

## Bristol Parks Forum

### Local Elections 2024.

### Responses from parties and candidates to Parks Forum questions, as of 26<sup>th</sup> April 2024.



The responses below have been received by the Forum Committee, in response to the three questions which have been asked, and are quoted unaltered from the original emails, unless the candidate's response repeats the party wide response.

Responses are listed in alphabetical order, by party name and ward.

It is possible that parties and candidates, rather than sending in replies to the Forum centrally, may have responses available locally.

#### Party wide responses:

##### 1 Green Party

Our collective response on questions 1 and 3 is:

#### **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?**

Bristol Green Party supports the Bristol Parks Forum Vision. To ensure it will be achieved, we will look to our councillors and community campaigners to support the successful work already taking place within Bristol's parks and green spaces. We would ensure that there is a clear understanding of the various players and partners who influence work in parks and figure out how to fill the gaps in council and volunteer (e.g. friends' groups, etc.) capacity.

The real challenge is to have practical solutions that can better fund the parks and their service. The recent scrutiny commission meeting on this started by looking at actual capital and revenue available and the commercial earnings that help fund the service costs. We will continue to look for ways to properly fund parks and green spaces despite the difficult financial circumstances local government faces over the next four years and without commercialising recreational and/or wild/natural spaces.

#### **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?**

We support the idea of a large new park in St Phillips in principle. The Local Plan is almost in place so we may have to look at other avenues for ensuring this park can come to fruition. We would like to see groups of stakeholders around the tables at various policy committees that deal with these themes (e.g. Communities, Planning, property holdings, etc.) and review what scope there is to influence the speculation underway in St Phillips using council landholdings and relationships with key developers. We would need to secure the requisite funding in order to make it happen but we don't think this is an insurmountable obstacle.

We have passed on question 2 to our candidates.

Rob Bryher

## 2 Knowle Community Party

We support your aims, and have always put parks near the top of our agenda and will continue to do so. Clearly each area must have green space on hand as we have in Knowle and that must also apply to the central area.

Cllr Gary Hopkins

## 3 Labour Party:

Please see below our response and thank you for the work you all do to promote the city's parks and open spaces.

We support the principles laid out in your vision – Bristol has fantastic parks and we're committed to continuing to invest in them to ensure they're nature-rich, accessible places for everyone to enjoy. We're proud of the £7m capital funds investment programme currently going into parks across the city, not including major projects like the regeneration of Castle Park, and our recently published Parks and Greenspaces and Food growing and Allotments Strategy reiterates our commitments. The quality of our parks is every bit as important as the quantity, and there has been excellent work on access and inclusion by organisations such as Your Park and Make Space for Girls and others that we have incorporated into this 15 year council strategy. This is all in the context of continued Tory austerity, further straining the council's budget.

We're currently working with partners, including South Gloucestershire Council, on the Brabazon development, the area around Filton Airfield on Bristol's northern fringe. Alongside new homes, an arena, schools, and doctors' surgeries, a new park the size of the Castle Park will be created - the largest new urban public park to be created in the South West in the last 50 years. Whilst not a new park, the regeneration of Broadmead, Castle Park, and the City Centre will also give Castle Park a new lease of life, which has to be prioritised in order to transform it into a park which is safe, secure, accessible and one that the city can be proud of.

As over 10,000 new homes are coming to the Temple Quarter area, it makes a good case for a new public park, and we need to work collectively to drive out this opportunity for new green space whilst we have it. We would welcome the opportunity to continue working with key partner organisations and community groups like the Parks Forum to advocate for new green space and we will make the case for this with development partners.

Considering the land is primarily owned by private organisations, rather than the council itself, this will be a challenging process, and we need to understand the cost implications considering the effect that austerity and other external factors that have had on council finances. Regardless, it's something we wholeheartedly want to investigate and push for, and we welcome the opportunity to do so with you following the local elections.

With best wishes,

Councillor Tom Renhard and Councillor Ellie King

Leader and Co-Deputy Leader of Bristol Labour Group

## **Responses from individual candidates by ward:**

### **1 Bishopston and Ashley Down: James Crawford and Emma Edwards – Green Party**

Q2 - 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?

Both Emma and myself are very supportive of parks and green spaces. Horfield common and the Ardagh is located in our ward and we have been working hard to support this space and we will continue to do so.

We will do this both by liaising closely with community groups, such as the Ardagh community trust, as well as with council officers to ensure that the common remains the great open space it is today.

### **2 Clifton Down West – Serena Ralston and George Calascione – Green Party**

Q2 - 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?

We are Serena Ralston and George Calascione the Green Party candidates for Clifton Down we will of course focus on the few green spaces we have in our ward. We do not have any parks, but have a couple of community run gardens including Easter Gardens and Arlington Gardens that we will:

- Support by working with the volunteer groups that run them
- Seek and share funding opportunities to improve them
- Promote their work and encourage other local volunteers to get involved

### **3 St George Central – Cara Lavan and Abi Finch – Green Party**

Q2 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?

We (Cara Lavan and Abi Finch, the Green Party candidates for St George Central ward) believe that parks and green spaces are vital both for people and wildlife and we are dedicated to protecting, enhancing and improving the accessibility for those parks in St George Central - Meadow Vale Park and Rodney Rd Playing Fields - and those in the surrounding area that are used by many people within the ward.

We will work with local groups and residents who are already active in these parks to ensure that we are in tune with the hard work that is already being done. We have already spent time assisting with the bulb planting in Rodney Rd and learning about the aims and intentions of its Friends group.

Meadow Vale needs more support - and is critical as a play space for lots of young people who live in an otherwise densely urban area. We are aware of an area of overgrowth causing problems for local residents on one side of the park and a lack of light at night time on the other - and we will work with the community to find out how that park can best be protected and enhanced.

We will look for a balance between the park as a place for wildlife to thrive, for children to play, for people to walk their dogs and for general public use.

We are also aware that there is a general lack of green space in St George Central, especially given the size of the ward, with many residents going to neighbouring wards to enjoy the green spaces there. Therefore, as well as supporting the enhancement of the existing green spaces we will be looking for opportunities to bring more greenery and nature into the ward through street trees and pocket parks where possible. We recognise that these are beneficial not just for the wellbeing of people and wildlife but also for air quality and helping to tackle extreme heat.

#### 4 St George West – Rob Bryher – Green Party

Q2 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?

My name is Rob Bryher and I am the Green Party candidate for St George West ward. I will of course focus on the parks and green spaces in my ward – St George Park, Hudds Vale Open Space, Plummers Hill Open Space, Gladstone Street CPG, Terrell Gardens and the River Avon Trail - and take the following actions:

- Support the Friends of St George Park group's Nature Conservation Proposals that they are working with the council to implement to improve wildlife and nature in the park. Practically, this means ensuring that the changes proposed reflect the desires of both the park group and local residents and communicating with local residents regularly about what changes they can expect to see in the park.
- Work with the council on the issue of the bowling green in St George Park and how it can be more formally/informally used by more people to create healthy regular exercise for local residents.
- Ensure we upgrade the play park in St George Park by supporting the Play in St George Park group in continued fundraising efforts.
- Protect and maintain all of the other green spaces (formal or informal) in the ward and listen to residents when they have issues to resolve or ideas they'd like to see implemented to improve things.

Bristol Parks Forum

26 April 2024