

Member Forum

19 March 2019

Statements from councillors



Procedural note:

STATEMENTS FROM COUNCILLORS:

- A maximum of 1 minute shall be allowed for the presentation of each statement (subject to overall time constraints).
- There shall be no debate on the statements and the Lord Mayor shall refer them to the Mayor for information/consideration.
- Statements will be dealt with in the order of receipt (subject to time).



The following statements have been submitted – full details are attached:

	Name	Title
CS01	Conservative Group Councillors	Silencing of the 'We Love Stoke Lodge' petition
CS02	Councillor Clive Stevens	Local Plan enriches landowners, we need to do something in the future
CS03	Councillor Jo Sergeant	Discretionary licensing for Avonmouth village

CS01**Members' Forum statement from Conservative Group Councillors****Subject – Stoke Lodge Playing Fields**

MEMBERS' PUBLIC FORUM STATEMENT from Cllrs Mark Weston, John Goulandris, Peter Abraham, Geoff Gollop, Liz Radford, Steve Smith, Chris Windows, Matt Melias, Claire Hiscott

SILENCING OF THE "WE LOVE STOKE LODGE" PETITION

We are seriously concerned that a petition, which has crossed the threshold for debate in this chamber, has been blocked by the Council on the pretext that debate might somehow damage the Council's future legal position. That could be said of many petitions and we hope censoring petitions will not now become the norm in Bristol.

Thousands of our constituents have signed this petition in the expectation that they would be able to engage in the democratic process. For some of our younger citizens this would have been their first taste of democracy - sadly now leaving a bitter taste in their mouths. Their faith in the Council will have been shaken and they will be genuinely puzzled as to what the Council fears from debate of this issue. By stifling discussion in this way, councillors and the public who have not been directly involved in this issue, will remain very much in the dark as to the arguments for and against a fence at Stoke Lodge. A missed opportunity!

The key issues, which we don't believe can have any effect on the Council's legal position and in our view are simply statements of fact, are:-

1. Bristol City Council is the owner of the freehold of Stoke Lodge.
2. Stoke Lodge has seen multiple shared use since its purchase in the 1940s.
3. Many schools have played sport at Stoke Lodge without the need for a fence.
4. Ofsted have confirmed in writing that no fence is required for pupil safeguarding.
5. The fence is galvanised steel, concreted into the ground, 2 metres in height and approximately 1.5 kilometres in length. It encloses the greater part of Stoke Lodge.
6. The fence hinders community access to important open space.
7. Local politicians of various political colours do not agree with the need for a fence and certainly not a permanent fence of this size and type.

We trust that we will not see any further attempts to close down democratic debate.



CS02

Members' Forum statement from Councillor Stevens

Subject – Local Plan enriches landowners, we need to do something in the future

Dear Mayor

Every five years or so Bristol Council's Planning Authority awards millions of pounds to some lucky landowners.

The giveaway date was yesterday. Yesterday was when the new Local Plan was issued showing new sites allocated for housing. Often the land allocated is derelict or ex car parks, unwanted industrial sites and this time includes a number of car dealerships. The lucky landowners will receive a value uplift of maybe a million pounds per acre possibly more.

This new money isn't coming from the Council itself but is at the expense of those needing affordable or simply reasonably priced housing and hinders the City's progress towards carbon neutrality because developers who buy the newly allocated, higher priced land will say "I can't afford to build cheap housing or be carbon neutral because the land price is too high". And national laws permit this excuse because the provision of affordable housing and carbon neutrality are subject to a viability test, which means if the land price goes up then you don't have to follow all the planning policies.

In fact one landowner was so overwhelmed with the Planning Authority's generosity that they celebrated by felling all the trees on their newly allocated land; the old Wyevale Garden Centre in Brislington West. I expect they got an early tip off. I think that Councillors Harriet Bradley and/or Jos Clarke will provide you with more detail and I do hope that replacement trees can be enforced.

A national Land Value Tax has been proposed by many as a solution to this five yearly bonanza but while we have a Conservative Government that's unlikely to happen. Why? Because the system I describe benefits the very individuals and businesses that vote for and fund that Party.

The next land value giveaway will be around the year 2024, so we have time to consider a local approach whereby the Council itself and people of Bristol will benefit instead of those who already have more than their fair share of Bristol's wealth.

Councillor Clive Stevens (Clifton Down ward)



CS03

**Members' Forum statement from Councillor Jo Sergeant
Subject - Discretionary licensing for Avonmouth village**

The private rented housing sector has grown in Bristol (like the rest of the UK), due to the prohibitive costs of buying a home and the increase in commoditisation of lower cost accommodation. As the Bristol City Council proposal for discretionary licensing schemes states:

'there can also be drawbacks if large concentrations of private rented properties become established in an area which impact on the areas social and community cohesion. Poorly maintained and or badly managed properties together with transient or disruptive tenants have an influence on the local community. Private absentee landlords may also not have a connection with the local community and as a result may not be aware of the impact their tenants may be having on the local community and residents

This very much applies to village of Avonmouth, which, due to its proximity to employment opportunities on the Avonmouth & Severnside industrial areas, has seen an increase in its transient population. The village has seen an increase in fly tipping and poorly managed household rubbish. Unwanted furniture and white goods, along with general household detritus, can often be found dumped outside properties between tenancies, official or otherwise, with no arrangement for their collection. Bristol Waste bins/boxes are incorrectly used, leading to their non-collection and are often left out on pavements all week and their contents end up strewn along local streets. This is because, whilst happy to profit from multiple rents, some landlords are not taking responsibility for their properties or their tenants. They don't always provide suitable storage. Nor do they always brief their tenants (whose first language is not always English) on their responsibilities and the methods for waste disposal.

Standard legislation is not working so I am requesting that discretionary licensing is introduced to Avonmouth village so that residents can benefit from the additional powers that Bristol City Council can exercise with regard to landlord regulation and responsibility. It may not solve all the problems with waste management in that area but it will be a start.

