

02 June 2014 - No 150

In this update: BPF meetings - Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve Events - Castle Park - Festival of Nature - Green Capital Partnership - TreePips - Earthed Residency

BPF meetings

The minutes for our last meeting are now on the website at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/meetings

Our next meeting on Saturday 28th June will focus on the way parks will be managed in the future and how Bristol Parks, the Neighbourhood Partnerships and Park Groups can work together in the new era of Neighbourhood Working.

Neighbourhood Partnerships are being asked to say how they want to influence grounds maintenance in the future and it is important that Park Groups are not bypassed in this process.

This is a chance to influence how parks & green spaces are managed over the next 5 to 10 years, so please make sure your group is represented.

Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve Events

Two exciting events this wonderful nature reserve.

Guided Walk

There will be a guided walk in Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve on Tuesday 17th June in the morning at 10am. It will be led by Rod Leslie, retired head of the Forestry Commission and his subject will be woodland management. He is a keen ornithologist and his book *Birds and Forestry* is acclaimed as a step towards forestry planning with management for wildlife. Rod is a founder member of "Our Forests", a group described as "a people's vision for the future of England's public woods and forests".

The walk will start at the Glenavon Park entrance. Some of the paths in the wood are steep and may be muddy.

Learn to Scythe!

Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve is hosting morning and afternoon sessions on Saturday 9th August 2014.

Learn to use the lightweight Austrian scythe with expert Chris Riley in this lovely setting in north-west Bristol. Scythes are provided! The charge is just £25 and places are strictly limited to only 6 per session.

Scythe Information sheet: www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/Scythe.pdf

Scythe Poster: www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/ScythePoster.pdf

Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve website: www.spnaturereserve.com

Castle Park

You will have seen the media coverage of the inevitable result of some 10,000 people being in Castle Park on a wet Bank Holiday weekend.

This has also highlighted the issues that have been raised at our meetings in the past about whether it is right to close the whole of a park (especially at a Bank Holiday & over half term).

A report with some photos can be seen here:

www.bristol247.com/2014/05/29/love-saves-the-day-but-can-festival-cash-save-castle-park-43081

Richard Fletcher has told us:

The organiser of Love Saves The Day will pay for reinstatement. That is what they have said publicly and to the Council and I don't have any reason to doubt it.

In terms of the reinstatement timetable, that is not clear-cut at the moment. Rule of thumb is grass seeding would take about six weeks to establish and re-turfing less so – probably four weeks. However to even start this we need to be on site preparing the ground – profiling and tilling effectively – and to start that we need a bit of a dry spell as the ground is too wet in many parts.

As parks manager I have to be mindful of the wider benefits events bring to the city in terms of quality of life, income and employment. When we say yes to any event we do run a risk of site damage because weather is so unpredictable. Up to now, for many years, we have not had a significant issue.

It is clear though as you say Fraser that we need to learn from this particular event – whether the site is suitable at all for events, whether it should have a maximum capacity, whether some areas of the park should not be available for event use, whether there is a ground protection system that can prevent damage etc – and we will do that. Although these questions have been looked at before, we haven't had this outcome before so we will absolutely be looking again.

As part of the park investment project we will look at whether investment can be made that will support events and/or mitigate any potential impacts. I need a steer first as to whether the Council sees the site as an events space into the future. I think it has to be to some degree.

I will let you know when I have a more definite reinstatement timetable.

Festival of Nature

The 'outreach' events for the Festival of Nature that have been held so far seem to have been well attended and enjoyed by those who took part. The full list of events to be held in parks and links to the Festival website can be seen at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/festival-of-nature/

There is also an interesting series of talks organised as part of the Festival, details are here: www.bnhc.org.uk/festival-of-nature/adulttalks

Don't forget to let me know if you have information you would like displayed on our stand in the

Green Forum tent.

Green Capital Partnership

The latest Green Capital Partnership newsletter can be seen here: <http://tinyurl.com/ly5rvr2>

Of particular interest might be the idea of installing Water Fountains throughout Bristol. Many parks of course used to have water fountains and I know that several park groups would like them replaced. If you would like a drinking fountain in your park let us know and we will pass the details on.

You might also be interested in Voscur's 'Painting the Town Green' event on 12th June.

TreePips

Those of you who use Social Media might like to know that TreePips are now on Facebook and Twitter and there are some great photos of the 2014 planting events.

www.facebook.com/treepipsbristol

www.twitter.com/TreePips

Earthed Residency

This is a new project that aims to encourage people into their local parks and explore their history, ecology and stories of their sites.

The start of this project is the Earthed Residency taking place at Ashton Meadows 14-18th June, the area of green space opposite the Create Centre and is a project being coordinated by the artistic team made up of a theatre producer, writer and land artist. Working with local groups, enthusiasts and specialists, the residency will explore the site and map it in a number of ways.

Everything that comes out of the earth, people bringing their stories and artefacts, specialists explaining processes and species will be documented and incorporated into an interactive exhibition in the Create Centre. There is also a fantastic design competition for people to have their 30m design mown into the site to create a piece of temporary land art.

More details are on the poster and information sheets:

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/EARTHEDposter.pdf

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/EARTHEDdetail.pdf

Fraser is meeting with the organisers of the project later this month to discuss how park groups could be involved in rolling this project out to other green spaces.

Rob Acton-Campbell
www.twitter.com/RobCrewsHole
Bristol Parks Forum
www.bristolparksforum.org.uk
2014 meeting dates: Sat 28th June - Sat 11 Oct

08 June 2014 - No 151

In this update: Festival of Nature 14th/15th June - Health & Safety Training - Eastwood Farm LNR
- Tree Forum - Council's Mapping System - Kings Weston - Old Sneed Park

Festival of Nature 14th/15th June

Full details for the festival weekend are at www.bnhc.org.uk/festival-of-nature

Our stand will be in the Green Forum tent, Avon Gardens Trust and the Tree Forum will also be represented on our stand.

There will of course be lots of other things to see and do, including 'fun tree-based activities with the TreePips team' in the Wild Bristol tent.

The Festival marks the start of Big Green Week and details of all the events planned as part of that can be seen at www.biggreenweek.com/2014-programme

Health & Safety Training

Bristol Parks have arranged two more dates for health & safety training, they will be on the following dates:

Friday 11th July

Saturday 12th July

If anyone wishes to attend these courses please email emma.bird@bristol.gov.uk or call Emma on 0117 922 3231.

Each course holds 10 people and will be held at the Create Centre from 10am until 3pm.

Completing this training will allow you to run work days and guided walks in Council managed parks & green spaces in Bristol while being covered by the Council's insurance.

Eastwood Farm LNR

I was pleased to see Savita Custead, chief executive of Bristol Natural History Consortium and

director of the Festival of Nature listing Eastwood Farm LNR as one of her five Bristol favourites on the Bristol Culture website www.bristol-culture.com/2014/06/08/my-bristol-favourites-savita-custead

Eastwood Farm is one of the lesser known of Bristol's green spaces but well worth a visit. Over the winter some new interpretation boards and two new benches were installed as part of the WildCity project.

The benches incorporate some wonderful stainless steel sculptures by Julian Warren 'Metal Gnu'. Photos of the benches and other examples of Julian's work can be seen here: www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/metalgnu.pdf

The interpretation boards were designed by Clare Chalice who has worked with many park groups in the past as dandi Creative. Clare has recently relaunched her business under the name of 'Inkwood Design' - www.inkwood.co.uk

Friends of Eastwood Farm are putting on their Wild Wednesday walks again this year and there will be a dog show on Sunday 13th July, see more at www.eastwoodfarm.org.uk

Of course the other great feature of Eastwood Farm is that it is right next to Beese's who have donated significant sums to both Friends of Eastwood Farm and Friends of Troopers Hill over the past few years - www.beeses.co.uk

Tree Forum

The next Tree Forum meeting is Monday 30th June, City Hall 18.05 prompt to 20.00. There is also a Civic Society organised talk about trees on 18th June. Full details are on the Tree Forum website at www.bristoltreeforum.org.uk

Council's Mapping System

The Council's online mapping system continues to improve with more and more information being added. A significant recent update is that the areas of parks are now shown rather than just symbols showing their location. To start you off follow this link to see green spaces in St George www.tinyurl.com/TroopersMap If you zoom in you can also see the location of entrances to the parks.

Kings Weston

Latest news from Kings Weston Action Group

Travellers

We're pleased to confirm that the travellers who camped at Kings Weston have since been moved on by the City Council and Police. The Council served notice on the remaining camper vans on Monday and the police were able to act on Tuesday to move them on. We have been working with

the Estates department to ensure there is no repeat of the problem. We have been assured that new timber bollards will be introduced to replace the rotten ones around Shirehampton Road Car Park and boulders replaced with larger, more immovable ones around the roadside.

We are keen that this remains only a temporary measure as we continue to push for a better designed frontage and approach from Shirehampton Road, but this will literally be a stop-gap until plans and funds allow. We are glad to say there has been very minimal damage to the grass and no major litter or waste problem, though we will be clearing what litter there is as part of this month's working party.

Working Party reminder

Next Saturday will be our monthly working party and we hope you can attend. It will run from 10am-3-3:30pm on Saturday 14th June and will be a change of venue from the published details. We will be returning to the 'Circle' at the end of Shirehampton Road car park where we were working last month and to ensure we finish the project we started there before moving on. We will be tackling brambles, undergrowth, laurels and saplings in the area and trying to arrest the encroachment of the grass area at a focal point of the whole estate. We will also be helping clear the litter left where the travellers camped, though this is minimal.

Please come along in suitable clothing for the weather whatever it might be on the day and ensure that you have suitable footwear. We will have some tools, but if you would like to bring your own please feel free. We hope that the City Council will be able to supply some as usual, but we should have a plentiful supply of working gloves. Bring along some lunch if you fancy, or drop in to the coffee shop at the house nearby.

History Update

We have been continuing our research into the history of Kings Weston and hunting down material from more and more obscure sources. This included a recent foray to Neath and the Neath Antiquarian Society where we discovered a pair of very interesting watercolour paintings. We have uploaded them to our web site for everyone to see here: www.kwag.org.uk/2014/06/08/historic-painting-discoveries/

The artist and date are unknown, but they are likely to date to the early Nineteenth Century, around 1800-1820. One is particularly interesting as it is the only known view of Kingsweston Inn from this period. Its early form is clear from the painting showing it with its central tower (viewing point?) before Victorian modifications reduced it in scale and replaced it with a gable. It isn't entirely clear in the artist's depiction whether the cutting and iron bridge have been constructed, but this occurred in 1821 and the implication seems to be that these predate that.

The other painting, clearly the pair to the one of Kingsweston Inn, shows Park Lodge just below it on Shirehampton Road. The lodge there today, now a listed building, replaced this earlier cottage at the gates to the private parkland. We were delighted to be able to add to the catalogue description of this item for the Neath Antiquarian Society as this painting had lost any identification of its location, but is similar to another painting held in the Bristol Record Office.

New Events!

July will see two very different free events at Kings Weston and we invite you and your family

along to them.

Firstly SUNDAY 6th July will be WILD AND FREE at Kings Weston! Wild and Free is being held in partnership with Bristol natural History Consortium and the National Trust and will be a day of family focussed events running from 11am to 4pm. The event will be focussed on the Circle, close to the end of Shirehampton Road car park. Come along on a bug hunt with our experts and see what you can uncover, or join in with our Nature Artefacts Roadshow by bringing along your strange and unusual nature finds for identification, or even just something you want to learn more about. Nature walks will run at 12pm and 2pm and help you discover the natural highlights and habitats of the Kings Weston woodlands. Or take a grab-bag and lead your own expedition, bringing back your discoveries and see how many you can collect from our identification sheets. Wild and Free should be a good woodland romp for the whole family in the company of knowledgeable experts to help uncover the park's hidden ecology.

SATURDAY 12th July will be KWAG's celebration of the BRITISH FESTIVAL OF ARCHAEOLOGY. Our exhibition will return, al-fresco, to the shell of the Echo at the end of the gardens. Come and discover more about the Kings Weston Estate with our lavishly illustrated history. Come and see what the lost statue once looked like for one of her brief returns to the plinth in the Echo, and see KWAG in action as one of our regular working parties starts clearing some of the overbearing laurel bushes nearby.

This event will also see the launch of a brand new history guide to the Kings Weston parkland, the first since 1916!! 5000 copies of the new free guide have been published in partnership with Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeology Society, and to coincide with the 350th anniversary of the Architect of Kings Weston House and the Echo, Sir John Vanbrugh.

Nearby Kingsweston Roman Villa will also be open, as well as the Kings Weston House cafe, making Kings Weston the ideal free day out for everyone! Posters for both events are attached to this email with full details. If you know anyone who you think might enjoy either of these events please feel free to pass them on!

Grant Success

We are delighted to announce that KWAG have been the recipients of a new grant of £1700 given to us by the Avon Gardens Trust. The grant is intended for the provision of a new orientation board and map what we have planned to erect close to Shirehampton Road car park. We have discussed the project with Bristol City Council Estates Department to ensure that the proposed board fits in with the existing "Heritage Estates" boards at other historic parks in the City. This will be one more step in getting Kings Weston recognised in its own right with a separate identity and an alternative experience to that at Blaise Castle Estate. As the project develops we will keep you up to date with its programme and hopefully be able to invite you all along to the unveiling!

Old Sneed Park

In addition to the two events I mentioned last time at Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve:

POND DIPPING - SUNDAY 6 JULY AT 2.30pm

Rupert Higgins, the local ecologist who wrote the management

plan for the lake, will guide us in identifying the pond life

Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult
Wellingtons and suitable sun protection are recommended
Some equipment will be available, but if you have a net and a
white plastic box please bring them with you

To book please contact Gwenda Wedge at gwendoes@hotmail.com
or call 0117 9686038

We would request donations of £5 per family group are made to cover costs

Rob Acton-Campbell
www.twitter.com/RobCrewsHole
Bristol Parks Forum
www.bristolparksforum.org.uk
2014 meeting dates: Sat 28th June - Sat 11 Oct

12 June 2014 - No 152

In this update: BPF Meeting 28th June - Green Capital Funding - Green Capital Nature Group -
Music on Troopers Hill

BPF Meeting 28th June

The agenda for the meeting on 28th June is now on the website at
www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/meetings

Green Capital Funding

We have discussed at previous meetings that Bristol being Green Capital next year will lead to
various funding opportunities for park groups.

The first of these has now been announced with an initial £10,000 being available through each
Neighbourhood partnership. More details are at www.bristol2015.co.uk/bristol-2015-grant-funding

There is also a press release on the Council's website at www.bristol.gov.uk/node/23915

The grant funding described above is being distributed through Bristol 2015 Ltd which is the
organisation specifically set up to host events and initiatives during 2015 www.bristol2015.co.uk

The Green Capital Partnership (of which BPF is a member) will be working closely with Bristol
2015 and is intended to continue to operate beyond 2015 www.bristolgreencapital.org

Green Capital Nature Group

The Nature, Wildlife and Green Spaces Action Group of the Green Capital Partnership was initially chaired by Savita Custead, who is also Director of Education and Engagement for Bristol 2015.

Savita recently stepped down as chair of the group. I am pleased to say that co-chairs are now Robin Maynard (Avon Wildlife Trust) and our own Fraser Bridgeford.

The importance of Nature issues in 2015 has been recognised by the Bristol 2015 company and Dr Bevis Watts (CEO of Avon Wildlife Trust) is Board member responsible for the 'nature' theme. He will be working closely with Robin & Fraser and also with Savita in her role as chief executive of Bristol Natural History Consortium and Richard Ennion at Bristol Parks.

Bevis has sent the following note to Nature Group members to explain how the nature programme for 2015 will be developed:

As members of the Green Capital Partnership Nature Group, I hope you will have seen the announcements today about the 2015 Board and the first funding made available by the 2015 company.

As the Board member for 'nature' I have prepared a note on how we hope to develop the nature programme for the Board to consider on 30th July, and continue to develop it thereafter. Please read this note as there is a really important role and contribution we need from the collective wisdom of the Group to develop a strategic and ambitious programme for 2015.

I know Fraser and Robin intend to convene a meeting of the Group as soon as the hiatus of busy period of the Festival of Nature and Big Green Week is finished.

Best wishes,

Bevis

Dr Bevis Watts

Chief Executive, Avon Wildlife Trust

Documents:

Nature programme development - www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/NoteBristol2015.pdf

DRAFT framework for the nature programme -
www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/Bristol2015NatureAmbition.pdf

If you want to get involved in the Green Capital Partnership and the Nature group then it is not too late for your group to join the Partnership www.bristolgreencapital.org/get-involved .

Alternatively you can feed back any comments to us and we will pass them on. In particular please let us have your thoughts on the draft framework and anything that you think should be there that isn't.

Music on Troopers Hill

Friends of Troopers Hill are holding their annual Music on the Hill event on Saturday 21st June from 6pm. This year we are joined by the fabulous Ambling Band www.theamblingband.co.uk

Bring a picnic (no BBQs please) and enjoy the views over Bristol listening to one of Bristol's favourite bands.

Find out more on the Friends of Troopers Hill website at www.troopers-hill.org.uk. Our latest newsletter is also available at www.troopers-hill.org.uk/news/Summer14.pdf

*** Don't forget to visit the BPF stand at the Festival of Nature this weekend ***

Rob Acton-Campbell
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23 June 2014 - No 153

In this update: BPF Meeting 28th June - Grounds Maintenance Proposals - Tree Planting in Parks - Badock's Wood - Create a Communal Garden - HighWaterLine Bristol

BPF Meeting 28th June

A reminder that the agenda for Saturday is on the website at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/meetings

Grounds Maintenance Proposals

As you will have seen the major part of Saturday's meeting will be about 'How parks can work in the future with less money but more input from the Community'

As a part of this Bristol Parks are proposing to bring all Grounds Maintenance 'in-house' when the current contracts end in February next year. The proposal is to run the service in-house for two years to March 2017, with a review after the first year to decide whether to continue on that basis or to contract out all or part of the service from 2017 onwards.

The aim is to allow more flexibility to respond to requests for changes in maintenance and to be able to minimise the impact of the £500k budget cut, that is due to take effect next year, by removing the costs of contract administration.

The detailed proposals are going to Cabinet for approval on Tuesday 1st July, and can be seen at Agenda item 7 in the papers for the meeting on the Council's website at: www.bristol.gov.uk/committee/2014/ua/agenda/0701_1800_ua000.html

These proposals will form part of the discussions at our meeting. If you or your group wish to make a statement to Cabinet about the proposals then the deadline is 12.00 on the day before; so there will be time to do this after our meeting.

The BPF committee met Tracey Morgan and Di Robinson to discuss some of the issues around this last week. One thing that was clear from that discussion is that there is a genuine desire to give Park Groups and Neighbourhood Partnerships more say in how parks are managed and to give more freedom for groups to carry out work in their own parks.

Tree Planting in Parks

As an example of how allowing groups to do more in their own parks might work there are changes being proposed to the way tree planting is managed both within parks and in streets.

A major part of the proposals is that groups will be able to propose and put together their own tree planting plans for a park (with suitable consultation) and then either organise their own tree planting (including buying their own trees) or commission TreeBristol to plant the trees. This would enable tree planting to proceed in more parks and remove the current block caused by the lack of capacity of Tree Officers to produce detailed tree planting plans for all those parks who want to plant more trees.

There will not be time to discuss these proposals in detail at our meeting, but they will be discussed in detail at the Tree Forum meeting at City Hall on Monday 30th June at 6.05pm. The full details of the proposals, including proposed revised prices for tree planting, can be seen in the papers for the meeting on the Tree Forum website at www.bristoltreeforum.org.uk

If you or your group have any comments on the proposals please email us and Hugh will be able to pass them on - or better still you may wish to attend the Tree Forum yourself. Clive Stevens as Chair of the Tree Forum is keen to get the views of Park Groups on the proposals.

Badock's Wood

You may be interested in the following upcoming events in Badock's Wood:

HERITAGE & ARCHAEOLOGY WALKS

(poster here: www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BadocksArchaeology.pdf)

Walk through Badock's Wood on Thurs 17th July 7.00 - 8.00 p.m. and repeated on Wed 23rd July - 11.00 a.m. - 12.00

Part of the Bristol Festival of Archaeology

Discover the history of Badock's Wood by joining Alan Aburrow (Friends of Badock's Wood) on an historic tour including a Bronze Age burial mound

Meet at the Lakewood Road entrance to Badock's Wood. This entrance is by postcode number BS10 5HW at Grid reference ST 57972 77451.

Walks are free of charge. All welcome

See Bristol Festival of Archaeology Leaflet for more information or
www.fobw.org.uk tel: 0117 962 1751

POND MANAGEMENT

Sunday 21st September 2014, 2.00 p.m.

Meet at Northern Gateway, Doncaster Road

The pond is being remodelled and volunteers will be expected to be able to dig, lift buckets of soil and possibly even get into the pond!

Please wear sturdy footwear, bring suitable clothing - waterproofs or sunhats etc. and a drink

We will provide tools, gloves and training

Over 16s only for this activity please

Please email for more information – fobwsecretary@yahoo.co.uk

Create a Communal Garden

Silver River www.silverriver.tv a TV production company based in London, are developing a new series with the working title Garden Republic and are currently looking for a dynamic residential street to film the series with. The series will follow the journey of a group of neighbouring homeowners transforming their own private back gardens into an amazing communal garden over the course of 12 months.

They say: 'After banishing their own garden fences, we hope the residents will work together and, with the help of gardening experts, create a real life Garden of Eden. This is going to be a lovely gardening series which will celebrate community spirit and be an enjoyable experience'.

If you or anyone you know might be interested then please contact Vicki Howarth
Victoria.Howarth@Silverriver.tv

HighWaterLine Bristol

Following the talk on this by Isobel Tarr our last meeting, the dates for marking the line around Bristol have now been finalised.

You can see details on their website at bristol.highwaterline.org

Rob Acton-Campbell

www.twitter.com/RobCrewsHole

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