

Environment Working Group Item 9

4th September 2014

Present: Helen Furber, Val Bishop, Sheila Preece, Alan Preece, Eileen Stonebridge, Janet Brinnand, Gill Brown, Sue mayer, Alan Aburrow, David Mayer, Gary Brentnall, Andrew McGrath

Apologies: Clare Campion-Smith, Glenise Morgan, Sue Boyd, Stephanie French, Hilary long

Notes from last meeting.

Canford tennis court lights. The recent consultation on the lights was compared with the efforts Gloucestershire County Cricket Club has gone to in its consultation regarding its plans to install flood lights at the county ground. GCCC, has engaged a company to undertake the consultation. It has sent out 2000 letters to residents in the vicinity and is holding several open meetings. The consultation re Canford's lighting has been considerably lacking in comparison.

Canford Park toilets. The new doors have been installed and are being wired up so that they close automatically at night. This should be completed by the middle of September, when the full refurbishment will be completed. Unfortunately, due to a number of unforeseen problems, the loos weren't ready for the summer holidays.

It was agreed that the wording in the last working group notes relating to the request from Coombe Dingle for funds to upgrade the Stoke Lodge upper football pitch, didn't properly convey the feelings of the working group. It was **agreed** that the wording should be – 'The group is against the pitch upgrade plans and has very serious concerns about it'.

It was also noted that the rock strata under Stoke Lodge is very thick and any work at the site will need to take this in to account

Green Capital funding.

Each NP has been given £10,000 of Green Capital (GC) to allocate to projects. The meeting was shown the template funding application form

and funding criteria for this money. There followed a long discussion on how the fund works, what sort of projects could be funded, the possibility of gaining extra GC funds to allocate, and the potential for moving requests for funding from Well Being to the GC fund (or vice versa) if deemed more appropriate.

The Environment Working Group **requests that the NP agree** that it be the body that receives and considers applications on behalf of the NP and makes recommendations to the NP for funding from the GC fund. It also **requests that the NP agree** that it will only accept applications on the appropriate application form.

Parks Updates

Janet informed the meeting of a fund, Lloyds Bank Community Award, that she would like everyone to consider. A poster of the information was handed out. Andrew to forward the pdf of this poster to the NP membership. **Action:** Andrew

Canford Park gateway. There is £31,500 in the pot for this project. Due to retirements and staff changes the project now has a new project manager – Teresa Crichton. She will be in contact with Wotsoc soon. There is enough in the fund to build the railings, pillars and a new gate but some members of Wotsoc would prefer a more ornate gate. This may need additional funding. But the rest of the project could proceed immediately. The funding needs to be spent or committed by the end of March 2015.

Old Quarry Park. Work proceeding. BCC is to adopt Henleaze Terrace. This means bringing this private road under BCC ownership. The current fencing on to the park at this point needs to be replaced to make it safe. This can be done in an expensive way or a cheaper way. Gary considers the cheaper option to be just as effective as the pricier one. The fence bordering the new development site at the north end of the park will be paid for by the contractors for the development.

Any plans for the fencing will be shown to the Henleaze Society for comment before any work commences.

There is concern that children who are too young are still playing on the play equipment meant for older children in Canford Park. Gary stated that there have been no reports of injuries this summer.

Tree report

The working group considered the report and had no comments to make other than their gratitude to Stephanie for the excellence of the report.

Allocation of funding to local projects

Andrew informed the meeting that previous requests for funding for two projects on Stoke Lodge would not proceed at present, as the management at Coombe Dingle Sports Ground now consider that any requests need to come from Cotham School, the leaseholder of the site.

The request for funding from Friends of Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve was considered. The project will provide improved access to the reserve. There followed a long discussion on the various possible options for funding this project. It was finally decided that the S106 (Hiatt Baker) fund would be the best source of funding. A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed that the working group **formally request the Neighbourhood Committee to agree to allocate £8,177.04** from the NP's S106 (Hiatt Baker) allocation to fund the FOSNR path project.

A request that the S106 (3 Stoke Hill) allocation of £2,306.80 be used to purchase 8 trees (as per the stipulation of the S106 funding) was fully supported by the working group. The working group **formally requests the Neighbourhood Committee to agree to allocate £2,306.80** as per this request (location details in Stephanie French's report) from the devolved S106 fund.

The working group is keen for the other 3 trees requested in Stephanie's report to be funded. The group considers that the best source of funding for these trees (totalling £983) would be the Green Capital Fund.

Action: Andrew to liaise with Stephanie on the application for this funding. This can be considered by the NP at its December NP meeting.

Further to the BCC Cabinet decision of 2nd September 2014, to combine various NP budgets in to one general NP budget, the Environment

Working Group **formally requests the Neighbourhood Committee to continue to ring-fence £1,500 to what was previously the Clean and Green budget.** This will allow the working group to continue to allocate funds to small projects in the NP area.

Stoke Lodge updates

The TVG process grinds on. We are still awaiting the result of the Newhaven appeal, which is due to be heard on 3/4th November 2014.

A request was made to have the hedging, from the point the new path comes on to the new playground to the end of the Stoke Lodge wall, running parallel to Shirehampton Road, cut back. This will aid the passive surveillance of the playground. **Action:** Gary to arrange

There is still ongoing concern relating to the potential legal liability of BCC regarding the growth of Knotweed from Stoke Lodge on to surrounding private properties. Andrew recalled a dialogue with BCC legal on this matter and will forward the emails to the group members. **Action:** Andrew

The back car park at Stoke Lodge has been found to contain asbestos (not the nasty blue type). Clearance of this is complicated due to the presence of Knotweed. A plan of action is in place to deal with it. There will be a spraying of the Knotweed in September 2014, with 3 further sprayings next year by a new contractor that has a very good reputation in dealing with this problem.

Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve Dam

This dam has been leaking for some years. The water level in the lake drops alarmingly on occasions. A report commissioned by BCC states that the dam needs urgent work. Unfortunately the dam report is flawed as it didn't identify the spot the leak is occurring, as the lake was full as a result of persistent heavy rain at the time of the inspection. However, FOSPNR know precisely where the leak is.

BCC Parks has stated the job is too big for them to fund/undertake. Tracey Morgan, Director of Parks, has stated she will investigate an alternative way of dealing with the problem. The issue is further complicated by the issue of ownership. The lake appears not to be

owned either privately or by BCC. This may or may not be hampering a remedy. However, as BCC Highways appear to have built rain drains on nearby roads to empty in to the lake, is this a 'de facto' admission of ownership/responsibility by BCC?

No full costings have been done, merely broad estimates. FOSPNR was invited to attend the NP and present a short report on the problem. The working group is **formally requesting** the councillor members of the NP to seek a solution to this issue. Please see appendix 1 of this report.

Any Other Business

Some reps in the NP have requested that in future, meetings of this working group be in the evening. It was **agreed** that the next meeting (6th November) will be an evening meeting. A discussion will be held at that meeting to decide on the timing of future meetings.

Sue Boyd requested that £450 (+ VAT) be allocated to clean the 8 stone pots circling the W-o-T war memorial. The working group agreed to recommend funding, and **formally requests the Neighbourhood Committee to agree to allocate £450 +VAT (total £540)** from the NP's Clean and Green budget to undertake this cleaning project. This project needs to be completed before the WW1 centenary memorial events on the weekend of 11th November 2014.

It was suggested that funds relating to a further quote of **£450 (+VAT)** to clean the remaining 7 stone pots in the vicinity of the war memorial be applied for via the well being fund. **Action:** Andrew to liaise with Sue Boyd.

Gary and Andrew were also requested to find out if the damaged kerbstones around the war memorial roundabout can be repaired.

Action: Andrew and Gary

Sue's suggestion of a new lamp at the bottom of the lane leading from W-o-T car park to Church Road, to be pursued via a funding application.

Action: Andrew to liaise with Sue

The remaining painting of the railings on this pathway can be completed by Community Payback. **Action:** Gary to organise a CP session

The upkeep of the Roman Custom House site on the Portway has declined severely. Can the schedule be checked to see if it is still being maintained? **Action:** Gary to check and remedy

Large garish plastic canvas posters advertising a variety of products and events appear to be proliferating on the railings at the Canford Lane/Coombe Lane junction. Are these allowed? Do they need planning permission? **Action:** Gary to check with BCC Planning Enforcement

Sue Mayer asked if it is okay to apply for benches for the new playground. The meeting was supportive of this and advised an application to the well being fund.

Date of next meeting. 6pm Thursday 6th November (venue tbc)

Tree Report to NP3 on 22nd September 2014

1. I have been continuing with the “usual” activities of check **planning applications** and commenting if required when a tree, or the lack of them, is relevant.
2. **Devonshire Road, Henleaze**: Working with Councillors Campion Smith and Morgan, and the Westbury Park Community Association I have been trying to come up with a scheme/plan to do something about the sorry state of the pavements in Devonshire Road - which are disrupted by tree roots - without losing trees. Many possibilities with a variety of implications and costs present themselves. There will be updates later in the year. The turnover of BCC Officers causes delays and loss of information, with the additional factor that there just are not enough Tree Officers to deal with their workload. This churn has caused some unfortunate delays and even breaks in work being done, but we hope that as soon as the holiday period is over we shall make some rapid progress.
3. **3 Stoke Hill s106 fund**. This fund was specifically designated as money to be spent on trees. I have been working closely with Josie Sadler in TreeBristol and we have developed a plan to re-plant missing street trees along or near to Shirehampton Road/Parry's Lane to fill in again this “green corridor.” Currently the Highways Officers are considering the empty pits I have nominated. Josie has seen and approved 11 pits, as some may be found to be no longer suitable for trees. The Environment Group has discussed the scheme and been kept up to date with developments. We could get 8 trees (we would need an extra £85 from somewhere).
4. **Development at Trymwood Parade**: When permission for this development was granted there were conditions to plant new trees and an obligation to replace a TPO Willow tree that was felled. I checked after the developers moved off site. The TPO tree had not been replaced and the four new trees were absolutely dreadful. I am delighted to say that when I reported this to the BCC Tree Officer he was already “on the case” and agreed that the planning conditions could not be discharged. He had already had discussions with the responsible architect and in the next season (Oct 14/Mar 15) the new trees will be replaced and the TPO tree

- re-planted. This will be one whole season later than it might have been. Needless to say I shall be watching. There are photographs!
5. **Trymside:** You may recall that two years ago several new trees were planted in Trymside Open Space. Wessex Water has recently been granted permission to use the area as a temporary site for cabins, offices, soil dump etc. and you will notice that work is well under way. I fear for the future of the trees. I have been reassured that the trees will be protected, and also that should any be lost then Wessex Water will have to replace them. The site (grass area/trees/pavements) will have to be restored. Needless to say I have several “before” photographs safely stored on my hard drive.
6. **The Gas Cabin in the corner of Stoke Lodge Playing Field:**
The lack of screening on two of the four sides has been raised as a Complaint by the Environment Group with the Enforcement branch of the BCC Planning Department. No action has been taken and an e mail to the Enforcement Officer on 7th August asking for an update was ignored. A further request for an update was sent on 19th August. John Goulandris is “on the case” but so far has had no greater success than I in achieving a meaningful reply (i.e. one we can understand) let alone any progress towards proper screening being planned for or implemented. I am appalled at the dilatory way that this matter is being handled, and the apparent contempt being shown towards our audacity in complaining about the lack of screening and in complaining about the way our complaint is being handled.

Stephanie French. NP3 Tree Champion.