

PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release
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Bristol Parks Forum calls for local council candidates to support the Forum's Vision for Bristol's Parks and Green Spaces and for a new Big Park in Central Bristol

As we approach the May 2024 local council elections, Bristol Parks Forum (BPF) is calling on Bristol's local council candidates to support the Forum's Vision for Bristol's Parks and Green Spaces. They are also calling for a new Big Park – a large, multifunctional green space – for central Bristol.

They are asking the following questions of all candidates and parties across Bristol.

1 Do you support the Bristol Parks Forum Vision - <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BPFVision.pdf> - and what would you do to ensure it can be achieved?

2 How can you contribute to ensuring that the health and well-being benefits our parks and green spaces provide for people and wildlife in your ward are maintained and enhanced?

3 Bristol Parks Forum has submitted a proposal that the Local Plan includes wording which allows for the redevelopment of Central Bristol to include a new large multifunctional green space to serve the proposed thousands of future residents the central Bristol area will be housing. Do you support this proposal and how would go about ensuring that this new green space is created?

Len Wyatt, Chair of the Bristol Parks Forum explained:

"Our members know how important Parks and Green Spaces are to their mental and physical well-being. With no legal duty for the provision of parks and green spaces, it is very important that the politicians, who will make decisions about the future of parks and green spaces, commit to ensuring this public provision across the City is maintained. It is essential that all our publicly accessible parks and green spaces in all the wards across Bristol are maintained as parks and green spaces, and are well managed."

He goes on to address why a new Big Park is needed in Central Bristol: *"With thousands of new homes being proposed for Central Bristol, particularly in the St Philips area, these must be accompanied by a new Big Park. There needs to be a large public multifunctional park, offering play space, space for nature, places for quiet contemplation, and for exercise etc. This can only be achieved with a significantly sized park. Improvements to existing parks green spaces, pocket parks and corner play spaces are needed too, but one big park is what this area requires to provide for the needs of new and existing City Centre residents. This is the City's last chance to have a new Big Park. Once this area is built on there will never be sufficient space for a new large green park in Bristol. This new park would meet many of the City's goals – nature recovery, health and well-being, inclusive play space, etc. This is why we are asking all the candidates to publicly support this idea and publicly explain what they will do to ensure the City gets it."*

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Notes for Editors:

1. Bristol Parks Forum is as an umbrella organisation for community park groups and organisations in the city with an interest in their local parks and green spaces.
2. Bristol Parks Forum's Vision was adopted in 2019 and can be read here <http://www.bristolparksforum.org.uk/BPFVision.pdf>
3. The Forum has made a representation on the need for a Big Park as part of its submission to the proposed Local Plan.

The Forum's submission states:

"The current plan does not enable sufficient parks and green spaces for central Bristol, to deliver sustainable development in that area, while also contributing to tackling the housing, climate and ecological emergency. The modification improves the current wording while, also allowing flexibility in the functions of the new park. See also other related representations. This version at this scale of policy provides a direction which would maximise the ability of the new park to deliver the benefits to people and wildlife. While we welcome improvements to existing parks and green spaces; and the provision of new open space including pocket parks and within development green infrastructure, only a new park at a sufficiently large size will provide the benefits needed to deliver adequate public space to meet the needs brought about by the amount of change proposed for central Bristol. There is a real risk that open space will be "hard surfaced" and "isolated" without this wording. Existing parks either within or nearby to St Philips are too small or have insufficient room to provide the space needed for the residents of somewhere between 2,500 and 7,500 new homes. St Philips is the only area left in central Bristol, with the potential to provide this feature, as most areas in central Bristol already have planning applications or framework proposals in position or nearing finalisation."

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