

Report of First Meeting of the Bristol Street Tree Forum.

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Following a meeting of the Bristol City Council Physical Environment Scrutiny Commission on 18th October 2007 http://www.bristol.gov.uk/committee/2007/sc/sc007/1018_joint_3.pdf it was agreed that a Bristol Street Tree Forum should be set up.

The inaugural meeting of the Forum was held on 5th March 2008 from 18:30 – 21:00. A formal report is being prepared and, once it has been commented upon by the participants, it will be put on the Bristol Parks web site.

The forum was well attended, both from the council end and the voluntary sector. Regarding council involvement, this included Landscape Design, City Urban Planning, Highways, Parks and Insurance. It is clear though that it will be a challenge to provide a genuine mechanism for community involvement throughout Bristol as there are potentially very many community groups which might have an interest, together with areas of Bristol where there are no obvious groups to involve. Groups who attended the first meeting were the Bristol Parks Forum, Bristol Street Trees, Civic Society, Keep North Street Special, The Landscape Institute, RCAS, and St Paul's Unlimited.

The meeting was run by a facilitator and was an opportunity both to consider the general issues and problems regarding street trees and to consider how future meetings of the Forum might be structured. There was no opportunity to get into specific issues. It is hard to summarise this aspect of the meeting but there was an overarching desire for a better method of communication from and consultation with Bristol City Council. I think it is fair to say that this problem was recognised by the BCC representatives who are sympathetic to resolving the problem. I was also very impressed by the positive contribution from Highways and City Urban Planning to the meeting.

The meeting was positive and though progress seems slow, it has got the Forum off to a good start. It has been agreed to hold a subsequent meeting in about two months time. I hope that the second meeting will get in to some of the substance of the discussion rather than simply being a discussion of process.

Bristol Street Trees distributed a statement to the Forum. However, due to the general nature of the first meeting, it was not really possible to discuss it. However, we hope it will be of interest in finding a way forward. The statement is available on: http://www.bristolstreettrees.org/BRISTOLSTREETTREES/News/Entries/2008/3/6_BRISTOL_STREET_TREE_FORUM_files/Forum%20Notes.pdf