

Bristol Tree Forum Committee meeting, Arnos Manor Hotel

Monday 25th July 2022 - Minutes

Present: Mark Ashdown (Chair), Stephanie French, Dougal Matthews, Vassili Papastavrou (Secretary), Jim Smith (vice chair and TC Coordinator), John Tarlton (Treasurer). Tree champions: Robert Griffin, Megan Lewis, Jane Valentine. Richard Ennion BCC (for Agenda items 1 and 2 only).

Apologies, Chris Wallace and the following tree Champions: Kerry Chester, Jette Halling, Jill Harris and Anne Silber

Next meeting is Monday 5th September 2022

1. Reports from Officers

John Tarlton reported that there was £4264 in the bank account. Money has been spent on the BTF leaflet and moisture measuring devices. John is preparing a blog on the 6,000 trees that were given away in the last planting season. Dougal suggested that we should include £1,500 to support Bristol's new [Trees for Streets](#) programme and look for match funding to support the new trees for streets programme. Vassili encouraged us to support the planting of large-form long-lived street trees.

2. Bristol Tree Strategy (Richard Ennion, Bristol City Council)

RE Updated the BTF on progress towards developing a Bristol Tree Strategy. Tree planting opportunities are being mapped at a city scale. The city has been split into three realms: public realm grey space (effectively the highway network), public realm green space (parks, small holdings, agricultural land, educational establishments etc) and the rest (private gardens, organisational land). There are discrepancies between three different methodologies which were used to calculate existing tree canopy and they vary from 12% to 18%. However, 18% is likely to be the current tree baseline canopy (matches iTree Canopy). Regarding grey space (i.e., Highways), Richard is focusing first on residential roads (unclassified roads), which account for 90% of the network. Various assumptions are being applied to model potential to plant trees, e.g., leaving five metres unplanted from road junctions to preserve sight lines and larger vehicle turning. The issues (elephants in the room) are money, services and whether people want trees. The modelling is assuming that trees can be planted in pavements where wider than two metres, otherwise trees would be planted within the road - effectively replacing part of a car parking space (vehicle requires c. 6 metres parallel to the pavement; a tree requires around two metres (tree plus bollards or some such)). On 19th an engagement with Bristol residents will start (a citizen conversation about trees) with open questions followed by workshops in October involving stakeholders. The 19 August coincides with the launch of 'Overstory' a canopy inspired arts installation in Broadmead. BCC alongside the Woodland Trust, Natural History Consortium and Avon Wildlife Trust will be in situ 19-25 August running tree related activities (targeting families mostly) and promoting the digital questionnaire, opportunities to get involved in tree planting (via One Tree Per Child) and promoting tree sponsorship (via Trees for Streets - who will also be present). An engagement partner has been appointed to manage this process. RE is finalising a set of questions for the engagement - and asked for feedback from BTM members.

There was then a discussion of the importance of retaining existing trees and the importance of engaging all departments of BCC which have a responsibility for trees (Planning, Planning enforcement, Housing, Education and Highways). Only by retaining more existing trees will it be possible to maintain existing tree canopy. In addition, it was mentioned that the Bristol Tree Replacement Standard is now going to be updated. The BTF has already submitted a proposal but has not had a reaction. BCC planners will be contacting BFT to have a conversation around changes to the Bristol Local Plan and associated Development Management Policies - ahead of expected consultation on such (to include tree-related policies) from October / November 22.

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3. Major planning applications.

The BTF is taking major planning applications seriously and submits detailed comments. Current applications include Brislington meadows, Bristol Zoo Carpark (again) and Bristol Zoo itself, Ashton Vale, and Baltic Wharf. We are concerned about the recent change of procedure to anonymise comments which makes it almost impossible to find the comments of groups such as BTF. For other comments, it is no longer possible to determine at a glance whether commenters are in support or against. This new policy makes the BCC planning portal pretty much unusable.

4. Bristol Tree Forum website hosting

It was agreed that we would take over the website domains that Clive Stevens (previous BTF chair) has maintained. Mark will follow up with Clive.

5. Planning enforcement (initial discussion)

In Bristol we are not aware of any substantive planning enforcement regarding the illegal removal of, or damage to, important trees. A recent example was the removal of an important lime tree in Woodstock Road Redland. Following a vote, the committee agreed unanimously that Mark should make a formal complaint regarding the failure of planning enforcement in this instance.

6. Any Other business

We will write a blog on the new BCC Trees for streets programme

Sean will organise training in the Autumn for Tree Champions to recognise veteran trees and register them on the database.

John reports that Bristol has adopted a version of the Joint Mitigation Protocol for addressing alleged subsidence claims and he will request the details of this.

Ends Vassili Papastavrou 12 August 2022