

Minutes of a meeting of the Tree Forum committee, Jan 16<sup>th</sup> 2017 at 8 Edgcombe Rd

**Present** Peter Harnett, chair, John Tarlton, treasurer, Richard Bland, Secretary, Jim Smith, Stephanie French, Vassili Papastavrou.

**Apologies** Mark Ashdown.

The chair welcomed Jacq Abraham, who had intended to outline her new role at the Tree Forum meeting on Nov 14<sup>th</sup>.

1 There was a brief discussion about the impact that recent cuts would make, in particular the abolition of the Neighbourhood Partnerships. Were this to go ahead, and the final decision had not yet been taken, the way in which grants for tree planting worked would have to be reorganised.

**2 Jacq Abrahams on the Arboricultural department..** There are essentially three areas- the One Tree Per Child planting area run by Teresa Crichton. The planning section organised by Richard Ennion and Laurence Wood, and the Tree Management Service that Jacq ran. This was responsible for ensuring the safety of 50,000 trees, spending about £500K, and using Bristwood and Toms as contractor. There were four Officers, Tim Brandran in the south, Phil Burton in the east and south, Beth Garman in the north and Leigh Cadogan Avonmouth.

Discussion ranged around various issues including an attempt by developers to use hedges as mitigation for tree loss, the need for more sponsorships, risk assessment methodologies. It was very strongly emphasised that the city regarded felling a tree as a very last resort, and not a way of saving money. The committee emphasised its desire to help the department in any way it could, and acknowledged that we lived in a complex era of instability.

**3. Publicity.** After Jacq left it was suggested that we might seek regular publicity by brief articles in suitable free journals. RLB had contacts with the publisher of BS6 and BS9 monthly advertising freebie, and Jim had contacts with the Post. RLB would seek to set up a system

**4 Planning Objection protocol.** Following some controversy in the pre-Christmas period about how we should approach commenting on planning applications the following principles were agreed. 1 Existing tree champions for particular areas would continue to challenge requests to fell trees as the recognised tree champion for an area. 2 No one would claim to speak for the Tree Forum as such. 3 As much of the city was not covered by a Champion, and as the existing system was closely related to the Neighbourhood Partnership structure in terms of money for new planting, we hoped that Mark Ashdown would continue to monitor applications, and ask individuals members of the committee to comment. It was important where ever possible to visit the tree involved. 4 It was important to recognise that a comment by a Tree Champion was simply a method of alerting a Tree Officer to a situation. 5 If felling was felt to be an appropriate action a Tree Champion would not normally comment.

**5 Tree notices.** The notices placed on trees that were to be, or had been felled, needed rewording.

**6 Planning applications and BTRP.** A warning was given that, in order to avoid the high cost of the BTRP, developers had taken to saying that no trees were present on a site, and thus avoiding any arboricultural report. Planning officers as well as the Tree forum needed to keep a close eye on this.

**7 Knoll Hill Woodland Trust Tree Trail.** RLB offered a guided walk, and suggests Saturday Feb 4<sup>th</sup> at 10.00 am at the entrance which is at the bottom of Bramble Lane, free road parking, Grid Ref ST5545 7521

**8 DONM** Monday 27 Feb 7.30 pm 8 Edgcombe Rd. Please note earlier time.