

# Bristol City Council

## Minutes of the Public Rights of Way and Greens Committee



11 July 2024 at 2.00 pm

### **Members Present:-**

**Councillors:** John Goulandris, Donald Alexander, Abi Finch, Ed Fraser, Cam Hayward, Al-Maghrabi, Kaz Self and Christine Townsend

### **Officers in Attendance:-**

Duncan Venison (Network Operations Manager) and Theo Brumhead

## **1 Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information**

The Chair welcomed all members to the meeting, introductions were then made.

## **2 Confirmation of Chair 2024/25**

Noted that at Full Council Annual General Meeting on 21 May 2024, Councillor John Goulandris was appointed Chair of the Public Rights of Way & Greens Committee for the 2024/25 municipal year.

## **3 Confirmation of Vice Chair 2024/25**

Noted that the appointment of Councillor Cam Hayward as Vice-Chair of the Public Rights of Way & Greens Committee for the 2024/25 municipal year.

## **4 Membership of PROWG Committee 2024/25**

Noted that the membership of the PROWG Committee for the municipal year 2024/25 were Councillors Donald Alexander, Al Al-Almagrahbi, John Goulandris, Cam Hayward, Tim Kent, Abi Finch, Ed Fraser, Kaz Self, Christine Townsend.



## 5 Dates of meetings 2024/25

Noted that the membership of the PROWG Committee for the municipal year 2024/25 were Councillors Donald Alexander, Al Al-Almagrahbi, John Goulandris, Cam Hayward, Tim Kent, Abi Finch, Ed Fraser, Kaz Self, Christine Townsend.

## 6 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies were received from Councillor Tim Kent

## 7 Declarations of Interest

None declared.

## 8 Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference were noted.

## 9 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Public Rights of Way & Greens Committee meeting held on 15 April 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

## 10 Public Forum

Members noted the public forum statements listed below and the written questions and answers as set out below. All the submissions had been published on the Bristol City Council's website prior to the meeting.

<b>Questions</b>	Shirley Brown	1. PROW work backlog 2. Stoke Lodge Village Green/Playing Fields
<b>Statement 1</b>	Helen Powell	Stoke Lodge Village Green/Playing Fields
<b>Statement 2</b>	Susan Mayer	Stoke Lodge Village Green/Playing Fields



**Question 1**

Having learned, at the last meeting of the PROWG Committee, that the huge backlog and long delays in making and implementing decisions about public rights of way in Bristol are partly due to the fact that there are only two council officers supporting that aspect of this Committee's work, and that some of their time had been seconded to working on unrelated projects, has any specific action since been taken to ensure that sufficient staffing and time will now be allocated ?

**Answer 1**

Whilst thirteen outstanding DMMOs may seem a huge number this is very small amount compared to other Authorities. Of the thirteen DMMOs awaiting investigation one is nearing completion and will be brought to committee in October and another is currently being investigated with the expectation it will also be brought to committee in October. A third path is on Council owned land and a Deed of Dedication is being sought to make the route a right of way – a short report will then be brought to Committee. Of the remaining ten, seven are unobstructed so currently available for use.

In order to address the backlog and limited Officer resource a consultant has been employed to work on DMMOs over the next two years. The consultant will work on the most complicated and time-consuming applications to allow Officers to focus on more straight forward applications alongside other rights of way work.

No Officers have been seconded to unrelated projects. Both Officers work solely on rights of way with some of that work being DMMOs. Officers are also required to work on planning applications that may affect rights of way, Public Path Orders (PPOS), Legal Event Modification Orders (LEMOs), enforcement works, maintenance and improvement projects and follow up public enquires.

**Question 2**

In view of the ongoing legal action by Cotham School to try and reverse the PROWG Committee's decisive vote in June 2023 to register Stoke Lodge as a Town or Village Green, are you aware of the arguments and evidence put forward by the local community's campaigners, as detailed on the website "We need to talk about Stoke Lodge"? (<https://welovestokelodge.blog>)

**Answer 2**

Yes, absolutely. The CRA as first defendant fully appreciates the input of Ms Welham and her counsel as second defendant.

**11 Current Claims, Inquiries and Miscellaneous Rights of Way matters**

The Network Operations Manager introduced the report and highlighted key points regarding some of the items listed in 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.

Points clarified were –



- a) The report regarding Argyle Place had not been submitted to the meeting as planned as legal advice was still being sought. The report would be brought back to the 3 October meeting.
- b) It was noted that two other applications were scheduled to be brought to the 3 October meeting, however it was considered unlikely that Ridgehill would be brought to October Committee as priority was being given to Argyle Place and Stoke Lodge. It was also unclear on the status of the Planning application now that Ridgehill had been registered as a Village Green.

**RESOLVED – that the report be noted.**

## **12 Update on Stoke Lodge Playing Fields Village Green**

### **Update on Stoke Lodge Playing Fields Village Green**

Members were advised that –

- 1) The Judicial review of the Committee’s decision of the 28 June 2023 to register the land had been discontinued with the consent of all parties to the application.
- 2) Cotham school had made an application under S14 of the Commons Registration Act 1965 to rectify the register of Village Greens maintained by the CRA by deleting the Stoke Lodge playing fields from the register.
- 3) The Council as landowner had adopted a neutral position in respect of the remaining application.
- 4) The CRA was actively defending the application on the instructions of the Committee.
- 5) The Hearing of the application had been listed for the 27<sup>th</sup> -31<sup>st</sup> January 2025.

**RESOLVED – that the report be noted.**

Meeting ended at 2.25 pm

**CHAIR** \_\_\_\_\_

