

Bristol Tree Forum Meeting Minutes - 04th November 2019

City Hall 18.00 to 20:00

Present:

BTF Committee. Jim Smith (Vice-Chair), Peter Creed, Stephanie French (planning), Sean Harding, Colin Palmer, Vassili Papastavrou (Secretary), John Tarlton (Treasurer), Chris Wallace (datasmith and websites). Apologies: Mark Ashdown (Chair).

Council Officers: John Atkinson, Richard Ennion, Richard Fletcher.

Councillors: Councillor Asher Craig (Deputy Mayor) Celia Phipps (Bedminster), Clive Stevens (Clifton Down). Apologies: Anthony Negus.

Organisations: Avon Needs Trees (Nikki Jones), Bristol and Bath Parks Foundation (Rob Acton-Campbell), Bristol Civic Society (Simon Birch), Friends of Brandon Hill (Nicolette Vincent), Friends of the Earth (Mike Birkin), Kingsdown Conservation Group (Helen Phillips), Meg Phillips, Nomam Ruhid, Naseem Talukdar, Moslek Uddin (PPAAP), Martin Grant (Manor Woods Valley Group), Sara Lucas (Shirehampton Community Action Forum), Treespect (Sean Harding), S. Evans (WLSL). Woodland Trust (Heather Elgar and Joe Middleton).

The vice-Chair welcomed Asher Craig, Deputy Mayor, and around 45 attendees to the public meeting.

1 Annual AGM

1.1. Election of Officers. The existing committee (first elected in November 2018) was re-elected unopposed and unanimously: Mark Ashdown (Chair) Jim Smith (Vice-chair) Vassili Papastavrou (Secretary) John Tarlton (Treasurer) Stephanie French (Planning Advisor) Chris Wallace (Datasmith).

1.2 Treasurers Report. John Tarlton indicated that there had two transactions in the year; £84 paid to Mark Ashdown for website service expenses, and £58.20 paid out to John Tarlton in reimbursement for purchase of the BTF banner. There was a £20 donation from John Waldron. The current balance is £957.31.

1.3. Summary of BTF activities over the last 12 months (Vassili). The Tree Forum has held five committee meetings during the year and publishes minutes of the meetings on its website. The key activities during the year have been:

- working with The Forest of Avon Trust, the Woodland Trust and Bristol City Council on the Replant Bristol Plan and together submitting a grant application to the Urban Tree Challenge Fund (more later on these from Richard and Heather)
- working with Bristol City Council to arrange the planting of some 400 street trees this season by helping to release some £750,000 Section 106 money that has been earmarked for tree planting. This is by far the largest number of street trees to be planted in the last 10 years
- Commenting on planning issues that concern trees (e.g. Hengrove park)
- Commenting on the recent Defra consultation on Protecting and Enhancing England's Trees and Woodlands
- Calling a meeting with BCC to address the BTF's concerns regarding the application of the Bristol Tree Replacement Standard.

- Commenting on the recent Defra consultation on Protecting and Enhancing England's Trees and Woodlands.

Following the AGM, there were four presentations (three of which are available online).

2. Bristol's plans to double tree canopy cover over the next 25 years. Deputy Mayor, Councillor Asher Craig (with Richard Ennion).

Councillor Asher Craig ([full speech available here](#)) welcomed all those present to the meeting and stressed the importance of increasing canopy cover in the context of Bristol being the first council to declare a climate emergency. Bristol is creating a One City Climate Strategy and through this as a city we have set a target to increase tree canopy cover by 25% by 2030 and to double it by 2046. The Council has been engaging with Forest of Avon, Woodland Trust and the Bristol Tree Forum with regards to a new tree strategy that will set out a proposed way forward.

Richard Ennion continued, also stressing that doubling tree canopy cover in Bristol by 2046 is a key priority and this will be delivered in partnership via Replant Bristol, One Tree per Employee, Bristol Tree Forum and others. This winter 564 specimen trees and street trees will be planted (the largest number of trees for at least the last decade), together with 6,000 smaller trees planted as part of the "One Tree per Child" programme. In June 2019 Cabinet agreed that Bristol was now ready to start consulting on a Bristol Tree Strategy in the coming months.

The reaction to the presentations was extremely positive. Following the presentation a question was asked regarding the monitoring of progress towards the canopy cover increase that is planned over the next 25 years. It was stated that as part of the One City Plan, the numbers of trees felled/planted (and the types e.g. whips or street trees) will be reported every six months. In addition a concern was expressed regarding the quality of after care for the trees that are being planted. Too many are failing because of inadequate maintenance and watering and this needs to be addressed as an integral component of new planting schemes. In addition, concerns were expressed regarding the large numbers of trees being removed as a part of new housing projects and whether it would be possible to remove fewer trees whilst still building desperately needed houses.

3. 1,000 Trees for Bristol Initiative: the plans to plant 1,000 trees at Southmead Hospital and at other Bristol sites. Naseem Talukdar.

Naseem explained ([presentation available here](#)) to the Bristol Tree forum how his organisations interest in starting a tree planting project had come from his charitable work feeding homeless people and then in trying to reduce single use plastics in the catering industry. Planting trees was the next logical step. Naseem is starting with a dramatic project and is organising the planting of 1,000 trees in the grounds of Southmead Hospital at the end of November.

During the discussion a question was asked about the plastic materials used in tree planting (e.g. tree guards) and the Woodland Trust answered that it is hoping to phase them out soon and is trialling alternatives now.

4. Replant Bristol: Heather Elgar, The Woodland Trust

Heather inspired the audience with an excellent presentation ([available here](#)) that put our efforts in Bristol into a global, then a national context. The Woodland Trust is actively engaging in urban tree issues and the Bristol Tree Forum welcomes their active engagement.

5. The role of tree Champions: Jim Smith.

Jim summarised the work of the tree champion as helping to increase local support for trees and commenting on planning applications. There is help available for anyone wanting to be a tree champion (it doesn't have to be too onerous or technical). Please get in touch with the BTF through our website if you are thinking of taking on this role in an area of Bristol not already covered.

The meeting ended at 8pm with Jim Smith thanking everyone for attending and a very positive meeting.

Vassili Papastavrou - 20 November 2019.