

**Stoke Bishop, Westbury-on-Trym & Henleaze
Neighbourhood Partnership**

Title: Environment Working Group (12th January 2017)

Report of: Environment Working Group and Tree Report

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Recommendations:

1. To **note** the details of the Environment Working Group meeting
2. The **Neighbourhood Committee is requested to agree to fund £8555 (amended amount)** to fund the planting of trees as detailed in 4.3 and in the tree report below
3. The **Neighbourhood Committee is requested to agree to fund £2,420** to undertake the work detailed in the request in 5.2 below. The funding is to be released from the NP's CIL fund.

Present: Alan Preece (Chair), Helen Furber, Stephanie French, Sheila Preece, Val Bishop, Gill Brown, David Mayer, Andrew McGrath, Alan Aburrow

Apologies: Roger Gamlin, Sue Mayer, Hilary Long, Clare Milne, Ella Davies, Gary Brentnall, Mildred Miller, Geoff Gollop

Meeting Chaired by Alan Preece –

1. Matters arising from notes of 27th October 2016 meeting:

1. £7,646.59 S106 agreed for work on Westbury Church Hall.
2. Sensory Garden projects to be funded at £14k each project (£4k design, £10k works).
- 8.5 (from July meeting) Overhanging growth. It is important that incidences are reported on line - <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/streets-travel/trees-hedges-and-grass>

4.1 Sea Mills Rec. Ella sent the following information for this meeting: *Lucy and Ella met with Holly Paton, the new Tree Officer for One Tree Per Child Bristol just after the last environment meeting. She surveyed the proposed orchard area and has plotted 10 small trees on a planting map- 6 apple and 4 pear in a rough triangle shape to ensure space for growth and mowing. The next stage of the process is a community consultation which Holly will oversee. Lucy is keen to get the local primary school involved as much as possible.*

2. Sensory Gardens. Whilst funding has been secured, the problem of officer time remains a problem. All S106 spend has to have an officer attached as project manager. Time and officer resource is very stretched. **Afternote:** Gary is able to act as project manager for the two sensory garden projects but will only be able to do so after March 2017.

2.1 Where possible, volunteers from the working group (or elsewhere) could be utilised to undertake some of the work

2.2 The initial design of Stoke Lodge Sensory Garden emphasises the need for it to be low maintenance and accessible for disabled users.

3.0 Future of this working group. The NPs, as they currently stand, are ending. Virtually all the funding for the NP budgets and staffing are being cut.

3.1 Not all staff will go at once, and there will be some support given to help NPs develop alternative new models. What funds are allocated to the future are likely to be concentrated in more deprived parts of the city, as per the Mayor's election manifesto pledges.

3.2 There has been no final decision taken on how CIL will be distributed. It is possible that local influence will remain in some form. S106 usually has to be spent in the locality from which it was generated. Again, there has been no decision as to whether its allocation will be open to local influence via some form of local influencing arrangements.

3.3 The working group has agreed to put the date of the next meeting in the diary and await developments.

4. Trees. Stephanie remains hopeful that the trees agreed for planting this season will be planted. A keen watch will be kept on the proposed sites. Andrew reiterated that he has been told they will definitely be planted

4.1 5 trees are being removed from Roman Way due to disease. 6 trees need replacing on Northumbria Drive. Councillors agreed these should be replaced.

4.2 Stephanie informed the meeting of a planning application (16/06917/F) at 62 Falcondale Road. This is a back garden development. 19 trees have already been removed. It has been accepted that replacements will need to be provided but the concern is that there is a request to replace some of the trees with hedges. This may set an unfortunate precedent. It must be objected to. The concern is that privets are classed as trees. This could mean a major loss of tree canopy in the long run.

4.3 At the last NP, a request from the NP's Tree Champion for £9,145 for 31 trees was granted from the NP's general fund. It was granted in the knowledge that the NP's general fund had just been frozen as part of the BCC-wide budget crisis. It was agreed that the money would be paid for the trees if and when the budget became unfrozen. It is now clear that this isn't going to happen. The NP's budget will not be returned. Therefore, the request has been formally re-submitted (with an alteration to the amount, see the Tree Report below) to the NP for it to pay for the request out of the NP's CIL fund (which remains unfrozen).

5. Other identified issues and Any Other Business

5.1 **Sea Mills Recreation Ground.** Ella has put together a list of potential improvements to the Rec. These included improvements to the pathways. Unfortunately it is unlikely that the cost of upgrading/replacing the pathway round the rec is feasible due to the budget freeze and the likely cost of the work (£40k+). It is acknowledged that the current path, whilst not in great condition, is serviceable.

5.2 The request is to replace the current dog bin with a combined dog/general waste bin and install a standard bench. The cost for these two items has been quoted at **£2,420**. **The NP is requested to agree the funding of these items from its CIL budget.**

5.3. **Canford Park.** Hilary Long provided a written update for the meeting.

5.4 A replacement gate is being provided for the entrance to the rose garden. It will be lightweight and accessible for all users. BCC Parks are managing this small project

5.5 The Lawn Tennis Association is now looking to hold county competition matches on the Canford courts. There is some concern that the University may be looking to take over the management of the courts in partnership with the LTA. The concern then would be that they become closed to casual users and that they would become 'overspill' courts for Coombe Dingle Sports Centre

5.6 **Afternote:** A meeting was held between members of WotSoc, the NP and reps from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) in early February. Whilst some of the concerns seem to have been put to rest (e.g. floodlights not being installed), there are a number of on-going discussions regarding how the facilities will be upgraded and managed. Fortunately, we have reps and councillors on the case. The LTA seems willing to be open about its ideas. Progress to be reported as it emerges

5.7 Due to the budget freeze, only emergency and maintenance work will be carried out in parks until a new funding regime for parks management is drawn up. BCC is looking at ways to manage its park stock in a 'budget neutral' manner (which means at no/minimal cost to the council) but hasn't yet come up with a model to enable this to happen. A watching brief will be kept.

5.8 **Afternote:** As of 7th February 2017, all play and access projects are on hold indefinitely as all money will now be invested to make parks as financially stable as possible. Only projects with external funding (including S106 and CIL) will be undertaken.

5.9 Alan A wanted it noted that the Transport Working Group may come to this group to seek CIL funding for Highways projects. There isn't a list of requests at present but Alan P is keen for the EWG to be supportive of this in principle. This was agreed by the meeting

6.0 **Date of next meeting:** 2.00pm 27th April 2017 (date and venue to be confirmed)

Tree Report to NP3 March 6th 2017

1) Tree Budget 2017/2018 from CIL funds please

At the December meeting of the NP a Tree Budget of £9145 for the 2017/2018 season was agreed by the Committee.

This was to see 30 street trees and one Park tree planted across the Partnership area in Dingle Close(12), Sea Mills Square(2), West Broadway(2), Stoke Lodge Parkland(1), Grange Park(1), Barley Croft(5), Oakwood Road(2) and Northumbria Drive(4 was 6).

The NPs interest in these streets has stimulated interest in Northumbria Drive by residents, and it may well be that residents fund some of the trees in that streets themselves. The NP was going to fund 6 trees in Northumbria Drive where there are currently 8 tree sponsorship sites. A large campaign organised by a resident has collected money enough for 4 trees. I think we should stump up (sorry) the £1180 to fund the remaining 4 trees (previously we agreed 6) and congratulate the residents for coming forward like this.

I ask for the Committee to authorise the allocation of £8555 for the planting of 29 trees from CIL funds devolved to the Partnership for the 2017/2018 planting season.

2) At a Tree Forum meeting I attended on January 16th I was told by a BCC Tree Officer in attendance that we would get our 3 trees on the dual carriageway in Henleaze and the 5 along Church Road Sneyd Park as ordered/budgeted for early last year. But I take a lot to be convinced, and until I see either the trees in the ground, or the written order that went from BCC to Gristwood and Toms the contractor, I have to confess I remain unsure, what with all this turmoil. Andrew and Gary have reassured me that all is well in this regard. Maybe even I can update you on March 6th with evidence of tree planting - otherwise we have 3 weeks to go!

As to Westbury Road and its new tree sites and possible pits - well I just do not know what to say or write that would not get me into trouble again.

3) Many NP working groups have worked hard and achieved much under the umbrella of the Partnership and how they might continue is yet to be determined. My work as the Tree Champion has been under the aegis of the Environment Group of the Partnership. We'll know more soon as the wind down continues and local groups and societies discuss what to do. The Sneyd Park Residents' Association has its own Tree Warden to deal with matters trees - particularly planning - but I have to confess to having involved myself in matters trees in Sneyd Park, partly because there are so many there that residents and developers are keen to fell, and partly in an effort to get trees planted there. If those trees do get planted in Church Road that will be my Sneyd Park swan song, although I cannot swing sweetly if at all.

4) As NP3's representative I have attended both Committee meetings and Public Meetings of the Bristol Tree Forum (BTF). This organisation is pan - Bristol and will continue. One of my tasks with the BTF and also within the Partnership has been the monitoring of Planning Applications in our area which affect trees adversely. I have often been able to call on support from other members of the BTF Committee and our Councillors to support comments and views in our area because of this membership. The BTF and the Council want that work to continue. The Council says it wants Tree Champions in each area but at the moment I'm not sure why.

I think that the Council and the Bristol Tree Forum define "Tree Champion" differently. The Council just wants folk who go and plant trees (I've done that) and then monitor the survival of the whips for the One Tree Per Child project.

The BTF has used Tree Champions to agitate for tree planting and to monitor planning applications and then notify Tree Officers, and Councillors and environmentally minded

residents, of developers and residents flaunting the rules. They also endeavour to influence the Council to be more Tree friendly.

Neighbourhood Partnerships have used Tree Champions to monitor planning applications and to organise the NPs applications for the planting of Street Tree replacements and in green spaces.

So these are very different roles.

5) I have spoken to the University of Bristol person again about the fate of the UoB 2nd phase street tree planting across Bristol in new sites. He said that their plans were still evolving, and some planting of moderate sized trees in significant sites outside the University "space" might still happen. But I am not spending any more of my or your time and energy on this. I'll keep my ear to the ground and respond if contacted.

6) I mentioned to a senior BCC Tree Officer our disquiet about hedging slipping in to landscape plans as mitigation for canopy loss when the BTRS (Bristol Tree Replacement Standard) was being applied as a planning condition. She had not heard of this and seemed equally dismayed. It is a shame that in BCC there appears to be little communication between two departments which should be so intimately associated - Trees and Planning. A recent re-organisation may overcome this - but there have been Tree Officers working within Planning for years regardless of who was whose line manager. She asked me to e mail her the two planning numbers we are bothered about - 16/03833 (*see below) and 16/06917. I have done that - with some trepidation bearing in mind what happened last time I emailed a BCC Tree Officer at their personal request. This time no one else got copied in. I'll let you know what she says. I know that Liz Radford is particularly interested in this issue and wants to be involved in getting it sorted with some kind of a policy. Liz can prosecute that with Council Officers and I am working to get the Tree Forum to develop a "view" on it that could become perhaps a support for any new BCC Policy or an amendment to BTRS. Even if my role in NP3 disappears I shall pursue this with the Tree Forum for a while, or try to make sure it is carried forward on the Agenda.

7) I found out more about the Bishop's Knoll Tree Walk with a guided tour for the BTF on February 4th. The Woodland Trust is going to prepare a map for visitors showing the seriously splendid trees - some very special in Bristol and the UK. Meanwhile I have mentioned it at the recent Forum meetings to encourage folk to visit this superb site on our doorstep.

8) I have reported to you the loss very soon of 6 trees on Northumbria Drive. Our Tree Officer met some residents there in January. The NP did add replacements for those 6 trees to its budgeted list at the last NP and if the money gets released then we should see those planted in 2017/2018. Some residents at Northumbria Drive have also stepped forward and according to our geographical Tree Officer Phil Burton have agreed to sponsor the other two already empty tree sites on Northumbria Drive. So that would see 8 new trees on Northumbria Drive if all this comes to fruition. More recently a resident has organised a campaign to collect even more funds and if you refer back to Item 1 you should see the result of his efforts. Thank you Jon Ashby.

9) Similarly I reported to the Stoke Bishop Forum the imminent loss of 5 trees on Roman Way. This mass extinction is going to make a difference to the local scene, much as in Northumbria Drive, but it comes too late for any plans to be made to replace the trees with any NP funds, so it will be up to the residents I am afraid to do something or nothing.

10) The Notices that go on trees that are about to be felled will need changing when NPs disappear and the money is therefore gone. I am working with the Tree Forum on that task.

11) Some achievements of the Tree "Lobby"

Some large trees planted in our area at sites chosen by residents when BCC won the Barcham Tree Prize in Henleaze Park Drive, Stoke Road South, Parry's Lane/Stoke Lane junction.

So many Planning Application battles fought that I am weary and there are too many to recount, but:

A Yew tree on Henleaze Road has now got a TPO when a resident wanted to remove it to make way for scaffolding.

Norway Pines on Parry's Lane saved and Norway Pines on Church Road Sneyd Park saved

Fewer trees lost than might have been lost to development in Stoke Road South (Redwood)

University of Bristol "encouraged" to plant replacement trees on the Stoke Bishop Campus rather than in the centre of town when they felled a woodland to make way for new student accommodation at Hiatt Baker Hall.

A Scots Pine in Church Avenue Sneyd Park saved from threatened felling to make way for an extension.

Prevention of felling of TPO tree in Old Sneed Road - crown reduction instead.

A householder in Parry's Lane had Bristol Tree Replacement Standard (BTRS) retrospectively applied to his house rebuilding application and had to plant 7 replacement trees after clearing his back garden 6 months prior to his development application.

This case led to the Senior Planning Officer agreeing to enforce the BTRS retrospectively for one year prior to the development application. The rule was already in place prospectively for 5 years (to replace any tree subject to a planning determination) that fails or is removed. This was a major step and came about after involvement of the Bristol Tree Forum with the situation.

The above led to the application of the BTRS to a development site in Falcondale Road where it will be applied even though the trees were cleared before the development application submitted.

Trees planted in Waitrose's new car park - originally there were to be none.

Most of the trees in Stoke Lodge Parkland/Playing Field/Recreation Ground (choose your own descriptor) awarded Tree Protection Orders - phew!

Cedar of Lebanon that was lost on Stoke Lodge now an admired Tree Sculpture.

Street Trees replaced on Kewstoke Road, Briarwood Close and Old Sneed Avenue (resident's efforts using some NP3 funds). Hopefully new trees soon to be planted on Church Road and Henleaze Road.

A hedge planted around the Gas Cabin on Stoke Lodge that might help to screen it in the future if it ever grows.

Street Trees replaced in Cedar Park, Adult Learning Centre, Roman Way, Stoke Lane, Stoke Grove, Parry's Lane, Druid Hill, Westbury Road funded by s106 monies devolved to the NP.

New Cedar of Lebanon in Stoke Lodge parkland to replace an Ash felled close to the new Children's Playground

Many residents guided through the Tree Sponsorship process to buy their own trees on Council land e.g. Henleaze Avenue, The Crescent Henleaze, West Broadway, Harbury Road, Northumbria Drive.

12) And lastly there have been some failures too. Too many to list but maybe we should note these two:

a) The Appeal to the Planning Inspectorate lodged by Care Home developers following refusal of their application to build the Care Home on Southmead Police Station - thereby felling a huge and important in every way Wellingtonia - has been allowed (28.12.16). So Bristol loses the tree and the Care Home makes loadsa cash. They would not even move the building a few feet in a large site even though their Agent said they were "listening to the Community".

This Appeal was supposed to go to an informal hearing. If it did I certainly was not notified and I had submitted a statement. I was also not told of the outcome of the Appeal despite having submitted a statement - so so much for democracy! I found out about it purely by chance whilst reading the Minutes of a meeting of Development Committee B (I really must get out more).

b) A plan to re-tree Devonshire Road as our Green Capital project was thrown into chaos and then abandoned very late in the day when Highways, having initially been supportive, withdrew its support after 9 months work because the Environmental Access Standards could not be met. Tree pits were required because of the number of subsidy claims and there was not room in the narrow pavements for these tree pits. In the last few days the pavements have had some repairs.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires the Neighbourhood Partnership to consider the need to promote equality for persons with the following "relevant protected characteristics": **age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation**. The Neighbourhood Partnership must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between different groups who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

The duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination in the area of employment, also covers marriage and civil partnership