

1 November 2009

BPF Meeting Saturday 31 October

The minutes of Saturday's meeting will be produced for us as usual by Catherine and distributed in due course. This is part of the support provided to the BPF by Bristol Parks, see www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/250709Appendix2.pdf

There are some brief notes on the main issues covered below:

Ashton Vale and the Stadium (Bristol Planning Application Number 09/02242/P)

The officer's report and other documents can be seen via <http://tinyurl.com/kv74bo>

The Ashton Vale Heritage Group thanked the BPF for their support.

The planning committee to decide on the stadium, housing etc. is on 4th November (Wednesday) when the council decision will be made. All the groups opposed are meeting on College Green at 5:15 on that day. It is important to show councillors the strength of the opposition. This will also influence the North Somerset Councillors when they come to make their decision on the application for the access.

If you can attend then the group would be pleased to see you, you don't have to stay for the meeting, a good turn out will make a difference.

You can also support the campaign to save the Green Belt and Site of Nature Conservation Interest by writing to the committee; the deadline is noon on 3rd November (Tuesday). You can download a template letter from the Avon Wildlife Trust website www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk see 'Bats not Balls' on the left of the page. Emails can be sent to development.management@bristol.gov.uk or hand deliver to: City Development, Brunel House, St George's Road, Bristol BS1 5UY.

AVHG also stated that they have made an application for Town Green status for the site and the meeting agreed that the BPF should support this.

Parks Events

The main part of Saturday's meeting was a workshop session on parks events. This was aimed at giving BPF members a chance to give ideas on how the Events Licensing procedure could be improved to make it easier for Park Groups to hold events on their parks. A key part of this is a review of the fees that are charged and discussion as to how Park Groups can access some of the £15k that BCC allocate to funding events. There was also good news on insurance, there will be a new insurance policy for community events which will allow organisers to obtain the necessary £5million of Public Liability Insurance for only £5 per event.

Several BPF members volunteered to join a working group to work with Jenny Crook from the Licensing team to take the process forward.

The aim is for it to be much easier next year for groups to hold small events in their own parks.

Wild City

I was pleased that the meeting agreed that the BPF should write to support this funding application; see www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/#wild

Operations Update

Rob Thurston (Parks Operations Manager) introduced himself to the BPF having joined Bristol Parks in June.

Rob updated us on progress with the tender process for the Central Area. Roland will represent the BPF in the interviews with prospective contractors that are now due next week.

There was also a review of the South Contract with Quadron, on which there seemed to be mixed views over its success.

Rob confirmed that 9 new Community Park Keepers would be appointed with a target date of February 2010; see www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/#cpk

Parks are also in the process of appointing five Apprentices / Trainees

In respect of CPOs there were mixed comments from the floor about their contact with Park Groups, but the general message seemed to be that they have too much to do and not enough time to do it.

Bus Rapid Transit / Knowle West / South Bristol Link

Gary Hopkins confirmed that the Malago route is not being considered as an option for the BRT. However concerns remain, particularly for the Northern Slopes. There was also discussion about the links between all the different developments planned in South Bristol and how these fit in with the Area Green Space Plan process and the BDF work.

Castle Park

Fraser thanked those who had donated money to the fund towards a judicial review of the Town Green decision. A proposal for a more sustainable development of the site has recently been published; see www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/#castle

Tree Forum

Hugh asked that BPF members should get involved in the Bristol Tree Forum which is putting together a tree strategy for Bristol. The next meeting is Monday 16 November at the Council House. There is also a survey in progress to identify sites where more trees could be planted in Bristol. If you have suggestions Hugh can be reached via info@bristolparksforum.org.uk

Snuff Mills Action Group – Peoples' Millions

Snuff Mills are competing for £50k from the Peoples Millions, you will be able to vote for them on 24th November; see www.peoplesmillions.org.uk/regions/west

AGM

Fraser and Hugh were re-elected as Chair and Vice Chair. Myself, Alison, Roland and Nancy were elected to the committee. It was noted that Hugh and Fraser will have completed their three year stint after this coming year so there will be need for new faces for 2011.

Fraser also made an appeal for more feedback as to what members would like to see covered at BPF meetings. The committee is aiming to meet soon to review how the structure can be made to work more effectively.

Rob Acton-Campbell

BPF

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7 November 2009

Ashton Vale

As you will probably have heard the planning committee followed the officer's advice on the stadium and said that they were 'minded to approve' the stadium but rejected the housing on the Site of Nature Conservation Interest which they had called 'Southlands'.

The football club now have to revise their application and bring it back to the committee within six months.

The rejection of the housing should mean that the SNCI is now safe from development, but there was immediately suggestions that part of the site could be used for an arena. There would also still a need to use part of the SNCI area for flood alleviation. Steve Micklewright from AWT was quoted in the EP as saying that the stadium should come and talk to the AWT about the ecology and wildlife issues.

As mentioned at our meeting the Ashton Vale Heritage Group have also applied for Town Green status for the land see <http://tinyurl.com/yhn2lh3>

BDF Core Strategy

The version of the strategy that is to be put to the Council Meeting on 10 November was published online just before the stadium planning meeting at <http://tinyurl.com/bdfcore>

This document is the Publication Version of the Core Strategy. It is the version that the council proposes to submit to the Secretary of State for independent examination under the terms of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

It includes lots of statements about protection of green space, it also gives a figure of 30,000 new homes in Bristol instead of the 36,500 suggested by the proposed changes to the RSS. These are new homes required in the period covered by the strategy which is 2006 to 2026. Interestingly it also gives some figures for the current situation. Completed dwellings for 2006 to 31 March 2009 were 7,037. Sites with planning permission or agreed subject s.106 are 12,510 leaving 10,453 to be found.

The key policies on green space state:

A network of valuable open spaces, green infrastructure and wildlife habitats will be maintained and improved throughout the city.

- Green Belt areas on the city fringes will be maintained to safeguard Bristol's attractive setting.
- Green infrastructure will be built into new developments across the city.
- Open spaces available to all will be improved.

Policy BCS9

The integrity and connectivity of the strategic green infrastructure network will be maintained, protected and enhanced. Opportunities to extend the coverage and connectivity of the existing strategic green infrastructure network should be taken.

Individual green assets should be retained wherever possible and integrated into new development. Where loss of green infrastructure is unavoidable in order to secure appropriate development, appropriate mitigation of the lost assets will be required.

Development should incorporate new and / or enhanced green infrastructure of an appropriate type, standard and size. Where on-site provision of green infrastructure is not possible, contributions will be sought to make appropriate provision for green infrastructure off site.

Open Space

Open spaces which are important for recreation, leisure and community use, townscape and landscape quality and visual amenity will be protected.

Some areas of open space may be released for appropriate development where:

- They are no longer important for recreation, leisure and community use, townscape and landscape quality and visual amenity;
- Development of all or part of an open space would result in improved urban form or an enhancement to existing open space areas.

New development should incorporate, or contribute towards, the provision of an appropriate level and quality of open space.

Biological and Geological Conservation

Internationally important nature conservation sites are subject to statutory protection.

National and local sites of biological and geological conservation importance will be protected

having regard to the hierarchy of designations and the potential for appropriate mitigation. The extent to which a development would contribute to the achievement of wider objectives of the Core Strategy will be carefully considered when assessing their impact on biological and geological conservation.

Good News on Town Green Application

The Elmtree Park Residents' Association has made some progress with their Town Green Application for the 15 acres of land behind Asda in Oatlands Avenue. The inspector's report has concluded that the area that the land has never been appropriated to public open space, and is therefore capable of being registered as a town or village green. More details can be seen at <http://tinyurl.com/yblr2ou>

You may remember that the Castle Park Application was rejected because the inspector decided that there was an 'implied appropriation'. All land owned by a Council must be held for a purpose, it could be for housing, road building, public open space or many other uses. Appropriation is the process where that purpose is officially changed. Land that is held by the Council as public open space cannot become a Town Green (except by a voluntary registration) because it is used 'by right' rather than 'as of right' (i.e. without permission, force or secrecy). Neither Castle Park or the land in Whitchurch were purchased by the Council for use as open space so a key argument for both sites was whether they were appropriated to public open space. Castle Park was purchased 'for the purposes of dealing with war damage'. The inspector concluded that in 1978, when the resolution to use the land as a park was passed, it must have been implicit in that decision that the land was being appropriated to a new statutory purpose. It is on this principle of 'implied appropriation' that the Castle Park User Group is aiming to seek a judicial review.

Funding Opportunity from Groundwork South West

from:

Louise Walsh, Development Director

Groundwork South West

Louise.Walsh@groundwork.org.uk

www.groundworksouthwest.org.uk

Tel: 01752 217721 ext 308

Fax: 01752 201680

Groundwork has a national partnership with M&S (we get the profit from the sale of their bags) which supports us to deliver some physical urban space improvement projects, with local communities / neighbourhood groups, which also incorporate some education and awareness work around climate change and the environmental impacts of our actions.

M&S are asking us to put forward some projects for their consideration, by mid December. They will fund 16 from across the country. In the South West region they are actively seeking appropriate projects from the Bristol / Gloucester M5 corridor area.

What we are looking for...

- A physical transformation / improvement of a publicly accessible space (What do I mean by 'public'? Could I go there and eat my lunch?). Something for families and community use. The space could be a community garden, a play area (preference for natural play), a wildspace, a pocket park, an urban centre space, country parks, sea front improvements, streetscapes & squares etc. A neighbourhood, community, voluntary or tenants group who would be happy to work with Groundwork to deliver the project (more information about who we are and what we do can be found at www.groundworksouthwest.org.uk. We do have an office in Bristol and staff who would be happy to discuss any opportunities further.
- A project with a total cost of approx. £50,000.
- M&S would provide up to £25,000 for the space transformation work.
- A project with the rest of the match funding already in place, or likely to be in place within a few weeks.
- A site where the landowner has given permission for the project to proceed and planning permission is not required (or has already been obtained or is likely to be approved within a few weeks).
- A group who are happy to work with us on awareness of environmental issues, our impacts on climate change and the actions that we can take. This is important to M&S and should be interesting not onerous!
- Opportunities for M&S staff (and maybe even customers) to get involved.
- Project sites should be within 10 miles from an M&S store.
- Projects that will have an impact. Projects that will make a difference for the people who live / work / play there.
- Projects which can be completed by no later than 1st December 2010.

At this stage we are not looking to develop entirely new projects. We are looking for an existing project which is at the right stage of development and happens to fit these criteria. Please feel free to circulate this information to anyone you think might be appropriate and if anyone has any suggestions or questions, please ask them to contact me, my colleague Julie Winkley our Development Manager (julie.winkley@groundwork.org.uk 01752 217721 ext 334) or Jane Hickie our Operations Manager for the West of England (jane.hickie@groundwork.org.uk 0117 971 5719).

We will need to identify any potential projects for submission by Friday 13th November 2009 at the latest please.

THANK YOU.

Wild City

There is now a Wild City page on the BCC website at: <http://tinyurl.com/ydm8aka> and also a consultation page at <http://tinyurl.com/ybxyt64>

I think Wild City can be a benefit to all wildlife sites in Bristol by raising the profile of wildlife issues and publicising events throughout the City, so it would be good to hear ideas from groups representing sites that are not scheduled to be part of the project about how they would like to get

involved. I will pass any comments I receive back to the team.

Rob Acton-Campbell

BPF

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13 November 2009

Knowle West Regeneration www.bristol.gov.uk/kwrf

A message from Len of the Northern Slopes Initiative www.northern-slopes-initiative.co.uk

Please find below the arrangements for the next stage of the Knowle West Regeneration Framework.....

The Council and its consultants are holding 4 interactive exhibitions as follows:

Saturday 14 November – Mede Centre, Inns Court

Sunday 15 November – Filwood Broadway – near or in the Social Centre

Monday 16 November – The Park, Daventry Road

Tuesday 17th November – The Health Park, Downton Road

All are between 10am and 6pm

“It will show how the area can improve from better transport, new homes, new jobs and shops, new and better parks and schools” “You will have the opportunity to vote for the ideas presented” – Urban Initiatives

We are urging people to go to the meetings and check what is happening to the Slopes, if there is development on it (eg: new housing, bus rapid transit) we are asking them to ask:

What are the effects on the residents?

What are the effects on the wildlife?

What are the effects on the environment?

And if they are asked to vote – consider the information - and we suggest vote NO to development on the Slopes.

Many thanks

BRT Line 3 Hengrove to City Centre <http://tinyurl.com/yg3xgz2>

A message from David at the NPN www.bristolnbn.net

This is to confirm that the Network has agreed with City Council officers the following series of involvement meetings in the choice of route, stops and engineering necessary for the Council to submit a bid to the Department of Transport for this scheme to be placed in the "programme" list. The Council's target deadline for submission is 31st March 2010.

Unlike the community involvement in Line 2 Ashton Gate to City Centre, this involvement will include choices of the route.

The community involvement programme looks like this:

Meeting 1 (Agenda: Purpose of BRT/cost-benefit criteria to be applied/reduction of route options/involvement issues)
Friday 27 November 2009

Meeting 2 (Agenda: Route/stop/engineering options)
Wednesday 9th December 2009

Public consultation period (Agenda yet to be decided)
2nd to 23rd December 2009

Meeting 3 (Agenda: Preferred route/stop/engineering option)
Wednesday 13th January 2010

There is talk of extending the public consultation period over Christmas/New Year. We have said that we doubt the public relations benefit of this. From a community point of view this would look disdainful of the community's right and ability to engage properly.

We have also said that it is important to be up-front and clear about the involvement process, especially at the first meeting on the 27th. That agenda should include an explanation/discussion of how the involvement meetings tie into and have a chance of influencing the BCC/West of England Partnership/Department of Transport approvals process.

All meetings will be at 17.30 for 1800 to 2000 at the Park Centre, Daventry Road, Knowle West.

As with Line 2, the idea is to assemble one or two reps from each Group so as to keep the meetings effective in numbers and enable in-depth discussion. We are asking reps to check back on the views of their wider group. The consultation period will also check wider public views.

Best regards,

David for NPN

(Nancy will be representing the BPF at these meetings, if you would like to attend to represent your group please let me know - Rob)

Interested in being a film maker? Interested in parks?

Bristol museum is running a series of three workshops for 16-25 year olds to help develop innovative film tours of Bristol that will be made available on the web and through an iPhone application. During the workshops the participants will; learn and practise film making and sound recording techniques, investigate existing archive footage, create visualisations of what the future might look like, and then get the opportunity to make the films. The areas that will be part of the tour include Castle Park, The Downs and the Harbourside.

This is a great opportunity for aspiring young film makers/ digital creatives to work on a live project and to extend their cv/ skills in exploring different uses for combined digital/ film media.

If you know of anyone that would like to take part in these workshops on three Saturdays on 14th, 21st November and 5th December then please contact Sarwat Siddiqui
Community History Curator sarwat.siddiqui@bristol.gov.uk on 0117 3525568 or 07808 485905.
The workshops will take place at the Museum and Record Office.

Young People and a Bench

With the consultation for the Area Green Space Plans starting in January and being the subject of our conference on 16th Jan it might be worth looking again at the P&GSS . One of the documents that was produced was 'Young People and a Bench' <http://tinyurl.com/y9mzv4> which I thought made very interesting reading and is well worth a look.

More information about the P&GSS is at www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/pgss.htm

New Local Nature Reserve

Bristol now has eight Local Nature Reserves. The latest to be designated is at Callington Rd which officially became a LNR on 1st October.

Callington Road LNR is to be one of the key sites in the Wild City (www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/index.htm#wild) project and it is hoped that as part of that project more sites will be added to the list. The P&GSS set a target of 16 LNRs; so we are now half way there.

The Callington Rd pages on the BCC website have been updated and can be found here:
<http://tinyurl.com/yajcrye>

Incidentally the BCC website is to be revamped next year and recently a lot of the links to pages, such as those for individual parks have been changed. I think I have now corrected all the links

from the BPF website – but if you find any that are broken please let me know.

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22 November 2009

People's Millions Vote for Snuff Mills Tuesday 24 November, details below.

Peter Wilkinson

The BPF committee have seen a copy of an email that Peter sent to all Bristol Parks staff on Wednesday which I feel should be shared with all BPF members, especially as it is clear from my inbox that rumours about this news are starting to spread.

"Dear colleagues,

I am writing to let you know that I have been working under an extended probationary period since I was appointed as Service Manager for Parks and Estates in June.

I am very sorry to have to tell you that at my review meeting yesterday afternoon, Tracey Morgan informed me that my performance did not meet her standards nor apparently those of the Executive Member. She therefore had to inform me that I was not confirmed in my post, and would therefore (I am assuming) go into redeployment.

I know this will come as a huge shock to most of you, but for me I was expecting this and it comes as a relief after a very difficult couple of months.

Tracey will let you know as soon as she can what arrangements she will now put in place to lead and manage Parks and Estates."

Tracey Morgan is 'Service Director, Environment & Leisure' having taken over in this post from Steve Moore who left at the end of October.

Obviously this came as a shock to us since we (along with Parks' staff) had had no prior indication of any problem. Peter has been head of Parks for as long as I have been involved with the BPF and has always been very honest and open with us. Fraser is arranging a meeting with Tracey for later this week to discuss the situation. In email discussions Tracey has said that 'we will continue to work with you [BPF] as we have always done'.

We have also contacted Cllr Gary Hopkins both he and Tracey have stated that the only planned changes to the Parks structure are the appointment of additional Community Park Keepers. Tracey

added 'I am however looking at how we can improve the services within Environment and Leisure and once I have clear ideas on this, I would be more than happy to share this with the BPF'.

I will let you know any further developments as they occur. In the meantime I'm sure you will join me in wishing Peter all the best for the future whether that lies at Bristol City Council or elsewhere.

People's Millions - Vote for Snuff Mills, Bristol on 24th Nov (please forward)

A message from Steve Micklewright:

Please support this excellent project by phoning the People's Millions on Tuesday 24th November and forward it to your contacts. It will really make a difference to a wonderful place.

Ivor Needs is 77 years old and his son Matt is a wheelchair user. They would like to be able to enjoy the river, trees and see the kingfishers and herons at Snuff Mills in Bristol, but the paths aren't good enough anymore. But if you vote for Snuff Mills in the ITV West Peoples Millions on Tuesday 24 November, that could all change.

By making a phone call that day you could ensure thousands of people benefit from the Snuff Mills Restoration Project because we want to make this beautiful valley in to a place where everyone can get closer to nature by:

- * Improving the footpaths for older people, wheelchair users and families with pushchairs
- * Renovating an old garden so even people who can hardly walk have somewhere beautiful to enjoy

- * Putting up bird boxes and growing oak trees with local schoolchildren

- * Organising events so everyone can enjoy the valley in a safe and enjoyable way.

But to do this we need you to vote for Snuff Mills from on Tuesday 24th November. Please visit <http://www.peoplesmillions.org.uk/regions/west> on the day or watch the ITV West News at 6pm and dial the number to vote for Snuff Mills. Each call costs just 10p and you can call up to ten times. Your 10p could mean Snuff Mills receives nearly £50,000, making it possible for Ivor and Matt and thousands of others to get closer to nature. To find out more about the project visit <http://snuffmillions.blogspot.com> For updates and to be reminded to vote on the day send an email to snuffmills@hotmail.co.uk

We need as many people to vote as possible, so please forward this email to your contacts and ask them to vote!

Snuff Mills Action Group is a group of volunteers who care passionately about the area. Because we are all volunteers, every penny raised goes straight to improving this very special place. Please help us make our dreams come true for the area.

Helping communities improve their spaces

A new briefing from CABI Space recommends ways to support community groups that are

working to improve neighbourhood spaces and points to organisations that can offer additional advice. See <http://cabe.cmail4.com/t/y/l/urjidd/ikuktuhhh/g> for details and for a link from where you can download the document.

Ben Prater's Bingo Balls

Friends of Troopers Hill will feature on the Bingo Balls this week – listen to Radio Bristol Monday to Friday 6pm to 7pm.

Rob Acton-Campbell

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29 November 2009

Meeting with Tracey Morgan

Here is Fraser's summary of the meeting we had with Tracey Morgan:

On Thursday evening Rob, Hugh and myself met with Tracey Morgan, the service director for environment and leisure. We had requested the meeting as members of Bristol Parks Forum had raised concerns over the continuing role of the Parks Forum as a result of the departure of Peter Wilkinson from his post. Concerns had also been raised that a large amount of knowledge and experience would be lost given Peter's departure.

We did have a constructive session with Tracey and the following points summarise the main areas of discussion.

* Tracey sees no change in the way that the Parks Forum works with Bristol Parks. She will present at the next forum meeting in January to share the work that has been undertaken over the last few months.

* Steve Moore worked in tandem with Tracey from the end of August until he left to affect the handover of the service director role.

* She is keen to see that what is working within Parks continues to do so and her focus will be on areas where improvement is required.

* Her priorities are the renewal of the central contract, completion of the area green space plans and improvement in the delivery of services.

* Tracey's recent background is with integrated Customer Services.

We also took the opportunity to highlight concerns we had over the timetable for the area green space plan consultation and the impact of the community infrastructure levy on the parks and green spaces strategy. We will have further discussions on these with Tracey and Gary Hopkins over the next month.

Fantastic news about Snuff Mills

Although Snuff Mills Action Group did not win the People's Millions vote on Tuesday, so many people voted for the Snuff Mills Restoration Project that they were the runner up project with the most votes. This means that they will receive the full grant of nearly £50,000 to improve Snuff Mills.

SMAG would like to thank everyone who voted for them.

See the Evening Post report here <http://tinyurl.com/yf6pcr6>

BRT - North Bristol to Hengrove

Bristol City Council have launched a consultation on their website about the Bendy Bus route from North Bristol to Hengrove. The consultation includes a questionnaire and some public exhibitions.

Details are here: <http://tinyurl.com/brtnf2h>

There is also information on the West of England Partnership website at www.westofengland.org and the 'Travel Plus' website at www.travelplus.org.uk All three websites seem to have slightly different information. In October we were told that there were now only two options for South Bristol but there now seem to be four. There are also proposals for a Park & Ride on small holdings between the M32 and Stapleton Rd which will also impact the allotments in that area.

Unfortunately none of the websites say anything about what the routes affect in terms of houses, buildings, landscapes, wildlife etc.

Not surprisingly; the Northern Slopes Initiative www.northern-slopes-initiative.co.uk are very concerned. The effects on the Slopes could be extremely significant, if a route goes across their area potentially splitting the area in to four parts, rather than the current three. The risk of further development on either side of the route must also increase if a route across the slopes goes ahead, and value of the land either side for environmental reasons goes down.

There are also concerns about the Hartcliffe Way options and their impact on the Pigeonhouse stream although as promised the Malago seems to be safe.

Troopers Hill on Ben Prater's Bingo Balls

If you missed Friends of Troopers Hill on the Bingo Balls on Radio Bristol this week, it is available on BBC iPlayer; details are on the Friends of Troopers Hill forum via www.troopers-hill.org.uk You

need to be quick though because Susan's interview from Monday 23rd will only be available until tomorrow.

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