

2 October 08

As you will be aware those of us who represent groups working on Bristol's Local Nature Reserves are firm members of the Sally Oldfield fan club. Sally has been Local Nature Reserve Officer for the past six years. Her post has been funded through two externally funded projects - 'Wildspace!' and 'Nature in the City'.

As well as supporting park groups at the LNRs and proposed LNRs Sally has overseen the designation of three new LNRs and has also organised numerous events and run projects with schools and other groups. Details of some of the events are given here: <http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/natureinthecity/natnews.htm> There is no doubt that Bristol's nature reserves have greatly benefited from Sally's work.

All Sally's fans were very sad to hear that Sally is leaving her post at the end of this week (Fri 3rd Oct). Sally is moving to a new role working on LNRs in Islington which is near to where her boyfriend, Richard, lives. After travelling to Bristol every weekend for 6 years, he has finally managed to persuade her to move over there. Islington's gain is sadly Bristol's loss.

Sally has been a joy to work with and will be very much missed, I'm sure you will join with me in wishing her the very best for the future.

Sally's last task has been to put together a lottery application to apply for funds to pay her successor. Unfortunately it appears that despite the very obvious success of her role BCC have been unable to find the resources to make the post permanent, but this is certainly something that Friends of Troopers Hill will continue to press for and I hope that you will support us.

We are also determined to try our best to continue to promote Bristol's nature reserves and to build on what Sally has achieved over the last six years, regardless of what support we might or might not get from Bristol Parks.

Rob

BPF & Friends of Troopers Hill

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

Next BPF meeting Saturday 11th October - 9-30am to 12-30pm at Windmill Hill City Farm.

6 October 08

Next BPF meeting Saturday 11th October - 9-30am to 12-30pm at Windmill Hill City Farm.

The Agenda for the meeting is now on the website here:

<http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BPFagenda.pdf>

Minutes of the last meeting: <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BPFMin120708.pdf>

This meeting is also the BPF AGM

The first item of AGM business is to discuss the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference

The proposal: <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/ToRchanges.pdf>

The existing Terms of Reference: <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/ToR.pdf>

After the AGM business we move on to the Parks Service Review:

Details on the BCC website: <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/parksreview>

Questions & Answers from the 13 September meeting: <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BPF%20Qs%20%2013%20Sept%2008.pdf>

Hugh's notes on the CPM role: <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/CPMrole.pdf>

I hope to see you there.

Rob

BPF

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

8 October 08

Parks Service Restructuring Update

Bristol Parks have now sent us DRAFT job descriptions for the various proposed new roles and I have posted these on a new page on our website at <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/ParksReview.htm>

On the page there is also a response from Richard Mond sent to Cllr Barbara Janke which replies to some of the issues raised by Hugh - this will be discussed further on Saturday.

We have also received comments about the restructuring from Eileen at Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve and Dave at Snuff Mills which can be seen here:

<http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/RestructuringComments.pdf>

Community Development Officer

As you are aware Richard Fletcher is now running the Area Green Space Plans and the post of CDO is therefore currently vacant. We have received this statement from Helen Rossington at Bristol Parks:

"The administrative support will be provided by Catherine, so requests for packs etc can go to her directly (as I believe you are already aware.)

Other support will be provided where possible by the CPMs, although given their workload, there will be a gap in the level of support that you receive in comparison to that which you received from Richard Fletcher. We hope to be recruiting early in the New Year (before, if we can), and so we would ask you to please be patient with us until we have the new person in post."

Catherine's email address is catherine.newman@bristol.gov.uk

Saving Ashton Vale's Heritage

Membership of the BPF is open to "groups with an interest in protecting/improving parks or green spaces (including natural spaces and outdoor playgrounds)". Although they should be spaces in

Bristol they do not have to be Council owned.

The Ashton Vale Heritage Group has been set up to campaign to save a privately owned Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). Some details of the site and an appeal for help can be seen in this statement from the group.

<http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/AshtonValeHeritage.pdf>

Rob

BPF

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

Next BPF meeting Saturday 11th October - 9-30am to 12-30pm at Windmill Hill City Farm.

13 October 08

As mentioned at the BPF meeting on Saturday, there are two issues of concern to the BPF and Park Groups that will be raised at the full Council Meeting tomorrow (14th October).

Sale of Filwood Park

The sale of Filwood Park was agreed at the same Cabinet meeting as the P&GSS was adopted - but some 30 minutes later. This was discussed at the BPF meeting on 11th October 2008 and it was agreed that the BPF would submit a statement to the full Council meeting on 14th October - the statement can be seen here:

<http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/FilwoodParkCouncil-1.pdf>

At our meeting Peter Wilkinson mentioned an email from Richard Mond that referred to Filwood Park - that email can be seen here: <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/Filwoodemail7Feb08.pdf>
The email was part of a discussion on the disposal of P&GSS sites that Bristol City Council considered had been agreed prior to the adoption of the P&GSS. Richard later added the development at J3 of the M32 to the list.

Grove Woods

The Petition to Bristol City Council to Save Grove Woods , Blackberry Hill, Stapleton (opposite Snuff Mills) is calling for the Compulsory Purchase of the woods from its existing owner and for it to be designated a Wildlife Reserve.

There will be a demonstration on College Green at 5.30pm tomorrow ,Tuesday 14th October and then statements and Petition handing in will be made by local people and Snuff Mills Action Group to Full Council at 6pm in the Council Chamber. The Snuff Mills Action Group would like everyone come along to support the petitioners and preserve this wildlife site.

Rob Acton-Campbell

BPF

15 October 08

A busy few days...

Parks and Green and Open spaces top of the agenda!

Fraser reports from the Council House:

"There were three groups outside the council house before the full council meeting last night (Tues). By far the largest were those from the campaign to save Grove Woods by the Snuff Mills Action Group with over 50 supporters. They even managed to out-shout the 'Save Kamal' protest with their megaphones. Kamal park - never heard of it.

In the council chamber the public gallery was full to overflowing and parks and green spaces were at the top of the public agenda with public representations on Grove Woods, Filwood Park and the open space at Sefton Park. With Grove Woods, Filwood and Sefton having 19, 13 and 18 statements to the council respectively there was initially on time allotted for three statements to be read from each of the areas, with two minutes being given to each of the statements.

The proceedings started with a late statement from Cllr. Bradshaw on Grove Woods. His statement said that the council would facilitate a meeting between the council, Mr Jafari (the owner) and the action group. This was met with some derision as this had been attempted before and the timing was not imminent. A Petition with 4,668 names calling on the City Council to Compulsory Purchase Grove Woods from the existing landowner and to designate it as a Wildlife Reserve was handed in by the Snuff Mills Action Group.

The three statements from the public on Grove Wood were well received with rapturous applause from all in the chamber except the labour benches. A film maker from BBC wildlife was particularly eloquent describing the otters in the area (always something to pull at the heart strings).

We heard from three Filwood Park residents again all very well received by the chamber. Their pleas did not merit a special statement from any of the cabinet members and they had to contend with an answer to a written question

On Filwood Park there seems to be a short shrift answer to a written question reported in the evening post.

Sefton Park also had a large contingent in the chamber with three people unable to understand why the council wanted to redevelop a school that would result in the existing open space and amenities being removed from the area.

Democracy in action? Well...."

Links to the BPF statement and press release on Filwood, articles about Filwood and Grove Woods on the Evening Post 'This Is Bristol' site as well as Mark Bradshaw's statement are on our website. A link to the minutes of the council meeting will be added when they are available.

Castle Park

With so much else to cover we didn't mention Castle park at the Forum meeting on Saturday.

As you know (I hope) there is to be a full Public Inquiry into whether it can legally become a new Town Green.

This starts on Monday, December 1st at 10am and will go on all that week if necessary. There will be evening sessions on Tuesday and Thursday.

Location - The Old Council House, Corn Street. Very handy for the Park!

All the evidence, witness statements etc etc have to be handed in, in tidy files, by the beginning of November, so if you know of anyone who might want to be heard please can they contact Mary Bannerman marybannerman@hotmail.co.uk immediately. Statements have to be typed and SIGNED so Mary needs a hard copy.

Wild Waters

A reminder that it is Wild Waters fortnight - see www.wildwaters.org.uk

Events this weekend include a story telling session with Martin Maudsley and friends on Friday evening. Friends of Troopers Hill were lucky enough to work with Martin 'Trooping the Hill' in the summer <http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/Trooping2008.htm> I'm sure it will be a great evening. On Sunday there is the Brislington Brook Trek <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BrisBrook.pdf> a chance to see some of our less well known green space.

BPF Terms of Reference

The revised Terms of Reference for the BPF as agreed on Saturday are now on the website together with a list of the newly elected committee - thank you for your support in electing us.

Rob Acton-Campbell

BPF

www.bristolparksforum.org.uk

20 October 08

Open Spaces on the front page of the Evening Post again!

This time playing fields at Newquay Rd - a link to the story is here: <http://tinyurl.com/5qedxr> I'll keep you up to date with any developments.

Site Allocations

This is the name for the next stage of the Bristol Development Framework.

This stage is the identification of potential development sites, sites of existing development that need to be identified and protected, green spaces and sites of special scientific interest that need to be identified and protected, etc. It is a time when the public can ensure that their neighbourhood amenities are identified in the Development Plan Document which is part of the Bristol Development Framework strategy. This process is also linked to the Area Green Space Plans.

It is therefore a time when all park groups should start to get involved in the BDF if they haven't already.

There is a Core Strategy meeting on Thursday 23rd October, 5.30 to 8.30pm to discuss this - the programme is here: <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/bdf231008.pdf>

If you would like to attend the event as a representative of your group please let Dave Carter,

Bristol City Council, know on (0117) 9036725 by 12 noon Wednesday. Fraser will be attending to represent the BPF.

If you cannot make the meeting there will be plenty of time to get involved in this programme as the consultation will run from 31st October to 17th December. Please also let Dave Carter know if you want to be kept informed of this consultation.

Chocolate Factory Site

This was mentioned at our very busy meeting on 11th October.
The Planning application ref is 08/03862/F and can be seen here:
<http://tinyurl.com/6jaunt>

The Land Ownership Plan which forms part of the planning application is here
<http://tinyurl.com/63rkp4> and shows the area owned by Bristol City Council; this area is covered by the P&GSS. The plan states that this land is 'being aquired by Square Peg'. We have been assured by Bristol Parks that the sale has not yet been agreed and Bristol Parks promised that there would be full public consultation before any green space is sold for this development.

Ashton Vale Heritage Group

I mentioned this new group before and sent you a link to a letter from the group appealing for help. Unfortunately the letter contained an error in the email address which should have read sharondallin@hotmail.com I have now posted a corrected version of the letter:
<http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/AshtonValeHeritage.pdf>

The group has organised a fund raising show for adults and children on Tuesday 28th Oct at 7.30pm in the Ashton Vale Community Centre with the Failand Drama Circle presenting Magical Musical Moments, basically captions from the well known Disney shows. They are also holding a walk day to encourage everyone to meet and walk the PROW's on the site. This is going to be held on 15 Nov between 1 pm and 4 pm. Please email Sharon for further details or to buy tickets for the show at sharondallin@hotmail.com.

Trees

Also in the Evening Post today is a letter from Vassili Papastavrou about Bristol's trees it can be seen here: <http://tinyurl.com/trees201008>

In an earlier email I mentioned the trees on Redland Green; the reports into these trees and those in Mall Gardens on the Bristol City Website give some details of the QTRA assessments that BCC use to assess the risk of trees which you might find interesting. See <http://tinyurl.com/64me9u>

There was also an article in the Guardian on trees.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/oct/12/conservation>

Rob Acton-Campbell
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24 October 08

It has been another busy week and so this email is a bit longer than usual but I hope you find it interesting.

Green Spaces in Bristol continue to get coverage in the Evening Post with Tuesday's edition featuring more about Filwood <http://tinyurl.com/6dbfu2> and a report on the footpath issue at Purdown that Sue Flint spoke about at our last meeting <http://tinyurl.com/6xnaoe>

Bristol Development Framework

Here is Fraser's report on yesterday evening's meeting which contains important information about the process:

"The Bristol Development Framework meeting was held on Thu evening. The presentation from the meeting can be found at:

<http://tinyurl.com/5n2qg5>

The Bristol Development Framework will be the document that will be used to guide planning within the city for the next 20 years. As such, it is important that we input to its creation. The meeting last night covered two areas.

- 1) The Site Allocations process and its relationship to the Core Strategy of the Development Framework
- 2) Area Green Space Plans.

Area Green Space Plans:

Richard Fletcher presented on AGSPs and the key piece of new information for us is new timetable for the Area Green Space plans. It is on page 26 in presentation (link above) and here <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/AGSPprogrammeOct08.pdf> There are issues between the timetable for the AGSPs, the timetable for the site allocations submissions and the timetable for the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). Note that the AGSP plan is now by Neighbourhood Partnership Area and the new timetable shows work with stakeholders in all areas of the City being complete by the end of April 2009!

Site Allocations process:

The site allocations process is where areas within the city get zoned for different uses, office, industrial, housing, nature reserves, open space, parks, retail etc. Once in the agreed BDF these will be used to guide planning decisions.

We need to ensure that our existing sites are zoned for parks and opens spaces and that if we know of any other sites that are candidates to become parks, nature reserves or other open spaces then they are given the opportunity to be zoned as such. The process for identifying the above is through the 'Call for sites' process. This involves identifying sites, marking out the boundary on a 1:1250 map on A3 or A4 paper, completing a response form to accompany the map, and then submitting it. This needs to be done between Friday 31st October and Friday 19th December (seven weeks).

Those sites that are shown on the current Parks and Green Spaces Strategy map have already been

noted, however if we know of areas that are contentious, or there are areas that are not on the P&GSS map then we need to ensure that these are brought to the attention of the council. Examples might be grazing land, land that is in private ownership, or land that is not currently open space that we think is a good candidate. Ashton Vale and Grove Woods are good examples of areas that need submitted.

So, if you know of an area that should be considered then please submit a call for site response form and map. Please let the forum know the sites that you plan to submit for. If you need assistance then let us know and we will endeavour to help."

The Parks and Green Spaces Strategy Maps for each NP area can be downloaded from here: <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/parks1.htm>

Bristol Biodiversity Action Plan

The Bristol Biodiversity Action Plan is to be put to the Council's Cabinet for approval on Thur 30 October. As I mentioned previously there will be a launch event on 12th November (11.30am - 1.30pm) (assuming it is approved) and invitations are available for 3 people from Parks Groups to attend. If you would like to attend, or would like more information, please email helen.hall@bristol.gov.uk Helen will select 3 people on a first come first served basis.

A text only version of the plan is available now on the BCC website here: <http://tinyurl.com/bbap08>
The full colour version will be available at the launch event.

The plan was produced by Helen Hall, Nature Conservation Officer, Bristol City Council. If you have seen the DVD which Sally Oldfield helped to produce about the Battle of Royate Hill you will also know that Helen was a member of the Avon Wildlife Trust at that time and was a leader of the successful campaign to save the site from development. With all the current talk of land sales etc it is good to know that people like Helen are working within the council to try and protect Bristol's wildlife.

Cycling City Project

A report on this is also going to Cabinet next week see <http://tinyurl.com/6zjonj>

It includes the following comment from Richard Mond, Head of Parks, Estates and Sport:

"There are important synergies between the aims of the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy and the aim of increasing cycling. Green spaces provide an attractive environment for cyclists, who in turn provide informal surveillance of parks, increasing their security; and of course parks are destinations as well as through routes for cyclists. Alongside these mutual benefits, there is a need to mitigate potential conflicts - ensuring, for example, that there is space to accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists with detailed design features which encourage co-existence".

Officers will be consulting with the Parks Forum at the earliest opportunity, following approval by Cabinet, in relation to any proposals affecting parks or open spaces in order that we address specifically the concerns outlined above in Richard Mond's

response.

On behalf of the BPF Fraser has submitted the following questions to Cabinet:

1. Who will be the stakeholder representatives be on the Cycling City Project Board?
2. What is the relationship between the route being developed in south Bristol for Cycling City and the proposed BRT route? Are they in any way dependent on each other?
3. What is the target date for the meeting with Bristol Parks Forum on the impact on Parks or Open Spaces?
4. Is the meeting expected to be with the full BPF membership or with committee members and/or representatives of impacted parks and green spaces?

Parks Restructuring

Bristol Parks are intending to come back to us in mid November with the results of the Consultation. At the moment the different comments are being collated. We have been promised specific answers to our questions and will be able to see the range of enquiries that were received and responses given. I will let you know the arrangements when they are confirmed - there will probably be another meeting along the lines of the one held in September.

e-Petitions

The Ashton Vale Heritage Group have now set up an e-petition asking for protection for Ashton Vale Fields which is a designated SNCI.

<http://epetitions.bristol.gov.uk/petition.php?id=220>

Other petitions relating to parks and green spaces that are still running include:

Save the Railway Path <http://epetitions.bristol.gov.uk/petition.php?id=161>

Save Malogo Greenway <http://epetitions.bristol.gov.uk/petition.php?id=206>

and this one relating to Blaise Castle Estate <http://epetitions.bristol.gov.uk/petition.php?id=208>

Trees

A brief update on the Street Tree Forum - now to be called the Bristol Tree Forum from Hugh:

"The Bristol Tree Forum has:

- adopted ToR based on the previous BPF ones, which will be revised before the next meeting on the 12th Jan
- first job is to devise a Tree Strategy , which will take up the whole of the next session , and most (probably) of the one after
- Richard Ennion et al impressed me with the open -minded and seriousness with which they're approaching both Forum and Strategy

- has elected a Chair (me).
Will report in more depth when I have the minutes.
Hugh"

I've mentioned the trees in Mall Gardens and Redland Green before, they must be the most studied trees in the country.

In reponse to the BCC reports available here: See <http://tinyurl.com/64me9u> Bristol Street Trees have commissioned their own report <http://tinyurl.com/5zoc6c> and also reponded to the Council's report <http://tinyurl.com/6lzlkn>

All these reports raise interesting issues about risk and how it is measured.

Rob Acton-Campbell
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29 October 08

Some good news for a change!

The Development Control (South and East) Committee agreed earlier today to grant a blanket Tree Protection Order across the whole of Grove Wood, including the 27 trees that the landowner had previously been given permission to fell. Steve Micklewright, chair of the Snuff Mills Action Group, spoke about the decision on Radio Bristol just after 5pm this afternoon. As Steve said this shows that the Council will respond if you have a really good case for protecting land. If you stick at it and are prepared to fight for what you believe in you can win.

Other News

Castle Park and Ashton Vale have also been mentioned in the news this week - there are links to the This is Bristol stories on the website.

There was also a report (at <http://tinyurl.com/6dm45b>) about a park in St Anne's. This park is of course one of the parks covered by the Area Green Space Plan for Brislington which is currently being produced. We have been promised an update on the AGSP process from Richard Fletcher - I shall post it on the website when we receive it.

Also on the website you can now see the text of my previous emails. I have posted them in pdf files which group together the emails for each month. Note I will only update these files once or twice a month so it is still worth being on this mailing list if you want to keep up to date.

Rob Acton-Campbell
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