

23 May 2010 – No 15

Hi

A slightly longer update than usual, I am catching up after being on holiday.

Last BPF Meeting

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

New Cabinet

You may have seen that there have been some changes in the responsibility of Executive Members since the elections. Gary Hopkins is now responsible for transport. We are told that he still has strategic responsibility for parks (ie the Parks & Green Spaces Strategy) while the operational aspects of parks are now covered by Bev Knott who is Executive Member for Neighbourhoods.

Bristol Festival of Nature 12th and 13th June 2010

There is more More information about the festival at www.festivalofnature.org and you can download a poster here: www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BFNPoster.pdf

Don't forget, Fraser is putting together a rota for the BPF stand to cover the two days in 2 hour slots, so please email info@bristolparksforum.org.uk to let us know your preferred day and time.

Stoke Park

As I have mentioned before BCC are in the process of purchasing Stoke Park. If you would like to learn more about the park then Steve England (who knows as much about wildlife in Stoke Park as anyone) has offered to lead a guided walk for BPF members. It would be on the evening of Thursday 1st July. If you or anyone you know are interested then please email me and I'll let you know the meeting point.

Steve recently made the national press through feeding one of the wild squirrels see <http://tinyurl.com/33by3pz>

Invasive Weed Clearing Events

Katherine Bubb of the Avon Invasive Weeds Forum has written with details of two Invasive Weed Clearing events that they are holding. The first is at Frampton Cotterell on Saturday 26th June and the second is at Eastville Park on Sat 17th July. More details and meeting points etc are on these

posters: www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/AIWFJune.pdf and
www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/AIWFJuly.pdf

You can contact Katherine or Victoria Freke via email at info@aiwf.org.uk for further information on this event or if you or members of your group would be interested in assisting with future events or invasive weed surveys in the local area. There is also further information available on www.aiwf.org.uk

Outdoor Table Tennis

I received the following from Nic Ferris, Sports Development Officer, (Health Walks)

I'm emailing as I thought you'd be interested in, and able to cascade to parks groups, some information on outdoor table tennis facilities. I was contacted yesterday by someone writing a piece for the Guardian on Table tennis (it's recent increase in popularity and projects in both London and Bristol) and I thought it would be worth spreading the news and getting people thinking about it as a possibility for their local park.

You may know that when I worked in Barton Hill on the GroundForce project that we had 2 concrete table tennis tables installed in East Bristol:

- 1) Gaunts Ham Park
- 2) The Dings Park

These 2 tables were requested by local residents and authorised and paid for by BCC, headed up by myself.

Another table has recently been installed in The Netham and in St. Pauls residents have requested a table in St. Agnes Park as part of it's regeneration (completed by June this year)

If there are more residents / local parks groups across Bristol that like the idea of having one in their local park or outside their local youth centre (or even on some derelict hard standing!) they could make sure their desires are heard as part of the green spaces strategy, other local consultation process (eg. pathfinders play park improvements) or by talking to their CPO.

I don't have a source of funding for this facility but I did want to bring it to the attention of parks groups in case it was something they hadn't thought of that would enhance their local green space / park - you never know if there might be an appropriate local small grants fund they could tap into.

If this is something more folk would like to see then I'm sure BCC would support funding applications by local groups (I am happy to liaise between groups and parks officers on this).

There may also be the option of designating funding towards tables if there is parks improvements planned for a particular area and residents suggest it at the consultation stage (eg. as has happened in St. Pauls in St. Agnes Park and The Netham in Barton Hill).

There is more information at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/OutdoorTableTennis.pdf

If you are interested you can contact Nic on 07810506738 or nicola.ferris@bristol.gov.uk

Ashton Vale Town Green Enquiry

As you may have seen in the press this is now in progress, there was a report on the BBC at <http://tinyurl.com/2wokql>

There was some information about a recent Town Green Application in the The Society for the Protection of Urban Green Space Newsletter it says:

An important precedent for the protection of urban green spaces in the UK has been set by the Supreme Court Ruling of 3rd March 2010 which can be studied at:

http://www.supremecourt.gov.uk/docs/UKSC_2009_0167_JudgmentV2.pdf

An entire golf course was held to be a Town Green because dog-walkers walked their dogs on it "as of right". They met the test of using the land as of right for 20 years because they did not walk their dogs secretly or by the use of force against the owners, nor did they use the course in reliance on any actual permission.

The Open Spaces Society has a useful list of earlier cases at

<http://www.oss.org.uk/village-greens/>scroll 2/3 down the page to "Court Cases".

The developers point of view on this ruling is given in an interesting and informative article at:

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/story.aspx?storycode=6509294>

I was also recently sent this article on a related subject:

Reasons behind neighbourhood activism over loss of open space

New Dutch research has investigated the composition and strategies of local activist groups who oppose changes to land use. The results indicated that activists tend to have a higher level of education and live in densely populated areas. They most frequently use awareness-raising strategies, especially when fighting new housing projects.

Although the effect of local activism is prominent in the public eye, it is an underexplored aspect of planning. Previous research has studied the motives behind activism and explored how politics might overcome local obstruction but little has been done on the nature of local opposition groups (LOGs) themselves or their strategies.

The study designed a self-administered survey to investigate the organisational form of LOGs and how this relates to the nature of the

project they contest. It was distributed to Dutch LOGs that specifically fight the loss of open space. 51 responses were obtained from the main actors in the groups.

The main concerns of LOGs are losses of natural resources (73 per cent), identity of the place (65 per cent) and quality of life (61 per cent). The researchers noted that these concerns tended to be more abstract which might be in anticipation of political language, i.e. they refrain from expressing their concern too concretely because politics is primarily concerned with bigger issues.

In 83 per cent of cases the most important actor in the LOG lived adjacent to the project site. 39 per cent of respondents had a master's degree, which is significantly greater than the national average of 11 per cent.

The types of land use that were most contested were housing sites (47 per cent) and commercial sites (28 per cent), which included office parks and manufacturing developments. There was a greater likelihood that an LOG would exist in areas with dense population, such as urban fringes, probably because an existing lack of open space increases concern about further loss.

The strategies used the most by LOGs (reported by over 50 per cent) were collecting signatures, distributing flyers, placing items in newspapers and websites. The most costly strategies were applied the least, such as installing equipment for recreational use, commissioning research on effects and suing. Interestingly, procedures and law suits were cited by many respondents as strategies they plan or expect to apply. A large number of respondents reported that they attended municipal council meetings and debates, but indicated this strategy had little success.

Further analysis into the link between LOGs and the nature of the project indicated that LOGs that protest against housing projects have a significant bias towards using awareness-raising strategies. Strategies based around law suits on nature protection legislation and environmental legislation were used more frequently for projects put forward at the provincial level compared with projects initiated by the municipality.

The research has provided previously unknown insights into LOGs but many questions still remain. One of the most important is: can the effectiveness of LOGs be measured and/or the final effects of LOG efforts quantified? What is clear is that LOGs are highly present in local planning processes and need a more careful and intelligent evaluation than merely considering them as 'irritating' activists.

Source: van Dijk, T. & van der Wulp, N. (2010). Not in my open space: Anatomy of neighbourhood activism in defence of land use conversion. *Landscape and Urban Planning*. 96:19-28.

Contact: t.van.dijk@rug.nl

Area Green Space Plan Consultation

This consultation is due to start on 14th June alongside the BDF Site Allocations consultation. The consultation events are being organised through the Neighbourhood Partnerships. There will be more details in future updates.

Rob Acton-Campbell

BPF

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

BPF Meetings:

Saturday 17 July; Saturday 9 October - venues to be confirmed

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Area Green Space Plan Consultation

As I said in my last update, the consultation on this is due to start on 14 June and will run alongside the BDF Site Allocations consultation. The consultation will run until 29 October.

The consultation events are being organised through the Neighbourhood Partnerships and there will be a central drop in session for people to view plans for the whole City.

You can see more about Site Allocations on the BDF website at <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/bdf>

There is also lots of useful information on the Bristol Neighbourhood Planning Network website at www.bristolnnp.net

As far as the Area Green Space Plans are concerned there are some documents now available for download at <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/agsp>

The page describes the documents as 'A summary of the main themes arising from the stakeholder process with local residents is available for each Neighbourhood Partnership Area'. In fact three of these are not yet available but 'coming soon'.

Those that are there give a summary of the issues raised in the area in general and also in particular green spaces. There is also a brief description of the spaces (though the one for Badock's Wood is written in code!). Some spaces that you might expect to be there aren't, most notably Castle Park in the Cabot & Clifton NP.

There is also a big gap in Knowle where 'This report does not consider or refer to the area within the Knowle West Regeneration Framework Area. This area includes some significant open spaces including the Northern Slopes, Filwood Park, Filwood Playing Fields.'

There is more information about what is going on in Knowle West on the Northern Slopes Initiative

website at www.northern-slopes-initiative.co.uk (click on 'News, Blog and Events'). In particular, The Knowle West Residents Planning Group (including the Northern Slopes Initiative) is holding consultations on their Neighbourhood Area Plan for the Knowle West Regeneration Framework area with the last session being at the City of Bristol College, Marksbury Road on 3rd June, 7-8.30pm

Also mentioned on their webpage is the fact that the NSI have serious concerns about the Kingswear/Torpoint/Marksbury/Novers development that BCC are pushing forward and the threat that it poses to parts of the Northern Slopes.

Woodland Flowers

While talking of the Northern Slopes you might be interested in this from Len:

"Have park groups with remnants of old woodland that hasn't been disturbed for say over 50 years - checked the flowers in their wooded areas?"

The reason I mention it is that I have been looking more closely at areas which weren't dug up for allotments during the second world war on the Northern Slopes - and have come across some interesting plants - yellow archangel, dogs mercury amongst others, which aren't found in the younger parts of the woodlands. It is something that I have missed up to now, as the natural tendency is to think that being in the middle of Knowle West/Bedminster there can't be anything of interest. The best time to look it is now, or although some flowers may be going over."

Endangered Species: Free range children

You might be interested in an article in the Times that has been highlighted on the Troopers Hill Forum at <http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/discuss.htm> It says 'Look back in sadness this Bank Holiday, and observe too many children who - adept as they are at video games and vogueing around the mall - will never make a den in heath or hedge.'

Another reason why we must get involved in the AGSP process and protect Bristol's wild green spaces such as the Northern Slopes.

Stoke Park Walk

We have now fixed the start time for this walk as 7pm Thursday 1st July. If you or anyone you know are interested then please email me and I'll let you know the meeting point.

Rob Acton-Campbell

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