

9 May 2011 - No 63

BPF Meeting 16th April

The minutes of the meeting will be on our website soon and I'll include a link in my next email. It has been good to see that Green Spaces are high on the agenda in the discussions about how the Council will be run now that no party has a majority!

The Downs' 150th Anniversary Celebration Picnic

BCC press release:

Everyone in the city is invited to join in celebrations marking The Downs' 150th anniversary on Sunday, May 22.

A special Victorian-themed picnic event has been organised by the city council, The Downs Committee and its partners, including: the Friends of The Downs and Avon Gorge; The Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project and Bristol Rotary Clubs.

On the day, the celebrations run from 12noon to 6pm and entry is free. Visitors are invited to bring a picnic and dress up in Victorian costume. Food stalls and The Downs café will be offering a range of quality refreshments.

In addition, there will be live theatre performance by members of Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, a military encampment with the 95th Rifles, traditional funfair games such as test of strength, coconut shy and treasure hunt. There will also be photoboards and wildlife walks and talks. Throughout the afternoon a range of fun craft activities and historic storytelling will be available in the children's marquee.

The City of Bristol Brass Band and the Madding Crowd with Bristol Harmony choir will perform at intervals during the special Downs' celebration event.

"This is a once in a lifetime celebration," says Vicky Abel, project development officer at the city council. "And we want the whole of Bristol to come along and join in the celebrations.

"The Downs play a very special role in the cultural and environmental life of the city. And over the years, The Downs have become a place for people to get together and have fun. It could be a football match, people out walking the dog, children flying a kite or fun runners raising hundreds of pounds for charity.

"The celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Downs are a chance for us all to say 'thank you' to those who have looked after - and continue to look after - The Downs and ensure The

Downs remain a green jewel in the city's crown."

Jack Penrose, chairman of Friends of The Downs and Avon Gorge (FODAG), added: "The Friends are passionate about The Downs and keen to welcome new members. FODAG are delighted with the programme of activities to mark this special day and proud to be a part of the celebrations.

"There's a good mix of historical, environmental and cultural activities on offer, so I'm sure the day will be a great success."

For more information about the event visit: www.bristol.gov.uk/thedowns

Wild City Project

The Wild City Project now has its own webpage at www.bristol.gov.uk/wildcity.

I've also added this to the list of 'redirectors' for the BCC website at <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/redirectors.pdf>

There will be a meeting of the Wild City Project steering group next week. As a BPF committee member who is also on the committee of one of the groups involved in the project I have been invited to go along. Although the project is still in its early stages I would be happy to have any feedback that you would like me to pass on.

The Bench Issue 65

The latest news from GreenSpace can be seen via the link below.

<http://tinyurl.com/bench65>

A message from Peter Watts of the Site Licensing Team

Now we have the Royal Wedding Street Parties behind us (did you know Bristol held the most street parties outside of London?) we thought it would be a good idea to contact you to establish whether you are wishing to hold an event again this year and to provide you with some useful information.

We now have a comprehensive website <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/leisure-and-culture/events/> where you can download the various application forms:

The Park Permit is aimed at events that are:

- * Small not-for-profit community events
- * Taking place outside the city centre
- * Not advertised to the general public
- * Expecting fewer than 200 people attending your event (including event 'staff') at any one time

- * Not specifically aimed at children or vulnerable adults
- * Not commercially-driven or marketing events

The full site licensing application form is for those larger events that don't fall within a park permit.

Please be aware that at this time of year (peak event season) a minimum 6 week lead in time to assess, consult and issue a licence is required, although for larger events we shall need more notice than this.

The Events Toolkit includes the full application form and other necessary documents to complete when requesting the use of a park or open space. Please refer to the checklist to ensure you have completed all the necessary sections as omissions can create delays.

You can access the Toolkit online at <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/leisure-and-culture/events/>

The most common omissions when completing a form are:

- * STEWARDS - please advise the number of staff working on your event to make it safe.
- * LOST CHILDREN STEWARD details - ALL events with children attending must have at least 1 Lost Children steward who has been CRB checked within the last 6 months.
- * RISK ASSESSMENT - failure to supply a risk assessment will result in your application being refused.
- * SITE MAP - Please supply a map showing the location of your event
- * FIRST AID - please advise your first aid provision on the day.

Please note the office is closed every Wednesday from 12 noon to 5pm to process site applications and issue site licences. Staff will therefore be unable to answer telephone calls or deal with personal callers.

If you wish to apply to hold an event on city council open space or in a park please e-mail your application and accompanying documents to p.watts@bristol.gov.uk . Please remember the minimum six week notice as there are a range of consultees that need to be consulted on any application.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Regards
Site Licensing Team
Arts and Culture
Bristol City Council
Colston 33
Colston Avenue
BRISTOL
BS1 4UA

Bristol's Green Week

<http://bristolgreencapital.org/node/343>

Sat 11th June - Live Local Weekend - how to live efficiently and minimise your impact. Including Food Trail: a cycling and walking tour of the best in locally produced food and drink, and "Solar" Green Doors open houses showcasing refurbishment renewable energy projects that have been carried out in Bristol. A Community Hub will be open at the Create Centre with activities.

Ping Pong

Alongside the new café kiosk in St George Park there is a new outdoor table tennis table, this is one of several in Bristol's parks, the full list can be seen on the BCC website at:

<http://tinyurl.com/ParksPingPong>

For most of the tables you need your own bats & ball but I am told that the St George café has bats & balls for hire (or at least will have soon).

Rob Acton-Campbell

BPF

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

Meeting dates: 16 July & 15 October

13 May 2011 - No 64

BPF Meeting 16th April

The minutes of the meeting are now at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BPFMinutes160411.pdf

AGSP Still in the News

A couple of articles in today's Evening Post

One about the letter sent to those you signed the recent petition against the sell offs:

<http://tinyurl.com/6a44k8z> and one picking up on some comments by Hugh:

<http://tinyurl.com/638gt53>

Job Vacancy - Project Worker for the 'Discover Brislington Brook' Project.

This project is a unique and new opportunity to co-ordinate a 3 year Heritage Lottery funded project, working with a wide range of partners including youth groups, community groups, schools, volunteers and other organisations on river related activities to provide opportunities for learning, participation and conservation of this valuable natural resource in Bristol. Salary: £21,000 per annum (pro rata), 18.5 hours per week, based at the CREATE Centre and on-site.

All details and job application form at www.brislington.org
Closing Date 31st May 2011.

Please pass this on to anyone you know who might be interested.

Festival of Nature Press Release

Have a wild weekend in Bristol this summer Festival of Nature 18-19 June

The Festival of Nature unleashes the city's wild side this summer when it returns to Bristol Harbourside on the weekend of 18-19 June.

The biggest event of its kind in the UK, this festival gives wildlife enthusiasts of all ages the opportunity to explore, enjoy and get close to the natural world - all free of charge.

Throughout the weekend there are loads of free and exciting activities - here's just a taste of what's to come...

- BBC 3D display - Bristol's famous BBC Natural History Unit has a special display of their new 3D technology. See the next generation of wildlife films, and keep your eye out for some very special visitors!
- Free IMAX screenings - 'Sea Rex: Journey to a Prehistoric World' takes you on a thrilling 50 feet high, 3D journey back in time to explore an amazing underwater universe inhabited by Sea Rex - the T Rex of the seas.
- Contemporary Sustainable Living Show - Straight from Olympia, the first show of its kind in the South West. In partnership with UK Aware and Forum for the Future, the Sustainable Living Zone has 40 environmental businesses and technologies from across the South West. Get some inspiration for your home.
- Wildlife Bee Garden - The Amphitheatre will become home to an extraordinary wildlife garden. Build bee nest boxes, plant seeds and buy plants.
- Free Storytelling with popular performer Michael Loader - Traditional Tales and Spontaneous Stories festooned with an abundance of animals, plus plenty of playful audience involvement.
- Bristol Zoo - Spot your first gorilla down on Millennium Square! Celebrating its 175th anniversary the Zoo tent has one of the large gorilla sculptures that will be on the streets of Bristol this summer. Find out what you can do to help save gorillas across the world, and get your first picture with a soon-to-be-famous Bristol icon
- The Green Forum - Bristol's green grassroots community. For the 9th year, now supported by Bristol Water, find over 50 grassroots organisations across the festival site and in the Green Forum tent. Join a group, make a pledge, find a hobby.

- Food market - Do your Saturday shop, and make a difference. The Festival's food market is a bustling and colourful place, with local produce and hot food from sustainable traders from across the South West.
- At-Bristol Live Lab - Hook yourself up to a machine that shows your heart beat and muscle impulses, or look super-close-up on your skin, hair, eyes and ears with high magnification cameras.
- Free puppet shows with the Woodenfingers Theatre Company.

Savita Custead, Director of the Bristol Natural History Consortium, who organise the Festival said: "Bristol is the wildlife capital of the UK and the Festival of Nature a much loved date in its summer diary.

This year it's bigger and better than ever - with loads of free hands-on fun for kids of all ages. You can even pick the brains of our friendly wildlife experts and spot some natural celebrities."

More information is available on the Festival of Nature website at www.festivalofnature.org or by calling the Festival team on 0117 930 4926

**** Volunteers Still Wanted! ****

We still need volunteers to man a BPF stand at the festival particularly for Sunday 19th June 10.00 - 5.00pm. Please email info@bristolparksforum.org.uk if you can spare a couple of hours to promote the BPF and your own group.

Big Tree Plant - A city-wide bid for more trees in Bristol

A message from Emma Whitaker, Big Tree Plant Bid Co-ordinator- Bristol:

I'm getting in touch to let you know about the Big Tree Plant funding bid to give you the chance to influence where trees are planted in your area.

It would be great if you can let me know of locations where you would like to see trees planted, this can be streets, green spaces, school grounds etc, anywhere that is publicly accessible, or where the public will benefit.

Hope to hear from you soon.

Best wishes

Emma

Bid Details:

In December 2010 the Government launched a National Tree Planting Campaign the 'Big Tree Plant', which aims to plant a million trees over 4 years. The campaign is focused on community based tree planting in streets, school grounds and other publicly accessible green spaces.

The Forest of Avon Trust is working in partnership with TreeBristol (Bristol City Council), the Woodland Trust and Trees for Cities, to prepare a grant bid as part of the Big Tree Plant to increase tree planting across the city. The focus is on areas of lower tree cover and higher deprivation but all areas can be included. The bid is due to be submitted in August so we are on a tight timescale.

We are working with community groups and interested individuals throughout Bristol so get in touch if you want to work with us to increase tree planting in your area - on streets, green spaces or anywhere in your neighbourhood where the public will benefit.

We also require match funding so any suggestions would be welcomed.

For more information please contact Emma Whitaker, Big Tree Plant Bid Co-ordinator at the Forest of Avon Trust on 0117 963 3383 or emma.whitaker@forestofavontrust.org

Tree planting provides many benefits including:

Well being: They give character and a sense of place and history to our neighbourhoods.

Road safety: Tree-lined streets improve the attention of drivers encouraging slower driving.

Environmental: Trees act as large full time air filters, giving us cleaner air.

Wildlife: Trees are an important food source for birds and they provide homes for a wide-range of wildlife, bringing nature to our doorstep.

Economic benefits: Property values are higher in tree-lined streets compared to similar streets without trees.

Forest of Avon Trust

The local charity for trees, working closely with communities to get more trees planted and to improve existing woodlands.

www.moretreemoreaction.com

TreeBristol

Part of Bristol City Council, TreeBristol was established to plant thousands of new trees in the city.

www.treebristol.com

The Woodland Trust

National charity promoting woodlands and native trees.

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

Trees for Cities

National charity working with local communities on tree planting projects in urban areas

www.treesforcities.org

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In this update:

The Future of the P&GSS - Town Green Update - Castle Park Redevelopment - Easter Garden - Bristol Big Day Out 25th June - Bristol Ecoshow Performance 17th June - Health & Safety Training Sat 17 September - 'Park Keepers' Questionnaire - Bristol Festival of Nature 18-19 June

The Future of the P&GSS

At the Full Council meeting on 17 May 2011 (following the May elections where the LibDems lost overall control of the Council) Cllr Janke, who was elected as Leader, outlined a number of issues that were agreed by all parties. This included halting all disposals under the Green Spaces Strategy and setting up a cross-party working group to look again at the strategy. The Press Release following that meeting can be seen here: <http://tinyurl.com/3d34t6s>

The working group once it is established is to set its own terms of reference, so at the moment we don't know how it will work. Of course since no disposals were planned to happen immediately then in the short term halting the disposals does not make any difference.

Town Green Update - Ashton Vale & Whitchurch

Another item agreed by the LibDems as part of the political negotiations after the election was that there would be an early decision on the Town Green application for Ashton Vale. This is likely to be considered by the Public Rights of Way and Greens Committee at their meeting on 16th June. They can either make the decision themselves or refer the issue to the Full Council.

Meanwhile the Inspector has issued her report on the application at Whitchurch 'Asda Field'. The concluding statement in her summary says:

'I was satisfied that the rest of the amended application land (the whole of the amended application land, with the exception of the former site of the prefabs) had been used by a significant number of inhabitants of the locality of Whitchurch Ecclesiastical Parish for lawful sports and pastimes as of right throughout the relevant period. I therefore recommend that this area should be registered as a town or village green.'

In due course the Public Rights of Way and Greens Committee will make the final decision.

One of the key issues at Whitchurch was whether the land was used 'as of right' or 'by right'. This is an issue which will also be key to several other applications which are now in progress. The inspector sets out in the report how the law relates to this. In particular 'The Council is a creature of statute and can only hold land under its statutory powers to do so'. So the key issue is why the Council owns the land and whether that has changed since the land was purchased. The Council has powers to hold land for open space purposes or for housing; planning (development) or many other purposes. It also has power to appropriate land from one statutory purpose to another.

The respect of land held for open space purposes the inspector said:

'In my judgment therefore, where it is established that the local inhabitants do enjoy a statutory right under section 10 of the Open Spaces Act 1906 or section 164 of the Public Health Act 1875 to use

the land for lawful sports and pastimes, a registration authority should not find that their user has been use "as of right", and accordingly should not find that the statutory test for registration as a town or village green has been satisfied in relation to that land.'

So if the land is held for the purposes of open space it cannot become a Town Green, however, in the case of Whitchurch the inspector has concluded that part of the land was held for planning (development) and part for housing and that there is no evidence that it has ever been appropriated for any other purpose.

'I was not persuaded that any part of the application land was held for open spaces purposes or for public walks and pleasure grounds during the relevant period. In my judgment the fact that an authority uses land held for another statutory purpose to provide a recreational area does not prevent use of that area being use as of right. Similarly I am not satisfied that the fact that land is held under Housing Act powers and laid out as recreation grounds or open space prevents use of that area by local inhabitants being use as of right. Even if I am wrong on that point as a matter of law, on the facts here, I am not satisfied that the area held for housing purposes, the site of the former prefabs, had been in any way laid out as recreation grounds or open space: this area was merely a cleared site.

There was no evidence to show that use had been forcible, permissive or secretive. I therefore conclude that the local inhabitants used the application land throughout the relevant period, as of right.'

The report does though have an appendix that refers to a recent court case 'BDW Trading Ltd (t/a Barratt Homes) v Spooner representing the Merton Green Action Group & Melin Homes Ltd'. In that case it was concluded that 'the provisions of section 241 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 prevailed over the Commons Act 2006, so that, the land having been appropriated for planning purposes by the council, it could be used, notwithstanding the Commons Act 2006, by any person in any manner in accordance with planning permission'. The implication of this case is that the land held for planning purposes could be developed even if it is declared as a Town Green, though it is not a reason for it not to be registered. In the Merton Green case the planning permission predated the Town Green application.

There is another paragraph in the report that might be relevant to Ashton Vale as well as Whitchurch, the inspector points out that:

'The Court of Appeal held that the Registration Authority's duty is to decide the application reasonably and fairly. The duty to act reasonably requires the authority to bear in mind that its decision carries legal consequences. The registration authority has to consider both the interests of the landowner and the possible interest of the local inhabitants. That means that there should not be any presumption in favour of registration or any presumption against registration. If the authority accepts the application, amendment of the register may have a significant effect on the owner of the land. Likewise, if the authority wrongly rejects the application, the rights of the applicant and of local inhabitants will not receive the protection intended by Parliament.'

Castle Park Redevelopment

There was an interesting article by Roger Mortimer about options for the redevelopment of the buildings around St Mary Le Port Church in the Bristol Civic Society Newsletter. Roger has given permission for us to reproduce it on our website and it can be seen at

<http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/#castle>

Easter Garden

I was pleased to hear that the planning application to fence off this site has been rejected. See www.eastergarden.moonfruit.com for more information about the garden and its history.

Bristol Big Day Out 25th June 2011

This is part of the national Civic Day event facilitated by the organisation Civic Voice. The focus of the Bristol events is to celebrate the city's unique and diverse public spaces.

They say:

Our main event is in the Bearpit (St James Barton Roundabout underpass) in the centre of Bristol. We are planning an afternoon picnic with circus performers, entertainment, stalls, music and food. We also would like local and community groups to organise their own event on the day, this can be as informal as you like. Perhaps a community picnic in your local green space, a game of rounders, a park clean up etc.

We are connecting the whole event electronically, we will have a website for you to send photos of your activities to (www.flickr.com/groups/bristolcivicsoc) a twitter hashtag (#brisdlay) for you to tweet about what you are up to and a website you can send other messages to. All these pictures and messages from across the city will be projected on the Big Screen in Millennium Square. If your park group would like to be involved in this national event we'd love to hear from you! Please get in touch on the email bristolcivicday@hotmail.co.uk

In the run up to the event we are also compiling a website with a list of all the events happening across the city as well as making good use of local media to promote the day so it may be a good opportunity to raise the profile of public spaces under threat as well as display how well used and important local public and green spaces are.

Bristol Ecoshow Performance 2011

Celebrates stream-side walks in Bristol, with Malcolm X Elders, Hibernia Players, contemporary music and poem, didgeridoo, Pigeonhouse Stream Campaign, DMedia and Green heart films, Gurt Lush choir & Kilter Theatre.

Friday June 17th 7.30pm £5/£4 conc.

Saint Stephen's Church, St Stephen's St off Corn Street BS1 1EQ

Bookings 0117 9559444 bigbromo@yahoo.co.uk www.ecoshow.org.uk

Health & Safety Training Sat 17 September

Following requests at our last meeting Bristol Parks are arranging another H&S training session on Sat 17th September. This will give you a bit of paper saying you are a 'competent person' and allow you lead groups to carry out work in Bristol's parks & green spaces while being covered by BCC insurance.

If you are interested please contact Catherine - catherine.newman@bristol.gov.uk

'Park Keepers' Questionnaire

There is still time to submit these questionnaires which are your groups chance to have a say on how your green space is maintained. Please complete a questionnaire whether or not you have a Park Keeper in your park or green space.

The questionnaires are available via the links below and should be returned to tracey.morgan@bristol.gov.uk or Bristol Parks at Colston 33, Colston Avenue, Bristol BS1 4UA

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/ParkKeepers.doc

or

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/ParkKeepers.pdf

Bristol Festival of Nature 18-19 June

We still need volunteers for our stand!

Rob Acton-Campbell

BPF

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

Meeting dates: 16 July & 15 October