

10 May 2009

Next Parks Forum meeting:
Saturday 16th May - at Windmill Hill City Farm 9.30am.

Agenda:

9:30 Parks Re-organisation
10:30 AGSP plan - update for each area and implication for downturn
11:30 Quadron Startup comments and feedback
11:45 Town Green applications update
12:00 Festival of Nature
12:10 AOB
12:30 Lunch

Please email info@bristolparksforum.org.uk if you have any AOB items you wish to be included.

Bristol Festival of Nature

www.festivalofnature.org

BPF are again intending to have a stall at the festival, the dates are 6th/7th June. There will be more details at the meeting and we will again be asking for volunteers to man the stall – the more volunteers we get the less time each person has to do! If you are able to help but will not be there on Saturday please let us know. Please also let us know if you have any material you would like displayed on our stand.

South Purdown

There was an interesting article in the Evening Post this week about how much BCC spent fighting for the footpath diversion on South Purdown to allow them to fence off part of the open space as school playing fields. See <http://tinyurl.com/cdbo3x>

Private Eye

I hear Bristol's parks got a mention in Edition No 1234 on page 11 under the title 'Park Strife'. If you have a copy could you bring it along on Saturday?

Natural England Environmental Volunteering Research

A message from the Institute for Volunteering Research:

The Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) is carrying out a piece of research on behalf of Natural England to explore volunteering in environmental and conservation organisations in the South West of England. As part of this, we'd really like to hear about your experiences.

We'd be very grateful if you could spare 5 minutes to complete a short online survey which will explore these issues. You can do so by clicking on this link which will take you to the survey – (or copy and paste it into your web browser)

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=AGMVNF0luCYmOaFKcTduMw_3d_3d

Once completed, please click on 'done' and the survey will automatically be sent to IVR. All the responses in this survey will be treated in the strictest confidence and no individual respondent will be identified in any report based on the survey. The survey deadline is the 22nd of May.

By completing the survey you have the opportunity to be entered into a prize draw to win one of three £25 book vouchers.

If you have any questions please contact Jennifer Russell at IVR on Jennifer.russell@volunteeringengland.org . You can find out more about IVR at www.ivr.org.uk and Natural England at www.naturalengland.gov.uk

Rob Acton-Campbell
BPF

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

BPF Meeting Dates: 16th May, 25th July, 31st October

17 May 2009

Saturday's BPF meeting

The minutes of the meeting are being written up by Catherine at Bristol Parks and will be issued in due course. In the meantime here are some notes on the main issues that were raised and some links to additional information:

Parks Re-organisation

Peter Wilkinson ran through the new structure and updated us with which posts had been filled and where there were still vacancies. He acknowledged that for some areas the fact that posts had not been filled when the new structure came into operation on 1st April meant that there was a vacuum with groups having no clear point of contact.

I hope to have a copy of the new structure on the website later in the week. There are still two Community Park Officer (CPO) posts to be filled (Central and North) interviews for these posts are due next week. Caroline Hollies, who has been appointed as Area Park Manager (APM) for Central, is on maternity leave looking after her new daughter Christina. Clare Adams, who has done an excellent job as CPM in the East over the last few months, has been appointed to cover the Central area until Caroline returns. A new Parks Operations Manager (POM) has been appointed as has a new Community Development Officer (CDO) both will take up their posts in a month or so. Peter

also reported that he will be interviewed for his own job next month.

South and Central Contracts

While the North and East Areas are now maintained by 'in-house' teams, South and Central will remain contracted out. Peter asked for feed back on the performance of Quadron who took over the South contract in February, there were a few issues raised in particular parks but the overall impression seemed positive. There were also comments that the performance of Continental Landscapes in the Central area had improved this year. Peter outlined the time-line towards the award of the new contract for this area which is to be in place by February 2010 when the current contract ends.

There will be two opportunities for BPF members to get involved. First (following a request from Alison) groups in the Central area will have an opportunity to check the maps/specifications for their parks that will be included in new contract, this will be June/July. Secondly a representative from the BPF will be able to get involved in the selection of the new contractor in the same way as Roland did for the selection of Quadron for the South. Please email info@bristolparksforum.org.uk if you would like to be involved.

AGSP Progress

Richard Fletcher presented a review of progress on the Area Green Space Plans. There is currently a lull in the 'stakeholder' consultation but this will start again in June and you should be contacted with dates for any outstanding meetings in your area in the next few weeks. The core sessions have been completed in most areas but many site specific meetings have yet to take place. Some of the delay has been caused by Sam Parry leaving for a job in London.

It is likely that the public consultation will now take place from January 2010, rather than the Autumn. This is mainly because the BDF team have yet again put back the dates for their consultations on the 'site allocations'.

Rapid Transit Routes

One of the issues raised in the discussions was the difficulty in finding out what is happening about proposals for rapid transit routes and how lack of knowledge is impacting both the AGSP, BDF and other ongoing consultation processes particularly in South Bristol. Apparently as well as threats to green corridors at the Malago and along Colliter's Brook there is a plan for a route diagonally across Hengrove Park.

Chocolate Factory Site

Gary Hopkins was able to give us an update on this site which adjoins the Bristol to Bath Railway Path. As you may know the planning application was approved, but the development proposed the use of two plots of land owned by BCC which are adjacent to the Railway Path and part of what is a

linear park. There was a public consultation on the sale of this land, details are at <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/bristolrailwaypathpublicconsultation>

Gary reported that the sale of this land was now considered to be a key decision to be made by executive members rather than officers. He said that he was unhappy with how this issue had been dealt with in the past but that the position was now that there was a scheme with planning permission that was generally thought to be beneficial to the area.

Gary stated that the smaller area 'Plot 1' had been leased to the Chocolate Factory in the past so could be considered as part of that site, also that without this land the development would not happen. It had therefore been decided to sell this land.

The larger 'Plot 2' runs along the cycle path and was mainly wanted for the multiple accesses to the 'Cycle Houses'; it was the proposed lease of this land that the BPF objected to in our statement agreed at our last meeting <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BPFRailwayPathResponse.pdf>

Gary said that there would now be a separate consultation on this land with two options - one with the multiple access ways and one with a reduced number of access points crossing the land. This consultation would be through the 'Ask Bristol' e-consultation system. I shall send you the link when it goes live.

Town Green Applications Update

The Rights of Way and Greens Committee considered the Town Green Application for Castle Park on 27 April, Members voted unanimously in favour of deferring the decision because they were not satisfied that they had been provided with sufficient information regarding the status of the land. It was agreed that the matter would therefore be given further consideration at the meeting at 2pm on Monday 27th July 2009. Minutes of the meeting can be seen here: www.bristol.gov.uk/committee/2009/wa/wa005/0427_mins.pdf

Gary Hopkins stated that it was the current administration's aim to restrict development at Castle Park to the area of the existing buildings.

Several other people at the meeting reported that Town Green Applications were in progress. The public inquiry on the park in Whitchurch has been deferred – report here: <http://tinyurl.com/qzpxw3>

There was a general discussion on the fact that issues such as the rapid transit routes, the large scale of the proposed development at Castle Park and the sale of Filwood Park without proper consultation had led to Town Green Applications being the only way people felt that they could protect green areas.

Festival of Nature 6th and 7th June 2009

www.festivalofnature.org

We are looking for volunteers to be at the stall over the weekend and are asking if possible that those volunteers take a two hour slot. This will give you an opportunity to promote the good work that your group is doing as well as the BPF. We would like to get representation over the period

from as many BPF members as possible. If you would like to volunteer please reply to info@bristolparksforum.org.uk with your name, the BPF affiliated group that you are part of and the slots for which you are available from the list below:

Sat 10-12, 12-2, 2-4, 4-6
Sun 10-12,12-2, 2-4, 4-5

We would also be pleased to hear from you if you can take on organising the setting up of the stall which will probably be on the Friday and/or the dismantling on the Sunday.

The Big Lunch 19th July

Ben Barker highlighted 'The Big Lunch' that is to be held on 19 July and reported that it was hoped that there will be a picnic in every green space in Greater Bedminster on that day. He urged that everyone should hold a lunch in their park. More details of the Big Lunch are at www.thebiglunch.com

Love Parks Week 25 July to 2 August

www.loveparksweek.org.uk

GreenSpace's annual awareness raising campaign, Love Parks Week, has now been launched for 2009. They are asking as many people as possible to get into parks between 25 July and 2 August to join their campaign for continued investment and support for these valuable assets.

You can register your events on their new website: they will be using the information gathered from the events registered online to call for continued investment and support for parks and green space.

Draft Protocol: Options when working 'High Value' Trees

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/ProtocolHighValueTreesDRAFT.pdf

Hugh highlighted this document which seems to suggest felling should be the first option considered when trees are considered to be a risk. Hugh urged anyone with an interest in trees in the streets or in their parks to get involved in the Bristol Tree Forum which is working towards a tree strategy for Bristol more details via www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/trees.htm

Save our Green Spaces

Sue suggested that The Forum should become a member of this group but it was agreed that we need more information and Alison is contacting them. The email that the group sent out and a copy of their manifesto can be seen via the link below . Your group may wish to consider joining and / or attending the meeting.

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/SoGS_MANIFESTO.pdf

A few things not covered at the meeting...

The Redevelopment of Kingswear Road, Torpoint Road and the College Site at Marksbury Road

This was mentioned briefly during the discussions on the number of consultations that were occurring in South Bristol. This one is being carried out by a London-based architecture practice FAT. The consultation documents can now be seen online at <http://tinyurl.com/pgl2fp>

These proposals include building on part of the Northern Slopes Proposed Local Nature Reserve which is also designated as an SNCI.

See also www.northern-slopes-initiative.co.uk

A New Park

Something Hugh meant to mention at the meeting was that the site that the Cycle City team are currently using as a depot on Station Rd, Ashley Down, will be given to the community as a park when they've finished. This was news to Peter Wilkinson when Hugh mentioned it later.

Colliter's Brook Trek Sunday May 24 10am to Lunchtime

Organised by Helen Adshead (as in previous years) the walk will begin at CREATE Centre at 10am and follow Colliter's Brook through Ashton Vale with a pick up point at 11am at Ashton Vale Club for Young People and then continuing on up to Hanging Hill Woods with a 'bring your own' picnic to finish. More details at <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/CollitersBrook.pdf>

A message from the BBC:

Have you ever wondered how you could get greater coverage for your group on the BBC?

Are you thinking of having an event, perhaps as part of the Dirty Weekend, Green Balloon Club or Springwatch and want to get it on the telly?

As part of the BBC's Breathing Places campaign we are staging Storytelling sessions at BBC Bristol in May.

The aim is to give a better idea of what News Editors are looking for when planning a programme - what they need and what they don't!

We'll also reveal how you can get your news story on the BBC's local and regional output.

The event is free but places are limited and will be issued on a first come, first served basis; please

feel free to forward this on to other groups or partners you work with, you feel might like to attend.

There are two such workshops in the BBC West region:-

- * 28th May, 10am-2.30pm: SON&R Centre, BBC Bristol, Whiteladies Rd BS8 2LR
- * 23rd June, 10am-2.30pm: SON&R Centre, BBC Bristol, Whiteladies Rd BS8 2LR

If you would like to come please e-mail trish.campbell@bbc.co.uk with the details below as soon as possible which session you'd like to attend (in order of choice) with full contact details .

Finally I would like to say thank you for all the kind comments I received at the Forum about these emails. Please do let me know if there is anything else that you think other groups will be interested in and I will try to include it.

Rob Acton-Campbell
BPF
www.bristolparksforum.org.uk
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New Parks Structure

Peter's presentation from Saturday (with a few tweaks) can now be seen in pdf format at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/ParksStructure160509.pdf

Festival of Nature 6/7th June

We need more volunteers!

The opening time on Sunday is 11am so we now have 4 two hour sessions on Saturday and 3 on Sunday.

The current timetable is:

Friday

Set-up (from 2pm) - Rob (I would like someone else to give me a hand)

Saturday

10-12 Len NSI

12-2 Alison RCAS,

2-4 *volunteer needed*

4-6 Rob & Susan FoTH

Sunday

11-1 Hugh MRPG

1-3 *volunteer needed*
3-5 Fraser Castle Park

Take down - Fraser

Please email info@bristolparksforum.org.uk if you can help. Ideally we would like two groups for each session. If you have anything you would like displayed then either take it along on the Saturday morning or let me know so that I can sort how to get it from you. I will be at the Colliter's Brook Trek on Sunday (10am to Lunchtime starting from CREATE) so that is one opportunity.

What is a genuine consultation?

The question of what consultations means in practice has come up at recent meetings with several people feeling "consulted out". We should not allow the council just to "go through the motions" of consultation. Vassili Papastavrou www.BristolStreetTrees.org provided this definition from Lord Wolfe (in a 2001 judgment regarding the Government's nuclear power consultation).

“To be proper, consultation must be: undertaken at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage; it must include sufficient reasons for particular proposals to allow those consulted to give intelligent consideration and an intelligent response; adequate time must be given for this purpose; and the product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is taken”.

Quite simple really and a good yardstick to judge Bristol consultations.

Park Group Events

This didn't get mentioned at the meeting but hasn't been forgotten. I am still in discussions with Peter and Jenny but we also need to talk to our new CDO and the CPOs once they are all in post. I hope we will have something to discuss at the next meeting.

Other Events in Parks

The example from Saturday of the Fun Fair at Greville Smyth Park which appeared without the park group being consulted suggests that the whole licensing system needs review. Please let us know your experience – are groups being consulted about events? Are events being held in your park that you consider inappropriate? Is damage being repaired?

Save our Green Spaces

I mentioned this group in the update on the meeting, their website is now live at www.saveourgreenspaces.org

YANSEC

We currently have a project in progress at Troopers Hill that is funded by YANSEC (Yanley and North Somerset Environment Company) www.yansec.org.uk . This is the group that gets contributions from Viridor Waste Management, the landfill operator at Yanley, through landfill tax credits. It can then distribute these funds for projects within 10 miles of Yanley. Since the site at Yanley has closed YANSEC will be wound up. However they still have some funds available, so if you have a project that can be completed before mid 2010 it would be worth contacting them. YANSEC will give you up to 90% of the project costs.

Details of the project on Troopers Hill (which is happening much more slowly than we had hoped) can be seen at www.troopers-hill.org.uk/yansec08.htm

Rob Acton-Campbell

BPF

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

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Festival of Nature 6/7th June

Our stand will be in the Green Forum Tent on Anchor Square.

***** We still need more volunteers *****

The current timetable is:

Friday

Set-up (from 2pm) - Rob (I would like someone else to give me a hand)

Saturday

10-12 Len NSI

12-2 Alison RCAS,

2-4 ****volunteers needed****

4-6 Rob & Susan FoTH

Sunday

11-1 Hugh MRPG

1-3 Sharon Ashton Vale Heritage

3-5 Fraser Castle Park

Take down - Fraser

Please email info@bristolparksforum.org.uk if you can help.

Ideally we would like two groups for each session, so it is not too late to volunteer for any of the sessions but obviously we would be particularly pleased if you can cover early Saturday afternoon. If you have anything you would like displayed then either take it along on the Saturday morning or

let me know so that I can sort how to get it from you.

Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Needs Survey

Bristol City Council is working to build a thriving 'Third Sector' - the government's term for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises.

As part of this commitment BCC is commissioning a set of Voluntary and Community Sector ('VCS') Infrastructure Support Services for a minimum period of three years from October 2010.

A Needs Assessment with all stakeholders is happening during May, June and July 2009.

They want to hear from all parts of Bristol's voluntary and community sector; this includes Park Groups.

There is an on-line survey you can complete. Please complete the survey and have your say.

More details via: <http://tinyurl.com/m7jgkw>

GreenSTAT update

Green STAT GreenSpaces visitor survey system, which records users' views of their local parks and green spaces, has recently been updated. Local authorities can now benchmark against other local authorities to see how their parks compare. This system is now being used by many local authority park managers to provide evidence and justify budgets for parks.

Bristol is on this system (though they still think there is a county called 'Avon') so please use it to record your views about the condition of your local parks.

www.greenstat.org.uk

You can also pass information to Bristol Parks via their Park Monitoring Form which can be downloaded from http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/monitoring_form.pdf

Volunteers available 25th September

A message from CSV <http://www.csv.org.uk/services/employee+volunteering>

I am researching volunteering opportunities for 4 teams each of around 20 volunteers.

The teams are Deloitte employees who will be volunteering in the Deloitte Community Day on Friday September 25th. In the Bristol area, I will find the company 6 volunteering opportunities from which they will select 4; one for each of their planned 4 teams (each of 20 participants). So if you put forward a volunteering opportunity for this event, you will have to await the company's decision before being sure that you will receive a team on that day. (However, if your project is not chosen, I may have other teams in the future that would

like to consider your task). The teams are very keen that their activity should make a real difference in their community and would prefer an environmental project.

If you know of any project that might benefit from these volunteers, please contact me to discuss this further. (Little work is involved in putting forward a task for consideration).

Thanks

Pat Walmsley
Project Officer, CSV Employee Volunteering

Email: patwalmsleycsv@tiscali.co.uk

Events in Parks

Peter Wilkinson has responded to my last email by saying that he believes that FROGS were consulted on the fun fair by Julian Cox in mid March but offered no feedback apart from via Cllr Sean Beynon who was asked to speak to Jenny (Parks' Events Licensing Officer). However he adds that Parks are going to regularise consultation and communications procedures in the light of this event in GSPk.

South Bristol Riverscapes Project

The Colliter's Brook Trek in the sunshine last Sunday was very enjoyable and informative, there are some photos here: <http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/natureinthecity/AshtonVale/Colliters2009.htm>

South Bristol Riverscapes Project which was developed by Bristol Living Rivers will soon have its own website but in the meantime you can see details of future walks here: <http://tinyurl.com/blr-walks> The next is the Avon New Cut Trek, July 26th, 10.30am to lunchtime, meet CREATE Centre.

Of course most of Bristol's parks and green spaces have rivers or streams running through them or near them (even if the stream is currently hidden underground as is Colliter's Brook in Greville Smyth Park). If you would like to get involved in a clean up of your local stream or river or join the fight against invasive weeds then email the Living Rivers team at environment@bristol.gov.uk and they will put you in touch with the relevant people.

Rob Acton-Campbell
BPF

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Festival of Nature 6th and 7th June www.festivalofnature.org

The Big Lunch 19th July www.thebiglunch.com

Love Parks Week 25th July to 2nd August www.loveparksweek.org.uk