

Public Health & Communities Policy Committee

11th October 2024



Public Forum

Please note: The views and information contained within the public questions and statements are those of individuals concerned and not of the Council.

Public Forum Questions

The following Public Forum Questions have been received for the Public Health & Communities Policy Committee on 11th October:

Number	Name	Subject
PQ01, PQ02	Sally Wyatt	Allotment rents and tenancy agreement
PQ03	Derek Patterson	Plant-based catering
PQ04, PQ05, PQ06	Tim Beasley	Allotment rents and tenancy agreement
PQ07, PQ08	Sarah Freeman	Allotment rents and tenancy agreement
PQ09, PQ10, PQ11,	Danica Priest	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PQ12, PQ13, PQ14	Anne DeHaan	Allotment rents and tenancy agreement
PQ15, PQ16	Cllr Ellie Freeman	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PQ17, PQ18	Joshua Roberts	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PQ19, PQ20, PQ21	Catherine Withers	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PQ22, PQ23, PQ24	Thomas Pearce	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PQ25, PQ26, PQ27	Cllr Guy Poultney	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PQ28, PQ29	Jacob Finnian Eric	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PQ30	Katy Ladbrooke	Allotment rents and tenancy agreement



Public Forum Statements

The following Public Forum Statements have been received for the Public Health & Communities Policy Committee on 11th October:

Number	Name	Subject
PS01	Martin Rands	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS02	Ruth Hecht	Allotment Rents and Tenancy Agreement
PS03	Alastair Sawday	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS04	Joanna Mellors	Allotment Rents and Tenancy Agreement
PS05	Owen Pilcherwood	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS06	David Carter	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS07	Withdrawn	
PS08	Sue Mullins	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS09	Helen Powell	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS10	Mark CD Ashdown	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS11	Helen Withers	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS12	Erika Uridge	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS13	Louise Matthews	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS14	Jim Mason	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS15	Dan	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS16	Anne Silber	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS17	Jordana Davarian-Cross	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS18	Maureen Anderson	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS19	Julia Halpenny	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS20	Luke Fitzpatrick	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS21	Bonnie Welch	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS22	Rachel Hall	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS23	Anita Bennett	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS24	Rebecca Eyton	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS25	Phoebe Taylor	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS26	Steve Whiting	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS27	Richard Matthews	Allotment Rents and Tenancy Agreement
PS28	Charlotte Ellis	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS29	Neil Goldsmith and Frances Robertson	Local pharmacy provision in North Bristol
PS30	James Davies	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS31	Angela Truell	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS32	Susan Sullivan	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion

Number	Name	Subject
PS33	Frances Neville	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS34	Sophie Stevens	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS35	Jenny Padfield	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS36	Vicki Holman	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS37	Toby Baker	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS38	Kevin Mullins	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS39	Teresa Tremlett	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS40	Catrina Davis	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS41	Jason Picton	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS42	T J Anderson	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS43	T K Cockle	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS44	John Beard	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS45	Michelle Graffagnino	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS46	Martyn Cordey	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS47	Pip Woolf	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS48	Lesley Powell	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS49	Robert Broughton	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS50	Helen Philips	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS51	Julia Victor of Friends of Novers Hill and Crox Bottom	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS52	Ian Whitttern	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS53	Rebecca Bell	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS54	Stuart McCarthy-Thompson, Avon Wildlife Trust	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS55	Amanda Barrett	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS56	Steve Beard	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS57	Deborah Sharp	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS58	Nick Barker	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS59	Owen Newman	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS60	Kathy Welham	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS61	Debbie Bell	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS62	David Clarke	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS63	Maddy Longhurst	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS64	Hilary Rydon	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS65	Anna Archer	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS66	Mark Brown	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS67	Angie Weller	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS68	Jacob Finnian Eric	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS69	Sarah MacDonald & Juliette Taylor	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS70	Councillor Lisa Stone	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS71	Bianca Chinn	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion

PS72	Joshua Roberts	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS73	Jasmine Beard	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS74	Lily Mazzotta	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS75	Flick Brown & James Smith	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS76	Helen Russell	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS77	Kerry Lyon	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS78	Kim Dowsett	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS79	Karen Brown	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS80	Tony Pitt	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS81	Kate Laver	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS82	Dave Lewis	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS83	Dr Sascha Roest-Ellis	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS84	Mike Karthaus	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS85	Kieran Becker	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS86	Marie Marsh	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS87	George Cook	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS88	Zdenka Cervena	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS89	Robert Thomas	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS90	Mary Marsh	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS91	Sue Chubb	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS92	Danica Priest	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS93	Gemma Lasseter	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS94	Amandine Tchou	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS95	Andrew Bradbury	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS96	Val Shepstone	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS97	Avellanaecology, Neill Talbot	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS98	Ricky Chandler	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS99	Paul Becker	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS100	Ana T Castro Castellon & Alec Jenkins	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS101	Kirsty Claxton	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS102	Michelle Ruse	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS103	Angela Mayhew	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS104	Laura Hardidge	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS105	Laura Chapman	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS106	Zoe Palmer	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS107	Ethan Murphy	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS108	Jessica McLean	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS109	Ollie Shears	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS110	Chris Lucas	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS111	Sue Fairhurst	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS112	Barbara Lewis	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS113	Katie Milne	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion

PS114	jane harper	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS115	Tony Coll	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS116	Birgit Muller	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS117	Thomas Pearce	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS118	Matthew Feltham	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS119	Jo Sergeant	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS120	Amanda Brett	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS121	Christina Hamati	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS122	Anna Abbott	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS123	Mark Hayward Jenkins	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS124	Bristol Tree Forum, John Tarlton	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS125	Nasim Dumont	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS126	Catherine Withers	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS127	Sarah Smith	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS128	Esma Pearcey	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS129	ann vowles	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS130	Cllr Ellie Freeman	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS131	Chris Faulkner Gibson, Bristol Allotments Forum	Allotment rents and tenancy agreement
PS132	Cllr Ani Stafford-Townsend	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS133	Tim Edwards	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS134	Stuart Budd	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS135	Emma Robinough	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS136	Duncan Porter	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS137	Sebastian Whitehouse	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS138	Jody Reed	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS139	Frances Whitlock	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS140	Matthew morse	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion
PS141	Ena Yarde	Allotment rents and tenancy agreement
PS142	Cllr Guy Poultney	South Bristol Cemetery Expansion

Public Forum Questions

PQ01, PQ02 - Sally Wyatt

PQ01: if you are going to charge additionally for water on top of rents. Then are we going to be allowed to use the water meaningfully. At the moment my plot is accessed via rickety steps and not near a water trough and it is basically too dangerous for me to be going up and down the steps with watering cans. It would take about 20 to 30 cans to water this way. In the past we were allowed syphon to water butts nearer to the growing area this was stopped under the completely ridiculous pretence that we might catch legionnaires disease. (Check the statistics on this)

Officer response:

The provision of an upgraded water supply cannot be funded through the revised rent uplift as the income that will be generated through the new rent proposal is insufficient. We will seek to use capital budgets for this if and when available and depending on other investment priorities.

PQ02: I harvest most of my water from rainfall could there be an opt out option of NOT using on site water (I didn't use any this year so don't want to pay for something I'm not using).

Officer response:

It is not possible for individual tenants to opt out of the water charge for sites with water. However, if the majority of tenants on a site wish to not have water supplied, we can arrange for the water to be disconnected to the site and deduct the water charge.

PQ03 - Submitted by Derek Patterson

PQ03: The science is increasingly clear that the promotion of diets rich in plant-based foods, and the reduction of consumption of animal products, is important for the health of both the planet, and our communities here in Bristol.

While the council does acknowledge that this is its own strategy around food, it is obvious that this message will be louder if the Council can lead by example in this, by “walking the walk” as well as “talking the talk”.

So my question is, ‘what can this committee do to ensure that the Council follows the example of other Councils across the country; most recently councils in Nottingham and Lincoln, and commit to 100% plant-based catering for its own internal meetings and events? Even if this is only a relatively small change, it will send a powerful message to the City about the needed direction of travel for our society.’

Officer response:

This committee could ensure it challenges the Council to be aware of the pros and cons of various catering offers and help highlight the opportunities to provide appropriate catering offers to colleagues and visitors which are deemed more environmentally friendly while being accessible to all.

Under the current concessions if the Council decided that all internal meetings and events should be fully plant-based this should be possible for the current Concessionaries to deliver.

For context, the 2023/2024 café, catering and event provision, that is part of the new contract, generated less than £4.5m in sales last year. The Council’s direct internal meetings and events sum is substantially less. It is broadly estimated that this amount is approximately £35,000.

PQ04, PQ05, PQ06 - Tim Beasley

PQ04: Whilst Council managers have finally come up with a slightly more acceptable Rent Increase Proposal that is circa 52% across all allotment plot Band sizes, the fact remains that this increase is still some one and half times cumulative inflation, from 2017/18 to present, of circa 33%. This is on top of all the other austerity measures, and cost of living increases, that the citizens of Bristol have had to endure since 2008.

Allotmenters are being penalised for the failures of the previous Council's political administration, and of Council managers. They are the ones who allowed the Allotment Office and service to be under resourced & mismanaged, and they have failed since 2018 to implement any rent increase at all, representing an almost criminal failure to bring more income into the service.

Will this Committee be setting up an Inquiry into these failures, including allotmenters in the Inquiry team?

Officer response:

There are no plans for an inquiry into the management of the allotment service.

PQ05: In the Report to this Committee, under Evidence Base, para 7, it states: “The additional income generated by the revised proposal is estimated to be £116K per annum from BCC directly-managed allotments. This is required to be used to support the Service’ revenue budget, allowing for one additional allotment officer resource that can be used to improve services to tenants, offer better support to volunteer Site Representatives and to progress the commitments made in the Food Growing and Allotment Strategy...”

In para 8 it states: “...Any expenditure related to the additional income generated from the rent uplift cannot commence until after the uplifted rents are collected.”

As a result of the Council's mismanagement of the Consultation over the last 10 months, this means that the absolute earliest an additional Allotments Officer will be recruited will be in late 2025/early 2026, as the increased allotment rents income will only start to be collected in November 2025.

Given how overburdened the current failing Allotment service is, to the extent it is unable to accurately send out correct invoices to 100% of allotment tenants, how on earth do Council Managers expect to have collaborated with stakeholders/allotmenters and agreed upon a new rent increase notification (and indeed a revised tenancy agreement and rules notification) to go out by end September 2025?

Officer response:

The report recommendation is to commence, not complete, a process of engagement with stakeholders on a new tenancy agreement and the future structure of rents within 12 months of Committee approval. This is to ensure existing allotment officer time is protected to carry out core allotment service tasks. The review process will therefore be completed sometime after 12 months depending on how the process is designed and develops.

PQ06: In early September the Allotment Forum's Rents and Value For Money sub-groups circulated to

Committee members a serious set of Proposals addressing today's Agenda item – some have been taken on board, some have sadly not.

One such Proposal was: “In 2026/27 we suggest a further increase is made in line with inflation...” followed by a list of reasons as to why this was a very good idea, and would save having to revisit the rent increase issue again in less than a year's time.

Why do today's Proposals not include this Proposal from the Forum sub-groups, so that the minimum 12-month notifications sent out in the coming weeks can cover rent increases for November 2025, and for October 2026?

Officer response:

The proposal in the Report is amended from that put to consultation, after taking the response to the consultation into account as well as other formal comments made through the decision-making processes – both Scrutiny and Committee. The addition of a recommendation to agree an increase in line with inflation would be considered a new proposal and thus require further public consultation, with subsequent delays and expense.

The Council's approach is to consider an inflationary uplift or other rent amendment mechanism being added to the Tenancy Agreement and subject to discussion through the engagement process committed to in the report, and subsequent full consultation. This will negate the need to routinely return to the Committee for decisions on allotment rent, unless the council chooses to propose and consult on additional rent uplifts outside of the mechanism approved.

QUESTION PQ07, PQ08 - Sarah Freeman

PQ07: Can the Committee confirm that any future rent increases will be reviewed and actioned annually? Allotment tenants should not be subjected to a high than inflation rent increase every 7 years.

Officer response:

This cannot be confirmed. It is our intention to consider adopting a mechanism to raise rents annually through the terms of a new tenancy agreement. However, this would not rule out the council choosing to propose and consult on additional rent uplifts outside of this mechanism if it was felt to be justified.

PQ08: Will the Committee confirm that any future rent increases will not be above the rate of inflation and will be line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Officer response:

This cannot be confirmed at this time.

PQ09, PQ10, PQ11 - Danica Priest

PQ09: The officer report states several times that the SNCI will be degraded if this expansion doesn't go through. Considering this site will have its own Friends of group to manage the grassland, What makes this site different from council owned sites like the Western Slopes which has maintained its biodiversity through grazing or Manor Woods Valley which maintains and enhances its biodiversity through its Friends of group?

Officer response:

The council has no record of a request to establish a friends group. Some of the sites mentioned in the do have grazing but are not considered positive measures as there is intensive horse grazing occurring. The proposed expansion works will put in place a 30-year Landscape Ecology Management Plan for the site which will improve the value of the SNCI by creating new habitats, enabling cross connectivity in new hedgerows and proactively managing the land to protect this habitat.

PQ10: What was the evidence used to determine that the SNCI would be degraded if the cemetery expansion was halted?

Officer response:

This was determined on the basis that over the past twenty years the quality of the SNCI has declined, as scrub has established and has started to affect the value of the SNCI. Unless there is active intervention through the 30 year Landscape Ecology Management Plan this decline will continue.

PQ11: Who is the local authority nature conservation officer overseeing the south Bristol cemetery expansion decision and the dormice surveys? We know Simecology is the private consultant that the council has hired to undertake the surveys so this question is about the local authority ecologist that is required for scrutiny only.

Officer response:

The Councils Nature Conservation Officer works within the Natural and Marine Environment Service.

PQ12, PQ13, PQ14 - Anne Dehaan

PQ12: Why have plots without water lost their 50% discount.

Officer response:

There are 6 allotment sites without a water supply. Tenants on these sites have been given a 50% discount on their rent, which is more than the cost of the water paid for by tenants with water supplied. The proposal to separate the water charge from the rent is so that all tenants pay the same rent for the land that they lease, and water is an additional charge for those who have access. The water charge rises in increments to reflect the size of plot a tenant has.

PQ13: Why should the recruitment of a new allotment officer be delayed until 2025/2026 when the administration of the allotment service is so problematic and leads to significant loss of annual income? (eg many plots lying vacant for years and long delays with plots being relet)

Officer response:

Resources to the Allotment Service were increased three years ago which has enabled the development and adoption of a comprehensive Food Growing and Allotment Strategy and enabled some service improvements to tenants and volunteer Site Reps. Our aim is to improve the service further and deliver Strategy objectives, including bringing more plots online. However, there are no other budgets available to add the resources required until additional income is generated from allotment rents.

PQ14: Are the recent invoices only sent out by email? i.e. What happens to tenants who are unable to respond or communicate by email and risk failing to respond within the 40 days allowed.

Officer response:

Most of the invoices are sent by email to allotment tenants who have supplied this contact information. Approximately 300 invoices are sent by post to tenants who have not provided or do not have an email address.

PQ15, PQ16 - Cllr. Ellie Freeman

PQ15: From the papers, I can see the council has concluded South Bristol Cemetery is the now only site in the whole of the city suitable for new burials. It is hard to understand how this is a robust conclusion without showing us the research into sites such as the Natural Burial Ground in Arnos Vale, analysis of burial trends or estimates of Public Health burials (i.e. those with no next of kin). Given the complicated and sensitive nature of this decision today and potentially more in the future, why have we still not got a comprehensive burial strategy for the city despite it being requested by Development Committee B on 6th September 2023?

Officer response:

The council has considered a number of locations all of which were not suitable to develop a new burial ground for a number of reasons which include drainage, area prone to flooding, contaminated land, bed rock which prevents burials occurring, road access and a new site would require significant infrastructure to be created such as utilities, access routes and car parking which would have a greater impact. Arnos Vale Cemetery has negligible burial capacity and will not meet the required needs of the city once the burial space at South Bristol runs out.

The Council has been focusing on responding to the immediate needs of Bristol's community for coffin and cremated remains plots. The service's intention is to develop a strategy in partnership with a variety of stakeholders, which will provide the council and the city with the future service provision required for its burial and bereavement services.

PQ16: The letter dated 3rd October 2023 responding to reviewer's comments seems to say that the surface water will be clean as it's above interment level but it's not entirely clear to a lay person about what happens to the grey water, as the attenuation pond is about flooding rather than water cleaning. There is also a comment from the Drainage Officer dated 28th December 2022 that implies concerns about the data submitted. Please can I and the residents in my ward of Bedminster be reassured that Colliters Brook will not be affected by the run-off?

Officer response:

The surface water drainage is above this level and is a separate system. The movement of ground water and how this will interrelate with the grey water from the graves is the subject of the Ground Water Risk Assessments described in the 3rd October 2023 letter.

The Ground Water Risk Assessment uses geological information and ground water level data measured in boreholes on the site, together with guidance on the risk of pollution depending on the numbers of burials carried out each year. This data is assessed and modelled to determine the associated risk of contamination levels exceeding acceptable levels published by the Environment Agency. This risk assessment is done through computer modelling of the data collected. The modelling has confirmed that the risk is low and the Environment Agency have supported this in their assessment. In this case a low risk means there is very little chance that the level of pollutants from the cemetery will reach a level to cause any harm to the environment.

Addressing the concern expressed by the Drainage Officer. The Agenda Document for Development Control B Committee of 29 November 2023, records an updated statement following the Drainage Officers review of additional modelling and data. The Drainage Officer wrote:

The design calculations submitted are for the proposed drainage arrangements, which have been designed on the basis of limiting the flow off site to 80l/s for all events up to the 1 in 100 plus 40% allowance for climate change, are accepted. The 80l/s design flow was chosen based on the assertion that this is the equivalent Greenfield runoff rate. Evidence has been provided to confirm this.

The Council's Drainage Engineer raises no objection to this application and does not consider that it is necessary to attach a condition.

For the above reasons we can reassure you and the residents of Bedminster that Colliters Brook will not be adversely affected by runoff.

PQ17, PQ18 - Joshua Roberts

PQ17: MG5 Grassland is nationally rare and should be protected, officers make the argument that it is only a small pipe (with numerous manholes at 1.35m²) however would the committee think its acceptable to remove just one stone at Stonehenge?

Officer response:

It is acknowledged that MG5 grassland should be preserved. The location of the attenuation pond and carrier drain route avoid the areas of MG5 grassland. The proposed expansion works will put in place a 30-year Landscape Ecology Management Plan for the site which improve the value of the SNCI by creating new habitats, enabling cross connectivity in new hedgerows and proactively managing the land to protect this habitat.

PQ18: It is stated that by doing nothing the council will lose £876,000 per annum. Current burial prices are £2250 each, at a rate of 105 per annum this totals £236,250 what accounts for the £634,500 disparity?

Officer response:

Cemetery turnover includes all income related to the burial process, such as plot fees, burial fees (since the plots are double depth, this averages to two burials per plot sold per year), cremated remains plots and burials, headstone fees, and other memorial products. The financial projections assume that when no new plots are available for sale, the additional income streams will also cease, aside from a small number of second burials.

PQ19, PQ20, PQ21 - Catherine Withers

PQ19: Experts have discredited both the original ecology report and groundwater risk assessment, so the harm to habitats and pollution risks remain undetermined as we stand here today, do the committee agree?

Officer Response:

The council is aware that some project reports and documentation have been reviewed by and commented on by members of the public, however it is incorrect that the project information has been discredited. The council employed suitably qualified professionals to undertake the required surveys, reports, and assessments. This documentation was submitted to the relevant authorities as part of the planning application process. Planning consent was then duly granted. The council is confident that the proposed project meets the relevant requirements for environmental protection.

PQ20: Natural England should have been informed of the MG5 grassland habitat, it is nationally rare, why was this not done?

Officer Response:

Natural England have been advised that there is MG5 grassland within the SNCI. They have also been informed that the location of the burial ground, attenuation pond and carrier drain route avoid the areas of MG5 grassland.

PQ21: do the committee agree making a properly informed decision on expansion should be made on such a sensitive conservation area with industry standard reports?

Officer Response:

The surveys and reports developed are specific to the site in question and account for the sensitivity for each location. In carrying out a survey and developing a report it is necessary to follow industry guidance and use recognised terminology to describe grassland and other habitats. The assessments carried out and reports prepared for this project consider a wider range of ecological issues, such as local rarity and value for invertebrates.

PQ22, PQ23, PQ24 - Thomas Pearce

PQ22: Site 1 is acceptable to all but with revised drainage plans dealing with the run-off water on site or discharging into existing storm drains saving adding pollution into Colliters Brook. Do councillors agree this is a perfectly acceptable option to everyone?

Officer response:

The proposed Site 1, as well as an area of the existing cemetery are at a lower level than the alternative storm drains on the A38, but at a higher elevation than the SNCI. For this reason, surface water can only drain through the SNCI and into Colliter's Brook. There isn't a practical alternative, and the design of the drainage system and burial areas ensures this option neither impacts the higher value MG5 grassland or presents an unacceptable pollution risk.

Additionally, the guidance from Wessex Water states that *"Alternative means of disposal (e.g. SUDS, natural watercourse, highway drains) must be properly investigated before any connection could be considered. In cases where there is no other option, only rainwater from impermeable surfaces could be considered, and then only into a dedicated public surface water sewer"*. The use of other storm water and highway drainage systems are similarly restricted. This is to prevent sewer and drainage systems being overwhelmed during rain storms, and the associated risk of flooding and pollution through the uncontrolled release of untreated sewage.

PQ23: If the answer to 1 is yes, this would mean there is suitable plot space to provide burial plots beyond 2026 as cited by the report, which would give more time for the member task and finish group to investigate various crematorium options. Do councillors accept that option 3 "stopping the expansion project in its entirety" is not accurate?

Officer response:

As Option 1 and 2 both include the requirement for new drainage to be installed within the SNCI, it is only Option 3 that includes no works within the SNCI and a requirement to essentially 'go back to the drawing board' in terms of the councils policy on how coffin burials and cremated remains interments are provided by the council. Option 3 is to stop the expansion project entirely, any future variant would require a minimum of new designs, applicable consents and budget approvals.

PQ24: There were six sites shortlisted in North Bristol. The soil and drainage issues evident in the South Bristol site are so extensive that officers claim £2.4 million is needed to make the site suitable. Various ecological groups have released statements outlining the high natural value of the MG5 rare grasslands on the proposed site, as well as concern at the lack of full ecological surveys taking place. What were the differences between the South Bristol cemeteries expansion and the other 6 sites, that made the 6 sites more ecologically unsuitable than this proposal?

Officer response:

The project has not identified extensive soil and drainage issues in the proposed expansion site for a burial ground at South Bristol. The development of an attenuation pond and drainage system is required to manage surface water.

In the development of the proposed scheme there have been a number of ecological reports prepared and surveys carried out. Because these reports contain details and locations of protected species and due to the sensitivity of this information it was not shared on the public planning portal, but it was shared with the planning authority and organisations who were consulted on the cemetery expansion. The location of the burial ground, attenuation pond and carrier drain route avoid the areas of MG5 grassland. The proposed expansion works will put in place a 30-year Landscape Ecology Management Plan for the site which improve the value of the SNCI by creating new habitats, enabling cross connectivity in new hedgerows and proactively managing the land to protect this habitat.

The council has considered a number of other locations for a burial ground all of which were not suitable for a number of reasons which include, drainage, area prone to flooding, contaminated land, bed rock which prevents burials occurring, road access and a new site would require significant infrastructure to be created such as utilities, access routes and car parking which would have a greater impact etc. The land at south Bristol was purchased to use as a burial ground once the current cemetery burial space had been exhausted.

PQ25, PQ26, PQ27 - Cllr Guy Poultney

PQ25: The table on page 128 of the report seems to indicate that the soonest Bristol City Council would expect to experience a shortfall in specific faith denomination burial plots would be in 2031. Is this correct?

Officer Response:

This is correct. However, the most immediate need is for nondenominational adult coffin burial plots.

PQ26: On page 114 of the report, there is a listing of five meetings in which the chair of the committee or the full committee was briefed by Council officers in respect of this decision. Have any additional briefings taken place since this report was written?

Officer Response:

Members of the Public Health and Communities Committee have received additional briefings and have visited the South Bristol Cemetery since the report was written.

PQ27: In respect of those briefings, have the contents now been made public, and if not, what opportunity has the public had to subject them to independent scrutiny?

Officer Response:

The briefings were provided to allow the committee members to seek clarity and ask questions on the proposed scheme. The site visits were to allow committee members to establish a better understanding of the area being proposed for a new burial site ahead of the committee meeting. There is not additional information to be made publicly available.

PQ28, PQ29 - Jacob Finnian Eric

PQ28: The council plans results in additional pollutants being discharged into Colliters Brook, what alternatives has the council considered that would remediate this?

Officer Response:

The proposed drainage system for the South Bristol Cemetery expansion will take surface water to Colliters Brook via a sealed carrier drain. Therefore, it will only be rainwater which will be entering the Colliters Brook and not additional pollutants as suggested. In developing the project, it was recognised that options were limited to take the surface water away and the proposed drainage scheme is the most effective way of addressing this.

With specific regards to pollutants, the project has undergone a Ground Water Risk Assessment using standardised methodology in accordance with Environment Agency requirements. The outcome of the Ground Water Risk Assessment is that the proposed development presents a low risk of pollution and this is supported by the Environment Agency comments received.

PQ29: An alternative to discharging water into Colliters brook would be utilizing the mains sewerage system on the A38, please explain why this has seemingly not been considered?

Officer Response:

The guidance from the Wessex Water states that *“Alternative means of disposal (e.g. SUDS, natural watercourse, highway drains) must be properly investigated before any connection could be considered. In cases where there is no other option, only rainwater from impermeable surfaces could be considered, and then only into a dedicated public surface water sewer”*. The use of other storm water and highway drainage systems are similarly restricted. This is to prevent sewer and drainage systems being overwhelmed during rain storms, and the associated risk of flooding and pollution through the uncontrolled release of untreated sewage.

As the A38 is higher than much of the cemetery site to be drained, it would prohibit any possible connection due to not being able to achieve the necessary pipe falls to allow the water to flow.

PQ30 - Katy Ladbrooke (on behalf of Allotment Forum Subgroup for Rents and Allotment Forum Subgroup for Value for Money)

We are grateful for the recent engagement of this Committee with members of the Allotment Forum subgroups over the matter of the rent increase, and for taking on board concerns of the allotment community. Will this Committee and the Council Officers for allotments, natural and marine environment, and management of place please commit to a transparent and collaborative approach to working with the Allotment Forum and wider allotment community in future matters? We encourage you to work with us from the planning stage before taking steps to revise tenancy agreements and rules, and for exploring future rent models.

Allotment Forum Subgroup for Rents (Ruth Hecht, Tim Beasley, Bob Radford, Joanna Mellors)

Allotment Forum Subgroup for Value for Money (Sarah Freeman, Ruth Hecht, Tim Beasley, Katy Ladbrook)

Officer Response:

The Council intends to engage with relevant stakeholders on the structure of rents going forward as well as a revised tenancy agreement and allotment rules. This is embodied in the Report recommendations. That the Committee for Public Health and Communities:

5. Authorises the Executive Director Growth and Regeneration in consultation with the Chair of the Public Health and Communities Committee to take all steps required to implement the revised allotments rent and charges and undertake the stakeholder engagement as set out in paragraph 9 of this report.

6. Further approves a stakeholder engagement process to update the allotment tenancy agreement and update the tenancy rules, which will be the subject of a future report to the Public Health and Communities Committee.

Public Forum Statements

STATEMENT PS 01

Submitted by Martin Rands

Bristol City Council declared an ecological emergency a few years back, but seems to have forgotten this fact.

Yew Tree Farm is the last working farm in Bristol, and occupies land with SSSI status.

Natural England is currently assessing the land as MG5 grassland, which would give the site SSSI status.

The land should not be damaged until this assessment is complete. All options would be very damaging to the ecology of this precious land.

It looks to me like this wonderful farm is being deliberately chipped away at, so that it becomes unviable. It looks to me like this is all about building houses on Bristol's greenbelt. Not just greenbelt, but land quite likely to be of SSSI.

STATEMENT PS 02

Submitted by Ruth Hecht, Dubbers Lane Allotment Site

I'd like to thank Cllrs Williams, Fraser, Hance, Lavan and Malik for taking the time to listen to the concerns of allotment tenants and to scrutinise in detail the proposals about rent increases put forward by officers.

The current proposal of an across the board percentage increase is to be welcomed, and with it being higher than inflation, I look forward to the more effective service which will be delivered by additional dedicated staff and more resources.

It goes without saying, that if the previous administration had listened to campaigners and taken seriously our objections to the original proposed rent increases, this issue could have been resolved in March.

However, one of the unexpected outcomes of the prolonged fight to keep allotment rents affordable is that tenants and other stakeholders have found a collective voice, and in the process have discussed a myriad of solutions to the many problems the Allotment Service currently faces.

I therefore look forward to working more collaboratively with both councillors and officers to create an Allotment Service which is fit for purpose, and which fulfils the ambitions of the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy 2024-2039 in relation to food growing and allotments.

STATEMENT PS 03

Submitted by Alastair Sawday

Mr Chair,

I seek to provide a perspective on the debate over the expansion of the South Bristol Cemetery. It is a wretchedly difficult decision, so it is important to be clear about principles and priorities. They can guide us.

We are living through a time of existential crisis as never before in human history. It is largely caused by our foolishness and our willingness to compromise with forces which harm our environment. We understand this and acknowledge it; Bristol has even declared an Ecological Emergency. We were a European Green Capital City in 2015, publicly committed to making Bristol green and sustainable. And we have, to the relief of all who place human survival as the highest priority, an administration that understands the urgency.

As a city we are proud of our city farms, land wrenched from the grasp of developers and planners to provide the vast benefits of which we are all aware. Here we face the prospect of allowing an actual working farm, Bristol's last, to be overwhelmed by housing and avoidable expansion of a cemetery. If we lose tens of beautiful farming acres, are we to then congratulate ourselves in later years on rescuing a couple of them for another city farm?

We remain caught in the familiar thicket of competing interests – with a fine and public-spirited citizen having to battle with her fellow citizens and our own elected democratic council. This sort of thing tears us apart at the very time when we should be pulling together with unprecedented determination to do the right thing by our environment. It is true that there are financial and practical pressures to be considered, along with the needs of a community, but our precious natural environment must take precedence over practical difficulties. These can be solved, with time and with new thinking. It is not beyond us to find a medium-term – and then long-term - solution to the burial problem. It IS beyond us to restore once-lost farmland.

STATEMENT PS 04

Submitted by Joanna Mellors

I would like to thank Cllr Williams and his colleagues on the Committee for the time they have spent meeting allotment tenants, visiting sites and getting to grips with the complexities of the Allotment Rents.

Both the time spent and the resultant changes to the Rents proposal are much appreciated, especially given the many other pressing concerns that the City of Bristol faces.

I particularly welcome:

- a) confirmation of the 50% discounts to tenants on means-tested benefits and to the Community Groups
- b) confirmation that there will be additional discounts for those Community Groups providing social value.
- c) recognition of the value of the volunteer Site Reps and the commitment to providing them with additional support
- d) the average increases in rent of approx. 52%

Paragraph 10 and Officer Recommendation No.6 refer to the Tenancy Agreement and Rules. It is no secret that the document released by the Allotment Service in December 2023 caused an absolute storm. I sincerely hope that officers will abide by their own recommendation that they liaise with stakeholders in the development of any new documentation.

I regret not being able to attend Friday's meeting but very much hope that the proposal put forward for consideration is approved.

STATEMENT PS 05

Submitted by Owen Pilcherwood

Please do not sacrifice what little green space we have for an option that will cause permanent damage. Vote for the option that will save the SNCI and find a better solution. The decision has been rushed and full surveys should be required.

Grassland being replaced by a pond could work. The mitigation strategies are not up to standard and Natural England and Avon Wildlife Trust are in full support of the SNCI

STATEMENT PS 06

Submitted by David Carter

I wish to object to plans for a cemetery extension at Yew Tree Farm site.

I note with some disappointment that your council has described the area known as Yew Tree Farm as scrubland. The description is clearly designed to persuade people that it has no value. On the contrary, it is a very valuable and should not be discarded for a cemetery extension. I suggest councillors acquaint themselves with the importance of this piece of land before they make decisions about it.

I also note with equal disappointment that work has been undertaken on this land prior to any decisions. This suggests that the council is not interested in hearing arguments against the development of this land and wish to pre-empt objections. I find this scurrilous. There is clearly some prejudice involved. Councils across the country often remain ignorant about their impact on green spaces. It is vital that in this case they only make decisions when they have all the facts before them and not simply facts which might seem convenient.

STATEMENT PS 07 – WITHDRAWN

STATEMENT PS 08

Submitted by Sue Mullins

I object to the expansion of South Bristol Cemetery because the impact on the SNCI that covers the area of expansion, which is to a large extent worthy of the SNCI status due to the natural farming methods used by Catherine Withers to manage Yew Tree Farm. If the expansion is allowed to go ahead there will be too great a loss of the SNCI to the city and the local Community. Furthermore, being the very last working farm in Bristol, Yew Tree Farm deserves to be saved for future generations to enjoy such a special area. The City has an obligation to preserve areas of such amazing ecological importance and the SNCI status is justly deserved, and is in line with the LA duty to preserve our SNCI areas across the city.

I am certainly no ecologist, or professionally qualified in any way, but I have lived here 44 years and my children, now adults with their own children, spent many school holidays pond dipping and enjoying the nature here in this area.

Having read the pages and pages of information relevant to this decision, both in the pack and other information widely available it is clear that the committee has a huge job to carry out to make the right decision. It is also clear that there is a lot of conflicting information making the job even more difficult, and there appears to me as a layperson to be significant bias in the Officers case for the expansion.

However I am convinced that the diversity of nature that frequents this very special area will undoubtedly be lost if the expansion is allowed to go ahead. Dormice, otters and many other important species of animals, birds and rare insects and plants are also fighting for their survival through Catherine Withers who runs Yew Tree Farm. The financial viability of the farm has been attacked on all fronts over the past few decades and this, if allowed to go ahead will be the final nail in the coffin, pardon the pun!!

There are of course numerous arguments both for and against the expansion, and I do not have the knowledge to assess these, but it seems to me that the arguments for the expansion seem to be flawed and contradictory to the facts:

- The cost of the expansion will be huge, due to the massive civil engineering work required to install drainage which will in turn destroy the viability of ancient trees on the land and make grazing the cattle, a condition of the SNCI designation and essential to the area retaining the SNCI status, impossible.
- There is a large area still unused within the cemetery.
- The Local Authority does not have a Statutory Obligation to provide burial grounds and there is still sufficient space for the next few years within the existing cemetery from what I have read.
- The financial implication table states that there would be a huge loss of revenue if the Cemetery were to stop conducting burials and cremations but this is not going to happen in the near or even medium future and therefore the figure is a hypothetical one.
- It is not clear that ecological surveys have been adequately carried out and this must be looked

at in detail and new surveys carried out properly and adequately.

- Burial space is a national issue and there is a public consultation ongoing to find a way forward which may result in this destruction being unnecessary and being as the cost is huge to the Local Authority far outweighing the gain the expansion would have is sufficient reason to refuse expansion at this time, in order to consider the issues more carefully and without the current bias.

The whole issue has become something of a political football but there is so much at stake for the farm, for the community, for nature and wildlife that the Committee must look at this issue with compassion as well as objectivity and ensure that this beautiful, inspiring place run by the dedicated Catherine Withers is allowed to continue its work, improving the habitat for wildlife sensitively, diligently and untiringly and serving the local community in so many ways including the Social Prescribing for wellbeing that takes place on the farm.

Thank you

STATEMENT PS 09

Submitted by Helen Powell

There is no legal obligation to provide cemeteries, but if we choose to do so then the land used must be appropriate. Your officers' report states that sites other than South Bristol Crematorium were deemed unsuitable due to 'high community and/or nature value' - and yet the proposals put forward (even the compromise option, option 2) involve digging up meadow land of the highest possible nature value, that is hugely valued by the community all across the City. This makes no sense.

Additional space has been identified within the existing cemetery area that will fulfil needs for 10 years. Option 2 may seem like an attractive middle course, but if you don't want to destroy the meadowland for burials, why would you destroy it for drainage? Officers have not yet investigated other drainage solutions that would avoid digging up the meadow. Option 2 is not ready yet, because you do not have all the information you need to make a proper decision. Officers are recommending that the Committee notes the report and sets out a preferred option, but this Committee is perfectly entitled to ask for further and better proposals and investigation of additional options. You do not have to settle for the 'least bad' option from a very limited selection, when there is clearly scope for improvement.

This proposal was largely formed and shaped under the previous administration and at the direction of the previous Executive. It has been highly controversial across the City, and this is a City that voted for change. As a City we elected you to be our democratic representatives and we voted for a different style of administration. You should not be shackled by decisions - in some cases politically-motivated - that were made by the previous Executive.

In any case the situation has moved on - Natural England has assessed the meadow as containing very rare MG5 grassland, so that it is potentially an SSSI rather than an SNCI. It cannot be justifiable, given today's knowledge of environmental issues and the ecological crisis, to rush through a decision to avoid that potential change in status. Equally, you should not be influenced by planning decisions made in the 1960s when the world was very different. Please do not base this important decision on partial information or close your eyes to relevant issues. That would be a poor start to a new administration on which this City is pinning its hopes of change and more transparent decision-making.

Nothing will be lost by postponing a decision and asking for more information or revised drainage solutions. People can still be buried. But once you give the direction to dig up that meadow - for drainage of all things - the damage will be done and cannot be undone. Please just pause, reassess the situation and ask for more information to be obtained. In a world where you can do things fast or do them right, please do this right.

STATEMENT PS 10

Submitted by Mark CD Ashdown

The One City Ecological strategy, adopted in 2020 and described as a strategy for an ecologically resilient, wildlife-rich Bristol, recognises that nature is one of Bristol’s best assets, and that it is ‘more important than ever to pull together to help nature’.¹ It encourages us all to confront ecological decline and support our natural spaces.

Whatever solution it decides to adopt, we therefore believe that this committee must avoid causing harm to the Colliter’s Brook SNCI, including its trees and important hedgerows. Unfortunately, neither Option 1 nor Option 2 (in its current form) are able to achieve this, but there is an alternative solution to this problem, as we set out below.

Article 37A of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, which came into force in February 2024, sets out a hierarchy of priority actions to avoid harm, called ‘adverse effects’.² Adverse effects must be avoided for all habitats with medium distinctiveness – that is, habitats with a distinctiveness score equal to or higher than four. All the baseline habitats affected by this application have medium distinctiveness or higher. Only if adverse effects are unavoidable may they be mitigated.

It is clear that, had Article 37A been applicable to this planning application, then the Council would have had to set out a BNG hierarchy which the LPA would have had to consider before granting permission. The adverse effects that these options will cause can be avoided simply by not developing on the SNCI, as our proposal suggests.

An alternative solution: develop Site 1 without encroaching on the SNCI

We have no objection to burials taking place on Site 1, the land to the south of the cemetery which is outside the Colliter’s Brook SCNI. If a modified version of Option 2, one that has no adverse effect on the SNCI, is adopted, there will be sufficient provision for the next decade, enough time to consider additional burial options for the future. Not only will this satisfy the needs of certain faiths, such as Islam and Judaism, which require interment, but it will also provide a much more suitable and better drained site than has historically been available.

Since drainage capacity for the burial site on Plot 3 would no longer be required, the drainage proposals, including the creation of a rainwater attenuation pond, will have to be redesigned. We note that a draft plan for a revised attenuation pond is suggested in Appendix A1 - Further Information document is proposed (page 8). However, this too would have an adverse effect on the SNCI, so other options will need to be explored. Is it possible to devise a SUDs scheme either somewhere within Site 1 (perhaps in the rectangular area in the north-east corner), or in the existing cemetery or on land nearby? This should be explored.

¹ <https://www.bristolonecity.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/One-City-Ecological-Emergency-Strategy-28.09.20.pdf>.

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/595/part/7A>.

However, it seems that this change will require the current grant to be abandoned and a new application to be submitted, given the significant amendment proposed to enable Option 2 to proceed. Whether this can be dealt with by way of an amendment under s.73 TCPA 1990³ seems doubtful, given the significant amendments that would be needed to the design and layout of the site.³

Also, the ecological evidence relied on in the original application is now out of date. Nor does it conform to industry standards for either Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) or for Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) and will need to be redone. A new biodiversity net gain calculation will also be required given these new drainage proposals and the release of the proposed plots on the SNCI. Any mitigation proposals will need to include the restoration of the areas of scrub illegally removed last July.

We also note that the dormice survey, promised by this October and required by law, has not been produced in time for this meeting. As evidence of dormice in the vicinity of Site 1 was found, this will need to be redone if this area has not already been surveyed. This meeting ought not to make any decision until this is available.

In the meantime, the position of the Yew Tree Farm farmer, Catherine Withers, needs to be secured and the proposed grazing licence issued to her as soon as possible. This is essential for the long-term future of the SNCI, to which Catherine is fully committed. This committee should require officers to complete this now.

³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/section/73>.

STATEMENT PS 11

Submitted by Helen Withers

Dear Councillors,

I have been following the situation with Yew Tree Farm with interest for some time now. I know that this last working farm and SNCI where endangered and protected Dormice are known to be living had been championed by Labour councillors only for them to make a U-turn resulting in Catherine Withers finding herself with a fight on her hands. The site has already endured trespassing and damaging of habitat by developers imposing their will upon Catherine and the land.

There may well be a need for burial grounds in Bristol, but as with solar, wind, housing, selecting appropriate areas on which to build is of the utmost importance. Of course, loved ones need to be laid to rest, but special habitat must not be sacrificed for this. Other suitable sites must surely be available whereas Yew Tree Farm cannot be moved or started again elsewhere. Once gone it would be lost forever. You will be well aware of various dire statistics of the state of nature in the UK; are you prepared to help in making it decline even further?!

I have great respect for the dead, however, we must prioritise the living by protecting this precious habitat. I urge you to refuse the planning application and to state that burial grounds must be sought elsewhere.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Withers (no relation to Catherine)

STATEMENT PS 12

Submitted by Erika Uridge

I'm asking your committee to stop South Bristol Crematorium expansion and save Yew Tree Farm SSCI.

Yours faithfully

Erika Uridge

STATEMENT PS 13

Submitted by Louise Matthews

This is a precious place that should be left as it is, the last working Farm in Bristol, a wonderful haven for nature in a time where we are losing so many of these protected places when we should be doing all that we can to protect them. The UK is one of the worst places in the world for losing important wildlife habitats. It's no wonder the world is in the state that it is in.

I live in the Ashton ward and regularly walk through the meadow and enjoy seeing all the different wildlife in this open space, a haven for my wellbeing along with many others, enjoying the different species of wildlife here.

I'm emailing you today as I feel passionately that Yew Tree Farm's SNCI habitat is a rare and precious asset within Bristol's ecosystem, and that it should be preserved from development and destruction. You hold incredible power over the fate of the SNCI habitat at Yew Tree Farm, and over the endangered Dormice, bats, otters and unique insects that live within the development site. I implore you to treat this decision with the seriousness that it deserves, and to vote against any expansion that involves the Yew Tree Farm SNCI meadow on 11th October.

It seems absurd that I even need to write this email; I do not understand how - in the midst of a self-proclaimed ecological emergency - BCC are even considering the proposal to expand South Bristol Crematorium onto this habitat.

I understand that BCC officers claim the city is running out of burial space, but this has never been evidenced. Looking at an aerial view of South Bristol Crematorium shows multiple fields - totalling approx 10 acres - which have not yet been used for burials, cremations or memorials. There is ample space for many more years worth of burials within the existing curtilage. More importantly, there is no legal requirement for local authorities to provide burial space, BCC's decision to do so is entirely voluntary.

You are unlikely to see these facts in any of the BCC-authored reports that are presented to you, as officers have famously failed to research alternative burial sites, or to develop a city-wide burial strategy. Cllr Stafford-Smith (in their role as DCB chair) very clearly asked for this in September 2023. Yet the DCB committee was forced to reach a determination on the proposed expansion nevertheless, and the information they were given by officers was flawed in multiple ways. A full analysis can be read at <https://www.bristol247.com/opinion/your-say/assault-community-planet-lose-this-site-burials/> but here is a summary of the issues...

- The council's ecology report is inadequate and does not conform to industry standards
- The site is MG5 grassland which is a habitat of very high distinctiveness and requires bespoke compensation
- The ecological mitigation being proposed is unreliable or in the case of drainage pipes non-existent
- Specifically, the mitigation proposals for soil preservation are unrealistic, unviable and unenforceable
- Very credible experts (Avon Wildlife Trust & Bristol Tree Forum) object to the scheme (<https://bristoltreeforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Why-Yew-Tree-Farm-should-be-a-Local-Green-Space.pdf>, and <https://www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/news/our-response-crematorium-expansion-yew-tree-farm-snci>)
- This will set a precedent that puts all Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs) at risk

- The decision goes against the City’s commitment to preserve 30 per cent of our land for nature.
- Ignoring the September 2021 Green Spaces motion is undemocratic
- The £2.4 million allocated for drainage could be better spent on youth services, new GPs, road improvements or other badly needed infrastructure

What *has* clearly been evidenced is that the meadow included in the development site is a rare and precious slice of Bristol’s countryside. Not only is it home to endangered and unique species, but it is also an amazing community asset.

- The footpaths that run through the meadow are used by many locals residents and it is a popular open space. There should be no argument that the SNCI land is under-utilised.
- The Farm also provides a social prescribing service to people who have presented to their GP with various physical and mental problems - including some complex cases. For this reason, preserving the SNCI meadow is also an important equalities issue for those who find respite & wellbeing there.
- The food produced by Yew Tree Farm is highly sustainable and makes an important contribution to Bristol’s food security.

Less than a year ago, BCC approved that the site in question should be protected and recognised as a designated Local Green Space within the new Local Plan. The preservation of Yew Tree Farm was a flagship policy in the Green Party’s winning 2024 manifesto. And senior councillors from all parties - including yours - publicly declared their support for the ‘Save Yew Tree Farm’ campaign at a cross-party photoshoot. You all agreed with us then; now it’s time to prove that this wasn’t just opportunistic greenwashing.

I sincerely hope you will evaluate the situation fully and will agree with so many south Bristol constituents that the arguments against expanding the crematorium onto the Yew Tree Farm SNCI are as clear as day.

And the clearest litmus test of all? If you can’t imagine approving the creation of a cemetery on other SNCI sites such as the Downs or Leigh Woods, please don’t approve the expansion of one onto the Yew Tree Farm SNCI. It really is that simple.

Thank you for reading this long but very important email.

Yours in hope and trust,

Louise Matthews

PS I encourage you to visit the site before your committee sits on 11th October. Farmer Catherine Withers has told me that her door is always open to you, she would love to show you around.

STATEMENT PS 14

Submitted by Jim Mason

As one of two surviving members of the family that previously farmed YewTree Farm, I believe the present owner is doing a marvellous job of preserving this part of Bristols history. The lane leading to the farm was the boundary between Bristol and Somerset after our city was established as a major town and county. It is part of our city's history and should be preserved for future generations to enjoy. There are many brown field sites in and around Bristol which could accommodate cemeteries. Majority of my immediate family are interred at the cemetery and from experience the space taken up by urns of ashes is amply provided in existing cemetery. A new burial or cremation facility on a brown field site would raise no objections from me if necessary. It seems to me that the Bristol City Council does not appreciate the concerns of a lot of citizens feelings or indeed care about preserving traditions or indeed the habitat of numerous creatures that will be destroyed by their actions if this goes ahead. Yew Tree Farm under the protection of Catherine Withers and her family must be allowed to survive as we survived the dropping of excess bombs from German bombers on their way home during WW11. Please vote in favour of maintaining Yew Tree Farm in its role as the last remaining farmland in this great city of Bristol.

Regards Jim Mason.

STATEMENT PS 15

Submitted by Dan

The expansion of the cemetery should NOT go ahead given the current proposals. The consideration given to ecological impact is severely lacking and burial space should not be prioritised over the protection of sites of nature conservation importance. I have seen reason to believe the 2020 ecological report was flawed or is now outdated.

The proposed expansion will lead to significant changes in how the land is managed, for example a loss of grazing, which is integral to its importance for protected wildlife.

Given that there is no requirement to provide burial space, and there is a recognised need to provide for nature, it seems absurd to agree to this expansion. Furthermore, I can't see benefit in the compromise position which offers no increased burial space but retains the attenuation pond etc of the full proposal. This second option seems even more absurd as it doesn't tackle the issue of limited burial space but retains one of the more damaging land developments. The inclusion of this second option makes me question the intent of the expansion (supposedly to increase burial space) and leads me to wonder if there are ulterior motives at play.

In conclusion, I would just like to make my support for option 3 (no expansion) clear.

Thank you.

STATEMENT PS 16

Submitted by Anne Silber

I am writing to object to plans to take SNCI land from Yew Tree farm to expand the crematorium. The land in question is an important preserve of endangered species and also contributes to the diversity of the area immediately outside Bristol. As a resident of Bristol I really value this farm close to the city which is very accessible and provides a valuable resource to Bristol residents and the wider community.

STATEMENT PS 17

Submitted by Jordana Davarian-Cross

Please not my objection to the Expansion of South Bristol Cemetery.

I object to the expansion of South Bristol Cemetery because the impact on the SNCI that covers the area of expansion, which is to a large extent worthy of the SNCI status due to the natural farming methods used by Catherine Withers to manage Yew Tree Farm. If the expansion is allowed to go ahead there will be too great a loss of the SNCI to the city and the local Community. Furthermore, being the very last working farm in Bristol, Yew Tree Farm deserves to be saved for future generations to enjoy such a special area. The City has an obligation to preserve areas of such amazing ecological importance and the SNCI status is justly deserved, and is in line with the LA duty to preserve our SNCI areas across the city.

I have followed the proposed crematorium expansion over the last few years and feel strongly that the 'impartial' data given is highly bias in favour of BCC. I am concerned that if the expansion were to go ahead we would lose a significant portion of the green belt in Bristol and if Yew Tree Farm is the target now, what is next? The continued development of green spaces in the city will make Bristol a hostile urban jungle.

Dormice, otters and many other important species of animals, birds and rare insects and plants are also fighting for their survival through Catherine Withers who runs Yew Tree Farm.

Based on what I have read the expansion of the crematorium will lead to an increase of the water pollution within Bristol. The works will destroy historic trees and hedges impacting native species of animal, the natural drainage of the land and reduce the beauty of the area.

It is my understanding that large proportions of the current crematorium land is unused and the figures given for when burial spaces run out seem to change per each report given. What is the truth?

The impact on the community of the farm as well as Catherine's livelihood is at stake, this is not a small knock to the farm but endangering its future in food production, something we know is at risk in the UK given the pressures the farming industry is under.

It is not clear that ecological surveys have been adequately carried out and this must be looked at in detail and new surveys carried out properly and unbiasedly.

Burial space is a national issue and there is a public consultation ongoing to find a way forward which may result in this destruction being unnecessary and being as the cost is huge to the Local Authority far outweighing the gain the expansion would have is sufficient reason to refuse expansion at this time, in order to consider the issues more carefully and without the current bias.

The whole issue has become something of a political football but there is so much at stake for the farm, for the community, for nature and wildlife that the Committee must look at this issue with compassion as well as objectivity and ensure that this beautiful, inspiring place run by the dedicated Catherine Withers is allowed to continue its work, improving the habitat for wildlife sensitively, diligently and untiringly and serving the local community in so many ways including the Social

Prescribing for wellbeing that takes place on the farm.

I object to any kind of burial ground works on Yew Tree farm.

Kind regards,

Jordana Davarian-Cross

STATEMENT PS 18

Submitted by Maureen Anderson

Please stop the expansion of the crematorium and save Yew Tree Farm. It has SNCI conservation status. The expansion would also endanger bats, dormice and otters. I understand there is suitable land within the crematorium and nearby.

Thank you,

Maureen Anderson

STATEMENT PS 19

Submitted by Julia Halpenny

The only acceptable option is option 3.

Option 2 *WILL* harm the SNCI - it is not an acceptable compromise

-There are no new Muslim burials being proposed for the Yew Tree Farm site, they will be non-denominational and Ash Internments

- The drainage pipes *WILL* harm the SNCI grassland habitat. It's not true that they are only small and won't cause damage

-Yew Tree Farm is so good for nature because it is ancient grassland that has NEVER been touched. You lose that forever once you disturb the soil.

The drainage *WILL* pollute our water.

-The works being done to fix the flooding for the existing Muslim graves are not dependent on the expansion or the extra drainage on the SNCI going through. That is already happening.

-The council did not look at alternative drainage solutions that don't go through the SNCI, the "drainage only" option will cause irreversible harm to the ancient grassland and rare wildlife habitat

-The ecology report that this is all based on was not done to industry standards and doesn't even cover the drainage pipes at all

-This statement is not against any political party or against people having burial space. This is just the wrong site.

- Have alternatives been considered and researched?

Damaging an SNCI sets a dangerous precedent; what next? Development on the Downs?

Destruction of a unique, environmentally friendly farm , a valuable resource for local residents and for the city, is simply wrong

STATEMENT PS 20

Submitted by Luke Fitzpatrick

I've lived in south Bristol my whole life and now live in Bedminster Down.

In south Bristol we have our own community and we should be able to bury our friends and family here.

I support plans that will make more space for burials and cremations at the South Bristol Cemetery.

STATEMENT PS 21

Submitted by Bonnie Welch

In advance of the Council's Committee meeting on Friday 11th October regarding the expansion of the South Bristol Cemetery, I am writing to you as a representative of Bristol-based organisation, The Sustainable Food Trust, and myself a local resident, in support of the safeguarding of Yew Tree Farm. I urge the council to thoroughly investigate alternatives for the cemetery expansion (for instance, Site 1 lies outside of the SNCI and is a relatively flat site that can make use of on-site runoff mitigation methods), to avoid the devastating impact this would have on Bristol's last remaining farm. The importance of Yew Tree Farm to the city of Bristol should not be underestimated.

As BCC has publicly acknowledged, Yew Tree Farm offers immense benefits to the Bristol community – enhancing and restoring biodiversity, mitigating flood risk, sequestering carbon, offering climate resilience, providing nutrient-dense and healthy food, and green space for public footpath users and community groups, such as our green social prescribing participants.

I have been working closely with Catherine Withers at Yew Tree Farm for the past two years, delivering a green social prescribing project at the farm – the first of its kind. In partnership with the College of Medicine and the University of Bristol, we have worked with Primary Care Networks across Bristol, enabling a wide range of patients (including those suffering bereavement as well as mental and physical health challenges), to visit Yew Tree Farm for on-farm activities that aim to improve health and wellbeing. Our evaluation, which I'd be happy to share with you, proves the incredibly positive impact that the farm has on individuals from across Bristol.

I know that the farm has enormous support from the local community as well as many wildlife, food and farming organisations who understand the value of Bristol's last working farm – not just in terms of its production of high-quality, nutritious food, but the numerous benefits it provides in terms of climate, nature and the health of the local community. Many of these positive externalities are yet uncoded, however should be considered 'public goods' and a vital part of the solution to our climate, nature, and public health crises.

I am sure you are aware that the farm now forms part of Bristol's newest SNCI – Site of Nature Conservation Interest – and last year an insect (as yet unknown to science) was discovered in the meadow. The farm is organic, nature rich and wildlife friendly, and produces nutritious, health-promoting food for the local community. Much of the landscape has been rewilded, and the farm is home to over 40 species of bird and 20 species of mammal. The site includes a natural hay meadow with over 90 plant and grass species, as well as permanent pasture for the cattle. There are several hundred mature trees, copses, woodland and hedgerows – all within Bristol's city boundary which makes Yew Tree unique.

As a Bristol resident, I am also aware of the commitments Bristol City Council has made to improving its local food infrastructure, as set out in *Bristol Good Food 2030: A One City Framework for Action*, which aims to transform the city's food system within this decade, supporting its ambitions on health, climate, biodiversity and social justice. There are also 86 references to food in the *Local Plan Review*, which states: "Since the last local plan was agreed in 2014, we now include new policies on biodiversity and proposes changes of approach at sites such as the Western Slopes, Brislington

Meadows and Yew Tree Farm that aim to give priority to nature conservation and food growing. Ecology and sustainability are key to a climate resilient city.”

What’s more, in light of the Government’s ambition to increase access to nature and green spaces for urban residents, and its new invitation to UK Councils to apply for funding to “put green infrastructure at the heart of their plans and priorities, improving the climate resilience of their places and enabling access for all”, it is absurd to think that BCC are considering destroying part of a greenbelt SNCI used by significant numbers of people across the community.

Considering the numerous benefits provided by Yew Tree Farm, and as Bristol’s last working farm, I believe the community would be outraged if it were to be lost. I therefore hope you will ensure that the entire farm is protected. At the very least, I hope that you will carry out an independent arbitration to see if there are alternatives to the proposed plans for cemetery expansion (e.g., making use of Site 1).

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

With kind regards,

Bonnie Welch (Head of Projects, Sustainable Food Trust),
also on behalf of Patrick Holden (Founder and CEO, Sustainable Food Trust)

STATEMENT PS 22

Submitted by Rachel Hall

Yew Tree farm is a rare, precious habitat that should be protected from any kind of development such as the ones proposed of housing and cemetery expansion. The land, which is hugely fertile has been producing food for generations and continues to do so. The farmer, Catherine farms traditionally which has meant that it is, once more a precious diverse habitat for many species of grasses, flowers, trees as well as supporting endangered dormice, harvest mice, otters, swallows How it can even be contemplated losing this to yet more development in a time when we KNOW habitat loss has a devastating effect on both wildlife and climate beggars belief. The Council some years back declared a Climate Emergency and these plans fly directly in the face of that. Please do the right thing and vote against these developments so that Catherine and future generations can continue to farm and the habitat be protected. It is WAY too precious, rare and important to be destroyed. The people of Bristol will be appalled at your wilful destruction should it go ahead.

STATEMENT PS 23

Submitted by Anita Bennett

Dear friends,

Now that you have just heard from Natural England that further surveys must be undertaken before destroying further habitats at Yew Tree Farm, I trust that you will choose option three, to delay and investigate other burial spaces.

I attended the planning meeting where Cllr. Stafford-Townsend ordered the officers to look at other possible expansion sites, and it appears that they have clearly not done so. Why not? That makes me suspicious that this is only being done to create drainage for future new houses up on the hill.

What will you tell your children in thirty years time if you vote for this? That you were instrumental in destroying a rare natural habitat? Think long and hard and vote for option three please.

Anita Bennett
Steering Committee
Save the Baltic Wharf Trees

STATEMENT PS 24

Submitted by Rebecca Eyton

Hello,

Please vote to save Yew Tree Farm on Friday! The farm is an irreplaceable habitat for such a wide range of species. My children love visiting the farm to get out into nature and have learnt so much about wildlife from our visits.

Please do the right thing on Friday and vote to save this incredibly special place.

Regards,

Rebecca Eyton

STATEMENT PS 25

Submitted by Phoebe Taylor

Good morning,

Please reject the cemetery expansion over Yew Tree Farm which is a priority habitat (MG5 and calcareous grassland) and a site of nature conservation(SNCI). We are in the midst of a climate emergency; the last thing anyone should be doing is knowingly destroying a natural habitat.

If we don't act now there will be no need for cemetery expansions - there will be nobody left to bury the dead.

Kind regards,
Phoebe Taylor

STATEMENT PS 26

Submitted by Steve Whiting

Ladies and Gentlemen of the committee I ask you to think about the tangible affects on the city of Bristol if Yew Tree Farm should disappear. This farm is not only a business but a community asset in its programs of inviting groups of people to experience the joys of being in nature and the knowledge and benefits it brings. I would also refer you to the report put together by the Nature Capital Committee whose members included Professor of Environmental Economics Ian Bateman from the Land, Environment , Economics and Policy Institute at Exeter University. It shows that there is a hard economic value of such green spaces in terms of savings to the public purse in health and well-being. And finally of course there is the number of endangered species that are to be found on farm due to its amazing biodiversity, an asset that is dwindling far to rapidly across the country. We as a species ignore nature at our peril.

I ask you to vote favourably in saving Yew Tree Farm.

Kind Regards

Steve Whiting

STATEMENT PS 27

Submitted by Richard Matthews

Please draw these comments to the attention of the members of committee.

Whilst accepting that a rent increase is overdue I don't know how you can agree an appropriate level of increase without a full and guaranteed commitment to good service standards for tenants.

Any increase in rents should be linked to a tenancy agreement by means of written service standards such as things the council will do on allotment sites eg communal area maintenance, response times to complaints and requests to the allotment office etc.

By way of background, the current tenancy agreement is very one sided: loads of things tenants can or (mainly)cannot do but nothing really about what the council will commit to by way of service standards

Surely, in return for a significant rent rise the tenancy agreement could be made fairer.

Not to mention the need to drop the previous proposed outrageous changes to rules!

STATEMENT PS 28

Submitted by Charlotte Ellis

Hello

Counsellors please vote option 3.

We are losing too much precious wildlife and greenery - before long we will just be like London and other congested cities.

Why not focus on creating more green space, adding more wildlife and planting more trees?

Sites of natural interest in England, particularly in cities like Bristol, play a crucial role in preserving biodiversity, enhancing community well-being, and promoting sustainable tourism. These areas provide habitats for wildlife, contribute to ecological balance, and serve as vital green spaces for recreation and relaxation amidst urban settings

In Bristol, the presence of open grassland, farms, parks, woodlands, and waterways not only enriches the local environment but also fosters a sense of community and connection to nature. The unnecessary destruction of these sites should be illegal, as it undermines environmental sustainability, diminishes the quality of life for residents, and jeopardises the rich natural heritage that future generations should inherit. Protecting these areas is essential for promoting ecological health, preserving cultural identity, and ensuring that urban development harmonises with nature rather than depleting it.

Thank you

Charlotte

STATEMENT PS 29

Submitted by Nick Goldsmith and Frances Robertson (on behalf of Cherington Road Neighbourhood Watch Resident's Group)

Our local area in North Bristol had a community pharmacy until January 2024 when Boots closed it. Another independent pharmacy with local branches applied to the NHS to open a replacement pharmacy on the same site. The replacement pharmacy was refused permission under a ridiculously bureaucratic and convoluted NHS process. So we have been left without any pharmacy in our neighbourhood.

As there is also no GP Practice in our neighbourhood, we ask that this Committee supports our efforts to have a replacement pharmacy in our area.

We also ask that the Committee Chair makes representations to the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Integrated Care Board and whoever else the Committee considers appropriate in order to prevent the loss of valuable NHS pharmacy services.

The need for local pharmacies as a key part of the public health system is growing and the NHS requires pharmacies to play a greater role in the health care system.

Decision making processes on a replacement pharmacy actively engages with commercial competitors whilst specifically excluding the public, patients, from the process. Our views are neither canvassed nor given any weight in the decision process, when we have contributed our concerns to the ICB and other NHS areas.

We are very concerned that patients are not being taken into account when decisions about access to pharmacy services are being made, not least because we are purposefully excluded from the process with no rights to be involved.

Background

In late 2023 Boots the Chemist, as part of its national programme of streamlining its business for brand purposes, announced the closure of 2 Boots local community pharmacies in Bristol. One of these was in our locality on Southmead Road (the other Hartcliffe).

We organised a petition when the closure of our local pharmacy was announced and approximately 900 signatures were collected. Boots refused our petition and closed its branch in January 2024 leaving the local community without a local community pharmacy within walking distance of our homes.

In February 2024 an independent local pharmacy operator put in an application to open a pharmacy at the site. This pharmacy needed a contract with the NHS and the permission of the Bristol, North Somerset and South Glos Integrated Care Board (BNSSG ICB).

In February we brought this matter to the attention of the Bristol Health and Well Being Board. They wrote to the NHS supporting the application but their letter was not shared with the decision making committee. In May 2024, BNSSG ICB refused the application for a replacement local community pharmacy, and NHS Resolutions has recently refused the appeal against this decision. This is despite very strong supporting information from our local ward Councillors, from all three wards and our own detailed letter outlining why the pharmacy is needed and why local residents have genuine difficulties accessing other pharmacies. In May, we raised the refusal with the Bristol Health and Wellbeing Board. The meeting discussed pharmacy provision and the concerns about closure of pharmacies and lack of access to pharmacies both in our and other Bristol neighbourhoods.

Cllr Williams, Chair of the HWB Board from May, has advised us that he has since written as Chair of the HWB Board, to the Secretary of State for Health about the overly rigid criteria for assessing pharmacy applications.

Lack of consideration of patient interests

Excluding the users from this process and relying on commercial competitors to tell the decision makers what we, the patients can and can't do in terms of accessing our NHS Prescription Medicines and Pharmacy Only medicines, was undemocratic and discriminatory.

GP surgeries are under pressure and we are advised to visit our local community pharmacy to gain advice and medication for a raft of ailments. We do not have a GP surgery in our neighbourhood, so the pharmacist was particularly important. The Bristol Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment 2022-2025 already recognised that North Bristol had fewer pharmacies per capita than the national average whilst also having a higher percentage of older patients in our area (and areas of deprivation).

So despite all of this, the BNSSG ICB committee decided there was no need for a pharmacy, even though there was clearly no over provision in the area. The process, bizarrely treats the application as if there was never a pharmacy there and the decision seemingly was based on the fact that apparently we can all walk over a mile to access other pharmacies in other neighbourhoods, which themselves are already overwhelmed with long queues.

The process is opaque and not open to the public, i.e. the users/funders/patients for the service have little or no say. We were neither notified nor consulted about the application but fortunately some of us belonged to our GP Practice Patient Participation Group where we found out about it and through which the applicant to open a replacement pharmacy heard about our petition and contacted us. Without that we would have had no information at all that another pharmacy company was interested in taking over the site that Boots had abandoned.

We were able to write in support of the pharmacy application, but were not allowed to make representations direct to the ICB, were not consulted but had to find out about the process and submit our letters by email. Meanwhile the formal consultees were other commercial pharmacies many of whom wrote in with their opinions about what we, the patients, could and could not do in terms of accessing a pharmacy for our medication and saying there were plenty of other pharmacies we could drive or get a bus to (one wonders from this if those writing the letters on behalf of the companies had ever even been to our neighbourhood let alone tried to do this).

Our neighbourhood still needs its local pharmacy and the need is urgent.

STATEMENT PS 30

Submitted by James Davies

I am contacting BCC to urge their councillors to vote for option 3 in respect to Yew Tree Farm in Bristol.

I am deeply concerned that our local council is forcing the hand of a working farm in the aid of profits from agreeing to support a property developing firm which is based out in London.

As a standing member of the community we should be supporting our local people and supporting our local businesses, the thought of an investment company who have the option to build 200 houses over the ever growing amount of investors which are already building houses on any part of Greenland in south Bristol is a huge concern, and local businesses like Yew Tree Farm are being pushed out and their already small profits being suffocated...

Growing up myself as a young boy, I had the pleasure of enjoying this area and green belt, my children have also grown up to this day and enjoyed what we shared as a community, we need to be looking after what we have and the loss or shrinking of Yew Tree Farm would be a major blow for the community.

I urge Bristol City Council and their Councillors to vote for option 3 at tomorrow's meeting and to back our local farm, along with other organisations such as RSPB, Avon Wildlife Trust, CPRE and Natural England.

Please support Bristol's last working farm.

Kind regards,
James Davies

STATEMENT PS 31

Submitted by Angela Truell

As a resident of South Bristol, I ask you **not** to approve any expansion of the cemetery into Yew Tree Farm.

I have read through the papers and in particular the arguments for either full cemetery expansion or a compromise solution. Neither can be justified. Preserving biodiversity and respecting the integrity of an area with SNCI status are key for the future of our city and its future inhabitants - our children and grandchildren. These are paramount considerations.

Instead, there should be a proper examination of alternative sites, if there is a proven need (and the figures did not look as compelling and urgent as the publicity in favour of expansion). There is no compelling evidence that Yew Tree Farm is the only option. A review of alternative sites as requested by the Chair of Planning in November 2023 has not happened. And it should. The papers before the committee do not appear to me to properly represent the consequences of the decision to halt expansion and look elsewhere as there has been no consideration of any other sites. I understand too that there are still 10 acres of unused space within the curtilage of the crematorium too.

Yours sincerely

Angela Truell

STATEMENT PS 32

Submitted by Susan Sullivan

As a resident of the area where Yew Tree Farm sits, I am affected by any decisions made by the Council.

I am aware of various mistakes made by the Council so far regarding Yew Tree Farm, and that the Council's intentions are in direct conflict with the protections already granted to this extremely valuable natural site, and the objections raised by the many organisations whose job it is to protect valuable sites of nature in the UK.

- 1) We know that 10 acres of land within the existing South Bristol Crematorium site have been currently identified as unused for memorials or cremated remains.
- 2) We know the original ecological report has been discredited by industry experts, and that committee members have been sent separate statements explaining how it does not comply with industry standards. Please read them.
- 3) We know the grassland at Colliter's Brook SNCI / Yew Tree Farm is extremely rare and ancient grassland. It CANNOT be replaced.
- 4) We know there are inconsistencies in Bristol City Council's reporting of burial stats for South Bristol Crematorium. In a 2020 report it was stated there was only 2 years burial space left, however the same was said in a 2024 report. It was also reported that during the Covid 19 pandemic burials decreased, however they also state that a future pandemic might spike burial numbers?
- 5) We know that Council officers have broken their own planning conditions by removing scrub from the Colliter's Brook SNCI / Yew Tree Farm site without applying for pre-commencement sign off, therefore, officers cannot be trusted to manage building work as they either lack knowledge of the site, respect for the land, or resources.
- 6) Water pollution will be severely increased from the proposed drainage having a devastating impact on all wildlife (including otters), as well as the residents and wildlife of Bedminster who live alongside the water.

As a result of all of the above, I urge Bristol City Council officers to do the RIGHT thing and vote for OPTION 3 ONLY - Please immediately pause all further works until a solution is found, preventing any incursion into the Colliter's Brook SNCI / Yew Tree Farm - this option is backed by Avon Wildlife Trust, RSPB, CPRE and Natural England amongst others.

Thank you.

STATEMENT PS 33

Submitted by Frances Neville

I am asking you to choose option 3 , to halt the expansion of the crematorium in order that the points made below can be taken into consideration and acted upon in the planning process. Thank you

STATEMENT PS 34

Submitted by Sophie Stevens

I'm writing to oppose the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto Colliter's Brook SNCI, also known as Yew Tree Farm. This is our last chance to prevent irreversible damage to a habitat home to dormice, otters, rare bats, and ancient grasslands.

There are three options before you:

Option 1: Continue as planned, destroying the SNCI for burials.

Option 2: Partially expand but still excavate the SNCI for drainage, harming its integrity.

Option 3: Pause the expansion whilst we undertake the necessary ecological studies and devise a more appropriate drainage plan.

Option 3 is the only way to ensure no harm comes to this vital habitat. Organizations like the Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England support this.

There is no issue with developing Site 1 for burials if an alternative drainage solution is found that avoids disturbing the SNCI.

I also want to address concerns from the officer's report:

Underused Land: There's almost 10 acres of unused space at the crematorium that could accommodate more burials without impacting the SNCI.

Ecological Issues: The current ecological report has been discredited by experts. It incorrectly suggests that replacing grassland with wetland meets biodiversity standards.

Irreplaceable Habitat: The ancient MG5 grassland at Yew Tree Farm cannot be recreated. Approving either Option 1 or 2 would cause permanent damage.

Water Pollution: The proposed drainage could lead to pollutants entering Colliter's Brook, harming local wildlife and residents.

In conclusion, I urge you to choose Option 3 and pause all work until we can find a solution that protects Colliter's Brook SNCI. We must preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

Regards,

Sophie Stevens

STATEMENT PS 35

Submitted by Jenny Padfield

I wish to oppose the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto Collitor's Brook SSSI also known as Yew Tree Farm. This is the last opportunity to prevent irreversible damage to habitat which supports dormice, otters, rare bats, ancient grasslands and important veteran trees.

The site for burials could be acceptable if alternative drainage solutions could be found which will protect the SSSI.

There are almost 10 acres of underused land within the crematorium site that could be used for burial without impacting the SSSI.

The Ecological issues should be revisited in light of being discredited by experts who state that replacing grassland with wetland meets biodiversity standards.

The issues of pollution of Colliter's Brook must be addressed.

Please listen to Bristol residents who are begging you not to destroy this invaluable local asset and bring disgrace on our Council which has a large Green representation.

Jennifer Padfield

STATEMENT PS 36

Submitted by Vicki Holeman

I'm emailing with my statement about the proposed expansion of the cemetery on to grassland currently maintained by Yew Tree Farm.

Yew Tree Farm is a rare Jewel within the city boundary, providing a haven for wildlife and relief for people who use the café and take the time to appreciate the wonders of nature that are so abundant there.

In expanding the cemetery on to this land especially for interring ashes, you are putting the dead before wildlife and before the living.

The SNCI, the farm, the wildlife, the beautiful stream, the hedgerows, the trees should all be put before an expansion of the cemetery. Im shocked and devastated that such a decision can be made.

How would you explain this decision to my 10 year old daughter, because I'm very much struggling to.

If it isn't obvious I want option 3, pause expansion completely and find a way to protect the SNCI

STATEMENT PS 37

Submitted by Toby Baker

I am a family butcher of five generations operating from Nailsea and working closely with Catherine's business. I know first hand of the carefulness of her animal husbandry and very high welfare, alongside her dedication to the wild creatures that make the farm home too.

Yew Tree's mission is to produce rare breed quality produce using local businesses and inputs, using more traditional techniques to create the best product for local people to enjoy food how it used to taste.

The weight of this fight with the council has taken it's toll. Trying to uphold the nature protections that should ensure the farm's safe future. Bristolians are flocking to the farm and the shop could open more often but has not been able to due to the endless work she takes on to defend the unique place that is Yew Tree Farm.

I am proud to be part of Catherine's business and wish to see it grow, not fail as the farm gets slowly strangled by encroaching development.

Please vote for option 3. If you can harm the SNCI once you can keep coming back and taking more. Option 2 is simply a ruse.

Kindest regards

Toby Baker (Proprietor of Bakers of Nailsea Butchers.)

STATEMENT PS 38

Submitted by Kevin Millins

I am writing to oppose the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto Colliter's Brook SNCI, also known as Yew Tree Farm. This is our last chance to prevent irreversible damage to a habitat home to dormice, otters, rare bats, and ancient grasslands.

There are three options before you:

Option 1: Continue as planned, destroying the SNCI for burials.

Option 2: Partially expand but still excavate the SNCI for drainage, harming its integrity.

Option 3: Pause the expansion whilst we undertake the necessary ecological studies and devise a more appropriate drainage plan.

Option 3 is the only way to ensure no harm comes to this vital habitat. Organizations like the Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England support this.

There is no issue with developing Site 1 for burials if an alternative drainage solution is found that avoids disturbing the SNCI.

I also want to address concerns from the officer's report:

Underused Land: There's almost 10 acres of unused space at the crematorium that could accommodate more burials without impacting the SNCI.

Ecological Issues: The current ecological report has been discredited by experts. It incorrectly suggests that replacing grassland with wetland meets biodiversity standards.

Irreplaceable Habitat: The ancient MG5 grassland at Yew Tree Farm cannot be recreated. Approving either Option 1 or 2 would cause permanent damage.

Water Pollution: The proposed drainage could lead to pollutants entering Colliter's Brook, harming local wildlife and residents.

In conclusion, I urge you to choose Option 3 and pause all work until we can find a solution that protects Colliter's Brook SNCI. We must preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

Thank you
Kevin Mullins

STATEMENT PS 39

Submitted by Teresa Tremlett

Dear Committee Members,

I'm here today to oppose the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto Colliter's Brook SNCI, also known as Yew Tree Farm. This is our last chance to prevent irreversible damage to a habitat home to dormice, otters, rare bats, and ancient grasslands.

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Water Pollution: The proposed drainage could lead to pollutants entering Colliter's Brook, harming local wildlife and residents.

In conclusion, I urge you to choose Option 3 and pause all work until we can find a solution that protects Colliter's Brook SNCI. We must preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

Teresa

STATEMENT PS 40

Submitted by Catrina Davis

I Catrina Davis completely appose the closure YEW TREE FARM and any plans to further destruct the natural beauty environment of meadows and working farm animals and many other habitats than to make way for extra burial drainage ground for the cemetery next door or that of Redrow housing development on the opposite side..I think as a local resident for 28 years this would be catastrophic..

STATEMENT PS 41

Submitted by Jason Picton

Dear Members of the Committee,

As we deliberate the future of South Bristol Crematorium and its proposed expansion onto Colliter's Brook SSSI, it's essential to consider the legal and ethical ramifications of our decisions. The ecological reports guiding this process have been challenged by industry experts for their lack of rigor and accuracy.

Option 3 offers a necessary pause to reassess these critical issues. Approving either Option 1 or Option 2 would not only lead to irreversible ecological damage but could also expose the council to legal challenges regarding its duty to protect designated conservation areas.

The ecological significance of the MG5 grassland present at Yew Tree Farm cannot be overstated. This habitat is irreplaceable and cannot simply be recreated. By opting for **Option 3**, we take a responsible stance that prioritizes ecological preservation and aligns with our legal obligations under conservation law.

In making this choice, we affirm our commitment to protecting not only our local environment but also our community's ethical responsibility to future generations. I urge you to vote for **Option 3**.

Thank you.

Jason Picton

STATEMENT PS 42

Submitted by Tracy Anderson

Dear Committee Members,

I'm here today to oppose the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto Colliter's Brook SNCI, also known as Yew Tree Farm. This is our last chance to prevent irreversible damage to a habitat home to dormice, otters, rare bats, and ancient grasslands.

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There is no issue with developing Site 1 for burials if an alternative drainage solution is found that avoids disturbing the SNCI.

I also want to address concerns from the officer's report:

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Water Pollution: The proposed drainage could lead to pollutants entering Colliter's Brook, harming local wildlife and residents.

In conclusion, I urge you to choose Option 3 and pause all work until we can find a solution that protects Colliter's Brook SNCI. We must preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

T J Anderson

STATEMENT PS 43

Submitted by T K Cockle

Dear Committee Members,

I'm here today to oppose the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto Colliter's Brook SNCI, also known as Yew Tree Farm. This is our last chance to prevent irreversible damage to a habitat home to dormice, otters, rare bats, and ancient grasslands.

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Option 3 is the only way to ensure no harm comes to this vital habitat. Organizations like the Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England support this.

There is no issue with developing Site 1 for burials if an alternative drainage solution is found that avoids disturbing the SNCI.

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Water Pollution: The proposed drainage could lead to pollutants entering Colliter's Brook, harming local wildlife and residents.

In conclusion, I urge you to choose Option 3 and pause all work until we can find a solution that protects Colliter's Brook SNCI. We must preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

Thank you for your time.

T K Cockle

STATEMENT PS 44

Submitted by John Beard

Dear Committee Members,

I'm here today to oppose the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto Colliter's Brook SNCI, also known as Yew Tree Farm. This is our last chance to prevent irreversible damage to a habitat home to dormice, otters, rare bats, and ancient grasslands.

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Water Pollution: The proposed drainage could lead to pollutants entering Colliter's Brook, harming local wildlife and residents.

In conclusion, I urge you to choose Option 3 and pause all work until we can find a solution that protects Colliter's Brook SNCI. We must preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

STATEMENT PS 45

Submitted by Michelle Graffagnino

To whom it may concern,

I am urging you all attempts to develop on Bristol's last working farm. A unique and important farm for biodiversity, carbon capture, interception from flood risk and a community hub reconnecting people to nature.

I could write a book on why this farm needs to be saved. I could cite research to support this and it would be thousands of pages. Please put nature and people over profits.

I urge you to consider option 3

Kind regards,

Michelle

STATEMENT PS 46

Submitted by Martyn Cordey

Dear Committee,

I live in Bristol and I am hereby submitting a written statement objecting to the expansion of South Bristol Cemetery into Yew Tree Farm, and in particular the SNCI.

This SNCI should be protected because there was a reason for its designation. Furthermore, any loss of SNCI land would set a precedent that could put all other SNCIs at risk. The city has already lost SNCIs and the remainder need to be protected in alignment with the Golden Motion passed at Full Council in 2021 to protect green spaces and greenbelt land.

The proposals for the cemetery expansion have been rushed and insufficient surveys have been carried out. Furthermore, there is ample unused land at South Bristol Cemetery that could be designated for burials and memorialisations, where much of the grassland is routinely cut

I therefore feel that there should be no other alternative but for Option 3 as in the officers' report.

Yours sincerely

Martyn Cordey

STATEMENT PS 47

Submitted by Pip Woolf

The 10 acres of Yew Tree Farm now under consideration for conversion to a cemetery teams with life forms and offers a priceless resource to both its owners, Bristol City Council and its custodian farmer Catherine Withers. For the Council it is a place that can not only offer well being therapy to those who are able to visit but also a living educational resource. For the farmer it is both a livelihood that offers hope for the rest of us that we can care for our natural world whilst keeping sufficient for the needs of our families now and in the future.

Farms produce our food. This small, organic mixed farm produces food with low inputs of resources such as fertilisers and pesticides.

Bristol City Council, like so many local authorities is undoubtedly struggling economically so making decisions as to how to serve its citizens is hard. I would however encourage the Council to be brave and please reconsider the real value of these 10 acres.

We need place to bury our dead but we also need places to nurture health and well being, not just for our human communities but for all other living communities that inextricably contribute to the health of our world.

I believe option three is the only acceptable outcome.

Pip Woolf

STATEMENT PS 48

Submitted by Lesley Powell

We are South Bristol residents and use and support the incredible Yew Tree Farm. We deplore the actions already taken and those proposed to destroy it.

We are retired from our careers and spend many hours per week volunteering on the Northern Slopes, Redcatch Park and Redcatch Community Garden because we care about our environment, and, as the Council maintain these spaces on a very limited basis (or not at all) without us volunteers many of our green spaces would not enrich the lives of South Bristol residents (at least) as much as they do. Yew Tree Farm is very special, it is formed of a complex, rare and rich habitat and cared for very much by its current custodians who have worked on and protected the land and the ecosystem it contains for many years. We buy produce from the farm because it is produced locally and organically and it is imperative we encourage this way of life if we are to support the survival of our environment.

We cannot believe there is even the slightest consideration to destroy this area of land and that there is no dedicated study to find alternative solutions to its destruction.

The destruction to date is unbelievable to us Council Tax payers! Officers and Cllrs, in post because we pay our taxes to represent us, act totally without consultation or representation of what we want or what the experts in this area advise!

We urge you to PAUSE AND REFLECT on what YOU are about to do. YOUR conscience will have to accommodate this forever IF you do not PAUSE AND REFLECT on ALL the information. One wrong, ill considered, ill informed decision that YOU may take now rather than wait for vital supporting information that will enable a fully informed and considered decision will be on YOUR shoulders FOREVER!

- Have YOU assured yourself that there is NO alternative option?
- Are YOU sure YOU know ALL there is to know about what YOU are about to destroy?
- Will YOU be able to face us residents who voted for YOU because WE thought YOU would do the RIGHT THING by US for US??

You, at THE VERY LEAST should VOTE TO DELAY. TO PAUSE AND AWAIT ALL NECESSARY INFO TO HELP YOU MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION.

PLEASE VOTE TO DELAY THIS DECISION.

Please consider before YOU vote to destroy OUR part of our precious world:

Critical need - The existing South Bristol Crematorium site has not used the space effectively from maps sent to Bristol Tree Forum from Ariaif Hussain (Bristol crematoriums). We have identified almost 10 acres of land within South Bristol Crematorium that is not used for memorials or cremated remains.

- Ecological credibility - The original ecological report has been discredited by industry experts, and the committee have been sent separate statements that explain how it does not comply to industry standards. For example, when assessing the BNG impact of the crematorium expansion they have claimed that you can replace a grassland habitat with a wetland habitat, but BNG-related law does not support this. Please encourage committee members to pay close attention to these statements that have been submitted from UK leading ecologists, which explain why the Council's ecological report is not fit for purpose.
- Nationally important habitat - The MG5 (rare) grassland present at Colliter's Brook SSSI/Yew Tree farm cannot be replaced and would be irreparably damaged if either Option 1 or Option 2 are approved. This type of grassland is ancient, extremely rare and of national importance. This grassland is still under assessment and has to be properly surveyed by Natural England or an

independently qualified ecologist specialising in botany, at the appropriate time of year. The presence of this type of grassland means Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm is a living museum. Damaging this ancient habitat (which is inevitable under Option 1 or Option 2) is unacceptable – it would be akin to removing/relocating one of the stones at Stonehenge. We are extremely lucky to have this habitat in Bristol, and should treasure and protect it. However if the committee vote for Option 1 or 2, they will be condemning it to destruction and will prevent Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm being upgraded from SNCI to SSSI status and given an even higher level of protection for the MG5 grassland, Dormice and rare bats that live there.

- Water pollution - The attenuation basin will be a storm pond, likely to accumulate high levels of ammonium from the burials happening on Site 1. It will be heavily polluted, and will not prevent our local waterways being polluted. During heavy rainfall there will be a risk of sending slugs of concentrated pollution into Colliter's Brook, creating heavy contamination. These added pollutants in Colliter's Brook would affect both the wildlife living in it – including otters – and the residents of Bedminster who live alongside it. The Brook's ecosystem is already struggling, and voting for either Option 1 or Option 2 will further contribute to eutrophication and other stressors threatening the survival of aquatic organisms. The best mitigation is not to run any drainage via Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm, and to pro-actively direct discharge away from Colliter's brook.
- Inconsistent burial forecasts - In 2020 a report stated there was only 2 years burial space left, yet in 2024 another report states exactly the same thing. Also, the council state in their recent report that annual burials decreased during the Covid 19 pandemic, however in their options they state a future pandemic might spike burial numbers. How do the committee interpret this?
- Land mismanagement - Officers have already broken their own planning conditions by removing the scrub from the Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree Farm site without applying for pre-commencement sign off. If Option 1 or 2 were to be approved, we would be dependent on the officers to manage the building work on the SNCI site, but their recent actions have shown that they lack either the appropriate respect, knowledge or resources to manage sensitive developments on SNCI habitats, and cannot be trusted to undertake the works responsibly.

STATEMENT PS 49

Submitted by Robert Broughton

Dear Committee Members,

I'm here today to oppose the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto Colliter's Brook SNCI, also known as Yew Tree Farm. This is our last chance to prevent irreversible damage to a habitat home to dormice, otters, rare bats, and ancient grasslands.

There are three options before you:

Option 1: Continue as planned, destroying the SNCI for burials.

Option 2: Partially expand but still excavate the SNCI for drainage, harming its integrity.

Option 3: Pause the expansion whilst we undertake the necessary ecological studies and devise a more appropriate drainage plan.

Option 3 is the only way to ensure no harm comes to this vital habitat. Organizations like the Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England support this.

There is no issue with developing Site 1 for burials if an alternative drainage solution is found that avoids disturbing the SNCI.

I also want to address concerns from the officer's report:

Underused Land: There's almost 10 acres of unused space at the crematorium that could accommodate more burials without impacting the SNCI.

Ecological Issues: The current ecological report has been discredited by experts. It incorrectly suggests that replacing grassland with wetland meets biodiversity standards.

Irreplaceable Habitat: The ancient MG5 grassland at Yew Tree Farm cannot be recreated. Approving either Option 1 or 2 would cause permanent damage.

Water Pollution: The proposed drainage could lead to pollutants entering Colliter's Brook, harming local wildlife and residents.

In conclusion, I urge you to choose Option 3 and pause all work until we can find a solution that protects Colliter's Brook SNCI. We must preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

Thank you for your time.

Robert Broughton

STATEMENT PS 50

Submitted by Helen Phillips

To Whom It may concern,

I understand that a decision is being made tomorrow in relation to whether the expansion of the crematorium should go ahead, encroaching onto land currently known as colliter's Brook SNCI.

As a local living in Bedminster Down and surrounding area for my entire life, I understand how important the farm and surrounding fields are.

When coming to a conclusion tomorrow, please consider whether morally and legally, you are doing the right thing.

Currently, I understand that the ecological report you are relying upon has been discredited by experts and a diverse ecosystem is at risk, including, beavers and doormouse due to potential poor decisions.

You are willing to disrupt MG5 grassland, which will never recover or can be replaced and the farm, which gives so much to the community and a weekly retreat for many, where children are educated about farming, food miles and importance of good quality food, is being totally dismissed.

The calming influence of the farm and surrounding fields bring peace and wellbeing to all, surely peoples mental health has to be a considering factor.

Although I appreciate housing and a requirement for crematorium expansion is required, I am sure there are more appropriate options available. This farm is a living museum which is essential for generations to come.

Please vote option 3 and work with the farm to diversify the land further and create a haven to educate our children on the importance of SNCI's wildlife and nature. Be a leader and do the right thing.

Make this land a talking point for the future, for the right reasons! Keep our countryside!

Regards
Helen

STATEMENT PS 51

Submitted by Julia Victor (Friends of Novers Hill and Crox Bottom)

We, the Friends of Novers Hill and Crox Bottom, are a fellow SNCI site in south Bristol.

We urge the committee to vote for option 3, pause and rethink.

It is certainly a matter of faith, but not of the religious kind; instead, faith in our elected representatives to make honest, transparent decisions.

Having seen the report from the council officer, it is very difficult to have faith in the integrity of this current administration because so much of it is reminiscent of the dealings of elected representatives from the recent past. How anyone today can make a decision about expanding the cemetery, based on the supposed facts in this report, is beyond us. Taxpayers money has been spent on this poorly written, biased and inaccurate report. It should be plain for you to see.

The report states that one of the only advantages of supporting option 3 is that it “supports the Green Party manifesto of no development of SNCIs”. And whilst we hope that the party commits to this manifesto pledge, why has this report omitted so many details pertaining to the ecological damage that the SNCI will suffer, should the expansion go ahead? Why aren't Natural England and Avon Wildlife Trust being listened to, again? Why are they misquoted as supporting a mitigation pond in place of grassland, when this is absolutely not what they support? Why are you making allowances for these errors?

When the crematorium and cemetery were built, they did not realise that in the future, green space such as this would be a finite resource and that Yew Tree Farm would be the last working farm in Bristol. The plans for the expansion are outdated, ill-thought and rushed through. The public are still without sound information regarding capacity and expansion at alternative sites. We can only assume that the forceful, callous and relentless pursuit of the land at Yew Tree and the calamitous decisions regarding the access and hedgerows is part of a much greater plan to develop the whole of the farm completely.

Making the decision today is not about choosing to save nature instead of protecting people's dignity. It is about choosing to become a more honest, transparent and responsible public service. You have a public duty to protect nature and the council seems to have forgotten this.

Many of south Bristol's SNCIs were in the last local plan and have been completely lost forever. Yew Tree cannot be the next one.

STATEMENT PS 52

Submitted by Ian Whittern

As a South Bristol resident, I am lending my name to saving Yew Tree Farm in its entirety - as it currently is with no compromise solution. I have been advised this is option 3 - which if the case ask you instruct the counsellors to vote this option.

STATEMENT PS 53

Submitted by Rebecca Bell

Dear Committee Members,

I'm here today to oppose the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto Colliter's Brook SNCI, also known as Yew Tree Farm. This is our last chance to prevent irreversible damage to a habitat home to dormice, otters, rare bats, and ancient grasslands.

There are three options before you:

Option 1: Continue as planned, destroying the SNCI for burials.

Option 2: Partially expand but still excavate the SNCI for drainage, harming its integrity.

Option 3: Pause the expansion whilst we undertake the necessary ecological studies and devise a more appropriate drainage plan.

Option 3 is the only way to ensure no harm comes to this vital habitat. Organizations like the Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England support this.

There is no issue with developing Site 1 for burials if an alternative drainage solution is found that avoids disturbing the SNCI.

I also want to address concerns from the officer's report:

Underused Land: There's almost 10 acres of unused space at the crematorium that could accommodate more burials without impacting the SNCI.

Ecological Issues: The current ecological report has been discredited by experts. It incorrectly suggests that replacing grassland with wetland meets biodiversity standards.

Irreplaceable Habitat: The ancient MG5 grassland at Yew Tree Farm cannot be recreated. Approving either Option 1 or 2 would cause permanent damage.

Water Pollution: The proposed drainage could lead to pollutants entering Colliter's Brook, harming local wildlife and residents.

In conclusion, I urge you to choose Option 3 and pause all work until we can find a solution that protects Colliter's Brook SNCI. We must preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

Regards

Rebecca Bell

STATEMENT PS 54

Submitted by Stuart McCarthy-Thompson (on behalf of Avon Wildlife Trust)

In an ecological emergency, the only option is no development at Yew Tree Farm SNCI. The Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) designation at Yew Tree Farm is an acknowledgement of the importance of this site for nature, with a unique mosaic of habitats including species-rich grassland, hedgerows, and woodland. Such designation should ensure protection from future developments.

Habitat fragmentation and pressure from development are major threats to species-rich grassland and it is important that this habitat is preserved.

The SNCI supports a wide range of species including plants, bats and birds that are increasingly scarce in the surrounding areas. This includes skylarks, which are on the red list of conservation concern, dormice, which have declined by 70% since 2000, and a species of grass fly that is new to science.

With multiple pressures from encroachment, it is vital that the SNCI is protected from all further developments that would irreversibly damage this important wildlife habitat.

Avon Wildlife Trusts recognises the complexities facing Bristol City Council when meeting the needs of all residents. However, the Council has committed to the One City Ecological Emergency Strategy¹ that identified land use changes and fragmented habitats as major causes of the decline in wildlife in Avon that brought about the declaration of an ecological emergency.

The positive goal within the Strategy of 30% of land managed for wildlife by 2030 will be seriously undermined by development on existing ecologically sensitive and important areas. Therefore, the SNCI at Yew Tree Farm must be protected, with no further developments or encroachment.

Option 1

In 2023, Avon Wildlife Trust objected to the original proposal to expand south Bristol cemetery and crematorium into the SNCI at Yew Tree Farm, due to the importance of these habitats for nature. Our position remains the same.

The habitat loss is too great at a time when we need more land managed for nature. Development on SNCIs must be avoided, to preserve the habitat for nature.

Option 2

Under the second proposed option of drainage and an attenuation pond, Avon Wildlife Trust has concerns about the impact on the habitats within the SNCI both in the works phase and over the long-term.

The species-rich grassland habitat is nationally important, with less than 6,000 hectares remaining in England². The mitigation proposals and potential Biodiversity Net Gain make little reference to the damage to this grassland habitat. For a designated priority grassland habitat, there is an expectation that the BNG would be at a much higher threshold and would relate to the same habitat.

Notwithstanding the impact on the SNCI, there is also limited information on how water flow would be managed effectively within this attenuation scheme. A straight drainage channel may exacerbate flooding and drought along its course, with a meandering channel using slow the flow methods being a better option in many schemes. However, this will require a larger area of grassland to be excavated and damaged.

If a drainage scheme is necessary, efforts must be made to explore options that do not encroach on the SNCI. In addition, if this approach went ahead, it should include slow the flow methods, and clearly set out how damage would be minimised and how damage caused is to be reinstated.

With important grassland habitat at stake, Avon Wildlife Trust cannot support this option which includes development on the SNCI.

During an ecological and climate emergency, we must make decisions that secure a future for nature in Bristol. The proposals within option 2 offer a short-term approach that will have a negative irreversible impact on the SNCI while needing to be revisited within a few years. This important grassland habitat must be protected from development.

Option 3

Avon Wildlife Trust supports an option where the SNCI and its mosaic of habitats is protected from development. It is important that criteria for designating this important site are not eroded by short term decisions that have long term implications for nature.

The suggestion that without development on the SNCI its habitats will degrade is potentially misleading given the scale of the negative impacts of the work proposed in options 1 and 2.

Measures to protect and improve the management of these habitats could easily be supported via funding such as the UK Government's Environmental Land Management Schemes.

Contrary to the wording in the appendices, the grassland is visibly species-rich and the current grazing regimes support the preservation of this important habitat.

The option of no development on the SNCI at Yew Tree Farm is the only option that supports our commitment to the One City Ecological Emergency Strategy. It is the only option that should prevail in an ecological emergency.

STATEMENT PS 55

Submitted by Amanda Barrett

I am emailing today in the hope of righting a wrong. I have followed the ongoing struggle to save Yewtree Farm for several years now and have both emailed in the past and attended meetings at Bristol City Town Hall which have been, at times, grim indeed. We live in troubling times - there is such a serious climate and biodiversity crisis that tackling this should take priority in international, national and local government thinking. Without a doubt, Yewtree Farm is a gem both in mitigating the adverse impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss as well as giving local people a chance to buy well-produced local food and offering them a wonderful place to ensure their health and well-being. Yet the decisions taken by Bristol City Council in the past few years with reference the future of Yewtree Farm show no sign of understanding how much people value this area or, indeed, what a coup it is for Bristol City Council to have this unique and independent, well-run, extraordinarily beautiful farm right on the doorstep of South Bristol.

If councillors want people to retain a gram of faith in local governance and elected officials doing the 'right' thing, then PLEASE pause the expansion whilst the necessary ecological studies are done to devise a more appropriate drainage plan. The current ecological report has been discredited by experts which is a shocking indictment of due process especially bearing in mind the paragraph above.

I have only just learnt that there's almost TEN acres of unused space at the crematorium that could accommodate more burials without impacting the SNCI - why isn't this explored and made public?

Finally, why not listen to Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England to ensure no harm comes to this irreplaceable habitat?

I really hope that this message is read and taken in good faith. I know I'm not alone in thoughts such as these.

With best wishes and fingers crossed
Amanda Barrett

STATEMENT PS 56

Submitted by Steve Beard

Dear Committee Members,

I'm here today to oppose the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto Colliter's Brook SNCI, also known as Yew Tree Farm. This is our last chance to prevent irreversible damage to a habitat home to dormice, otters, rare bats, and ancient grasslands.

There are three options before you:

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Option 2: Partially expand but still excavate the SNCI for drainage, harming its integrity.

Option 3: Pause the expansion whilst we undertake the necessary ecological studies and devise a more appropriate drainage plan.

Option 3 is the only way to ensure no harm comes to this vital habitat. Organizations like the Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England support this.

There is no issue with developing Site 1 for burials if an alternative drainage solution is found that avoids disturbing the SNCI.

I also want to address concerns from the officer's report:

Underused Land: There's almost 10 acres of unused space at the crematorium that could accommodate more burials without impacting the SNCI.

Ecological Issues: The current ecological report has been discredited by experts. It incorrectly suggests that replacing grassland with wetland meets biodiversity standards.

Irreplaceable Habitat: The ancient MG5 grassland at Yew Tree Farm cannot be recreated. Approving either Option 1 or 2 would cause permanent damage.

Water Pollution: The proposed drainage could lead to pollutants entering Colliter's Brook, harming local wildlife and residents.

In conclusion, I urge you to choose Option 3 and pause all work until we can find a solution that protects Colliter's Brook SNCI. We must preserve our natural heritage for future.

STATEMENT PS 57

Submitted by Deborah Sharp

I am writing to you concerning the council meeting on October 11 regarding an extension of South Bristol Cemetery and its potential adverse impact on Yew Tree Farm.

My involvement with Yew Tree Farm is as the co-lead for a Green Social Prescribing programme that we have been running with the local PCNs and the Bristol ICB. As well as the University of Bristol, the other organisations involved are the College of Medicine whose Patron is His Majesty the King, and the Sustainable Food Trust.

This project was conceived by His Majesty who has a particular interest in the role of nature and green space in promoting and maintaining wellbeing. Green Social Prescribing supports people to engage in nature-based interventions and activities to improve their mental health. Social Prescribing Link Workers connect people to community groups and agencies for practical and emotional support. Along with the evidence for time spent in, and connection to nature, there is evidence that suggests there are benefits of nature-based social prescriptions on long term health and wellbeing and in populations at the greatest risk of health inequalities. The project we have been undertaking, is allowing local people who suffer with long term physical and mental health problems to spend time on the farm and benefit from the wonderful surroundings and the therapeutic impact of nature. Green Social Prescribing is a national government supported initiative and has recently been subject to a £5.77m research project to test how to embed green social prescribing. The learning from that work will help all of us in Bristol be a part of this approach to improving health and health care. And in the last month, the Government has announced its invitation to UK Councils to apply for funding to “put green infrastructure at the heart of their plans and priorities, improving the climate resilience of their places and enabling access for all”. It seems contrary for BCC to consider destroying part of a greenbelt SNCI used by significant numbers of people across the community.

I am sure you are aware, that this piece of land previously rented by Catherine Withers from Bristol City council is crucial to the farm. Without that land, the farm is probably not viable. There are several other major concerns due the site being designated an SNCI. It appears the harm to this Site of Nature Conservation Interest has been outweighed by equalities issues. We are aware that the land taken away from nature friendly organic farming will be for non-denominational burials. We would also argue that offering green social prescribing is a strong and positive gain in tackling health inequalities, (Yew Tree farm is in the BS13 postcode).

The farm is very special to Bristol. There is huge concern at the possibility it might be in peril. There is great support across the city and beyond for this approval to be reversed and it appears the power to enable this, is in your hands as chair of the Public Health and Communities committee.

The farm has a strong local and national profile having been the centre of an episode of Countryfile (aired 2022), featured on BBC R4 On your farm (20th August 2023) and the Sustainable Food Trust have a recent piece about it in their newsletter <https://sustainablefoodtrust.org/news-views/bristols-last-working-farm-a-farm-for-the-future/>.

In writing in support of Yew Tree Farm I would implore yourself and the council to take the time carefully investigate reasonable alternatives for the cemetery expansion (for instance, Site 1 lies outside of the SNCI and is a relatively flat site that can make use of on-site runoff mitigation methods), to avoid the devastating impact this would have on Bristol’s last remaining farm.

I think I speak for the health professionals who have referred to this green social prescribing opportunity as well as the patients for whom it has made a difference.

STATEMENT PS 58

Submitted by Nick Baker

I disagree with the decision and the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium and want it to be paused and stopped. It would greatly affect Yew Tree farm one of the last wild places left in Bedminster and a SNCI

I believe there is an alternative solution that the Council haven't proposed yet, which might save the council coffers many thousands of pounds and will protect the SNCI. I have no objection to Site 1 being used for burials, and encourage the Council to find an alternative version of Option 2, where the drainage arrangements do not involve excavating the Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm, and the drainage is discharged away from the Colliter's Brook watercourse. If they can achieve this, the crematorium can be expanded without harming the SNCI.

I strongly disagree with the expansion for the following reasons

Critical need - The existing South Bristol Crematorium site has not used the space effectively from maps sent to Bristol Tree Forum from Ariaf Hussain (Bristol crematoriums). We have identified almost 10 acres of land within South Bristol Crematorium that is not used for memorials or cremated remains.

Ecological credibility - The original ecological report has been discredited by industry experts, and the committee have been sent separate statements that explain how it does not comply to industry standards. For example, when assessing the BNG impact of the crematorium expansion they have claimed that you can replace a grassland habitat with a wetland habitat, but BNG-related law does not support this. Please encourage committee members to pay close attention to these statements that have been submitted from UK leading ecologists, which explain why the Council's ecological report is not fit for purpose.

Nationally important habitat - The MG5 (rare) grassland present at Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm cannot be replaced and would be irreparably damaged if either Option 1 or Option 2 are approved. This type of grassland is ancient, extremely rare and of national importance. This grassland is still under assessment and has to be properly surveyed by Natural England or an independently qualified ecologist specialising in botany, at the appropriate time of year. The presence of this type of grassland means Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm is a living museum. Damaging this ancient habitat (which is inevitable under Option 1 or Option 2) is unacceptable – it would be akin to removing/relocating one of the stones at Stonehenge. We are extremely lucky to have this habitat in Bristol, and should treasure and protect it. However if the committee vote for Option 1 or 2, they will be condemning it to destruction and will prevent Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm being upgraded from SNCI to SSSI status and given an even higher level of protection for the MG5 grassland, Dormice and rare bats that live there.

Water pollution - The attenuation basin will be a storm pond, likely to accumulate high levels of ammonium from the burials happening on Site 1. It will be heavily polluted, and will not prevent our local waterways being polluted. During heavy rainfall there will be a risk of sending slugs of concentrated pollution into Colliter's Brook, creating heavy contamination. These added pollutants in Colliter's Brook would affect both the wildlife living in it – including otters – and the residents of Bedminster who live alongside it. The Brook's ecosystem is already struggling, and voting for either Option 1 or Option 2 will further contribute to eutrophication and other stressors threatening the survival of aquatic organisms. The best mitigation is not to run any drainage via Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm, and to pro-actively direct discharge away from Colliter's brook.

Inconsistent burial forecasts - In 2020 a report stated there was only 2 years burial space left, yet in 2024 another report states exactly the same thing. Also, the council state in their recent report that annual burials

decreased during the Covid 19 pandemic, however in their options they state a future pandemic might spike burial numbers. How do the committee interpret this?

Land mismanagement - Officers have already broken their own planning conditions by removing the scrub from the Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree Farm site without applying for pre-commencement sign off. If Option 1 or 2 were to be approved, we would be dependent on the officers to manage the building work on the SNCI site, but their recent actions have shown that they lack either the appropriate respect, knowledge or resources to manage sensitive developments on SNCI habitats, and cannot be trusted to undertake the works responsibly.

I trust the council will make the sensible and financially economical decision and save Yew Tree farm.

A concerned South Bristol resident

STATEMENT PS 59

Submitted by Owen Newman

I hope you will read this and include it in your briefing notes.

I have walked through Yewtree Farm many times in the last twenty years and watched it change into an extraordinary place for both wildlife, people and livestock. Yewtree Farm is unique within the neighbourhood and further afield. Small but perfectly formed, the area has billowing hedges, wonderful meadows, veteran trees, rare species such as kestrels and otters. It delivers more than some Wildlife Trust reserves and should be treasured by the Council as a pearl beyond price.

I know others are writing to you with reference the short-sighted decision to damage the integrity of the mosaic habitat so I will keep this brief. However I agree with all the arguments that point to those in Friday's meeting to call a pause on the expansion. It's never too late to change tack and I am shocked that the current ecological report is so un-professional in its findings. So please listen to Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England and ensure that no harm comes to this irreplaceable habitat that gives delight to so many and a refuge to a host of creatures who have no voice.

Thanks

Owen Newman

STATEMENT PS 60

Submitted by Kathy Welham

To the Councillors sitting on the Public Health and Communities policy Committee:

Yew Tree Farm is not the Green Belt site which should be chosen for expansion and provision of land for burial and cremation. It is entirely unsuitable and the impact on it would be catastrophic. The harm caused by such an impingement on prime, rare, carefully, meticulously and successfully farmed land, for the production of food - using healthy, sustainable practices that do not deplete but attempt to enrich the environment - would be devastating. It is unlikely that Yew Tree Farm could remain viable under the twin onslaught of the nearby new housing and the crematorium enlargement.

Yew Tree Farm, the last working farm within the city boundary of Bristol, must be protected from further damage. It is an immensely valuable and irreplaceable site which has been worked since the 1960s by a farming family using well-trying, traditional practices of husbandry which aim to preserve and enrich the natural diversity that supports healthy soil, healthy crops and a viable, healthy ecosystem.

These things are made possible by the farm's unique mix of habitats - grassland, woodland, meadow, scrub, hedgerow and Colliter's Brook - which together feed and foster, water, shelter and nurture an extraordinary and highly unusual number and variety of species. This is recognised by Yew Tree Farm's SNCI status.

Such a place needs the highest level of protection, and this is incompatible with the encroachment of developments so close to its boundaries. The expansion of the cemetery and crematorium onto this irreplaceable, unique land will cause insidious damage and pollution. This in turn will undermine the entire structure and the survival of the interdependent organisms making up the varied habitats the farm supports. It will alter the fragile balance which we cannot yet even fully describe, and which will be irreparable once the fundamental elements are gone. This is the danger the crematorium/cemetery expansion threatens. Once its elements are destroyed, such a balance cannot be recreated.

We know that a huge mistake was made when the 'protected' hedgerow at Yew Tree Farm was disgracefully grubbed up. That cannot be undone and was clearly unlawful, whatever forms of words BCC is using to excuse it. But please do not let even greater damage be wrought on this site by approving an inappropriate and unjustified crematorium/ cemetery expansion onto the unique land of Yew Tree Farm.

Those who support an immediate approval, before a proper survey has even been completed, must be aware that if MG5 grassland is found on the site, its rarity will mean that it, and Yew Tree Farm itself, are of national importance and qualify for SSI status. This is not what any developer wants to hear, but it is what you, as councillors who are concerned to protect Bristol's environment and important assets, and the wellbeing of all residents, should insist on. Yew Tree Farm is an incredibly rare asset and it needs your protection from financial, short-term interests. In the long term, the expansion of the crematorium onto this valuable land would be vilified and regretted, but it could never be rectified. It would be too late. I ask you not to let that happen.

Please do not approve this expansion and instead please take responsibility for protecting this (so far relatively) unspoilt, rich ecosystem from harm. For Bristol. Please require BCC officers to find an alternative, appropriate site for cremations and burials. Not Yew Tree Farm.

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Thank you.

Kathy Welham

STATEMENT PS 61

Submitted by Debbie Bell

Dear Committee Members,

I'm here today to oppose the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto Colliter's Brook SNCI, also known as Yew Tree Farm. This is our last chance to prevent irreversible damage to a habitat home to dormice, otters, rare bats, and ancient grasslands.

There are three options before you:

Option 1: Continue as planned, destroying the SNCI for burials.

Option 2: Partially expand but still excavate the SNCI for drainage, harming its integrity.

Option 3: Pause the expansion whilst we undertake the necessary ecological studies and devise a more appropriate drainage plan.

Option 3 is the only way to ensure no harm comes to this vital habitat. Organizations like the Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England support this.

There is no issue with developing Site 1 for burials if an alternative drainage solution is found that avoids disturbing the SNCI.

I also want to address concerns from the officer's report:

Underused Land: There's almost 10 acres of unused space at the crematorium that could accommodate more burials without impacting the SNCI.

Ecological Issues: The current ecological report has been discredited by experts. It incorrectly suggests that replacing grassland with wetland meets biodiversity standards.

Irreplaceable Habitat: The ancient MG5 grassland at Yew Tree Farm cannot be recreated. Approving either Option 1 or 2 would cause permanent damage.

Water Pollution: The proposed drainage could lead to pollutants entering Colliter's Brook, harming local wildlife and residents.

In conclusion, I urge you to choose Option 3 and pause all work until we can find a solution that protects Colliter's Brook SNCI. We must preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

Thank you for your time. Debbie Bell

STATEMENT PS 62

Submitted by David Clarke

- I am writing with regard to the proposals to extend Bristol Crematorium to include land currently farmed as Yew Tree Farm. Two of the three options that have been proposed will destroy or severely downgrade the habitat that is Colliter's Brook SNCI which is home to dormice, otters, badgers, rare bats and insects, and which by law should be protected by its owner Bristol Council,
- It also includes an ancient and rare form of natural grassland that is of national importance and should be treated as such by the Council and properly surveyed at the appropriate times of year before a decision is taken that would destroy it forever.
-

Option 1: Continue as planned, and use Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm as new burial land for South Bristol Crematorium would devastate this area.

Option 2: Partially expand South Bristol Crematorium, using only Site 1 (next to the A38) for new burials and excavate the land at Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm to install drainage pipes and an attenuation pond would damage the integrity of the grassland habitat and introduce dangerous pollution into the water courses supplying Colliter's Brook.

Use of Site 1 for new burials would not be an issue of itself if any drainage plans directed water well away from the Colliter's Brook site..

Option 3: Pause the South Bristol Crematorium expansion plans in their entirety. This is the only civilised option in the opinion of experts such as Avon Wildlife Trust, the RSPB, CPRE and Natural England.

The reports submitted by officers of the council to the committees making the decisions have been declared by many experts to be both lacking in multiple details and (presumably deliberately) misleading. They appear to have been designed to steer the committee in one direction rather than to establish the truth of the situation. And the opinions of experts hired for a few days by either the Council or the developers have been published to "guide" committee members, but not the often conflicting opinions of equally qualified local experts who have a long-term association with and understanding of the area. Indeed the original ecological report has been declared unfit for purpose by national experts, and some claims in those reports are contrary to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)-related law.

-

Is the expansion actually necessary? It seems that the area currently occupied by the crematorium has nearly 10 acres of land not currently used for burials or memorials and no proper survey has been published to show why that land cannot be used. Instead the Council has stated that there is only space for 200 more burials on the site. Even if just 1 acre of the currently unused space could be converted into burial space that could provide for many hundreds of full size graves.

I would also encourage committee members to study statements issued by the council over the past 5 years describing expected numbers of graves and how much burial space they have left (e.g. 2 years in 2020, still 2 years in 2022?). It appears that statistics are being manipulated here.

Irresponsible and premature Land management. Scrub has been cleared from the site already causing a degree of ecological damage, contrary to the planning conditions agreed by the Council.

The officers who managed this work show little understanding of the importance of the SNCI site or of the relevant laws. If either Option 1 or 2 is agreed, this gung-ho approach to development will cause widespread damage beyond the agreed boundaries.

I believe there are also new proposals to change the law to make it easier to reuse burial sites. This may make a big difference to the apparent shortage of space.

Please don't be misled into making a decision to destroy an important ecological habitat when it is probably not necessary.

Please take time to understand the issues and read beyond the submissions provided by the Council. It would be a dreadful mistake to allow these plans to proceed, either through ignorance or a desire not to embarrass the Council.

Thank you for reading this

David Clarke

STATEMENT PS 63

Submitted by Maddy Longhurst

Dear all,

In response to agenda item 8 Options for South Bristol Cemetery, I would like to submit the following statement.

Having read through the three options presented for the future of burial provision for the city, looked at the Equalities and Environmental Impact Assessment it seems clear that:

a) A new strategic approach is needed for considering future burial space for the city. There is enough capacity to ensure no shortage while a different strategy is developed. It is fundamentally wrong, and unnecessary for SNCIs, burial space and nature-friendly local food provision to be played off against each other so there are winners and losers. All are essential to create a resilient city and this will require a shift in mindset from scarcity to abundance.

A new strategy could look systematically at suitable peri-urban burial spaces, for example outward 1 to 3 miles from Bristol's boundary in every direction, which will give rise to a number of potential, level sites that are not nature rich, or the homes of established regenerative farms, but suitable for safe, caring burials and within easy reach.

This will require a conversation and a strategic collaboration with neighbouring local authorities so it is important to recognise that mechanisms for having these conversations and developing a collaboration already exist and are in use by Bristol and its neighbours. The contentiousness of this crematorium expansion has revealed this to be a strategic and cross-boundary issue. Addressing this now will ensure that nature, the resilience and re-localisation of the food system and respectful burials can all happen into the future without resource-intensive competition and conflict every time.

b) consideration of negative equality and ecological impacts has been underplayed on the submitted forms. The up-playing of the benefits of option A ignores the fact that significant ecological losses will be incurred, and we know that you can't 'replace' established ecological systems with new planting on top of ecologically damaged landscapes.

Ecological improvements to Colliters Brook can happen over time anyway, gently and without loss or disruption to existing populations.

b) loss of any ecological webs, habitat and regenerative food production is a direct loss to public health. Across the UK, it is Public Health teams that are championing food system change and taking courageous leaps forward, recognising that our mainstream food system is responsible for so many health and climate related problems, not just locally but globally.

I work with cities across the UK and know that for a public health committee to choose to undermine a long-established, high welfare, habitat-regenerating food supplier is a regressive step when they are simultaneously collaborating with Bristol Good Food 2030, climate and ecology emergency boards and so on. Consistency of values and vision is required here. Many public health teams elsewhere are working hard to support the establishment of exactly what we already have with Yew Tree Farm.

c) The expansion of the crematorium runs counter to green party policies and One City Plans. It acutely downplays the disruption and loss of intact, established ecosystem webs that would occur through the creation of the attenuation pond which is only necessary because it is a steeply sloped site that floods. It is perhaps inconvenient but true that the SNCI site is not fit for purpose as a burial ground.

d) a positive narrative around the vision I have outlined above will help prevent the setting of one interest or need against another.

The needs of SANDS and other similar charities, and the needs of religious or other groups and individuals to bury loved ones are universal and continuous. The urgent need for ecological safeguarding and regeneration, and the urgent need to create flourishing, resilient and nutrient dense, affordable food supply into the city - getting nutritious food (and not supermarket surplus) to those who need it most, is universal and continuous. It is also one of the core pillars of public health.

A new, positive, multifunctional land use strategy for the city region that extends beyond the political boundaries, and which looks at these needs holistically and long-term is inescapable.

I would recommend Option C to give the Council the space and impetus required to respond carefully, strategically and effectively to all the areas of need highlighted in this case.

STATEMENT PS 64

Submitted by Hilary Rydon

Dear Committee Members

I'm writing to you today to oppose the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto Colliter's Brook SNCI, also known as Yew Tree Farm. This is our last chance to prevent irreversible damage to a habitat home to dormice, otters, rare bats, and ancient grasslands.

There are three options before you:

Option 1: Continue as planned, destroying the SNCI for burials.

Option 2: Partially expand but still excavate the SNCI for drainage, harming its integrity.

Option 3: Pause the expansion whilst we undertake the necessary ecological studies and devise a more appropriate drainage plan.

Option 3 is the only way to ensure no harm comes to this vital habitat. Organizations like the Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England support this.

There is no issue with developing Site 1 for burials if an alternative drainage solution is found that avoids disturbing the SNCI.

I also want to address concerns from the officer's report:

Underused Land: There's almost 10 acres of unused space at the crematorium that could accommodate more burials without impacting the SNCI.

Ecological Issues: The current ecological report has been discredited by experts. It incorrectly suggests that replacing grassland with wetland meets biodiversity standards.

Irreplaceable Habitat: The ancient MG5 grassland at Yew Tree Farm cannot be recreated. Approving either Option 1 or 2 would cause permanent damage.

Water Pollution: The proposed drainage could lead to pollutants entering Colliter's Brook, harming local wildlife and residents.

In conclusion, I urge you to choose Option 3 and pause all work until we can find a solution that protects Colliter's Brook SNCI. We must preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

Destruction of this SNCI would create a precedent where all other SNCI's would be at future threat from development

I urge you to consider the future of Yew Tree Farm (Colliter's Brook SNCI) very carefully and preserve Bristol's last working farm for future generations.

Regards

Hilary Rydon

STATEMENT PS 65

Submitted by Anna Archer

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing today as a local resident to oppose the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto Colliter's Brook SNCI, also known as Yew Tree Farm. This is our last chance to prevent irreversible damage to a habitat home to dormice, otters, rare bats, and ancient grasslands.

There are three options you are considering as follows:

Option 1: Continue as planned, destroying the SNCI for burials.

Option 2: Partially expand but still excavate the SNCI for drainage, harming its integrity.

Option 3: Pause the expansion whilst we undertake the necessary ecological studies and devise a more appropriate drainage plan.

Option 3 is the only way to ensure no harm comes to this vital habitat. Organizations like the Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England support this.

There is no issue with developing Site 1 for burials if an alternative drainage solution is found that avoids disturbing the SNCI.

I also want to address concerns from the officer's report:

Underused Land: There's almost 10 acres of unused space at the crematorium that could accommodate more burials without impacting the SNCI.

Ecological Issues: The current ecological report has been discredited by experts. It incorrectly suggests that replacing grassland with wetland meets biodiversity standards.

Irreplaceable Habitat: The ancient MG5 grassland at Yew Tree Farm cannot be recreated. Approving either Option 1 or 2 would cause permanent damage.

Water Pollution: The proposed drainage could lead to pollutants entering Colliter's Brook, harming local wildlife and residents.

In conclusion, I urge you to choose Option 3 and pause all work at least until a solution that protects Colliter's Brook SNCI can be found. We must preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

Regards

Anna Archer

STATEMENT PS 66

Submitted by Mark Brown

In relation to Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm, please **choose option 3** and pause all further works until we have a solution which prevents any incursion onto the Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm.

Please consider these points:

Critical need - The existing South Bristol Crematorium site has not used the space effectively from maps sent to Bristol Tree Forum from Ariaf Hussain (Bristol crematoriums). We have identified almost 10 acres of land within South Bristol Crematorium that is not used for memorials or cremated remains.

- Ecological credibility - The original ecological report has been discredited by industry experts, and the committee have been sent separate statements that explain how it does not comply to industry standards. For example, when assessing the BNG impact of the crematorium expansion they have claimed that you can replace a grassland habitat with a wetland habitat, but BNG-related law does not support this. Please encourage committee members to pay close attention to these statements that have been submitted from UK leading ecologists, which explain why the Council's ecological report is not fit for purpose.
- Nationally important habitat - The MG5 (rare) grassland present at Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm cannot be replaced and would be irreparably damaged if either Option 1 or Option 2 are approved. This type of grassland is ancient, extremely rare and of national importance. This grassland is still under assessment and has to be properly surveyed by Natural England or an independently qualified ecologist specialising in botany, at the appropriate time of year. The presence of this type of grassland means Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm is a living museum. Damaging this ancient habitat (which is inevitable under Option 1 or Option 2) is unacceptable – it would be akin to removing/relocating one of the stones at Stonehenge. We are extremely lucky to have this habitat in Bristol, and should treasure and protect it. However if the committee vote for Option 1 or 2, they will be condemning it to destruction and will prevent Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm being upgraded from SNCI to SSSI status and given an even higher level of protection for the MG5 grassland, Dormice and rare bats that live there.
- Water pollution - The attenuation basin will be a storm pond, likely to accumulate high levels of ammonium from the burials happening on Site 1. It will be heavily polluted, and will not prevent our local waterways being polluted. During heavy rainfall there will be a risk of sending slugs of concentrated pollution into Colliter's Brook, creating heavy contamination. These added pollutants in Colliter's Brook would affect both the wildlife living in it – including otters – and the residents of Bedminster who live alongside it. The Brook's ecosystem is already struggling, and voting for either Option 1 or Option 2 will further contribute to eutrophication and other stressors threatening the survival of aquatic organisms. The best mitigation is not to run any drainage via Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm, and to pro-actively direct discharge away from Colliter's brook.
- Inconsistent burial forecasts - In 2020 a report stated there was only 2 years burial space left, yet in 2024 another report states exactly the same thing. Also, the council state in their recent report that annual burials decreased during the Covid 19 pandemic, however in their options they state a future pandemic might spike burial numbers. How do the committee interpret this?
- Land mismanagement - Officers have already broken their own planning conditions by removing the scrub from the Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree Farm site without applying for pre-commencement sign off. If Option 1 or 2 were to be approved, we would be dependent on the officers to manage the building work on the SNCI site, but their recent actions have shown that they lack either the appropriate respect, knowledge or resources to manage sensitive developments on SNCI habitats, and cannot be trusted to undertake the works responsibly.

thank you,

Mark Brown

STATEMENT PS 67

Submitted by Angie Weller

Regarding the crematorium expansion that will destroy the rare and protected habitat at Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm, which is home to dormice, otters, badgers, rare bats, ancient grasslands, and a species of insect which has never been seen anywhere else in the world. There are 3 options on the table...

- Option 1: Continue as planned, and use Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm as new burial land for South Bristol Crematorium
- Option 2: Partially expand South Bristol Crematorium, using only Site 1 (next to the A38) for new burials. However the land at Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm would still be excavated to install drainage pipes and an attenuation pond, and would destroy the integrity of the grassland habitat.
- Option 3: Pause the South Bristol Crematorium expansion plans in their entirety

I URGE councillors to choose option 3 and pause all further works until we have a solution which prevents any incursion onto the Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm.

Regards

Angie weller

STATEMENT PS 68

Submitted by Jacob Finnian Eric

Dear Committee Members,

I am here to express my strong opposition to the proposed expansion of the South Bristol Crematorium onto the Colliter's Brook SNCI, known as Yew Tree Farm. This expansion threatens an irreplaceable habitat that supports rare species and ancient grasslands whilst risking polluting the water course.

The three options before you must be carefully considered. While some may see the expansion as a necessary step, I urge you to recognize that Option 3 offers the most sustainable and economically viable solution. By pausing the expansion, we open the door to alternative drainage solutions that can accommodate increased burial capacity without harming the SNCI.

Options 1 and 2 carry hidden long-term costs, including potential legal challenges and damage to the environment, which may ultimately outweigh any short-term financial benefits. Moreover, there is significant public opposition to using this ecologically sensitive area for a drainage system.

As such, selecting Option 3 is not just an environmental decision; it is an economic one. It allows for a strategic reassessment of our burial provision without compromising our commitment to protecting Bristol's green spaces. I implore you to consider the long-term consequences and vote for Option 3.

Thank you for your attention.

Jacob Finnian Eric

STATEMENT PS 69**Submitted by Sarah MacDonald & Juliette Taylor**

We are writing regarding the proposed expansion of the South Bristol Crematorium. We urge councillors to choose option 3 and pause all further works until there is a solution which prevents any incursion onto the Colliter's Brook SNCI (Yew Tree Farm).

We were extremely concerned to read your recently released Officers Report, which was vague and extremely misleading. We would like to raise the following points:

- **Critical need** - The existing South Bristol Crematorium site has not used the space effectively from maps sent to Bristol Tree Forum from Ariaf Hussain (Bristol crematoriums). We have identified almost 10 acres of land within South Bristol Crematorium that is not used for memorials or cremated remains.
- **Ecological credibility** - The original ecological report has been discredited by industry experts, and the committee have been sent separate statements that explain how it does not comply to industry standards. For example, when assessing the BNG impact of the crematorium expansion they have claimed that you can replace a grassland habitat with a wetland habitat, but BNG-related law does not support this. Please encourage committee members to pay close attention to these statements that have been submitted from UK leading ecologists, which explain why the Council's ecological report is not fit for purpose.
- **Nationally important habitat** - The MG5 (rare) grassland present at Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm cannot be replaced and would be irreparably damaged if either Option 1 or Option 2 are approved. This type of grassland is ancient, extremely rare and of national importance. This grassland is still under assessment and has to be properly surveyed by Natural England or an independently qualified ecologist specialising in botany, at the appropriate time of year. The presence of this type of grassland means Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm is a living museum. Damaging this ancient habitat (which is inevitable under Option 1 or Option 2) is unacceptable – it would be akin to removing/relocating one of the stones at Stonehenge. We are extremely lucky to have this habitat in Bristol, and should treasure and protect it. However if the committee vote for Option 1 or 2, they will be condemning it to destruction and will prevent Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm being upgraded from SNCI to SSSI status and given an even higher level of protection for the MG5 grassland, Dormice and rare bats that live there.
- **Water pollution** - The attenuation basin will be a storm pond, likely to accumulate high levels of ammonium from the burials happening on Site 1. It will be heavily polluted, and will not prevent our local waterways being polluted. During heavy rainfall there will be a risk of sending slugs of concentrated pollution into Colliter's Brook, creating heavy contamination. These added pollutants in Colliter's Brook would affect both the wildlife living in it – including otters – and the residents of Bedminster who live alongside it. The Brook's ecosystem is already struggling, and voting for either Option 1 or Option 2 will further contribute to eutrophication and other stressors threatening the survival of aquatic organisms. The best mitigation is not to run any drainage via Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm, and to pro-actively direct discharge away from Colliter's brook.
- **Inconsistent burial forecasts** - In 2020 a report stated there was only 2 years burial space left, yet in 2024 another report states exactly the same thing. Also, the council state in their recent report that annual burials decreased during the Covid 19 pandemic, however in their options they state a future pandemic might spike burial numbers. How do the committee interpret this?
- **Land mismanagement** - Officers have already broken their own planning conditions by removing the scrub from the Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree Farm site without applying for pre-commencement sign off. If Option 1 or 2 were to be approved, we would be dependent on the officers to manage the building work on the SNCI site, but their recent actions have shown that they lack either

the appropriate respect, knowledge or resources to manage sensitive developments on SNCI habitats, and cannot be trusted to undertake the works responsibly.

In the local elections, we both voted for Green Councillors with the belief that this would secure the future of the farm and the important SNCI. I hope that the Green councillors, in particular, will do “the right thing”, keep their promise, and scrap any plans to extend the crematorium onto the land at Yew Tree Farm.

Kind regards

Sarah MacDonald & Juliette Taylor

STATEMENT PS 70

Submitted by Cllr. Lisa Stone

Yew Tree Farm is more than just a field—it's a rare and fragile environment, one of the last of its kind in the UK. Its soils have remained untouched for thousands of years, supporting an ecosystem that cannot be replicated. Yet, plans are underway to disrupt this precious land with development that will damage it forever. This isn't just about stopping a burial ground expansion or housing project; it's about protecting a Site of Nature Conservation Interest.

Once lost, this habitat can never be restored. While new landscapes can be created, they will never match the biodiversity and natural beauty we risk losing here. I, alongside local campaigners, am calling for a rethink. Why not just stop and take a deep breath, let us make sure that what we are doing will not destroy this precious land, and if we do, it will be done with great care, using methods that will not damage the SNCI. Also we must ensure the farm can continue on its journey towards ecological farming methods that will deliver the much needed food Bristolians need, in a way that protects us and the planet.

Can I please ask you all to ensure Yew Tree Farm remains a sanctuary for nature, not another casualty of short-term decisions, and that what ever decision you make has been made with care and thought.

STATEMENT PS 71

Submitted by Bianca Chinn

Dear Committee Members,

I'm here today to oppose the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto Colliter's Brook SNCI, also known as Yew Tree Farm. This is our last chance to prevent irreversible damage to a habitat home to dormice, otters, rare bats, and ancient grasslands.

There are three options before you:

Option 1: Continue as planned, destroying the SNCI for burials.

Option 2: Partially expand but still excavate the SNCI for drainage, harming its integrity.

Option 3: Pause the expansion whilst we undertake the necessary ecological studies and devise a more appropriate drainage plan.

Option 3 is the only way to ensure no harm comes to this vital habitat. Organizations like the Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England support this.

There is no issue with developing Site 1 for burials if an alternative drainage solution is found that avoids disturbing the SNCI.

I also want to address concerns from the officer's report:

Underused Land: There's almost 10 acres of unused space at the crematorium that could accommodate more burials without impacting the SNCI.

Ecological Issues: The current ecological report has been discredited by experts. It incorrectly suggests that replacing grassland with wetland meets biodiversity standards.

Irreplaceable Habitat: The ancient MG5 grassland at Yew Tree Farm cannot be recreated. Approving either Option 1 or 2 would cause permanent damage.

Water Pollution: The proposed drainage could lead to pollutants entering Colliter's Brook, harming local wildlife and residents.

In conclusion, I urge you to choose Option 3 and pause all work until we can find a solution that protects Colliter's Brook SNCI. We must preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

Regards Bianca Chinn

STATEMENT PS 72

Submitted by Joshua Roberts

Dear Committee Members,

I'm here to advocate for the protection of Colliter's Brook SNCI, Yew Tree Farm. This land is a vital ecological resource, home to numerous protected species and ancient grasslands.

Two of the three options presented in the officer's report pose significant threats to this habitat. I do not oppose to developing site 1 but we must pause to explore alternative drainage solutions that do not involve the destruction of this unique ecosystem.

Furthermore, we must recognize the community's deep connection to this land. Residents of South Bristol care deeply about Yew Tree Farm, and we feel a collective responsibility to safeguard it for future generations. The risks of increased water pollution from the proposed development are too great to ignore. Choosing Option 3 allows us to rethink our approach to burial capacity while respecting our natural heritage.

Let us make a decision today that reflects our commitment to ecological integrity and community values. I urge the committee not to pollute our waterways and to vote for Option 3.

Thank you for your consideration.

STATEMENT PS 73

Submitted by Jasmine Beard

Dear Councillors,

As a resident of Bedminster/ Ashton, I am urging you to carefully consider the significant flaws in the Officer's report as you make your decision on the future of Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree Farm. I am aware for the need for burial space but it should not come at the expense of our SNCI.

It is vital that you choose Option 3 (paused expansion and exploration of other options) of the officers report to avoid irreparable harm to this site and the local environment. Below are key reasons why the report should not be relied upon and why Option 3 is the only option:

1. **Critical Need:** The existing South Bristol Crematorium has not used its space efficiently. Maps provided by Bristol Tree Forum show nearly 10 acres of unused land at the site that could accommodate memorials and cremated remains. The need for additional burial space is overstated, and the existing site has the capacity to meet demand without expanding into environmentally sensitive areas.
2. **Ecological Concerns:** The ecological report has been discredited by leading industry experts. You have received statements explaining how it fails to meet industry standards, including claims that grassland habitat can be replaced with wetland habitat—an assertion that contradicts biodiversity net gain (BNG) laws. These expert assessments must be considered, as they highlight why the report cannot be trusted to guide such an important decision.
3. **Nationally Important Grassland:** Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree Farm is home to MG5 grassland, a rare and ancient habitat of national importance. This grassland cannot be replaced, and it would be irreversibly damaged by the development proposed under Options 1 or 2. Such damage would prevent the site from being upgraded to SSSI status, which would ensure greater protection for this vital ecosystem, home to rare species such as bats and dormice. Approving either of these options would be akin to destroying a cultural landmark—once lost, it cannot be restored.
4. **Water Pollution:** The proposed attenuation pond at Site 1 would likely accumulate ammonium from burials, causing pollution in Colliter's Brook. Heavy rainfall could cause this pollution to spread, threatening the already struggling ecosystem and affecting local residents. Otters and other wildlife depend on the Brook, and additional stressors such as this could lead to further degradation. Option 3, which avoids expanding into this area, provides the best solution for mitigating environmental damage.
5. **Inconsistent Burial Forecasts:** The burial forecasts in the report are inconsistent. A 2020 report claimed only two years of burial space remained, yet in 2024, the same claim is repeated. Moreover, the report contradicts itself by acknowledging that burials decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic while predicting that a future pandemic could cause a spike in burials. These contradictions raise serious questions about the accuracy of the data being used to justify expansion.
6. **Land Mismanagement:** Officers have already breached planning conditions by clearing scrub from the Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree Farm site without proper approval. If Options 1 or 2 were approved, the same officers would be tasked with managing the sensitive developments in this area, despite their recent failure to follow regulations. Their ability to manage such an ecologically important site is questionable.

In conclusion, the Officer's report contains numerous inaccuracies and should not be relied upon. Option 3 is the only option that protects Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree Farm, preserves its rare habitats, and ensures that this nationally significant site can continue to thrive.

I urge you to choose Option 3 to safeguard this valuable environment for future generations.

STATEMENT PS 74

Submitted by Lily Mazzotta

Dear Councillors,

I urge you to reconsider the significant flaws in the Officer's report before deciding on the future of Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree Farm. While I understand the need for burial space, it should not come at the cost of this important site.

Option 3 (pausing expansion and exploring alternatives) is the only choice that avoids irreversible harm to the local environment. Key reasons why the report cannot be trusted and why Option 3 is essential include:

1. ****Overstated Burial Need****: South Bristol Crematorium has 10 acres of unused land for memorials and cremations. The push for additional space is exaggerated, and the existing site can meet demand without destroying sensitive areas.
2. ****Discredited Ecological Report****: Experts have discredited the ecological report for not meeting industry standards and for suggesting that grassland can be replaced by wetlands, which contradicts biodiversity laws.
3. ****Nationally Important Grassland****: The rare MG5 grassland at Colliter's Brook is irreplaceable. Development under Options 1 or 2 would prevent it from achieving SSSI status, permanently damaging this vital ecosystem.
4. ****Water Pollution****: A proposed burial pond would pollute Colliter's Brook, harming wildlife and the ecosystem. Option 3 prevents this risk.
5. ****Inconsistent Burial Data****: The report's burial forecasts are contradictory, raising questions about the accuracy of the data used to justify expansion.
6. ****Land Mismanagement****: Officers have already violated planning conditions at the site, casting doubt on their ability to manage further development.

In summary, the Officer's report is flawed, and only Option 3 will protect Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree Farm and its rare habitats.

Yours faithfully,

Lily Mazzotta

STATEMENT PS 75

Submitted by Flick Brown and James Smith

Dear Committee Members,

I'm emailing you today to oppose the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto Colliter's Brook SNCI, also known as Yew Tree Farm. This is our last chance to prevent irreversible damage to a habitat home to dormice, otters, rare bats, and ancient grasslands.

At a time when biodiversity is declining rapidly across the UK, we must do all we can to turn the tide and protect our few wild spaces.

There are three options before you:

Option 1: Continue as planned, destroying the SNCI for burials.

Option 2: Partially expand but still excavate the SNCI for drainage, harming its integrity.

Option 3: Pause the expansion whilst we undertake the necessary ecological studies and devise a more appropriate drainage plan.

Option 3 is the only way to ensure no harm comes to this vital habitat. Organizations like the Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England support this.

There is no issue with developing Site 1 for burials if an alternative drainage solution is found that avoids disturbing the SNCI.

I also want to address concerns from the officer's report:

Underused Land: There's almost 10 acres of unused space at the crematorium that could accommodate more burials without impacting the SNCI.

Ecological Issues: The current ecological report has been discredited by experts. It incorrectly suggests that replacing grassland with wetland meets biodiversity standards.

Irreplaceable Habitat: The ancient MG5 grassland at Yew Tree Farm cannot be recreated. Approving either Option 1 or 2 would cause permanent damage.

Water Pollution: The proposed drainage could lead to pollutants entering Colliter's Brook, harming local wildlife and residents.

In conclusion, I urge you to choose Option 3 and pause all work until we can find a solution that protects Colliter's Brook SNCI. We must preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

Thank you for your time.

Flick Brown and James Smith

STATEMENT PS 76

Submitted by Helen Russell

> Dear Committee Members,

>

> I'm writing to oppose the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto Colliter's Brook SNCI, also known as Yew Tree Farm. This is our last chance to prevent irreversible damage to a habitat home to dormice, otters, rare bats, and ancient grasslands.

>

> There are three options before you:

>

> Option 1: Continue as planned, destroying the SNCI for burials.

>

> Option 2: Partially expand but still excavate the SNCI for drainage, harming its integrity.

>

> Option 3: Pause the expansion whilst we undertake the necessary ecological studies and devise a more appropriate drainage plan.

>

> Option 3 is the only way to ensure no harm comes to this vital habitat. Organizations like the Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England support this.

>

> There is no issue with developing Site 1 for burials if an alternative drainage solution is found that avoids disturbing the SNCI.

>

> I also want to address concerns from the officer's report:

>

> Underused Land: There are almost 10 acres of unused space at the crematorium that could accommodate more burials without impacting the SNCI.

>

> Ecological Issues: The current ecological report has been discredited by experts. It incorrectly suggests that replacing grassland with wetland meets biodiversity standards.

>

> Irreplaceable Habitat: The ancient MG5 grassland at Yew Tree Farm cannot be recreated. Approving either Option 1 or 2 would cause permanent damage.

>

> Water Pollution: The proposed drainage could lead to pollutants entering Colliter's Brook, harming local wildlife and residents.

>

> In conclusion, I urge you to choose Option 3 and pause all work until we can find a solution that protects Colliter's Brook SNCI. We must preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

>

> Thank you for your consideration. Regards, Helen Russell

STATEMENT PS 77

Submitted by Kerry Lyon

I write to add my statement on behalf of myself and my family.

Having moved close to the farm around 13 years ago, that whole plot of land and now it's fabulous community services are a huge part of what we believe in.

The land saves us from our desk based day jobs, a space to completely get amongst nature, yet living so close to the city. I've personally grown up exploring this farm land and surrounding area, it's already shrunk so much in size compared to what it was.

We urge you to not build anything else on it! We need land like this for our future. It's beautifully maintained and offered as a much needed community space and more!

Mrs Kerry Lyon

STATEMENT PS 78

Submitted by Kim Dowsett

Hello,

I wanted to email to raise concerns around proposals to expand South Bristol Crematorium and in the process destroy or harm important and necessary habitat and ecology at Yew Tree Farm. This will also impact the ability of the farm to produce local and sustainable food for the surrounding area. Both of these issues should be a high priority for Bristol.

I can see no real credible reason why living and ecologically important habitat must be destroyed to make space for burials.

I would press you to reconsider and find alternate solutions - which must exist - rather than the current proposals.

Regards,

Kim

STATEMENT PS 79

Submitted by Karen Brown

Good Evening

Please accept this statement of my concerns in regard to the above cause due for debate on Friday 11th October 2024. I live on Ashton Drive and am deeply concerned about this proposal, particularly the effects on Colliters Brook which runs close to my property, of which I have taken a great interest in, along with it's inhabitants, having walked along the whole of the brook many times.

The Officers Report, which is intended to guide your decision making is not only deeply flawed and misleading but also contains false and inaccurate information. It has been stated that the creation of a pond is adequate replacement for grassland habitat - THIS IS COMPLETELY FALSE and is not backed by Natural England - PLEASE READ ALL STATEMENTS from leading ecologists that debunk this. This ancient MG5 grassland is a haven for wildlife and is so very very important to this area and Bristol as a whole and frankly is irreplaceable if damaged and absolutely cannot be offset by creating a pond! I have read reports that have remarked that the drainage proposal of such an attenuation basin will add further to the pollution already present in the waterways by increasing levels of nitrogen and phosphorus, thus threatening the survival of aquatic animals and organisms. In short, the creation of a pond will raise the levels of pollution to the brook to serious levels.

You can see from any map how close I live to the brook and I follow closely the discovery of wildlife in this area, such as otters, bats, egrets to name a few, and having observed many species first hand. The disturbance of this land will seriously threaten these animals and their habitat.

I understand that there are 3 options to be considered this coming Friday - I would sincerely urge you to choose Option 3. I have just learnt that in a list of objections to Option 3 details continued degradation of the SNCI area due to lack of active management and improvements - SERIOUSLY??!! Oh come on!! This is NATURE!! Anything other than Option 3 is choosing to mess with nature in damaging this valuable eco environment! I'm lost for words that development is considered a better option than leaving a natural, endangered habitat to do it's natural thing! The area is managed with animal grazing and a proposal for any scrub encroachment has been put to the head of parks and council - I shall personally be involved in giving my time freely to manage this area, at no cost to the council/tax-payers!

May I close by questioning that should those in decision making roles on this matter go against anything other than Option 3, and thus disregard evidence from independent bodies such as the Avon Wildlife Trust, the RSPB, Natural England and base a decision on a inaccurate report full of untruths and misinformation (that can be proved), then I can only imagine that such a callous decision is purely financially driven in that stopping the expansion will lead to lost income from burial services. I sincerely hope this is not the case.

Thank you, Karen Brown

STATEMENT PS 80

Submitted by Tony Pitt

The choice to designate areas as a Special Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) is taken to protect the particular characteristics of a valuable ecosystem.

Any changes to that ecosystem will damage and diminish the value of the ecosystem and the habitat provided.

Not all habitat is the same and they are created over many years in a way to match the terrain and conditions they are on. For example, grassland is not the same as a bog or pond. This should be obvious but 'ecology accountancy' pretends that habitat unnatural to the site can just be shoehorned in.

The poor quality of information provided, and lack of openness are enemies of good democracy and community inclusion. Hiding behind a structural system where decisions are clouded and obfuscated will only increase voter anger and distrust with politicians and the structural issues within a council.

How do ordinary people have impact on those structural issues that have developed and been encouraged by previous administrations. A break with past is needed to halt this grinding bureaucratic mess.

There is a clear choice here - to protect one of the very limited number of wildlife rich spaces in the city, or to destroy it and set the precedent that habitat can be destroyed and alternatives not sought.

- Tony Pitt

STATEMENT PS 81

Submitted by Kate Laver

Dear councillors,

Please **choose option 3** and pause all further works until we have a solution which prevents any incursion onto the Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm.

Otherwise this will destroy rare and protected habitats.

Regards

Kate

STATEMENT PS 82

Submitted by Dave Lewis

I am writing to ask you too leave Yew Tree Farm alone we live our regular visits on a Saturday my wife spent her youth walking around the fields near the Farm and we both get very upset about what you are planning so please reconsider and leave Yew Tree Farm alone
From a very close neighbour.

Regards
Dave Lewis

STATEMENT PS 83

Submitted by Dr Sascha Roest-Ellis

Dear Councillor,

I urge you to vote for Option 3.

Bristol is facing the rapid loss of critical green spaces and wildlife, which threatens to push us towards the environmental degradation seen in cities like London. The ongoing destruction of these areas disrupts local ecosystems, leading to a decline in biodiversity and the essential ecological services these habitats provide.

Rather than depleting these resources, we should focus on increasing green spaces, planting trees, and supporting urban wildlife. These efforts play a crucial role in carbon sequestration, flood mitigation, and maintaining ecological balance in an increasingly urbanised environment.

Protecting our parks, woodlands, and waterways is not just an environmental priority but also a scientific necessity to ensure the resilience of our urban ecosystem. Sustainable development must work in harmony with nature, preserving Bristol's biodiversity for future generations.

This is urging you to please option 3 (pausing the expansion of the cemetery) in the officers report.

Thank you,

Sascha

STATEMENT PS 84

Submitted by Mike Karthaus

Dear sirs

Regarding consultation into expansion of south Bristol crematorium I implore that you choose option 3 and pause all further works until a solution is reached that protects SNCI surrounding Yew Tree Farm.

Any expansion will cause irreparable damage to the untouched meadows in this SNCI and put additional stress on the ecosystem.

Whilst I appreciate the need for more burial sites, it's evident that the site on bridgewater road is at capacity and is not a long term solution to managing the wishes of the deceased. It should remain open for cremation and only be used for this purpose with a burial site if required to be placed on an alternative site.

Please take option C. Pause until a solution can be found.

Regards

Mike Karthaus

Resident of Ashton vale and frequent visitor to the SNCI

STATEMENT PS 85

Submitted by Kieran

Good morning,

I hope you are well.

Just emailing today to say I'm concerned about the potential loss of Yew Tree Farm. I've heard that building work may go ahead which would restrict the ability for the farm to keep working as normal. I've been informed that if any of the planned construction goes ahead, the farm would likely not be able to keep its doors open. This is a massive shame as it is such a precious resource in what is already such a built up city.

I hope the decision that's made this week is one that helps the survival of our final few green spaces in Bristol.

Kind Regards,

Kieran

STATEMENT PS 86

Submitted by Marie Marsh

Dear Sir or Madam

I am writing to you concerning Yew Tree Farm and the travesty that will happen if you go ahead with the expansion to South Bristol Crematorium. I live local to the farm. I cannot believe there are no other viable sites in South Bristol. It seems that Bristol City Council have been very unfair regards Yew Tree Farm, firstly the Redrow housing debacle and now this.

Bristol City Council likes to boast about it's 'green' creditials, but the proposed expansion to South Bristol Crematorium is the complete opposite. The reports seem very biased in favour of the council plans and it has been pointed out are factually inaccurate, wildlife experts have been ignored as have other reports stating this expansion should not happen. You are completely ignoring the SSCI status and showing a complete disregard for the biodiversity and wildlife there. It is shameful how you have already destroyed the meadow and now you want to destroy the rest. The only option that makes sense and is the right option is to pause the South Bristol Crematorium expansion in their entirety.

Your faithfully

Marie Marsh

STATEMENT PS 87

Submitted by George Cook

Dear members of the committee,

My name is George Cook and I am a wildlife conservationist from Bristol. I have written in before in defence of Yew Tree Farm SNCI and I am writing again to urge you to protect this important site.

We are so lucky to have SNCIs in Bristol like Yew Tree Farm. Sites where we can show that nature can be protected whilst growing food and providing green space locally for people to enjoy.

I lived near the farm from 2019-2022 and it provided such an important life line for me during covid. On the site I discovered kingfishers, bats, barn owls, bullfinches, peregrine falcons and siskin, the only place in Bristol I have seen them.

The state of nature report last year said that 1 in 6 species across the UK is faced with extinction. Temperatures continue to rise and weather becomes more extreme. And yet, even in a progressive city such as Bristol, the UKs only European green capital, home to a green MP, we continue with the same actions that got us into this mess. We need to protect our nature rich sites with urgency.

Please reconsider the crematorium expansion plans. Protect Yew Tree Farm and all the species that call it home.

Regards
George Cook

STATEMENT PS 88

Submitted by Zdenka Cervena

Dear committees,

Hope my email will find you well.

I would like to share my preferred option for the environmental decision tomorrow. Please accept option 3.

Thank you in advance.

Kind regards

Zdenka Cervena

STATEMENT PS 89

Submitted by Robert Thomas

Surely you people can see that this farm and location is of massive benefit to our fantastic City. The closeness of many forms of nature and wildlife right on our City Doorstep.

Therefore you all shouldn't need to be Reminded!
of the good that keeping and Backing! this fantastic farm for all of our Bristolian families for many decades to come, is the Right thing to do for the City of Bristol
And all its Residents
Nature & Wildlife is Bristol's Future
For Heaven's Sake

Robert Thomas

STATEMENT PS 90

Submitted by Mary Marsh

Dear Sir or Madam

I live local to Yew Tree Farm. I am truly shocked what will happen to the farm if you go ahead with the expansion to South Bristol Crematorium. I cannot believe you have not found any other suitable sites in South Bristol. It would appear Bristol City Council have been very unfair regards Yew Tree Farm. Firstly you allowed a housing developer to dig test holes, knowing this is green belt land.

Bristol City Council says it is a 'green' council, The proposed expansion to South Bristol Crematorium is the complete opposite. The reports you are using seem to ignore other expert opinions. Wildlife experts have been ignored as have other reports stating this expansion should not happen. In some cases it is stated as well your reports do not support the facts put forward by wildlife and other experts in this field. You are totally ignoring the SSCI status. You seem to not to care about the wildlife, biodiversity and natural beauty of the area. It is appalling how you have already destroyed the meadow and now you want to destroy the rest. The only option that makes sense and is correct is to pause the South Bristol Crematorium expansion in their entirety.

Your faithfully

Mary Marsh

STATEMENT PS 91

Submitted by Sue Chubb

Dear Council Members,

I am writing to object concerning current plans to expand South Bristol Crematorium and the granting of planning permission for this project.

This expansion should it go ahead at Colliters Brook SNCI will destroy the rare and protected habitat there, which is home to important flora and fauna - namely otters, bats, badgers, dormice, rare grassland and other species.

I understand the committee are looking at 3 options in considering the expansion of the crematorium at the meeting on 11th October.

As this site is an SNCI and should by this designation be protected for nature, only option 3 - to pause the expansion plans in their entirety will safeguard this site for nature. The ecological importance of the site and the importance of protecting it has already been established by the local community and organisations such as the RSPB, Natural England and Avon Wildlife Trust.

Furthermore, there is time to pause expansion whilst other solutions are considered. Within the grounds of the existing crematorium almost 10 acres of land have been identified which have not yet been used.

The SNCI site also contains ancient and rare grassland habitat. If damaged by implementing options 1 or 2 this habitat can never be replaced. This grassland has yet to be surveyed by Natural England and following this may even be upgraded to SSSI status, a higher level of protection.

Furthermore Council Committee members must note that the original ecological report to the Council has been discredited in statements submitted by leading U.K. ecologists who say it is not fit for purpose. Close attention should be given by Committee members when considering these statements from ecologists, explaining why the original report falls below industry standards.

Furthermore if option 1 or 2 goes ahead this site will not be safe from water pollution due to the construction of an attenuation pond. During periods of heavy rainfall Colliters Brook could become contaminated by pollutants that would threaten aquatic life present. To avoid this there should be no drainage via Colliters Brook and discharge should be kept away from the brook/stream.

As there are so many risks that involve damaging this nature rich site irreparably, I would like to see the expansion plans halted - option 3 adopted, whilst the Council considers other solutions that will not damage this site for nature and that do not threaten the future of Yew Tree farm which manages the farm acres sympathetically for nature and is a good steward of the land.

Thank you for considering my statement to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Chubb

STATEMENT PS 92

Submitted by Danica Priest

Dear committee members deciding the fate of Colliters Brook SNCI, popularly known as Yew Tree Farm. I know you have a lot of statements supporting option 3 to get through so I will do my best to keep this as short as possible and stick to the key facts. So here are the top reasons why option 3 is the only acceptable decision:

1. The ecological surveys this proposal is based on are insufficient, inconsistent, and fail to meet industry standards. Option 3 would allow for proper surveys to be done

Here's a taste of what's wrong with the reports:

- The report does not conform to industry standards for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) or Ecological Impact Assessment (EIA).
- The report provides broad and brief habitat information, with significant red flags.
- The habitat survey does not align with the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab), which is essential for calculating Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).
- Some habitat categories seem fabricated, such as "diverse grassland" and "moderately diverse grassland."
- The report fails to correlate National Vegetation Classification (NVC) communities to relevant priority habitats, Annex I, or irreplaceable habitat categories, which are crucial for planning applications.
- Nationally important habitats like MG5 are glossed over, with inadequate mitigation measures recommended.
- The presence of upright brome (MG5b) raises concerns, as it is linked to internationally important Annex I habitats, which the report downplays.
- The assessment of habitat value is inconsistent and switches between geographic and made-up scales.
- The surveys were not done at the correct time of year and are also out of date
- Dormice surveys not conclusive so it should still be assumed dormice are present onsite
- The mitigation suggestions do not state specific actions, as expected in an EIA, and instead offer vague recommendations.
- unimproved grassland cannot be replaced with a pond under Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) guidelines

This is backed up by what Natural England has said:

'we cannot be sure about exact locations and extent of MG5 – that would require a more detailed programme of survey work. We also note that the MAGIC website indicates the SNCI area as containing lowland calcareous grassland Priority Habitat, the evidence cited as being the Bristol Grassland Survey, 1991. Turning to the question of SSSI designation, a site might be considered for notification if it contained a significant quantity of MG5 grassland.'

Therefore at the very least, the report requires a complete redo by a competent botanist, including the use of qualitative data.

Sources: CIEEM <https://cieem.net> › ...PDF Guidelines for Preliminary ecological appraisal

CIEEM <https://cieem.net> › resource Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (EIA)

Biodiversity net gain - GOV.UK

Joint Nature Conservation Committee <https://jncc.gov.uk> › nvc National Vegetation Classification (NVC)

<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/132012>

2.The SNCI and priority habitat will be harmed with option's 1 and 2.

The SNCI consists of Calcareous Grassland and MG5 grassland which is irreplaceable. In layman's terms this habitat is so valuable and rare because it means the soil has never been disturbed. This means no digging, plowing, tractors, pesticides, fertilisers or anything. For a grassland to have maintained its grassland status by being grazed but not have its soil ever touched is incredibly rare. Once that land gets disturbed by construction works for example putting drainage pipes in or having diggers driven over it to dig out a drainage pond, it will lose that quality forever. The ecosystem will be forever altered and no amount of mitigation will change it back. Think of it like cutting down an ancient tree or erasing a priceless work of art—you can't restore its original value once it's gone.

Option 2 is not a compromise. It's a lose/lose scenario that fails to protect the SNCI.

Sources: GOV.UK <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk> › ...PDF National Vegetation Classification: MG5 grassland

3.Water Pollution

Experts have indicated that the groundwater risk assessment underestimated the existing pollution levels in Colliters Brook. The proposed drainage expansion plan is projected to significantly elevate nitrate concentrations in the stream, posing a serious threat to local wildlife, including otters. This raises concerns about the justification for proceeding with the project.

The nutrient loading in the proposed attenuation basin poses a risk similar to that of storm ponds, which can accumulate high levels of pollutants like ammonium from cemetery land. This accumulation could lead to concentrated pollution during heavy rainfall, potentially contaminating Colliters Brook. The best way to prevent environmental damage would be to avoid expanding the cemetery.

Sources: Please refer to the statements from Alec Jennings Analytical scientist at Wessex Water scientific centre, Saltford and Ana T Castro Castellon BSc, MSc, DPhil school of geographical sciences, Cabot institute for the environment.

4.Alternatives Drainage options have not been explored

No alternatives to the drainage on the SNCI have been explored. I'm sure we can all agree if there is a compromise where the drainage can go on a site that doesn't touch the SNCI that would be the ideal scenario so this should be explored before making any decisions. There's definitely a compromise out there and we would be happy to help work with the council on this. We consulted a drainage expert that said this is possible and gave many alternative solutions that we would love to share with you.

Source: Tom Worely, BCC's project manager for the cemetery expansion and author of the officer reports

5. The Attenuation pond is not the same thing as a wildlife pond and it is not supported by the organisations listed in the officer's report

The section on the attenuation pond in the officer's report to the committee uses a table which contains statements from various conservation organisations. These statements are only on the benefits of ponds in general and have nothing to do with supporting the specific plans for this proposed attenuation pond on the SNCI.

This misleading use of generic pond benefits in the proposal ignores the fact that unimproved grassland cannot be replaced with a pond under Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) guidelines, and using the rare grassland for pollution filtration is not an acceptable solution.

Think of it this way, you wouldn't use a statement from Avon Wildlife Trust on the benefits of wildlife ponds to install a pond in the middle of your bedroom.

I'm sure it's just a coincidence that the first two organisations listed are Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England who are both well documented supporters of protecting Yew Tree Farm's SNCIs.

I reached out to Natural England for clarification, and this was our conversation:

'I just wanted to clarify one thing. In the officer report they use evidence from Natural England to support their attenuation report. Can I just get your clarification on that evidence? I'm assuming this is just generic evidence about ponds in general and is not specifically from Natural England in support of the council's proposed attenuation pond is that correct?'

Response from Natural England:

'Hi Danica

Yes, that's right. We've not commented on any detailed pond design.'

A pond is defined as a permanent body of water with a continuous input of water flow such as a spring or stream. Whereas an attenuation pond will have water levels that go up and down dependant on rainfall. According to the average rainfall in Bristol there will be periods of time where there would be little or no rain to maintain water levels particularly in the summer months, leaving just mud behind. This means it will be difficult to attract and maintain plants and animals associated with a pond habitat. This estimate does not take climate change in to consideration which makes future rainfall levels impossible to predict.

Sources: The weather records of Bristol

Stormwater Plan Review | Virginia DEQ

6.False Claims of SNCI Degradation

The officer's option matrix claims that without the expansion, the SNCI will not be enhanced and will continue to degrade. This assertion is entirely incorrect. The suggestion that the SNCI is degrading is equally unfounded. The encroaching scrub was already cleared in July which was not mentioned in this option matrix. Furthermore we have already met with the head of the parks department and taken the first steps to establish a Friends of Yew Tree Farm group to address future scrub encroachment and ensure proper management of the SNCI. This would be similar to successful efforts at council owned green spaces like Manor Woods Valley and Northern Slopes. Colliters Brook SNCI has been effectively managed for wildlife for decades by Catherine Withers without any development so making the proposal to destroy this site for management purposes is illogical.

Sources: Set up and run a Friends of Park Group

Get Involved

7.Most Wildlife Conservation organisations, ecologists and Naturalists object to option 1 and 2.

Here's a partial list of organisations and experts that have raised objections to options 1 & 2:

Avon Wildlife Trust
Natural England
RSPB
CPRE

Iolo Williams (ornithologist and Tv presenter)
Chris Packham (conservationist and Tv presenter)
Derek Gow (ecologist and author)
Cathy Mayne (ecologist and dormice expert)
Sustainable Food Trust
Patrick Holden CBE
Bristol Tree Forum
Protect Earth UK
Nick Gates (director of Wild Isles and naturalist)
Neill Talbot (Avellana Ecology)
Josh Styles (botanist and restoration ecologist)

Thank you for reading this far and I hope this is enough information to prove that option 3 is the only acceptable choice.

STATEMENT PS 93

Submitted by Gemma Lasseter

To the Bristol City Council Public Health Committee,

I am writing with deep concern and sadness about the proposed expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto the precious land known as Colliter's Brook Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI), or Yew Tree Farm. This place is more than just a piece of land – it's a sanctuary for wildlife, a part of Bristol's living history, and a refuge for those of us who value the natural world.

Colliter's Brook is home to some of the rarest and most vulnerable species in our region – dormice, otters, badgers, and even bats that are hardly found anywhere else. The ancient MG5 grassland that grows here is a national treasure. This kind of habitat cannot be recreated once it's lost – it has evolved over centuries, and its destruction would be a tragic and irreversible loss for our city. To destroy it for more burial space, when there are alternatives, feels like an act of senseless harm.

We have a responsibility to protect places like this. They are rare and becoming rarer by the day. The expansion threatens to rip apart the delicate balance that allows this wildlife to survive and thrive. To me, it feels deeply wrong that we could allow such a vital part of our natural heritage to be sacrificed when there are other options available.

Option 3 – pausing the expansion plans – is the only way to prevent this environmental catastrophe. This is not just my view; it's also supported by Avon Wildlife Trust, RSPB, CPRE, and Natural England. All these organisations agree that we need to protect Yew Tree Farm from further harm, and I stand with them.

I have also heard alarming things about the council's own ecological report, which seems to downplay the damage that would be done. It's heartbreaking to think that decisions could be made based on a report that experts have said is flawed. How can anyone say that ancient grassland can be swapped out for a pond and call that a fair exchange? It's simply not right.

The drainage plan associated with Option 2 is another major concern. The idea of digging up this beautiful grassland for pipes and a stormwater pond fills me with dread. I can't help but think about the ammonium pollution from burials seeping into Colliter's Brook, poisoning the waters where otters play and affecting the whole ecosystem. We are already seeing how fragile our waterways are – adding this kind of stress could be disastrous.

This isn't just about burial space; it's about how we treat the land that supports us all. Once we lose Yew Tree Farm, we can never get it back. Please, I urge you to choose Option 3 and pause all further plans until a solution is found that protects this irreplaceable place. We must do better by our environment, and we must act now before it's too late.

Thank you for listening.

Yours sincerely,
Gemma Lasseter

STATEMENT PS 94

Submitted by Amandine Tchou

Dear Council Members,

I am writing to object concerning current plans to expand South Bristol Crematorium and the granting of planning permission for this project.

This expansion should it go ahead at Colliters Brook SNCI will destroy the rare and protected habitat there, which is home to important flora and fauna - namely otters, bats, badgers, dormice, rare grassland and other species.

I understand the committee are looking at 3 options in considering the expansion of the crematorium at the meeting on 11th October.

As this site is an SNCI and should by this designation be protected for nature, only option 3 - to pause the expansion plans in their entirety will safeguard this site for nature. The ecological importance of the site and the importance of protecting it has already been established by the local community and organisations such as the RSPB, Natural England and Avon Wildlife Trust.

Furthermore, there is time to pause expansion whilst other solutions are considered. Within the grounds of the existing crematorium almost 10 acres of land have been identified which have not yet been used.

The SNCI site also contains ancient and rare grassland habitat. If damaged by implementing options 1 or 2 this habitat can never be replaced. This grassland has yet to be surveyed by Natural England and following this may even be upgraded to SSSI status, a higher level of protection.

Furthermore Council Committee members must note that the original ecological report to the Council has been discredited in statements submitted by leading U.K. ecologists who say it is not fit for purpose. Close attention should be given by Committee members when considering these statements from ecologists, explaining why the original report falls below industry standards.

Furthermore if option 1 or 2 goes ahead this site will not be safe from water pollution due to the construction of an attenuation pond. During periods of heavy rainfall Colliters Brook could become contaminated by pollutants that would threaten aquatic life present. To avoid this there should be no drainage via Colliters Brook and discharge should be kept away from the brook/stream.

As there are so many risks that involve damaging this nature rich site irreparably, I would like to see the expansion plans halted - option 3 adopted, whilst the Council considers other solutions that will not damage this site for nature and that do not threaten the future of Yew Tree farm which manages the farm acres sympathetically for nature and is a good steward of the land.

Thank you for considering my statement to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Amandine Tchou

STATEMENT PS 95

Submitted by Andrew Bradbury

Dear Councillors

I urge you to vote for Option 3.

1. Option 3 is the only option which fully guarantees the protection of the SNCI in the context of the valuable continuation of authentic farming at Yew Tree Farm.
2. Whilst there is a need to plan ahead with regard to the provision of burial and remains services by the city, there is no immediate pinch point. Future options looking at other locations require more research.
3. It is not possible to put a figure on the immense value to present and future generations of the successful and biodiversity rich land management practised by the farm.

Thank you for reading.

yours sincerely,

Andrew Bradbury

STATEMENT PS 96

Submitted by Val Shepstone

Dear Committee Members,

I plead with you to vote against the destruction of Bristol's last working Farm - Yew Tree Farm. The loss of this previous irreplaceable habitat will sit on your conscience for the rest of your lives. It is not a decision that the electorate want you to make.

I oppose the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto Colliter's Brook SNCI, also known as Yew Tree Farm. This is our last chance to prevent irreversible damage to a habitat home to dormice, otters, rare bats, and ancient grasslands.

There are three options before you:

Option 1: Continue as planned, destroying the SNCI for burials.

Option 2: Partially expand but still excavate the SNCI for drainage, harming its integrity.

Option 3: Pause the expansion whilst we undertake the necessary ecological studies and devise a more appropriate drainage plan.

Option 3 is the only way to ensure no harm comes to this vital habitat. Organizations like the Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England support this.

There is no issue with developing Site 1 for burials if an alternative drainage solution is found that avoids disturbing the SNCI.

I also want to address concerns from the officer's report:

Underused Land: There's almost 10 acres of unused space at the crematorium that could accommodate more burials without impacting the SNCI.

Ecological Issues: The current ecological report has been discredited by experts. It incorrectly suggests that replacing grassland with wetland meets biodiversity standards.

Irreplaceable Habitat: The ancient MG5 grassland at Yew Tree Farm cannot be recreated. Approving either Option 1 or 2 would cause permanent damage.

Water Pollution: The proposed drainage could lead to pollutants entering Colliter's Brook, harming local wildlife and residents.

In conclusion, I urge you to choose Option 3 and pause all work until we can find a solution that protects Colliter's Brook SNCI. We must preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

Thank you for your time.

Kind regards

Val Shepstone

STATEMENT PS 97

Submitted by Neill Talbot (on behalf of Avellana Ecology)

Statement re: South Bristol Cemetery expansion and priority grassland habitat at Colliter's Brook SNCI

Avellana Ecology believes that Bristol City Council's plans for drainage at the site need to be reviewed in view of the presence of priority habitat grassland in field 5 (Semi-improved lowland meadow).

The NVC category for this grassland is MG5, which is a rare and sensitive habitat of very high distinctiveness. Therefore it would be inappropriate to place drainage pipes in field 5. As a result of the plans the species-rich grassland in this field would be irrevocably degraded, leading to a significant loss in biodiversity within the SNCI.

Before any work is undertaken on site further ecological (including botanical) surveys will be required at an appropriate time of year, ideally between May and July.

Avellana Ecology is an ecological consultancy based in Bristol run by Neill Talbot, providing a range of services to community groups, charities, private individuals, national and local government bodies, businesses and landowners. Neill has worked in nature conservation for a Conservation charity (The Wildlife Trust); ecological consultancies; and local Authorities.

Neill has extensive experience of undertaking habitat and botanical surveys for over 25 years including the use of Phase 1, UKHab and National Vegetation Classification (NVC).

Neill has been an associate member of Chartered Institute of Ecologists and Environmental Management (CIEEM), since 2016, and regularly undertakes training courses for CIEEM and other organisations on botanical identification and habitat surveying for nature conservation.

Neill Talbot, ACIEEM
Avellana Ecology

STATEMENT PS 98

Submitted by Ricky Chandler

Dear Committee Members,

I'm here today to oppose the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto Colliter's Brook SNCI, also known as Yew Tree Farm. This is our last chance to prevent irreversible damage to a habitat home to dormice, otters, rare bats, and ancient grasslands.

There are three options before you:

Option 1: Continue as planned, destroying the SNCI for burials.

Option 2: Partially expand but still excavate the SNCI for drainage, harming its integrity.

Option 3: Pause the expansion whilst we undertake the necessary ecological studies and devise a more appropriate drainage plan.

Option 3 is the only way to ensure no harm comes to this vital habitat. Organizations like the Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England support this.

There is no issue with developing Site 1 for burials if an alternative drainage solution is found that avoids disturbing the SNCI.

I also want to address concerns from the officer's report:

Underused Land: There's almost 10 acres of unused space at the crematorium that could accommodate more burials without impacting the SNCI.

Ecological Issues: The current ecological report has been discredited by experts. It incorrectly suggests that replacing grassland with wetland meets biodiversity standards.

Irreplaceable Habitat: The ancient MG5 grassland at Yew Tree Farm cannot be recreated. Approving either Option 1 or 2 would cause permanent damage.

Water Pollution: The proposed drainage could lead to pollutants entering Colliter's Brook, harming local wildlife and residents.

In conclusion, I urge you to choose Option 3 and pause all work until we can find a solution that protects Colliter's Brook SNCI. We must preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

Thank you for your time.

Ricky Chandler

STATEMENT PS 99

Submitted by Paul Becker

On 4th February 2020 this council made history by being the first to declare an ecological emergency. As Carla Denyer stated "All life, including human life, relies on a stable ecosystem as much as it relies on a stable climate"

However, recent media surrounding the options being offered for Yew Tree Farm suggests that some of her fellow Greens are instead minded to prioritise the recurring revenue from burials over maintaining the integrity of an SNCI, effectively selling off the ecological inheritance of their own children to balance the budget. Meanwhile, more profitable sites with lower ecological value such as golf courses remain untouched. There is no sense of ecological urgency let alone emergency.

The Greens hold the balance of power on this committee. There is nowhere to hide; it's time for them to show whether they are still worthy of their name. Are they yet another party of middle management, obsessing over their spreadsheets as we drift serenely towards climate and ecological catastrophe. Or will they finally make a stand and prioritise our precious ecological diversity and by extension our food security, starting by looking at other alternatives to this incursion into an irreplaceable SNCI.

Because if not now then when, and will they even get another chance, because who in their right mind is going to re-elect a bunch of hypocrites who stand behind banners at election time only to betray their slogans the instant they achieve power.

Option 3 is the only responsible way forward.

STATEMENT PS 100

Submitted by Ana T Castro Castellon & Alec Jenkins

Hello,

we have great concerns about the proposed expansion of the South Bristol Cemetery and the Risk Assessment:

Points to remark:

Page 36 - Section 8.5 ConSim Results

"The 50th percentile (most likely) and the 95th percentile (worst case) predicted ammonium concentrations at the base of the unsaturated zone before dilution in the aquifer are reported in Table 8-8. This presents the extent of attenuation processes in the unsaturated zone."

- This is based on only two of the three surveyed boreholes, specifically BH02, despite assumed expectations that the BH02 differing chemical characteristics and the inferred groundwater flow direction would not be expected to impact groundwater quality.

However, further investigations should be conducted to confirm this, or at the very minimum at least another set of samples be taken from each borehole, because it is known that two samples cannot provide statistical significance.

Ideally, ten samples should have been taken.

Tables 8-3 (non Revised P223 Method) and 8-4 (Revised P223 Method)

"The (maximum) background groundwater quality of ammonium NH₄⁺ in groundwater beneath the site is 1.7484mg/l. Due to the uncertainty of the source and extent of the background NH₄⁺ this is excluded from the assessment."

Pages 41/42

"The principal contaminant in the effluent generated by the cemetery is ammonium. The predicted ammonium loading to the site has been calculated for the standard burial methods in accordance with Environment Agency guidance."

"Based on the results of the P223 quantitative hydrogeological risk assessment, the proposed cemetery extension is shown to likely result in adverse impacts to groundwater Tier 2 Groundwater Risk Assessment HYG662 South Bristol Cemetery 42 July 2021 42 quality."

- And, ultimately, further contamination of Colliers Brook.

"A revised P223 quantitative hydrogeological risk assessment, taking into account the entire Site area, shows no exceedances in the non ammoniacal nitrogen concentrations modelled, and shows the ammoniacal nitrogen

levels to be at a much lower concentration. This model will be more representative of the Site following the recommendation that the site be evenly spread with burials per year."

The assertion that there are likely to be no exceedances is based entirely on a revision that chooses to remove inconvenient data and assume a forecast of events that satisfies the planner's intentions.

Based on data already mentioned in the report and the implications of further investigation and attention to it, a worst case scenario could also be assumed from a standpoint of conservative environmental protection.

Regarding the nutrient loading in the attenuation basin, it is the equivalent to a storm pond with the risk of a high accumulation of ammonium from the cemetery land.

It is well known that storm attenuation ponds can accumulate pollutant nutrients.

A further risk is that heavy rainfall can make the pond overflow, sending a slug of more concentrated pollution into Colliters Brook, creating heavy contamination.

The best mitigation measure to avoid environmental damage would be to simply not expand the cemetery.

STATEMENT PS 101

Submitted by Kirsty Claxton

As a resident of South Bristol I believe the council should defer the decision to extend the South Bristol Crematorium on the site of Yew Tree Farm. I would urge them to consider alternatives regarding the extremely important matter of how to manage and bury our dead - an essential and shared consideration in the lives and culture of all communities regardless of religious and cultural practice.

I would urge the council to create a forum to fully discuss this matter which will continue to be an issue long after this decision regardless of the outcome today.

The current concerns of farming and burial are clearly an issue of life and death and space available. Local food production, organic farming, sympathetic and sustainable land management and deep ecological concern will already and crucially have been addressed by others in this review. Sadly this appears to have been disregarded up to now.

I want to see this important discussion and its underlying issues properly discussed so that citizens can help shape our city. In particular I would like to draw attention to the vital role that small local farms can play in community cohesion and in aiding understanding of the processes that put food on our plates. Yew Tree Farm is already doing this through offering opportunity for those referred by their GP to connect with nature and community to improve their physical and mental health by visiting and undertaking activity on the farm.

Can Bristol City council view this as an opportunity to give careful consideration to new ideas to how we accommodate burial space and how this can be done without damaging the local resource which is Yew Tree Farm.

My preferred decision on this matter is option 3.

Kirsty Claxton

STATEMENT PS 102

Submitted by Michelle Ruse

Good Morning,

I am emailing you as I am requesting that the committee vote for Option 3

I am a local resident living in Bedminster and previously Bedminster Down. The farm is a precious resource and needs protecting.

BCC needs to find another way to provide burial sites or look at alternatives which are not destructive to the environment.

I am frankly disgusted at BCC's approach to this issue

Kind regards

Michelle Ruse

STATEMENT PS 103

Submitted by Angela Mayhew

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to object to the proposed expansion of South Bristol Crematorium and I urge you to select option 3, pausing on all further works until we have a solution which prevents any incursion onto the Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm. The report that was published contained a lot of factual inaccuracies and as such is really misleading and should be discarded. The points below sum up why this report shouldn't be regarded.

- Critical need - The existing South Bristol Crematorium site has not used the space effectively from maps sent to Bristol Tree Forum from Ariaf Hussain (Bristol crematoriums). We have identified almost 10 acres of land within South Bristol Crematorium that is not used for memorials or cremated remains.
- Ecological credibility - The original ecological report has been discredited by industry experts, and the committee have been sent separate statements that explain how it does not comply to industry standards. For example, when assessing the BNG impact of the crematorium expansion they have claimed that you can replace a grassland habitat with a wetland habitat, but BNG-related law does not support this. Please encourage committee members to pay close attention to these statements that have been submitted from UK leading ecologists, which explain why the Council's ecological report is not fit for purpose.
- Nationally important habitat - The MG5 (rare) grassland present at Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm cannot be replaced and would be irreparably damaged if either Option 1 or Option 2 are approved. This type of grassland is ancient, extremely rare and of national importance. This grassland is still under assessment and has to be properly surveyed by Natural England or an independently qualified ecologist specialising in botany, at the appropriate time of year. The presence of this type of grassland means Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm is a living museum. Damaging this ancient habitat (which is inevitable under Option 1 or Option 2) is unacceptable – it would be akin to removing/relocating one of the stones at Stonehenge. We are extremely lucky to have this habitat in Bristol, and should treasure and protect it. However if the committee vote for Option 1 or 2, they will be condemning it to destruction and will prevent Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm being upgraded from SNCI to SSSI status and given an even higher level of protection for the MG5 grassland, Dormice and rare bats that live there.
- Water pollution - The attenuation basin will be a storm pond, likely to accumulate high levels of ammonium from the burials happening on Site 1. It will be heavily polluted, and will not prevent our local waterways being polluted. During heavy rainfall there will be a risk of sending slugs of concentrated pollution into Colliter's Brook, creating heavy contamination. These added pollutants in Colliter's Brook would affect both the wildlife living in it – including otters – and the residents of Bedminster who live alongside it. The Brook's ecosystem is already struggling, and voting for either Option 1 or Option 2 will further contribute to eutrophication and other stressors threatening the survival of aquatic organisms. The best mitigation is not to run any drainage via Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm, and to pro-actively direct discharge away from Colliter's brook.
- Inconsistent burial forecasts - In 2020 a report stated there was only 2 years burial space left, yet in 2024 another report states exactly the same thing. Also, the council state in their recent report that annual burials decreased during the Covid 19 pandemic, however in their options they state a future pandemic might spike burial numbers. How do the committee interpret this?
- Land mismanagement - Officers have already broken their own planning conditions by removing the scrub from the Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree Farm site without applying for pre-commencement sign off. If Option 1 or 2 were to be approved, we would be dependent on the officers to manage the building work on the SNCI site, but their recent actions have shown that they lack either the appropriate

respect, knowledge or resources to manage sensitive developments on SNCI habitats, and cannot be trusted to undertake the works responsibly.

PLEASE PLEASE save Bristol's oldest working farm and pick option three.

Yours
Angela Mayhew

STATEMENT PS 104

Submitted by Laura Hardidge

Dear Bristol City Council

Please see the points below regarding the proposed expansion of the crematorium site. I am fully against this plan and urge you to not be short sighted when your decision has such an impact on our local ecosystems.

Please work together to find a solution that can maintain our fragile habitat.

- Critical need - The existing South Bristol Crematorium site has not used the space effectively from maps sent to Bristol Tree Forum from Ariaif Hussain (Bristol crematoriums). We have identified almost 10 acres of land within South Bristol Crematorium that is not used for memorials or cremated remains.
- Ecological credibility - The original ecological report has been discredited by industry experts, and the committee have been sent separate statements that explain how it does not comply to industry standards. For example, when assessing the BNG impact of the crematorium expansion they have claimed that you can replace a grassland habitat with a wetland habitat, but BNG-related law does not support this. Please encourage committee members to pay close attention to these statements that have been submitted from UK leading ecologists, which explain why the Council's ecological report is not fit for purpose.
- Nationally important habitat - The MG5 (rare) grassland present at Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm cannot be replaced and would be irreparably damaged if either Option 1 or Option 2 are approved. This type of grassland is ancient, extremely rare and of national importance. This grassland is still under assessment and has to be properly surveyed by Natural England or an independently qualified ecologist specialising in botany, at the appropriate time of year. The presence of this type of grassland means Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm is a living museum. Damaging this ancient habitat (which is inevitable under Option 1 or Option 2) is unacceptable – it would be akin to removing/relocating one of the stones at Stonehenge. We are extremely lucky to have this habitat in Bristol, and should treasure and protect it. However if the committee vote for Option 1 or 2, they will be condemning it to destruction and will prevent Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm being upgraded from SNCI to SSSI status and given an even higher level of protection for the MG5 grassland, Dormice and rare bats that live there.
- Water pollution - The attenuation basin will be a storm pond, likely to accumulate high levels of ammonium from the burials happening on Site 1. It will be heavily polluted, and will not prevent our local waterways being polluted. During heavy rainfall there will be a risk of sending slugs of concentrated pollution into Colliter's Brook, creating heavy contamination. These added pollutants in Colliter's Brook would affect both the wildlife living in it – including otters – and the residents of Bedminster who live alongside it. The Brook's ecosystem is already struggling, and voting for either Option 1 or Option 2 will further contribute to eutrophication and other stressors threatening the survival of aquatic organisms. The best mitigation is not to run any drainage via Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm, and to pro-actively direct discharge away from Colliter's brook.
- Inconsistent burial forecasts - In 2020 a report stated there was only 2 years burial space left, yet in 2024 another report states exactly the same thing. Also, the council state in their recent report that annual burials decreased during the Covid 19 pandemic, however in their options they state a future pandemic might spike burial numbers. How do the committee interpret this?
- Land mismanagement - Officers have already broken their own planning conditions by removing the scrub from the Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree Farm site without applying for pre-commencement sign off. If Option 1 or 2 were to be approved, we would be dependent on the officers to manage the building work on the SNCI site, but their recent actions have shown that

they lack either the appropriate respect, knowledge or resources to manage sensitive developments on SNCI habitats, and cannot be trusted to undertake the works responsibly.

Best wishes,
Laura

STATEMENT PS 105

Submitted by Laura Chapman

Many members of the public will talk passionately today about the very serious policy and procedural issues related to the South Bristol Crematorium expansion, and the reasons why Option 3 is the only morally justifiable decision to make today. I agree with them wholeheartedly.

But I have one very simple message for members of the committee; the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium should not be on today's agenda. You are being asked to make a final decision on an issue while the chips are still very much in the air. It is impossible for you to evaluate whether the pros outweigh the cons of expanding the crematorium onto the Colliters Brook meadow, when you can't even get a straight answer about whether the land is an SNCI or if it should be upgraded to an SSSI. For all these reasons, an irreversible decision made today would be highly vulnerable to legal challenge.

You are being put in an unenviable position: the officer's report presented to you has been widely and thoroughly discredited by experts, and declared unfit for purpose. Surveys were superficial, or lacking entirely. The ecological argument against expansion is far stronger than you have been shown. Even in the few days since the report was published, new information has emerged which indicates that the Colliters Brook SNCI (aka the Yew Tree Farm meadow) is an even rarer and more precious habitat than previously thought, and likely qualifies as an SSSI of national importance. Experts from Natural England must be allowed to conduct the proper surveys at the proposed development site, in order to make sure the habitat is given the appropriate level of legal protection against development. You should be asking why this significant discovery wasn't detected by the ecology "experts" who conducted the surveys quoted in the Officers report.

There is no need to rush such an important decision, and - if you are minded to vote for either Option 1 or 2 - there is no reason why you should not defer it to a later date so that the outstanding questions can be answered and discredited surveys can be redone, allowing you to make a proper & accurate assessment.

The people of Bristol have become adept at spotting dodgy decisions which have been hurried through the system, decided in back rooms based primarily on commercial merits, whilst correct procedure and policy is ignored in favour of "getting stuff done". Indeed, the entire reason this committee exists is because the people of Bristol clearly decided they were sick of that type of strong-leader politics. We want informed and considerate decision making, not bad deals done quickly.

Those of us who were burnt by the previous administration are now passionate about upholding the standards of scrutiny that should be undertaken by Councillors when making important decisions like this. The decision you are being asked to make about South Bristol Crem, in the circumstances you are being asked to make it, is a clear judicial review in the making. Objectively, you have not yet been given the full suite of information that is necessary to reach a robust & informed determination. If you make a final decision today based on disputed and incomplete evidence from officers, it will undoubtedly be vulnerable to legal challenge. If you are concerned about the financial projections for the crematorium, also be sure to weigh up the financial consequences of judicial review. Delaying this decision until the full suite of credible ecological surveys have been properly conducted may be the most financially astute decision, as well as being the morally justifiable one.

You'll appreciate by now that this is a complex decision which requires multi-disciplinary expertise across planning and ecology officers as well as the public health concerns that your report focusses on. Let's get it right. Hopefully you have already heard & seen enough to realise that the SNCI site shouldn't be developed or excavated in any way, and will proudly vote for Option 3. But if you are unconvinced or undecided so far, and you can't hand-on-heart say that you have 100% faith in the information presented to you to inform today's decision, please defer the decision until you have the full facts for this important assessment.

STATEMENT PS 106

Submitted by Zoe Palmer

Dear Council Members,

I am writing to object concerning current plans to expand South Bristol Crematorium and the granting of planning permission for this project.

This expansion should it go ahead at Colliters Brook SNCI will destroy the rare and protected habitat there, which is home to important flora and fauna - namely otters, bats, badgers, dormice, rare grassland and other species.

Dead humans are not more important than living ecosystems.

I understand the committee are looking at 3 options in considering the expansion of the crematorium at the meeting on 11th October. As this site is an SNCI and should by this designation be protected for nature, you must chose option 3 and pause the expansion plans in their entirety will safeguard this site for nature. The ecological importance of the site and the importance of protecting it has already been established by the local community and organisations such as the RSPB, Natural England and Avon Wildlife Trust.

Furthermore, there is time to pause expansion whilst other solutions are considered. Within the grounds of the existing crematorium almost 10 acres of land have been identified which have not yet been used.

The SNCI site also contains ancient and rare grassland habitat. If damaged by implementing options 1 or 2 this habitat can never be replaced. This grassland has yet to be surveyed by Natural England and following this may even be upgraded to SSSI status, a higher level of protection.

Furthermore Council Committee members must note that the original ecological report to the Council has been discredited in statements submitted by leading U.K. ecologists who say it is not fit for purpose. Close attention should be given by Committee members when considering these statements from ecologists, explaining why the original report falls below industry standards.

As there are so many risks that involve damaging this nature rich site irreparably, I would like to see the expansion plans halted - option 3 adopted, whilst the Council considers other solutions that will not damage this site for nature and that do not threaten the future of Yew Tree farm which manages the farm acres sympathetically for nature and is a good steward of the land.

Thank you for considering my statement to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Zoe Palmer

STATEMENT PS 107

Submitted by Ethan Murphy

This incredible site cannot be lost. No other option can be taken apart from Option 3! This precious and ecologically important site cannot be damaged as this rare grassland habitat is just that, rare, too much of our UK grasslands have been lost and we cannot lose more! There are hundreds of unique species that live on these grasslands like the Common Blue, Marbled White, Ringlet, Small Blue butterflies which have had, as well as many other species significant decline in recent years. This site should not be used as when damaged will never be able to be brought back to its original glory and at the level of biodiversity it is right now.

I hope this will convince you to leave this beautiful place as it is for our Bristol wildlife!

Thanks,

Ethan.

STATEMENT PS 108

Submitted by Jessica McLean

Dear Sir's / Madam's & Whomever this may concern...

If it is not stopped now, the crematorium expansion will destroy the rare and protected habitat at Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm, which is home to dormice, otters, badgers, rare bats, ancient grasslands, and a species of insect which has never been seen anywhere else in the world.

There are 3 options on the table...

Please please choose option 3 today!!!

Option 3: Pause the South Bristol Crematorium expansion plans in their entirety

Of the present list, Option 3 is the only one that will prevent ecocide. Avon Wildlife Trust, the RSPB, CPRE and Natural England all agree with us.

However there is an alternative solution that the Council haven't proposed yet, which might save the council coffers many thousands of pounds and will protect the SNCI. We have no objection to Site 1 being used for burials, and encourage the Council to find an alternative version of Option 2, where the drainage arrangements do not involve excavating the Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm, and the drainage is discharged away from the Colliter's Brook watercourse. If they can achieve this, the crematorium can be expanded without harming the SNCI.

-
- Critical need - The existing South Bristol Crematorium site has not used the space effectively from maps sent to Bristol Tree Forum from Ariaf Hussain (Bristol crematoriums). We have identified almost 10 acres of land within South Bristol Crematorium that is not used for memorials or cremated remains.
- Ecological credibility - The original ecological report has been discredited by industry experts, and the committee have been sent separate statements that explain how it does not comply to industry standards. For example, when assessing the BNG impact of the crematorium expansion they have claimed that you can replace a grassland habitat with a wetland habitat, but BNG-related law does not support this. Please encourage committee members to pay close attention to these statements that have been submitted from UK leading ecologists, which explain why the Council's ecological report is not fit for purpose.
- Nationally important habitat - The MG5 (rare) grassland present at Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm cannot be replaced and would be irreparably damaged if either Option 1 or Option 2 are approved. This type of grassland is ancient, extremely rare and of national importance. This grassland is still under assessment and has to be properly surveyed by Natural England or an independently qualified ecologist specialising in botany, at the appropriate time of year. The presence of this type of grassland means Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm is a living museum. Damaging this ancient habitat (which is inevitable under Option 1 or Option 2) is unacceptable – it would be akin to removing/relocating one of the stones at Stonehenge. We are extremely lucky to have this habitat in Bristol, and should treasure and protect it. However if the committee vote for Option 1 or 2, they will be condemning it to destruction and will prevent Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm being upgraded from SNCI to SSSI status and given an even higher level of protection for the MG5 grassland, Dormice and rare bats that live there.
- Water pollution - The attenuation basin will be a storm pond, likely to accumulate high levels of ammonium from the burials happening on Site 1. It will be heavily polluted, and will not prevent our local waterways being polluted. During heavy rainfall there will be a risk of sending slugs of concentrated pollution into Colliter's Brook, creating heavy contamination. These added

pollutants in Colliter's Brook would affect both the wildlife living in it – including otters – and the residents of Bedminster who live alongside it. The Brook's ecosystem is already struggling, and voting for either Option 1 or Option 2 will further contribute to eutrophication and other stressors threatening the survival of aquatic organisms. The best mitigation is not to run any drainage via Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm, and to pro-actively direct discharge away from Colliter's brook.

- Inconsistent burial forecasts - In 2020 a report stated there was only 2 years burial space left, yet in 2024 another report states exactly the same thing. Also, the council state in their recent report that annual burials decreased during the Covid 19 pandemic, however in their options they state a future pandemic might spike burial numbers. How do the committee interpret this?
- Land mismanagement - Officers have already broken their own planning conditions by removing the scrub from the Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree Farm site without applying for pre-commencement sign off. If Option 1 or 2 were to be approved, we would be dependent on the officers to manage the building work on the SNCI site, but their recent actions have shown that they lack either the appropriate respect, knowledge or resources to manage sensitive developments on SNCI habitats, and cannot be trusted to undertake the works responsibly

Yours with hope & best wishes,

Jessica McLean

STATEMENT PS 109

Submitted by Ollie Shears

Dear Council Members,

I am writing to object concerning current plans to expand South Bristol Crematorium and the granting of planning permission for this project.

This expansion should it go ahead at Colliters Brook SNCI will destroy the rare and protected habitat there, which is home to important flora and fauna - namely otters, bats, badgers, dormice, rare grassland and other species.

Dead humans are not more important than living ecosystems.

I understand the committee are looking at 3 options in considering the expansion of the crematorium at the meeting on 11th October. As this site is an SNCI and should by this designation be protected for nature, you must chose option 3 and pause the expansion plans in their entirety will safeguard this site for nature. The ecological importance of the site and the importance of protecting it has already been established by the local community and organisations such as the RSPB, Natural England and Avon Wildlife Trust.

Furthermore, there is time to pause expansion whilst other solutions are considered. Within the grounds of the existing crematorium almost 10 acres of land have been identified which have not yet been used.

The SNCI site also contains ancient and rare grassland habitat. If damaged by implementing options 1 or 2 this habitat can never be replaced. This grassland has yet to be surveyed by Natural England and following this may even be upgraded to SSSI status, a higher level of protection.

Furthermore Council Committee members must note that the original ecological report to the Council has been discredited in statements submitted by leading U.K. ecologists who say it is not fit for purpose. Close attention should be given by Committee members when considering these statements from ecologists, explaining why the original report falls below industry standards.

As there are so many risks that involve damaging this nature rich site irreparably, I would like to see the expansion plans halted - option 3 adopted, whilst the Council considers other solutions that will not damage this site for nature and that do not threaten the future of Yew Tree farm which manages the farm acres sympathetically for nature and is a good steward of the land.

Thank you for considering my statement to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Ollie Shears

STATEMENT PS 110

Submitted by Chris Lucas

Dear Committee Members,

I'm here today to oppose the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto Colliter's Brook SNCI, also known as Yew Tree Farm. This is our last chance to prevent irreversible damage to a habitat home to dormice, otters, rare bats, and ancient grasslands.

There are three options before you:

Option 1: Continue as planned, destroying the SNCI for burials.

Option 2: Partially expand but still excavate the SNCI for drainage, harming its integrity.

Option 3: Pause the expansion whilst we undertake the necessary ecological studies and devise a more appropriate drainage plan.

Option 3 is the only way to ensure no harm comes to this vital habitat. Organizations like the Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England support this.

There is no issue with developing Site 1 for burials if an alternative drainage solution is found that avoids disturbing the SNCI.

I also want to address concerns from the officer's report:

Underused Land: There's almost 10 acres of unused space at the crematorium that could accommodate more burials without impacting the SNCI.

Ecological Issues: The current ecological report has been discredited by experts. It incorrectly suggests that replacing grassland with wetland meets biodiversity standards.

Irreplaceable Habitat: The ancient MG5 grassland at Yew Tree Farm cannot be recreated. Approving either Option 1 or 2 would cause permanent damage.

Water Pollution: The proposed drainage could lead to pollutants entering Colliter's Brook, harming local wildlife and residents.

In conclusion, I urge you to choose Option 3 and pause all work until we can find a solution that protects Colliter's Brook SNCI. We must preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

Thank you for your time.

STATEMENT PS 111

Submitted by Sue Fairhurst

Dear Sir/Madam

I implore councillors to vote for Option 3 only. Option 3 is the only option that saves the farm and its precious wildlife. This is backed by organisations like Avon Wildlife Trust, RSPB, CPRE and Natural England.

Please Please save Yew tree farm- looking to the future instead of short term gain, our wild life is so precious and the farm is integral to the community.

Kind regards
Sue Fairhurst

STATEMENT PS 112

Submitted by Barbra Lewis

Dear Committee Members,

I want to oppose the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto Colliter's Brook SNCI, also known as Yew Tree Farm. This is our last chance to prevent irreversible damage to a habitat home to dormice, otters, rare bats, and ancient grasslands.

There are three options before you:

Option 1: Continue as planned, destroying the SNCI for burials.

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Option 3 is the only way to ensure no harm comes to this vital habitat. Organizations like the Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England support this.

There is no issue with developing Site 1 for burials if an alternative drainage solution is found that avoids disturbing the SNCI.

I also want to address concerns from the officer's report:

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Irreplaceable Habitat: The ancient MG5 grassland at Yew Tree Farm cannot be recreated. Approving either Option 1 or 2 would cause permanent damage.

Water Pollution: The proposed drainage could lead to pollutants entering Colliter's Brook, harming local wildlife and residents.

In conclusion, I urge you to choose Option 3 and pause all work until we can find a solution that protects Colliter's Brook SNCI. We must preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

Thank you for your time.

Ms Barbara Lewis

STATEMENT PS 113

Submitted by Katie Milne

Dear Committee Members,

I'm here today to oppose the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto Colliter's Brook SNCI, also known as Yew Tree Farm. This is our last chance to prevent irreversible damage to a habitat home to dormice, otters, rare bats, and ancient grasslands.

There are three options before you:

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Option 3 is the only way to ensure no harm comes to this vital habitat. Organizations like the Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England support this.

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Water Pollution: The proposed drainage could lead to pollutants entering Colliter's Brook, harming local wildlife and residents.

In conclusion, I urge you to choose Option 3 and pause all work until we can find a solution that protects Colliter's Brook SNCI. We must preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

Kind regards

Katie Milne

STATEMENT PS 114

Submitted by Jane Harper

Dear Committee Members,

I'm here today to oppose the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto Colliter's Brook SNCI, also known as Yew Tree Farm. This is our last chance to prevent irreversible damage to a habitat home to dormice, otters, rare bats, and ancient grasslands.

There are three options before you:

Option 1: Continue as planned, destroying the SNCI for burials.

Option 2: Partially expand but still excavate the SNCI for drainage, harming its integrity.

Option 3: Pause the expansion whilst we undertake the necessary ecological studies and devise a more appropriate drainage plan.

Option 3 is the only way to ensure no harm comes to this vital habitat. Organizations like the Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England support this.

There is no issue with developing Site 1 for burials if an alternative drainage solution is found that avoids disturbing the SNCI.

I also want to address concerns from the officer's report:

Underused Land: There's almost 10 acres of unused space at the crematorium that could accommodate more burials without impacting the SNCI.

Ecological Issues: The current ecological report has been discredited by experts. It incorrectly suggests that replacing grassland with wetland meets biodiversity standards.

Irreplaceable Habitat: The ancient MG5 grassland at Yew Tree Farm cannot be recreated. Approving either Option 1 or 2 would cause permanent damage.

Water Pollution: The proposed drainage could lead to pollutants entering Colliter's Brook, harming local wildlife and residents.

In conclusion, I urge you to choose Option 3 and pause all work until we can find a solution that protects Colliter's Brook SNCI. We must preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

Thank you for your time.

STATEMENT PS 115

Submitted by Tony Coll

Dear Committee

As a concerned member of the public I would like to add my voice to those opposing the expansion of South Bristol Cemetery.

I would like the committee to vote for Option 3 - to stop the expansion project in its entirety, because:

1 Expansion will prevent the proper operation of the SNCI.

2 Expansion will make Yew Tree Farm no longer viable.

3 Large grassy areas of the cemetery that could be used for burials have not been properly considered.

4 Other burial sites have not been seriously assessed.

5 Officers' reports are of poor quality. They contain inaccuracies, typos, unsubstantiated assertions and generalisations, giving an impression of lack of proper professional care. This is too important an issue for decisions to be made that rely on sloppy workmanship. It appears that once officers have taken a view, groupthink takes over and they are not prepared to give due consideration to alternative solutions.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

Tony Coll_B A Oxon

STATEMENT PS 116

Submitted by Brigit Muller

Dear Committee

I feel very strongly that biodiverse places like Yew Tree Fram need to be protected, instead of destroyed, especially in the light of the current biodiversity crisis and BCC's own Biodiversity Emergency policy.

“There seems to be a viable alternative and I don't understand why this solution is not pursued:

However there is an alternative solution that the Council haven't proposed yet, which might save the council coffers many thousands of pounds and will protect the SNCI. We have no objection to Site 1 being used for burials, and encourage the Council to find an alternative version of Option 2, where the drainage arrangements to not involve excavating the Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm, and the drainage is discharged away from the Colliter's Brook watercourse. If they can achieve this, the crematorium can be expanded without harming the SNCI.”

Please do vote to protect the habitat for so many life forms. They might not be human, and we deem them less important, (less important than dead human bodies) but they are vital for this planet and ultimately for humans too.

Thank you!
Kind regards
Birgit Muller

STATEMENT PS 117

Submitted by Tom Pearce

Why the expansion of the South Bristol cemetery is a political opportunity/threat for each party on the committee:

Green party: The Green party's focus around the climate and ecological emergency, as well as being anti austerity, is a major driver of the Green vote. According to the More In Common report after the General election, the top reason people voted Green (51%) was "their policies on the environment and climate change." This vastly dwarfs the 2nd top reason "the country needs something new" (30%). The second biggest reason for Green voters not voting for the Labour party was "trust in Labour to deliver on their promises".

Progressive activists make up 33% of the Green voter base. They are described as: "A passionate and vocal group for whom politics is at the core of their identity, and who seek to correct the historic marginalisation of groups based on their race, gender, sexuality, wealth, and other forms of privilege. They are politically engaged, critical, opinionated, frustrated, cosmopolitan, and environmentally conscious." Bristol has a concentration of this voter group. In the last general election, Greens won 20% of this group compared to 49% voting Labour. In that election, 45% of Labour's progressive activist voters considered voting Green at one point. So not only do this group make up a third of the current voter base, they also represent the party's greatest opportunity in future elections. The environment is one of their top issues.

Following the previous Labour administration by voting to expand the crematorium (which both option 1 and option 2 represent) would be politically damaging, being policies that damage the environment, and representing more of the same. The Labour Together report into general election 2024 states "A significant number of Green voters decided in the final two weeks, with 28% of Green voters deciding on the day. This was much higher than any other party." The increase in Green vote is a fragile one. Furthermore, if Green councillors vote against their own Bristol Green party manifesto, it will remove its own trust advantage over Labour with existing voters.

Labour party: The Green to Labour switchers from the above group are very volatile as described before, which makes taking votes back from the Greens more plausible if they fail to protect their new voter base. Climate change and the environment also ranked third of key issues (19%) to current Labour voters according to More In Common polling of the general election.

In future elections, Labour will need to protect their coalition of increased rural seats. They will also need to convince those progressive activists that thought about voting Green but didn't, that they are a safe pair of hands on the environment. Labour has the most to lose, with Bristol East and Bristol South making up two of top three most marginal seats for the Greens in the next general election.

Liberal Democrats: According to More In Common polling of the general election 24 percent of Liberal Democrat voters put it in their top three issues, second only across the parties to Green voters' 50 per cent. Holding onto these voters in rural seats where the main rival is the Conservative party will be key in the next election, and voting to protect Colliters Brook SNCI from development offers a chance to show voters in the Bristol orbit that they take these issues seriously.

Conservatives: One of the key messages of the Labour party has been to loosen planning regulations and making it easier to build. The Conservatives in South Gloucestershire have recently taken up a "protect our Green belt" campaign in order to win over rural voters in the seats it lost in 2024. Protecting an SNCI fits well with the "defend our countryside" messaging.

STATEMENT PS 118

Submitted by Matthew Feltham

Dear Council Committee,

I understand that the Council is meeting this Friday to decide on the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium on the land at Colliters Brook. This area is an SNCI and as such I thought it would have long term protection from development. As a local resident I know that the area has an abundance of wildlife and we are very lucky to have rare bats, badgers and otters there as well important ancient grassland.

In considering the options for the future of the site I would like the Council to vote for option 3. This option is the only one which would pause the plans to expand the cemetery so other options could be looked at which would not damage either the SNCI or the future of Bristol's last working farm.

This site is simply too important for nature to be lost or irreparably damaged and should be protected. I understand that the original ecological statement made to the Council was not supported by other UK ecologists who thought it was inaccurate and misleading.

Please vote for option 3 so this important SNCI is preserved for nature and the future of Yew Tree Farm can be safeguarded.

With best wishes,

Matthew Feltham

STATEMENT PS 119

Submitted by Jo Sargent



Hi, I'm a hazel dormouse. Yes, I know I'm extremely cute but..

..according to the Woodland Trust, I'm 'in serious danger, with numbers estimated to have fallen by 52% between 2009 and 2018'.

I'm also: 'protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981' and a 'Priority Species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework'

Some of us live in the place you're considering destroying, along with otters and some very rare bats. It's special because it allows us to live safely in ancient grassland and woody vegetation, and we thrive on the fruits and insects available in the Summer, before we hibernate. We're creatures of impeccable taste. The fact we're here says a lot about the quality and diversity of this site.

To be honest, I'm a bit scared to go to sleep this year, in case I wake up to find my habitat is gone, or, I don't wake up at all.

I understand that you need more burial sites, although, when it's my time, I'd prefer a woodland option. I've also heard that there are ten acres of unused space at the South Bristol Crematorium so, why not check that out and other options before destroying my habitat?

Please vote for the least harmful option and let me wake up to my beautiful world. It'll be best for everyone in the long run.

STATEMENT PS 120

Submitted by Amanda Brett

I urge councillors to choose option 3 and pause all further works until there is a solution which prevents any incursion onto the Colliter's Brook SSSI/Yew Tree farm.

I cannot see how a site like this can be destroyed especially in light of the current biodiversity crisis and the Council's own Biodiversity Emergency policy.

STATEMENT PS 121

Submitted by Chrisina Hamati

Dear Committee Members,

I am emailing today to oppose the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium onto Colliter's Brook SNCI, also known as Yew Tree Farm. This is our last chance to prevent irreversible damage to a habitat home to dormice, otters, rare bats, and ancient grasslands.

There are three options before you:

Option 1: Continue as planned, destroying the SNCI for burials.

Option 2: Partially expand but still excavate the SNCI for drainage, harming its integrity.

Option 3: Pause the expansion whilst we undertake the necessary ecological studies and devise a more appropriate drainage plan.

Option 3 is the only way to ensure no harm comes to this vital habitat. Organizations like the Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England support this.

There is no issue with developing Site 1 for burials if an alternative drainage solution is found that avoids disturbing the SNCI.

I also want to address concerns from the officer's report:

Underused Land: There's almost 10 acres of unused space at the crematorium that could accommodate more burials without impacting the SNCI.

Ecological Issues: The current ecological report has been discredited by experts. It incorrectly suggests that replacing grassland with wetland meets biodiversity standards.

Irreplaceable Habitat: The ancient MG5 grassland at Yew Tree Farm cannot be recreated. Approving either Option 1 or 2 would cause permanent damage.

Water Pollution: The proposed drainage could lead to pollutants entering Colliter's Brook, harming local wildlife and residents.

In conclusion, I urge you to choose Option 3 and pause all work until we can find a solution that protects Colliter's Brook SNCI. We must preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

Thank you for your time
Very best wishes

Christina Hamati

STATEMENT PS 122

Submitted by Anna Abbott

To whom it may concern,

I urge decision makers to consider rejecting plans to expand South Bristol crematorium on the 11th Oct and instead be in favour of preserving the little green space we have left that are left truly wild for the precious rare wildlife that we share our ever expanding city with.

Whilst I appreciate that expansion may be required we are living in a world where space is ever being squeezed and instead we should be moving away traditional burials and cremations due to the environment impacts and vast amounts of land required and instead consider the impacts of those choices on the living, both for the benefit of our future generations by retaining green space which is especially rare in city's and for the benefit of the wildlife that relies on us fighting preserve these places indefinitely.

I propose a variant of option 2 should be considered to use only site 1 as a short term fix and leave any other land at Colliters brook completed untouched and preserved.

The below is a list of issues highlighted by Yew tree farm, and I understand they are supported by various wildlife societies in the UK, Avon Wildlife trust, RSPB, CPRE, Natural England:

Critical need - The existing South Bristol Crematorium site has not used the space effectively from maps sent to Bristol Tree Forum from Ariaf Hussain (Bristol crematoriums). We have identified almost 10 acres of land within South Bristol Crematorium that is not used for memorials or cremated remains.

Ecological credibility - The original ecological report has been discredited by industry experts, and the committee have been sent separate statements that explain how it does not comply to industry standards. For example, when assessing the BNG impact of the crematorium expansion they have claimed that you can replace a grassland habitat with a wetland habitat, but BNG-related law does not support this. Please encourage committee members to pay close attention to these statements that have been submitted from UK leading ecologists, which explain why the Council's ecological report is not fit for purpose.

Nationally important habitat - The MG5 (rare) grassland present at Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm cannot be replaced and would be irreparably damaged if either Option 1 or Option 2 are approved. This type of grassland is ancient, extremely rare and of national importance. This grassland is still under assessment and has to be properly surveyed by Natural England or an independently qualified ecologist specialising in botany, at the appropriate time of year. The presence of this type of grassland means Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm is a living museum. Damaging this ancient habitat (which is inevitable under Option 1 or Option 2) is unacceptable – it would be akin to removing/relocating one of the stones at Stonehenge. We are extremely lucky to have this habitat in Bristol, and should treasure and protect it. However if the committee vote for Option1 or 2, they will be condemning it to destruction and will prevent Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm being upgraded from SNCI to SSSI status and given an even higher level of protection for the MG5 grassland, Dormice and rare bats that live there.

Water pollution - The attenuation basin will be a storm pond, likely to accumulate high levels of ammonium from the burials happening on Site 1. It will be heavily polluted, and will not prevent our local waterways being polluted. During heavy rainfall there will be a risk of sending slugs of concentrated pollution into Colliter's Brook, creating heavy contamination. These added pollutants in Colliter's Brook would affect both the wildlife living in it – including otters – and the residents of Bedminster who live alongside it. The Brook's ecosystem is already struggling, and voting for either Option 1 or Option 2 will further contribute to eutrophication and other stressors threatening the survival of aquatic organisms. The best mitigation is not to run any drainage via Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree farm, and to pro-actively direct discharge away from Colliter's brook.

Inconsistent burial forecasts - In 2020 a report stated there was only 2 years burial space left, yet in 2024 another report states exactly the same thing. Also, the council state in their recent report that annual burials

decreased during the Covid 19 pandemic, however in their options they state a future pandemic might spike burial numbers. How do the committee interpret this?

Land mismanagement - Officers have already broken their own planning conditions by removing the scrub from the Colliter's Brook SNCI/Yew Tree Farm site without applying for pre-commencement sign off. If Option 1 or 2 were to be approved, we would be dependent on the officers to manage the building work on the SNCI site, but their recent actions have shown that they lack either the appropriate respect, knowledge or resources to manage sensitive developments on SNCI habitats, and cannot be trusted to undertake the works responsibly.

I hope you will consider mine and all other objections seriously and instead consider the more environmentally friendly options available for cemetery expansion whilst our city continues to grow.

Your decisions should not be a quick fix to address an current issue which will reoccur in the future unless more considered action is taken to really optimise the use of existing space and identifying the importance of retaining habitats for wildlife around us.

Yours

Anna Abbott

STATEMENT PS 123

Submitted by Mark Hayward Jenkins

South Bristol should not be deprived of this snici.

Why anyone would choose to expend their entire capital of political goodwill destroying yew tree farm is unfathomable. It is obviously a disastrous decision in both the short and long term.

Councillors cannot be confident they are making decisions future proofed against legal challenge. Many statements have highlighted how vulnerable and susceptible to legal challenge the case presented would be.

South Bristol deserves respect ; not decisions imposed by otherwise remote authorities.

You should choose to elevate , not degrade south bristol , and to support and listen to Catherine Withers.

Many thanks.

Mark Hayward Jenkins

STATEMENT PS 124

Submitted by John Tarlton (Bristol Tree Forum)

Summary: We propose that expansion of the South Bristol Cemetery should be limited to Site 1 only, as an interim measure to provide burial space until 2036. This will avoid harmful impact to the Colliters Brook SNCI and on the sustainability of Yew Tree Farm, and allow Bristol City Council (BCC) at least a decade to consider alternatives. Should all alternatives prove impossible, BCC retain the option to re-apply to expand into Site 3. In order to avoid all harmful impact to the SNCI, which is prohibited according to planning policies DM17 and DM19, drainage attenuation would also need to be redesigned, re-siting the attenuation pond and the damaging associated drainage infrastructure external to the SNCI, probably requiring a fresh planning application.

This solution represents a win-win for all parties in that it provides for over a decade of burials whilst leaving the SNCI and Yew Tree Farm entirely undisturbed, with the option to return to the original proposal should alternative burial sites prove impossible.

As the current availability of burial sites in Bristol is projected to run out in 2026, there is an urgent need for additional burial site provision.

Phase 1 of the proposed extension of the South Bristol Cemetery into the Colliter's Brook Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) is projected to deliver burial provision only until 2036, and as such this is only a temporary solution to our need for burial sites in Bristol.

Phase 2 would further encroach into the SNCI, providing burials beyond 2036. However, the projected longevity of phase 2 is called into some doubt, as what were assumed as sites suitable for double burials turn out to be, according to the council's own expert, only appropriate for single burials due to shallow soil (see Annex 1).

The extension of South Bristol Cemetery, as approved by the previous administration's Development Control Committee (22/05714/FB, Option 1), would result in harmful impact on the Colliters Brook SNCI currently adjacent to the cemetery, which is not allowed by planning policy:

- Development on part, or all, of an Important Open Space as designated on the Policies Map will not be permitted unless the development is ancillary to the open space use. (DM17).
- Proposals which would harm important features such as green hillsides, promontories, ridges, valleys, gorges, areas of substantial tree cover and distinctive manmade landscapes will not be permitted. (DM17)
- Development which would have a harmful impact on the nature conservation value of a Site of Nature Conservation Interest will not be permitted. (DM19).

This cemetery expansion would also harm the sustainability of Yew Tree Farm, the last remaining working farm in Bristol and one of the city's most important wildlife sites. Such a development in an Ecological Emergency, should only be considered if there are absolutely no alternatives.

And, indeed, there is an alternative proposal (Option 2), which only develops site 1, and is projected to provide burial sites for 10 years (up until 2036). Again, this is an interim solution to the burials issue, but, crucially, one which does not damage Colliters Brook SNCI or adversely affect the future of Yew Tree Farm. There remains a requirement for an attenuation pond, albeit reduced in scale. This alternative solution should also include re-siting the pond, and crucially the damaging associated infrastructure, within the current cemetery and outside of the SNCI.

Were a modified version of Option 2 adopted, Bristol City Council would have until 2036 to consider alternative, long term, sites for burial provision in Bristol, with the remainder of Option 1 still available in the unlikely event that there proves to be no alternative. This would allow Bristol City Council to provide immediate sites for burial for all denominations, including Muslim and Jewish, up until 2036, without contravening their own policies on protection of SNCIs, and remaining consistent with their declared Ecological Emergency.

Annex 1: The need for burials

The projected longevity of burial provision is based upon the following calculation of the number of sites provided:

- Site 1a – 526 double and 373 single burials (total 1,425).
- Site 1b will be used exclusively for ash interment.
- Site 3 – 1,981 double burials (total 3,962).

This makes a total of 5,387 burials in 2,880 plots in the proposed South Bristol Cemetery expansion, with Phase 1 providing 1,130 plots which would satisfy the mid-forecast demand (110pa) until 2036.

Importantly, this calculation assumes that all of the plots in Site 3 (1,981) will allow double burials. However, the Council's own analysis is that most, if not all, of these plots will only sustain single burials, and therefore the assumption that the Phase 3 expansion will provide long term burial provision should be reconsidered.

Site 3	GROUND_WATER_RISK_ASSESSMENT-3351196		
<p>Intrusive investigations showed no signs of groundwater or any notable seepages within the trial pits excavated across the site to date, which were dug to depths of between 2.0m bgl to 3.0m bgl. The refusal depths of the trial pits were variable and suggests that the depth to bedrock across the site may also vary significantly, impacting the proposed burial depths. At this stage, we would therefore recommend that allowance be made for single burial depths only. Additional investigation works could be undertaken to ascertain whether the site could be zoned into areas of single burial depth and areas of full burial depth.</p>			

STATEMENT PS 125

Submitted by Nasim Dumont

For the attention of the committee,

This is to ask the committee to make the right decision on Friday, 11/10/2024, and vote for option 3 in the proposal.

As a Muslim member of the public who lives in south Bristol, I am against any attempt to damage the wildlife and the farm under the name of expansion of the cemetery. My religion condemns harming nature, trees, and wildlife for such a reason.

1. Option 2 *WILL* harm the SNCI it is not an acceptable compromise
2. There are no new Muslim burials being proposed for the Yew Tree Farm site, they will be non-denominational and Ash Internments
3. The drainage pipes *WILL* harm the SNCI grassland habitat. It's not true that they are only small and won't cause damage
4. Arnos Vale and other older sites are SNCIs because they have been left alone for hundreds of years. They are also nowhere near the same grassland ecosystem which Yew Tree Farm fields are. Yew Tree Farm is so good for nature because it has NEVER been touched. You lose that forever once you disturb the soil. Arnos Vale is lovely but it's not a replacement for ancient grassland like Yew Tree Farm
5. The drainage *WILL* pollute our water.
6. The works being done to fix the flooding for the existing Muslim graves are not dependent on the expansion or the extra drainage on the SNCI going through. That is already happening.
7. The council did not look at alternative drainage solutions that don't go through the SNCI
8. The ecology report that this is all based on was not done to industry standards and doesn't even cover the drainage pipes at all!
9. We want to work with the council on this. We aren't against any political party and we aren't against people having burial space. This is just the wrong site.
10. The only acceptable option is option 3
11. Under no circumstances should SNCI be touched or disturbed.

Best Wishes,
Nasim Dumont

STATEMENT PS 126

Submitted by Catherine Withers

Statement to committee-

I plead with the committee to vote option 3 and take a sensible pause to investigate the problems and possible solutions that have recently been flagged by expert opinion and comment.

Cathy Mayne lead National dormouse monitoring programme Leigh Woods, Cooks Wood, co-lead The Perch Cheddar, Alec Jennings, Analytical Scientist (Wessex water Scientific centre) Ana T Castro Castellon PhD, Chemical and Environmental Engineer (Bristol University, Oxford University, Wessex Water, Thames Water) Neill Talbot ACIEEM, Joshua Styles MSc AMRSB MCIEEM FISC level 6 Principal ecologist and Botanical Specialist. Natural England, Avon Wildlife Trust.

Due to the flatness of site 1, the drainage and discharge option proposed appears unworkable and will cost more than anticipated, making it unviable, if it is achievable at all. This needs further investigation before a decision can be made. Please read Bristol Tree Forum statement, we are currently seeking expert advice for this option and would welcome working with officers together to formulate a plan. This may prove to be more cost effective for the public good. After speaking with Natural England they discussed their own specialist hydrologists may be able to assist.

Rather than providing a workable solution/ or mitigation, the drainage and attenuation basin pose a serious threat to the health of a much-loved waterway visited daily by Otters, causing additional pollution to an already contaminated brook which runs through much of South Bristol. Please refer to the statements from Alec Jennings and Ana T Castro Castellon.

There are generic comments copied and pasted by officers showing the biodiversity of ponds- please be clear this is a contaminated storm runoff basin. Natural England and Avon Wildlife trust and the other environmental groups quoted have not endorsed this runoff basin. I quote Alec Jennings "Regarding the nutrient loading in the attenuation basin, it is the equivalent to a storm pond with the risk of a high accumulation of ammonium from the cemetery land. It is well known that storm attenuation ponds can accumulate pollutant nutrients. A further risk is that heavy rainfall can make the pond overflow, sending a slug of more concentrated pollution into Colliter's Brook, creating heavy contamination. The best mitigation measure to avoid environmental damage would be to simply not expand the cemetery."

The entire premise of planning approval was drawn upon an ecological report that has been discredited by industry experts. See statements by Avellanaecology and Joshua Styles.

Concerns have also been raised regarding the current dormouse survey - Cathy Mayne's report, which had to be undertaken subsequent to approval by officers who had not flagged their presence at Yew Tree Farm during the original planning committee meetings.

Natural England wish for further studies to be undertaken to establish the value of the MG5 grassland and require a more detailed programme of survey work. This would have to be done at an appropriate time of year. The committee must be made aware that this application has been high profile and controversial, yet officers removed scrub habitat during nesting season without permission. In the same fashion they have previously failed to enforce other environmental harms at Yew Tree Farm. Can the committee and the public trust the actions of officers to protect an SNCI and dormouse habitat?

The officers also granted a grazing licence on 2nd May election day to those responsible for the hedgerow destruction at Yew Tree farm, the same people who to our knowledge are still being actively investigated by Avon and Somerset police. The council themselves called the police on your current graziers.

In order to avoid significant environmental damage, of the options presented by officers, only Option 3 is appropriate.

The viability of the farm will be affected as this is not the only threat to the farm's future, Barrett formally Redrow want to build housing on the ancient hay meadow, the council officers failed us with proper procedure which led to the habitat destruction.

My opposition to the housing development led to my eviction so my farm shrunk overnight by 13 acres. Subsequently the council also evicted me from their land with just 28 days notice, so within 12 months the land available for me to farm has reduced by approx. 33 acres. I assume I was evicted by the council as I opposed the

crematorium expansion on ecological grounds, those that obtained the licence neither live in Bristol or indeed have lived at the farm for over 35 years. They have also written in support of developing the farm for housing. Those that love and want to protect the farm will naturally conclude that officers reluctant to consider a pause to further ascertain the severe risks of pollution, environmental and ecological harm want to plough ahead with the original application (option 1) but are using smoke and mirrors and subterfuge to obtain the full development and ultimate collapse of the SNCI and the farm to housing, which becomes more likely if the farm is not viable.

Unless option 3 is selected, or further information sought in respect of the points raised by you and the experts before a final decision is made, then there will be little option to me but to consider issuing a claim for judicial review.

I appreciate your time to read my statement. Catherine Withers.

STATEMENT PS 127

Submitted by Sarah Smith

To whom it may concern,

I would like lodge my objection to any development that will destroy Yew Tree Farm and the SNCI. This site is a Priority Habitat and a Site of Nature Conservation and the evidence all shows it will be destroyed if development goes ahead. Councillors need to vote for option 3 and protect the SNCI and Yew Tree Farm.

Sarah Smith

STATEMENT PS 128

Submitted by Esma Pearcey

Dear sir/madam

With regards to the consultation into expansion of south Bristol crematorium I urge you to choose option 3 and pause all further works until a solution is reached that protects the SNCI surrounding Yew Tree Farm.

Any expansion will cause irreparable damage to the untouched meadows in this SNCI and put additional stress on the ecosystem.

Whilst I appreciate the need for more burial sites, it's evident that the site on bridgewater road is at capacity and is not a long term solution to managing the wishes of the deceased. It should remain open for cremation and only be used for this purpose with a burial site if required to be placed on an alternative site.

Please take option C. Pause until a solution can be found.

Regards

Esma Pearcey

STATEMENT PS 129

Submitted by Ann-Marie Vowles

Please vote for option 3 and protect this special place. Once it's gone it's lost forever.

I am convinced that burial choices will not be the same in the future as in the past. People will opt for different options than burial.

Please do the right thing and protect this space now.

Ann-Marie Vowles

STATEMENT PS 130

Submitted by Cllr. Ellie Freeman

Yew Tree Farm, the SNCI land and the cemetery are all precious and valuable in many ways and today the committee needs to protect all three as well as it can. In order to do that, there are a number of things to be considered when looking at the three options presented today.

Members need to be confident that the information presented about the ecological nature of the SNCI land meets industry standards, is accurate, up-to-date and comprehensive enough to make a robust decision. They need to be clear about the judgements made by key expert organisations such as Natural England about the nature of the SNCI, how any works could affect it and whether it warrants any further protections. This includes understanding the impact of installing pipes, inspection chambers, the hydrobrake chamber and the attenuation pond on both the SNCI and related waterways.

They need to be confident that the CEMP (if any work is approved) and LEMP will be enforced and closely monitored to ensure the SNCI keeps its status and is managed well in the future. Part of the ongoing management is the grazing licence. As I understand it, Yew Tree Farm have been managing the land and will continue to do so by grazing their cattle there. Therefore, before anything else happens, the licence needs to be finalised and the farm and the council agree a way of working together in the future.

The council must take account of the impact on the viability of business on neighbouring land. Yew Tree Farm will be affected by whatever gets decided today. The committee needs to be confident what this means for the business. It is not clear from the papers if this has been fully discussed with the farm and therefore the impact of all three options understood.

The committee also needs to be clear about the burial needs of the city in the short, medium and long term. Without a burial strategy, I don't see that the committee can be confident about this. The lack of a strategy means there is no understanding of what might happen to this land in the future, or how the council is going to maintain the service it currently provides. I understand the Task and Finish group will work on this. The committee could choose to take this step before making a decision about the cemetery. Any strategy should include the management of any land relating to burial use, such as the SNCI, related waterways and public realm.

Due to BCC incompetence or lack of capacity, the farm has suffered recently. A gate was put in the wrong place, ancient hedges damaged, dormice surveys not carried out and the grazing licence still needs to be resolved. The investigation into the planning process was not satisfactory. The committee system enables political parties to work together to do things differently, more transparently and in a more considered way and this is a chance to show that.

My colleagues here today are in an incredibly difficult position, as they are looking at how to implement a decision made by a planning committee some time ago. Added to this, the lack of funding for parks, green spaces and cemeteries has led to a department that's under huge financial pressure, the lack of a burial strategy means there is a time-pressure and the high public interest in this case means enormous amounts of information to be considered. I recognise the work they have put in to get to this point today. As a councillor, I have to put faith in my fellow councillors of all parties on committees to question officers, consult widely and weigh up all the information they have to make a robust and defensible decision on behalf of the people of Bristol, those living here now and in the future.

STATEMENT PS 131

Submitted by Chris Faulkner Gibson (on behalf of the Allotments Forum)

The Allotments Forum notes that this Committee is being asked to approve a process of stakeholder engagement to carry out a review of the terms, conditions and rules pertaining to allotment plot use and lease agreements.

The Forum welcomes the opportunity to work collaboratively with the City Council in this regard, and has established a working group of allotment tenants, co-workers and site reps to review the current and proposed rules and if necessary recommend changes.

To do this, the following will need to be agreed:

1. Timescale

A meaningful timescale for completion: we suggest at least 12 months from commencement, allowing for the fact that the Forum working group members are all working in their own time and that Allotment Officers are thinly stretched – this cannot be a speedy project.

2. Terms of Reference

We will need to agree a framework with the Allotments Office as to the overall aims and objectives of both the review and the rules themselves. We suggest this will include but not be limited to: supporting the 2024 Food Growing and Allotment Strategy; underpinning an acceptable standard of cultivation and the encouragement of good horticultural practice to get the best out of each plot; providing a framework for the resolution of disputes and promoting fair treatment of, and harmonious relationships between, tenants; supporting the role of site reps; and ensuring fairness to all those on the waiting list.

3. Consultation Results

The results of the consultation exercise on rules and tenancy agreement changes (that ran between December 2023 and January 2024) need to be analysed and the resulting report published – without this the consultation will have been meaningless and a great deal of invaluable information and insight – including from community groups – will be lost.

4. Officer Support

The Forum Working Group will carry out most of the 'legwork' but will need access to and help from the Allotments Manager and Officers. The Working Group will require background information, data and context relating to the rationale behind the proposed changes. We will also require help with liaising with the various associations, community and special interest groups to ensure all voices are heard. The expert input from the Allotment Office will be essential to a successful outcome.

We believe that with the active support of the Public Health and Communities Policy Committee and the Allotments Office, the Allotment Forum can play a pivotal role in moving this issue on from its unfortunate beginnings to a successful conclusion, for the benefit of all.

STATEMENT PS 132

Submitted by Cllr Ani Stafford-Townsend

I chaired the planning committee which considered the expansion of South Bristol Crematorium, twice. I also have family at South Bristol Crem. I am acutely aware of the considerations and struggles facing the committee this week.

All councillors regardless of their party get involved in politics and activism to make a difference. Once elected, we often do need to make tricky decisions made on additional, previously unknown to us information. We often feel compelled to make hard choices for the bigger picture and to achieve an important end goal.

When the expansion came to Development Control, it became clear that Bristol had no burial strategy. There is still has no long term burial strategy and the need for provision, statutory or not, is not immediate. We do however have immediate financial pressures and expansion into the SNCI could feel like a tempting solution.

As Chair of DC, as a councillor and as an activist before that, I have seen repeated chipping away of our ecology, damage being offset or mitigated but never avoided. I know there will be other statements to committee outlining the ways in which damage is caused or impossible to mitigate in this instance.

But moreover, we have a climate emergency in which we repeatedly pass points of irreparable damage to our ecology. As a city, a country, a planet, we cannot afford to lose an inch or percentage of green space with such high ecological value.

There is no benefit to expansion into the SNCI that is worth the damage and loss that it will result in.

There is no compromise in this scenario that is worth it.

STATEMENT PS 133

Submitted by Tim Edwards

Please take this as a formal written statement to object to the expansion of South Bristol crematorium. We do not need more ground for the dead, we need more ground for the living, and not just humans but all life. We need to stop the destruction and removal of green areas around us. People should be encouraged to cremate more. We don't need precious green space being taken up to put bones in.
I fully endorse option 3 to stop the expansion.

STATEMENT PS 134

Submitted by Stuart Budd

Hello

I wish to submit a statement with regards to Bristol Cemetery Capacity and Options for Future Provision proposal please.

I urge a vote for option 3 on environmental grounds.

We in Bristol elected a green council in order for them to protect the environment.

Thank you

Stuart Budd

STATEMENT PS 135

Submitted by Emma Robinough

I am writing to log my support for yew tree farm and all its nature and what it stands for.
It is a hub of the community and an important part of Bristol . Its supply's clean food, taking care of the nature .

STATEMENT PS 136

Submitted by Duncan Porter

I strongly object to the current expansion plans to be voted on Friday 11th October 2024.

I will avoid going into detail about the specific issues with the plan, but will instead defer to statements by Catherine Withers and Danica Priest who have provided detailed analysis that I have seen and endorse.

I would like to further question the application on two points, but also recognise that I understand and empathise with the financial pressures of Bristol Council and many other councils nationally.

1. There are many other options for burial without impacting the SNCI. To suggest that options 1 and 2 are the only options is clearly not true. If the development was restricted to the field adjacent to the A38, it would buy time for other options including:

- a) Denser use of the existing site - I have visited the cemetery and can see scope for much more internal expansion.
- b) Reuse of old graves in other Bristol sites. This is common practice in many international cities. We cannot expand forever.
- c) Use of parkland. We have thousands of acres of land near good facilities and public transport that should be considered before SNCI land.

There are of course many other options. The current development looks like a choice of convenience and cost management. This is not a long term plan for nature and the planet.

2. In an ecological emergency– we need to be bold and brave to protect the remaining habitats we have. That the protection of this habitat is strongly supported by Avon Wildlife Trust, Natural England, RSPB and CPRE should be a strong indicator of the correct decision. History will judge us on our current actions.

STATEMENT PS 137

Submitted by Sebastian Whitehouse

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am here today representing the voices of many residents who cherish the natural beauty of Bristol, particularly the Colliter's Brook SNCI, Yew Tree Farm. This land is not merely an ecological site; it represents a significant part of our community's identity, providing a refuge for diverse wildlife and an opportunity for local residents to connect with nature.

The proposed expansion of the crematorium poses a serious threat to this cherished space. While the officer's report suggests three options, it is clear that Option 3 is the only one that aligns with the community's values and environmental responsibility. Continuing with either Option 1 or Option 2 would mean sacrificing precious habitat for short-term gains, which goes against the collective ethos of protecting our environment for future generations.

It's vital to consider that the current South Bristol Crematorium site has unused land that could accommodate burials without encroaching on the SNCI. Instead of damaging Yew Tree Farm, we should look to maximize the existing capacity and explore alternative drainage solutions that do not jeopardize our protected ecosystems.

In light of these considerations, I strongly advocate for Option 3. Let us prioritize the health of our community and our environment by making a choice that preserves our natural heritage.

Thank you.

Sebastian Whitehouse

STATEMENT PS 138

Submitted by Jody Reed

In May 2021 the Mayor of Bristol announced that, due to the city's climate and ecological emergencies, developing the SNCI land at Brislington Meadows for housing was no longer appropriate. When Homes England later submitted their planning application, objections by councillors included:

“Much has changed in the world since the local plan was adopted... Invertebrates are central to ecosystems, and recent studies show they are suffering rapid decline... I'm not convinced that heavy machinery and large-scale earth moving won't disturb the fauna and flora... Our understanding of the climate threat and catastrophic biodiversity collapse has dramatically increased.. It is now very clear that, whilst there is still a housing crisis in the city, this cannot be addressed to the detriment of the climate and ecological disaster.” (source - <https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/mgChooseDocPack.aspx?ID=10374>)

Planning officers agreed and refused the application.

In February 2022, former Mayor Marvin Rees announced that, following an ecological report and discussions with the Avon Wildlife Trust, the council would not build houses on the SNCI land at Western Slopes (Novers Hill) in order to protect wildlife corridors and habitats.

In the 1980s Bristol City Council began designating SNCI's and the city planners created policies such as DM19 that provided the only protection for them.

Each SNCI has specific reasons for its designation; simply adding a fenced-off pond or planting trees on land valued for its grassland habitat makes no sense. The 1991 Greater Bristol Nature Conservation Strategy referred to the grassland type found at Yew Tree Farm for being particularly valuable in Bristol as it is 'not common nationally,' extra protection is needed.

Colliter's Brook SNCI is no different to Brislington Meadows & Western Slopes it must be given equal protection.

By distorting the clear wording of the DM19 policy, the council risks allowing developers to do the same, potentially using Yew Tree Farm as a precedent to destroy the little that is left of Bristol's nature assets and everyone will lose out.

'In light of the reasoning Avon Wildlife Trust and others who've objected to any work on the SNCI part of the application site Option 3 is realistically the only option. There are always ways around difficult problems and am confident if everyone worked together a solution will be found.'

Thank you for taking my words into consideration.

STATEMENT PS 139

Submitted by Fran Whitlock

I don't have the time to lay out my thoughts on this matter, but I want it on record that I strongly oppose any development on the Yew Tree Farm/Colliter's Brook site. More learned and articulate people than me have voiced their concerns, and I support everything they say. I've designed banners, and posted flyers to help the cause, and I don't give my precious spare time away unless I think the cause merits it. And this does, a thousand-fold. So save Yew Tree Farm, or risk losing the backing of all of us who voted Green in both the local and national elections.

STATEMENT PS 140

Submitted by Matthew Morse

I am writing today to ask you not to build anything on yew tree farm, I believe its option 3.

STATEMENT PS 141

Submitted by Ena Yarde

Dear Committee,

Whilst I agree there should be plot rent increases and I am pleased that the new proposed increases are lower by % I am dismayed to see there will be no discount for plot holders with no access to water whilst also increasing their rent by the same % as everyone else. This is unfair.

1. In not providing a water supply to those plots there are infrastructure and maintenance savings made by the council.
2. Those plot holders with no access to water have to, at their own expense install and maintain water butt's and water storage.
3. A discount would allow them to continue to maintain their water collecting and storage systems, thus continuing to save the council time and money which should be reflected in a discount. This is also an acknowledgement by the council that access to a water supply is an essential requirement to run a plot and that while collecting rents the council have not provided this basic need.

Regards

Ena Yarde

STATEMENT PS 142**Submitted by Cllr. Guy Poultney**

I'm writing to ask the Committee to vote for Option 3. This does not preclude future reconsideration. However, the evidence presented in the report is not strong enough to justify the damage to the SNCI, the risk to Yew Tree Farms ongoing operation, and the reputational damage to the council of pursuing either options 1 or 2. Based on the officer's projections presented here, the soonest estimate of a shortage of any of the denominational burial plots is 2031.

The 5 year average is clearly an overestimate. Demand for burial plots over the last 11 years shows a consistent fall, rising only in response to a global pandemic and the ceasing of new plots being provided at other sites. The total has dropped to half of its level in 2013.

Option 2 cannot be considered a compromise position. The damage to a unique ecosystem and the neolithic soil cannot be mitigated. It will create a polluted mudpool.

I urge you to vote for Option 3.

Burial at **South Bristol** and all **other sites** 2013-2023

