website.

Tracey Morgan's main message was that there will be changes in her department but that the aim is to reduce the number of 'chiefs' and not the 'indians'. Tracey covers four areas - parks, streetscene, public protection and sport each with its own manager. The aim is to reduce costs by bringing these areas together. Tracey is keen to improve the appearance of all areas of Bristol and commented that it was no good having a nice looking park with newly planted trees next to a pile of fly-tipping in the street. Tracey is keen to get people's views before making decisions.

On Neighbourhood Partnerships there was a clear message that park groups should get involved in their local partnership. At the moment they can only 'influence' parks spending but in the future they are likely to have more power to move money between budgets in their area.

We were pleased to welcome back Richard Fletcher at his first BPF meeting for a while. His message was that while the consultation could have gone ahead this month the delay to the AGSP consultation would allow better information to be produced.

The Central Contract has been let to English Landscapes for a minimum five year period. On the scoring system based on price and quality EL came second, but the price from the highest scoring contractor was considered too low to be viable. Staff are now in the process of being transferred to EL through TUPE. Some staff are moving to be employees of BCC since part of the area that was covered by Continental is being taken 'in-house' so that the new area will align with the NPs.

English Landscapes were unable to attend the meeting but you can see a presentation about the company and how they intend to approach the contract here:

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/ELmtg160110.pdf

I gave an update on the events process and I will give more details on that in my next email. I also introduced the BPF membership form - see below.

There was an update from Ashton Vale - see

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/AshtonValemtg160110.pdf

The meeting also agreed to support the Northern Slopes Initiative in opposing and proposals for a bendy bus route across the slopes. Gary Hopkins said that he thought this was extremely unlikely to happen.

Following the meeting there was a very interesting walk around Snuff Mills, many thanks to Steve Micklewright of Snuff Mills Action Group for his time. You can see a photo here:

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/forumwalk.jpg

BPF Membership Records

The form is now available from the website at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/#membership

If you want your group to be included in the 2010 Parks Forum Directory the form must be returned by 15 February

This process will allow us to have an official list of BPF member groups. Being a member of the BPF will help you access event funding in 2010 and we hope there will be other benefits in the future. A list of groups that have returned the forms can be seen here:

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/directory.htm

There may be a time lag between forms being returned and the details appearing on the webpage.

These Emails

It seems that some people are not receiving some of these emails. I will now start to number the emails so that you will know if you have missed any. This is No 3 being the third in 2010. Past emails are on the website at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/#email but they are only uploaded at the end of each month. If you find you have missed any then please email me and I will forward any you miss. If lots are going astray I will try and find a different way of sending them.

Rob Acton-Campbell

BPF

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

BPF Meetings: Saturday 10th April; Saturday 17 July; Saturday 9 October

25 January 2010 - No 4

Community Festival and Event Fund

As a result of the discussions with Bristol Parks about events, Park Groups now have access to funding from Bristol City Council to run events in parks. This is an existing fund which has been expanded to cover park events.

Unfortunately due to a lack of resources in the events team there is only a very limited window in which to apply for this funding. Applications for any events to be held before April 2011 need to be made by 4pm on 26th February 2010! There is also a detailed application form to complete for each event.

Guidelines and the application form can be downloaded from the links below:

Introduction - www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/EventFundIntro.pdf

Fund Guidelines - www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/EventFundGuidelines.pdf

Application Form - in Word Format www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/EventFundAppForm.doc

At the moment Park Groups will still be charged the £42 booking fee for use of the park so that should be included in the costs. For small events insurance cover is available from Bristol Parks for £5 per event. To satisfy BCC auditors, signed copies of the application form are required - scanned copies of the signed sheet can be sent by email to save postage.

For further information contact – Annette Thompson on 922 3287 or for Fund Criteria queries contact Claire Teasdale on 922 4665. Claire can meet Parks people who have not applied for funds before. Both Claire and Annette have email addresses in the usual BCC format and are part of the Events team based at Colston 33.

This is a great opportunity to get funding for events to promote your park and your group so please take advantage of it if you can.

This information is also now on our website at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/#events

BPF Membership Records

A reminder that the form needs to be completed by 15 February for any group that wants to be included in the 2010 directory. The form is available from the website at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/#membership

As I mentioned in my last email completing this form will allow your group to become official members of the BPF - this will help your group apply for funding for events as described above and we hope there will be other benefits in the future. It will also help the influence of the BPF if we can show a large membership of groups, so please make sure that your group returns a form. A list of groups that have returned the forms can be seen here: www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/directory.htm

The list will be updated as I receive forms, though there may be a time lag between forms being returned and the details appearing on the webpage.

The details on the second page of the form will appear in the directory and therefore also on the web in pdf form. If you do not want your contact details published then contact details can be entered as 'c/o Bristol Parks' and Catherine or Raquib will then pass on any messages on via the details included on the first page.

Email addresses entered on the first page will be added to my list for these emails.

Rob Acton-Campbell

BPF

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

BPF Meetings: Saturday 10th April; Saturday 17 July; Saturday 9 October

26 January 2010 – No 5

A message from Peter Wilkinson...

Dear Parks Forum,

Some of you will know by now that I have decided to leave the City Council - my last day is this Thursday 28th - to set up my own green space consultancy business.

My decision to move on is in the context of latest restructuring of the service which takes effect from 1st February, as discussed at the recent Forum meeting. I have for some time had the ambition of working for myself so grabbed the opportunity when it was presented to me!

Leaving Bristol Parks after over 13 years brings mixed emotions as there is still much more to be done - and I would ideally have liked to see the completion of the Area Green Space Plans and their adoption, secure Stoke Park in the council's ownership and get those longhorn on there, develop further our apprenticeships programme and so on. However it does feel like a good time to seek fresh pastures and I am immensely proud of what my team has achieved over the past decade, making the council's parks service one of the most highly regarded in the country.....and much of our success couldn't have been achieved without the support of the forum and some fantastic park groups.

Personally, I think I am most proud of helping to establish BPF as the voice of the parks community in Bristol. When Fraser and I were speaking recently in Plymouth about how the forum has evolved since 2003, it struck me again how powerful is the agreement between BCC and BPF - and how it describes (in my experience anyway) what feels to be an unprecedented approach to accountability and transparency between a council service and its customers. It hasn't always been easy has it, but the foundations of a zesty little partnership are now very strong...

The weeks, months and years ahead are going to be challenging ones I am sure, but I will keep in touch with your further development via Rob's excellent newsletters. Rob also has my home email if anybody wishes to get in touch.

All the best,

Peter

ps

"The price of democracy is eternal vigilance"
Ben Barker.....or was it Thomas Jefferson!

Rob Acton-Campbell

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