

5 June 2012 - No 99

In this update: Parks Maintenance - Area Environment Officers Update - BIG Green Week & Festival of Nature - Health & Safety Training - Events in Parks - South Bristol Link - CPRE Bristol Group - National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces - Ping! Update

I hope you have had an enjoyable Jubilee Weekend. There are several requests for feedback in this update, please do try to find time to respond, the committee need to know that we are representing your views.

Parks Maintenance

The wet weather in April and May was a challenge to those responsible for maintaining Bristol's parks and green spaces and for grass cutting in particular. On the other hand it is not a surprise that the grass grows fast at this time of year, nor that we have some wet days.

We would like some feedback on how well you think the maintenance teams have performed this Spring - please let us have your thoughts, whether good, bad or average. It would be helpful to have feedback from as many parts of the City as possible.

It would also be useful if you could let us know whether in general you think maintenance of your park or green space is better or worse than it was two years ago.

We would be pleased to receive comments both on specific parks and on work in your area in general. We will put together a report on any feedback we received to pass to Bristol Parks. Please respond by the end of this week if possible.

Area Environment Officers Update

Richard Fletcher's briefing notes from our meeting are now on the website at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/AEONoteApril2012.pdf

Richard has told us that the two vacancies are to be advertised externally, so that anyone can apply. If you know of anyone who you think might be interested then ask them to contact Richard for more details or lookout for the vacancies on <http://jobs.bristol.gov.uk>

BIG Green Week & Festival of Nature

The BIG Green Week festival programme features one hundred events over nine days in Bristol, from Saturday 9th to Sunday 17th June. More details are at <http://biggreenweek.com>

The Festival of Nature is at the end of BIG Green Week over the weekend of 16th/17th June.

We would still like more volunteers to man the BPF stall at the festival. This is a good chance to publicise your group and your park. Please email me if you can fill one of four two hour sessions on Saturday or one three sessions on Sunday.

You can find out more about the festival at www.festivalofnature.org

Health & Safety Training

BTCV Avon will be running another Health & Safety training course for volunteers and community groups this summer.

The training covers health and safety procedures that volunteers and community groups need to follow when carrying out practical activities on land owned by Bristol City Council.

The course will be arranged on one of the following dates - 7th July, 4th August, 11th August, 8th September, 15th September or 22nd September.

If you or another member of your park group would like to attend, please email Catherine Newman catherine.newman@bristol.gov.uk with your preferred date and any dates you can't make. Catherine will then email you to confirm the time, venue, etc.

Events in Parks

As you know the BPF has been working hard to make it easier for park groups to organise events in parks to promote themselves and their green spaces.

The latest 'rules' are at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/#events and this also has links to the relevant sections of the BCC website.

Remember for small events run by park groups with the support of Bristol Parks you will not be charged for a Park Permit and BCC will provide insurance.

The other aspect of events in parks is the use of green spaces for large commercial events, such as festivals, fun fairs etc. The fees from these events form a significant part of Bristol Park's funding and in the current financial climate BCC are actively encouraging organisations to come to Bristol for these events. Obviously this will impact on the estates and City Centre sites in particular.

Clearly there is a demand for these events and those that attend them enjoy them. However, the downside is that while the event is taking place the park is not available for its normal use. A good example of this is that this weekend Castle Park was closed for the weekend, from Thursday through to Tuesday (cycle path from 7pm Friday), for a festival costing £20 a ticket and attended by some 10,000 people.

We will be talking to Bristol Parks and the events team about this in the near future, so it would be good to have your thoughts on where the right balance lies. Do you think it is right to close off the whole or part of a park for an event? Would it be acceptable so long as it was only on a limited number of days per year? Is it acceptable so long as routes through the park are kept clear? Is it acceptable in areas with more green space than the P&GSS standard but not in areas such as the City Centre where green space is limited?

South Bristol Link

The BPF has been asked for its views on the South Bristol Link road. This is one of two consultations into proposed 'Rapid Bus Transit' routes that can currently be found on www.bristol.gov.uk/consultationfinder There are links from there to various maps etc giving more details.

The South Bristol Link includes construction of new roads and will have an impact on some green spaces in South Bristol. Along with other groups, the Transport for Greater Bristol Alliance opposes the scheme; you can find their reasons on www.tfgb.org.uk/campaigns.htm#alt

The closing date for the consultation is 5pm on 29 June. If you feel that BPF should or should not respond (and if you think we should what that response should be) by Fri 15th June so that we have time to put our response together and submit it.

CPRE Bristol Group

We have received the following from the CPRE:

I'm writing to invite you all to a meeting of the CPRE Bristol district group on Tuesday 12th June, from 7.30 to 9.30 in the Greville Room at the Hen and Chicken, Southville.

I'm the director of CPRE Avonside, covering the old county of Avon, and we have district groups in the four local authority areas we cover. The district groups are volunteer committees who campaign on the issues that matter to them locally.

The Bristol group is a new group, and we're keen to publicise what we're doing and get people involved. The meeting will be to discuss the issues that CPRE Bristol will campaign on and how the group will operate. All are welcome. Our main priorities in the Bristol group are likely to be around protecting the green belt around Bristol from inappropriate development and building a better relationship between town and country in terms of sustainable food supplies, public transport, access to countryside and so on. However, we're very open to looking at issues that people in Bristol feel are important, and anyone who feels that there are significant problems that are not being addressed and that could fall into our remit should come along on June 12th to discuss them.

We would also like to be able to support BPF members in future by adding our voice in situations where there is a threat to green spaces in the city.

Best wishes,
Joe Evans
Director, CPRE Avonside
07854 741130

National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces

A reminder that the BPF is a member of the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces - www.natfedparks.org.uk This is a national group aimed at raising the profile of green spaces and encouraging the formation of forums like ours to give park groups a stronger voice both locally and nationally.

One thing that has been clear from the emails that I see relating to the NFPGS is that things seem to be much better in Bristol than in many other areas. In particular we seem to have much better access to senior officers in Parks and to Councillors. Other areas also seem to be behind Bristol in getting their Development Framework in place and are raising concerns about the potential development of their green spaces following the issue of the National Planning Framework. The fact that Bristol's Council owned parks and green spaces are now shown as important green space on the draft Site Allocations document now seems all the more important.

Ping! Update

Next Thursday 7th June Ping! Briefing and workshop has been postponed to Tuesday 12th June, 7 - 8.30pm at Unit 15, Alfred Street, The Dings.

Do you live or work near an existing outdoor Ping Pong table?

Or are you connected with one of the locations on the attached list that will be getting a PP table this July?

If so, then this workshop is for you....

Ping Pong enthusiasts (beginners, hobby players and league players) who would like to help out at a Ping! event in July 2012 are also invited to attend.

7 - 7.40 pm:

- Briefing on Ping! Bristol
- Ping! Events run by the ping team during July.
- How to organise your own event, risk assessment, monitoring etc.
- VolunteerPing!
- Table Tennis basics - rules of the game, how to score, activities to involve public pingers.

7.40 - 8.30 pm:

Practical session on the tables

Please contact Nic Ferris to book on and pass on this email to anyone you think may be interested:

07810506738 / nicola.ferris@bristol.gov.uk

A list of table locations is at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/TableLocations.pdf
www.pingbristol.net
www.facebook.com/pingbristol

Rob Acton-Campbell

BPF

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

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

08 June 2012 - No 100

In this update: TreeBristol & The Tree Forum - Steve England & Stoke Park - Festival of Nature - Know Your Kings Weston - Parks Maintenance - £3.5m for Bristol's Parks - Love Parks Week 21-29 July 2012 - Ashton Vale TVG - Quality of Life Survey - Dog Doo Display

Mostly positive news for update 100!

TreeBristol & The Tree Forum

As you travel around Bristol now it is impossible to fail to notice the number of new street trees that have been planted. There have also been many planting schemes in parks involving the local community and particularly local schools.

The latest tree planting was of a Jubilee Oak on Brandon Hill, there are photos here:
www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/brandonhill

The development of the Tree Forum over the past few years and the way that they have worked with Bristol City Council and TreeBristol as been part of this success.

If you want to get involved with the Tree Forum then the next meeting is on Monday (11th June) 6-8pm at the Council House, they are always keen to see new members.

You can find out more about the Tree Forum at www.bristol.gov.uk/treeforum The background information for the meetings contain a lot of useful documents that are well worth looking through even if you can't get to the meetings.

Steve England & Stoke Park

I am pleased to see that Steve England now has a regular column 'England's Glory' in what we must now call 'The Post'. Links to some of his recent articles are below. Anyone who has met Steve will have been struck by his enthusiasm for Stoke Park and his determination to reach out to young people.

Steve tells me that he has just finished a three month contract at Stoke Park engaging with surrounding schools and groups. He says "I have brought anti social behaviour down to a record low by engaging with park users, and the scrambler bikes have all but disappeared, and the park is in its best state of calm shall we say in its history."

It's great that his enthusiasm is now able to reach a larger audience through his articles, links to the last two are below

4 June - <http://tinyurl.com/cf3fsra>

28 May - <http://tinyurl.com/brhsklz>

Festival of Nature 16/17 June

I think we have all the slots covered now, but it would be good to have a few more volunteers,

especially for Sunday. I will send out a schedule to those who have volunteered showing who is on when early next week.

www.festivalofnature.org

Know Your Kings Weston

A reminder and a quick request about the FREE Know Your Kings Weston event that will be taking place at Kings Weston House on Saturday 16th June to coincide with the very weekend of the 300th anniversary of the commencement of Vanbrugh's Kings Weston House.

The Know Your Kings Weston day, part of the Know Your Bristol series of events, will be taking place between 10am and 4pm and is presented in partnership with the University of Bristol. It is an opportunity to come along, see inside the house, explore our exhibition and artefacts, and share your own memories, old family photographs, historical documents, slides, film or anything relating to Kings Weston, the local area or the wider city. These will join the many entries already collected as part of Bristol City Council's Know Your Place project. Archaeologists from Bristol City Council will be on-hand to explain Know Your Place and show how YOU can use it to discover more about the history of your City. Your contribution could just be an important discovery for the rest of the city!

The University of Bristol will be there to record anything you bring along and you will receive a FREE digital copy of any material you bring along to be able to share with your friends and to save for posterity. The University will also be giving demonstrations of archaeological techniques during the day - weather permitting.

There will also be short free tours of the gardens available and free refreshments are being arranged. A flyer is attached with this email if you know anyone else who might be interested in coming along or getting their old memories digitised for free.

We would like to ask if there are any volunteers who might be able to come along for a time during the day to staff the exhibition and help out? It need only be an hour or so, but whatever time you can manage we would be very grateful. Please let us know if and when you could help. We'd be really pleased to see you!

Whether you have lived close to Kings Weston all your life, or are new to the area we hope that there will be something to make a day-out of it!

David Martyn

The excellent Know Your Place website is at www.bristol.gov.uk/knowyourplace

Parks Maintenance

I am pleased to say that the response to my appeal for feedback in the last update has been mostly positive. I will send a copy of the feedback we received to Bristol Parks at the end of next week, so there is still time to send any further thoughts.

£3.5m for Bristol's Parks

The decision on which projects will get a share of the £3.5m that has been allocated by Cabinet for parks will be made at the Cabinet meeting on 4th July. The report will be available on the BCC website 2 weeks before the meeting. The report will list the projects proposed by Councillors and set out the reasoning behind the selection of projects to be funded.

I know that some Councillors worked with park groups and NP Environment sub-groups in putting in these submissions, while some worked independently so it will be interesting to see what type of projects were suggested.

Incidentally the last Cabinet meeting on 31st May decided in response to a referral by two Neighbourhood Partnerships 'That the incentive scheme recommended by the Cross Party Working Group, and agreed by the Cabinet in January 2012, be retained'.

Love Parks Week 21-29 July 2012

GreenSpace have issued a press release about this year's Love Parks week that is the week before the Olympics. The press release, which has an event in Victoria Park at the top of the list of sample events, can be seen here: <http://tinyurl.com/bmjrhjr>

If you are holding an event during that week then please do register it on their website www.loveparkweek.org.uk

Ashton Vale TVG

Tony Dyer reports on yet another apparent twist in this saga on the Bristol 24-7 website today:

<http://tinyurl.com/cbqth3c>

Quality of Life Survey

The 2011 survey is being presented at the Quality of Life Scrutiny commission on the 18th June and can be seen at:

www.bristol.gov.uk/committee/2012/sc/sc008/0618_11.pdf

I am pleased to see that satisfaction with the quality of parks and green space has improved at 83% (81% in 2010).

One item that will not be a surprise to anyone that has attended a Neighbourhood Forum is that concerns about problem dog fouling continue to increase with 78% of residents concerned (compared with only 63% in 2006).

Dog Doo Display

Having mentioned dog fouling, below is an extract from an article by Chris in the Summer edition of the Friends of Troopers Hill Newsletter 'The Hill' that I thought would strike a cord with everyone who receives this update. The full newsletter will be available at www.troopers-hill.org.uk/news soon.

For now I come to the one item of litter that really, really winds me up, and I'm sorry, but I am going to have a bit of a whinge about it, though I know it's surely to the wrong audience if you're a recipient of this newsletter. However, please humour me and help spread the word: Just as there is no such thing as the "Dog Poo Fairy", there is also no award to aspire to, for the most artistically hung filled dog poo bag. You could be forgiven for thinking though, that Troopers Hill has its own Dog Doo Display team. I find bags deposited along paths, carefully placed on rocks, delicately hung from trees between knee and face height, or, lobbed into the shrubbery, where their full glory will only be revealed come autumn, when the leaves drop away to reveal them. This utterly defies me. I just don't get it.

If someone is going to go through the less than pleasant task of picking up faeces that will break down naturally within about 4 weeks on the ground, why then leave them on the hill in a bag which will not break down for potentially 400 years, and provides a real danger to wildlife throughout that time? Plastic bags can choke wild animals, block their digestive tracts, ensnare their limbs or strangle them, and can leach chemicals into the soil as they break down. And besides which, anyone walking on the hill, who has cleaned up after their furry friend, is never far from a suitable receptacle. So why leave the waste on the hill in worse circumstances than the dog did? OK rant over

Rob Acton-Campbell

BPF

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

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

22 June 2012 - No 101

In this update: Next BPF meeting Sat July 14th - Parks Maintenance - Kingswear/Torpoint/Marksbury Road etc Development - Webpages & Facebook - The Feeder Canal Sand Martin Colony - How often should we elect our councillors? - Himalayan Balsam - Marketing on a shoestring - TreeBristol

Next BPF meeting Sat July 14th

We are now finalising the agenda for the next meeting. One item that will certainly be on it (and not in the last slot!) is the news from various groups that had to be cut from the last meeting. If there is anything that your group has been doing that you would like to share at the meeting let us know and we will try to fit you in.

Parks Maintenance

We have passed on the responses we got on maintenance to Richard Stransom, Pam Jones and Tracey Morgan. There will be further discussion on this issue at our next meeting on 14 July.

Kingswear/Torpoint/Marksbury Road etc Development - A Thank You

Len from the NSI writes in to say thanks for those who supported the NSI and other local groups efforts to change the Council and other Partners mind on the above. We now wait to see what the Council does next.

You can see the response that the BPF committee sent here:
www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BPFStatementKnowleWest.pdf

More at www.northern-slopes-initiative.co.uk/

Webpages & Facebook

While writing Len also mentioned that NSI are considering having a Facebook page he would like to hear from other groups how successful has having a Facebook and Twitter Account been for you?

What has your group's experience been - and what do you think is a successful way of operating these. If your group has taken a decision not to have a facebook page then why not? Please email Len directly at len.s.wyatt@btinternet.com

While on the subject of webpages, could you please check your group's entry on our directory at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/directory.htm to ensure it is up to date and let me know of any changes.

The Feeder Canal Sand Martin Colony

Internationally acclaimed artist Tue Greenfort has been commissioned by Foreground to create a new permanent artwork on the Feeder Canal in the form of a fully functioning Sand Martin roost in a converted shipping container.

Greenfort's work entitled THE FEEDER CANAL SAND MARTIN COLONY is sited on a low concrete platform at the side of the Feeder Canal near Netham Lock where boats sometimes moor. The platform is directly adjacent to an embayment beneath a road bridge. Sand martins have already begun to roost in core holes and drainage holes drilled in the stonework of the retaining wall which is a very different habitat to their historic habitats. Greenfort's work will be located to the left of this existing colonisation, greatly increasing the potential for the colony to expand with the hope, as suggested by the works' title, that his intervention will lead to a significant colony of the birds establishing themselves in this unexpected part of Bristol.

There is a Day Conference on 11-4pm, Friday 29th June 2012 at the Arnolfini

This conference launches the project with contributions including the artist, leading ornithologist Richard Bland, local historians and civil engineer Lloyd Turner who has constructed the roost to explore the relationship between ecology, industrial history, global trade and contemporary art that has provide the context and inspiration for the work.

The conference will be of equal interest to audiences interested in public art, ecological initiatives, urban history and ornithology.

THIS EVENT IS FREE BUT TICKETED

To book a ticket contact Arnolfini

T: 0117 917 2300

E: boxoffice@arnolfini.org.uk

The Sand Martin Colony will be installed from 29th June. It will be sited on the edge of the Feeder Canal near Netham Lock, opposite Netham Park.

How often should we elect our councillors?

There is a consultation on the BCC website asking about whether we should keep the elections by thirds or move to all out elections every fourth year.

www.bristol.gov.uk/electoralcycle

Himalayan Balsam

I have mentioned previously campaigns to reduce Himalayan Balsam, particularly

www.aiwf.org.uk/

While it is important to remove as much of the weed as possible it is also important that Bristol Parks or the landowner is informed before any activities take place.

Currently there is an experiment being run by the University to gauge the impact of HB on the pollination of native plants, so in specific areas they need some HB to be left to flower. There are sites at Eastwood Farm, Blaise and Ashton Court

Marketing on a shoestring

Venue - People Can, 1 New Street, St Judes, Bristol BS2 9DX - on Thursday 28th June 10am - 1pm

So you've launched your new group/organisation ...you're really happy and excited. But then you need to get some customers and maybe some volunteers too. How do you do this – without spending a fortune? Join us on our 90 minute presentation with Helen Dowling of Exceptional Thinking. She's going to talk to you about 100 different ways to market and promote your group/organisation for little or no cost. Interested? See below for information on how to book your place.

Barefoot Coaching have been running a series of Lottery funded free community training events. You may have already attended those. Following on from that training we hope you can join us on the 28th June for this FREE networking/training event. The agenda is as follows:

10.00am arrival and coffee

10.30am Training topic - Marketing on a shoestring

12.00pm - 1.00pm Lunch

To ensure the event is accessible we can reimburse travelling costs on production of a valid receipt - if driving, mileage can be claimed. Simply email Lynne.Miller@Peoplecan.org.uk to confirm whether you'd like to attend so we know how large the attendance is likely to be as places will be limited.

TreeBristol

The latest round of Neighbourhood Partnership meetings has some information about proposed tree planting schemes. One park in each NP has been selected for the next year.

More information is in the reports to the meeting and on TreeBristol website at www.bristol.gov.uk/treebristol which also has a report on last year's planting.

The latest TreeBristol update can be seen here: www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/TreeBristol08.pdf

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