

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Public Rights of Way and Greens Committee



31 January 2023 at 2.00 pm

Members Present:-

Councillors: Tessa Fitzjohn (Chair), Jude English, Lily Fitzgibbon, John Goulandris, Jonathan Hucker, Philippa Hulme and Andrew Varney

Officers in Attendance:-

Theo Brumhead, Nancy Rollason (Head of Legal Service), Tom Dunsdon (Solicitor) and Eddie Procter

1 Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed all parties to the meeting, and everyone introduced themselves.

2 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Paul Goggin, Tim Rippington.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Noted that Councillor Jonathan Hucker and Paul Goggin were present at the last meeting, Minutes to be amended accordingly.



RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 27th September 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

5 Public Forum

None received.

6 Current Claims Inquiries and Miscellaneous Rights of Way Matters

The PROW Officers introduced the report and highlighted key points concerning some of the items listed (Appendix A - Applications for Definitive Map Modification Orders, Appendix B – Miscellaneous rights of way orders, Appendix C – Enforcement actions and Appendix D – PROW improvement programme).

Members welcomed the updates and arising from discussion the following points were clarified –

1. Rights of Way that had been blocked for a long period of time maintained their legal status. Problems associated with these were often complex and long standing and, in some cases, the only solutions were to formally divert the footpath or creating a ‘stopping up’ Order so that the highway land ceased to be a highway, road, or footpath.
2. If a Right of Way was obstructed and the person(s) causing the obstruction was known to the local authority the first course of action was to ask them to remove it. If this was not possible the council could undertake the work and invoice the person(s) concerned. An agreed solution was always the preferred option, but other legislation could perhaps be used if a solution could not be found this might include a Community Protection Notice which seeks to stop a person or body continuing with conduct which unacceptably affected the community.
3. Members of the committee were also advised that they could formally request the council’s enforcement team officers to use their delegated powers to potentially resolve PROW obstructions.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

7 Stoke Lodge Village Green Application - Timeline - Verbal update

The Committee received a verbal update regarding the progress of the Stoke Lodge Town and Village Green (TVG) Application.



The Legal Officer confirmed that the Inspector's clerk had said that the Inspector's report on the Stoke Lodge TVG would be available in early February 2023. Once the report had been received by the Council as Commons Registration Authority, it would be sent to the PROWG Committee and the relevant parties. Liaison with members of the PROWG Committee would then take place to discuss the next steps to be taken to convene a meeting of the committee to take a formal decision.

Members then discussed and agreed that a formal site visit should be arranged once the Inspector's report had been received. The next meeting of the committee was scheduled for 20 March so a site visit could potentially be in early March, this would be confirmed as soon as possible.

Regarding the site visit the Head of Legal Services confirmed that this was for the benefit of committee members to enable them to understand the context more clearly and although other parties could attend, they would not make statements or ask questions. In answer to a member's question the Head of Legal Services confirmed that if a member was unable to attend the site visit, they could still take part in the formal committee meeting debate and decision.

The Legal Officer gave details of the process to be followed once the Inspector's report had been received but following a comment from a member of the public in relation to the sharing of a draft of the report it was agreed that this would be reviewed and confirmed with Members as soon as possible.

RESOLVED – that the verbal update be noted, and a formal site visit be arranged once the Inspector's report had been received.

8 Information items

Members noted the information items as detailed below.

a) Commonwealth War Graves Commission: Installation of signs indicating war graves

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission had offered Bristol Councillors the opportunity to erect signs at churchyards, cemeteries, and burial grounds that contain war graves. The aim of the initiative is to increase awareness of war graves in the UK and to remind the public that they need not travel abroad to find Commonwealth commemorations. The Signs project commenced as part of the centenary of the First World War.

b) Celebrating the restoration of PROW's by organising a photo shoot and press opportunity



Urban Public Rights of Way were the ancient, short cuts taken as busy pedestrians, to make journeys shorter and often more enjoyable. Though they might become overgrown, filled with fly tipping, or even built in or over thereby losing their usefulness.

Ward Councillors would be encouraged to raise the profile of the PROWG team and take the opportunity, when public rights of way in their ward were restored to full use, to organise a photo shoot with the local councillor, residents, and a member of the PROWG team.

9 Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 2pm on 20 March 2023.

Meeting ended at 2.50 pm

CHAIR _____

