

Bristol Tree Forum Committee Meeting - 1st July 2019

Present: Mark Ashdown (MA), John Tarlton (JT), Jim Smith (JS), Stephanie French (SF), Peter Creed (PC) and Colin Palmer (CP) [minutes]

Apologies: Vassili Papastavrou (VP), Sean Harding (SH), Chris Wallace (CW) and Clive Stevens (CS).

Previous minutes agreed.

1. JT advised that BTF has £1,115.60p in the kitty. He presented the new BTF banner which still has to be paid for. John will keep it with him.
2. Agreed that the Festival of Nature event which would be good to have a pitch at. The event happens in June. Consider also the Filwood Festival in September which would be our first opportunity to display the new banner.

3. University tree planting

JT has written to the university Chancellor about the proposals. Alan Steely is now the contact point. The planting concerns the area between Parry's Lane, Stoke Hill and Saville Road. We need clarification over the sites involved.

4. Hengrove Park

The challenges over the proposed loss of some 800 trees focused the minds. Agreed we need to submit comments on this.

5. Bristol Tree Champions

PC - BS3 district.

CP - South Bristol.

SF - Stoke Bishop.

JT - Redland.

JS - Filwood.

Dundry slopes [still to be confirmed]

MA - Bishopston.

We need to cover more wards.

We have an issue of how the tree champions might communicate. Perhaps by the use of Social Media sites? Tree champions have to be comfortable with sharing their contact details or be contacted.

Agreed to set up Tree Champion emails for BTF web site and make further enquires for new Tree Champions.

We will to organise some tree champion training. One topic could be on how to read a planning application that affect trees and monitor comments on this. We need a link to Cllr's so that there is more recognition of Tree Champions across the city.

6. Planning Regulations

It is helpful to look at other people's comments when checking planning applications. There is a distribution list for planning applications. What qualifies as a 'street tree'.

7. Letter to James Brokenshire

Problems of tree cutting work being carried out over weekends and during Bank Holidays when council offices are closed, and tree felling issues are no dealt with until the office opens. In the meantime, trees may be felled. The Wyevale Garden Centre fiasco at Hick's Gate was cited as an example.

James Brokenshire has been asked to clarify the Law on TPO as opposed to the exercise of permitted development rights.

8. Tree of the Year Competition

Very little done towards this event for 2019 so far. Agreed that we will proceed even though it is later than last year.

Publicity on the website with a timetable of events would be good. Last year's winner cannot reapply.

9. Section 106 / CIL proposals

If trees are to be cut down, the rule is that you must replace it or plant another elsewhere.

Is it an effective way of doing things? Trees are the only item to qualify and that Neighbourhood Partnerships responsibilities have now been transferred to Area Committees which have the power over how most S106 money is spent. The process is how it's spent and BTF can look further into that.

We are aware of lots of tree planting sites in Bristol currently - just under a thousand in total with many awaiting sponsorships where proposals have gone through Stage 1.

John Atkinson is acknowledged to be a key BCC officer in respect of local information. He had recently identified the sites for planting the additional copper beeches along Hengrove Way.

S106 money should extend to beyond the current one-mile radius.

The 'One Tree Per Child' scheme is admirable except that whips are often planted which easily disappear amongst existing vegetation and can also be easily damaged or die.

Developers see the opportunity of making money out of tree planting. We have already submitted comments to Redland school re their plans for 'shrubbery' replacement under 19/02831/cond.

10. Strengthening and building the BTRS

Papers have been sent to BCC regarding the refinement of previous papers. Paul Chick has left his post [Kate Cottrell has replaced him] but had said that rules can be applied a year retrospectively. We would like that to be 2 years - one benefit being that it would allow bigger trees. The One-mile radius is a national standard. Is it?.

Also a ban on using hedging as tree replacement.

When trees are lost as part of redevelopment, developers try and get away with planting smaller trees despite having cut down specimens of much greater stature. It should be used for restoration of tree canopy.

The standard of tree measurement is known as the CAVAT standard. Additionally, the health, position and accessibility are all taken into account. The CAVAT method is the most generous of measurement methods.

We have an advocacy role for the BTRS.

11. The Draft Local Plan.

BTF has submitted a response to it.

Reserved Open Spaces - the council can change these sites use to allow development, so this aspect needs to be kept an eye on.

Trees of Bristol project is being worked to map all these sites and add missing open spaces.

There are 146 allotment sites across Bristol with some no longer in use so possible spaces for tree planting. The problem is likely to be that **BCC** will also have its sights on these spaces for housing and related development.

In respect of the Hengrove Park, tree losses of nearly 1000 (planning application 19/02632/PB) We have asked for more a specific location of the trees targeted to be felled.

Planning issues - training on understanding and responding to planning applications would be helpful - especially for Tree Champions.

12. BCC Tree Strategy and APfBUF

We are trying to develop a 'Bristol Forest'. We have agreed a tree canopy of 11.9% as per the recent i-Tree Eco survey.

Defra: Urban Tree Challenge: Proposals have been invited to plant one million trees across the country. BCC is applying. We have been helping.

Areas of severe deprivation across the city are being identified and proposals made to plant tree in available green spaces here initially.

'Stump Sites' also need to be identified.

13. Richard Bland Memorial Grove

It is planned to plant a copse of trees by Ivywell Road near the Sea Wall on the Downs. The design is in progress. John Atkinson is being asked on the current situation.

14. AOB

We have obtained a copy of the OONS which provides details of green spaces.

Health research of trees regarding the mental health benefits and conditions such as COPD.

Extinction Rebellion group - could they become an affinity group tied into the BTF as a way of venting our concerns?

Mention was also made of Metro Bus not replacing dead trees during the development of the transport system.

Meeting closed.