

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

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Subject</b>
CS01	Cllr Richard Eddy	Ancient Hedgerow Destruction at Yew Tree Farm
CS02	Cllr Carla Denyer	Gaza Ceasefire
CS03	Cllr Mohamed Makawi	Gaza Ceasefire
CS04	Cllr Tessa Fitzjohn	Bus Cuts
CS05	Cllr Patrick McAllister	Gaza Ceasefire

**CS01**

**Members Forum statement from Cllr Richard Eddy**

**Subject: Ancient Hedgerow Destruction at Yew Tree Farm**

As the Mayor and Cabinet will know, an abortive attempt to destroy protected ancient hedgerow was made earlier this year. The outrageous action was only stopped due to the heroic acts of the farmer at Yew Tree Farm - allied with citywide supporters - and the ensuing 'stand-off' was widely reported in the local media.

Nevertheless, the incident revealed that Bristol City Council had lamentably failed to uphold its obligations to protect ancient hedgerow - enshrined in national legislation - due to a bureaucratic error, in that it had failed to respond to the legal landowner's application within the prescribed period of time. The Council's Legal Services and Development Management Officers acknowledge this manifest failure but claim Pontius Pilot-like that they are now unable to do anything meaningful to protect ancient hedgerow here - which was recently accorded the status of a local Site of Nature Conservation Interest.

On Tuesday, 7th November 2023, contractors engaged by Longmoor's destroyed ancient hedgerow at Yew Tree Farm, claiming the previous Planning regime gave them the right to do so. I understand that Planning Enforcement Officers attended on the day. Further destruction of the hedgerow was committed on Friday 10th November 2023.

This gives rise to three related points:

Firstly, now that Longmoor contractors have achieved their vandalism at Yew Tree Farm, does Bristol City Council intend to take action against the landowner due to their abject failure to create the breach in the location indicated in the original application (contrary to Regulation 6 of the Hedgerow Regulations)?

Secondly, if not, why not (contrary to national legislation)?

Thirdly, I understand there is a proposal to plant 250 metres of replacement hedgerow somewhere else on site. Is Bristol City Council aware of this and have relevant Officers been consulted about this proposal, given that the site is now designated a SNCI?

**CS02**

**Members Forum statement from Cllr Carla Denyer**

**Subject: Gaza Ceasefire**

'School Strike for Palestine', a group of Bristol school children, have been collecting signatures on their petition asking the four MPs who represent Bristol to call for a ceasefire in Israel-Palestine. Four weeks ago they invited the MPs to meet them outside City Hall to receive the petition. None of the MPs responded, therefore organisers invited me to meet them and accept the petition. I promised to present it to the Council.

I share their concerns. The abhorrent situation in Palestine and Israel must end. We were all horrified by the cruel Hamas attacks, which broke international law. But this atrocity does not in any way justify the mass human suffering we have seen in Gaza, a level of bombardment of civilians - including many innocent Gazan children - that has shocked the world.

There is no military route to long-term safety and security for the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, as they both deserve. Instead, there must be a political settlement, based on the requirements of international law and beginning with an end to the illegal occupation.

When I joined a School Strike for Palestine demo on College Green a few weeks earlier, I heard one of the young people say: "I don't have to lie in bed wondering if the roof is going to crash down on top of me like children in Gaza do." It nearly broke my heart. No child should even have to imagine such an event happening, much less have it happen to them.

I believe that as political leaders it is our responsibility to listen to people and use our platform to stand up for what is right. I invite councillors from all parties, and the Mayor, if you agree and want to use your platform to call for a lasting ceasefire and a just political settlement in Israel-Palestine, please join me in the lobby in the break for a photograph with the petition.

**CS03**

**Members Forum statement from Cllr Mohammed Makawi**

**Subject: Gaza Ceasefire**

The city of Bristol is a sanctuary of 91 languages and dialects and includes people from all over the world. Bristol, I am addressing you with the voice of humanity and justice for the defenceless residents of Gaza, who reject the rhetoric of bombs, bullets, murder, and crimes against humanity committed against them.

The unprecedented escalation in violence in Palestine and Israel has resulted in a death toll of over 1,400 Israeli Killed by Hamas and 17,000 Palestinians, with over 6,150 Palestinian children and 4000 women killed by the Israeli forces.

A temporary pause in this conflict from the 24th November 2023 was welcome, and we hope this was just the first step and is repeated urgently into the ending of this conflict and preventing further loss of innocent life.

Since 9th October, over 2.2 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, half of which are children, have been subject to collective punishment; Israel has cut off all food, water, electricity, fuel and medical supplies and has been preventing the entry of international aid convoys through the Rafah crossing. Israeli forces have bombed hospitals, schools, residential buildings, and businesses. Over 1.4 million Palestinians have become internally displaced.

They are not just numbers, but innocent souls that were bombarded by warplanes in their homes and hospitals, not military barracks. Their bodies were buried under the rubble. Children, the same as our children. Mothers & fathers, the same as our mothers and fathers. As democratically elected representatives, we must stand with justice and reject wars & call for peace, and stand against genocides, ethnic cleansing, war crimes, forced displacement, and occupation.

The Green party called for cease-fire from the beginning of the conflict, & I hope the Mayor & our Bristol MP'S & my fellow councillors will do the same and listen to the people of Bristol & around the UK who have kept coming out every week to demand an immediate cease-fire & stop to the mass killing of the people of Gaza, as well as an end to the occupation to free Palestine for good.

Let's do the right thing and be on the right side of history before it's too late.

**CS04**

**Members Forum statement from Cllr Tessa Fitzjohn**

**Subject: Bus Cuts**

In the last 10 days there have been two articles about the bus cuts in Ashton Vale. BBC Bristol reported that bus cuts have left the elderly 'isolated', and the South Bristol Voice's recent headline focused on the fact that residents have been left stranded by the scrapping of the No23 bus last April, which was a vital link for the Ashton Vale community.

Prior to the No 23, residents caught a shuttle bus that met the No 24 on Winterstoke Road, but this was removed just after the last local election in 2021. I held a public meeting in November 2021 to talk about this, which was attended by 80 residents, Councillor Ed Plowden and First Bus manager Chris Hansom. To everyone's relief, Chris managed to bring back the No 23 till April this year. Since then, we've had no direct contact with First Bus, but their public statements have said the No 23 is no longer commercially viable.

This is a small community of elderly and disabled residents, who are now forced to use taxis and try to find lifts or face staying at home. They are also poorly served with community facilities; the nearest surgery is 1.6 miles away and the nearest supermarket over a mile. There is only one local shop that takes only cash.

Since April they have fought an ongoing battle to make themselves heard. I have attended meetings with Dan Norris with residents Jane Caines and Shelagh Roberts. They have also written to the Minister for Roads and Transport, who wrote back saying; "Local Authorities have a statutory duty to consider whether to tender services where a commercial service is removed and is deemed socially necessary. Which includes key amenities and addressing social isolation."

They have gotten themselves on TV, in the papers and attended the 'Reclaim the Bus' protests and are determined to get their bus back, and quite rightly. This is shameful.

There are two other buses. The No 24 on Winterstoke Road nearly a mile away, and the M2 which doesn't travel to North St. Neither are a suitable replacement for the No 23.

I urge Mayor Rees to include Ashton Vale in the West Link trial as soon as possible.

**CS05**

**Members Forum statement from Cllr Patrick McAllister**

**Subject: Gaza Ceasefire**

I would like to note my previously submitted statement to the cancelled November Member Forum on the horrific conflict that has erupted in Israel and Palestine since October 7<sup>th</sup>. Sadly, the humanitarian crisis in Gaza has only gotten worse in that time.

The United Nations has warned that half of Gaza's population is starving.

Nearly 20,000 people have now been killed.

The war has been the deadliest ever for civilians and for journalists.

Hamas still holds Israeli civilians hostage.

The Israel-designated "safe zone" for nearly two million civilians is a desolate region smaller than Heathrow Airport.

And the United Kingdom is complicit in these ongoing atrocities through abstaining on the UN Security Council resolution to try and end the conflict.

I hope that every Member of Bristol City Council would condemn the unrestrained violence against civilians – from both sides of this conflict – and agree that all reports of war crimes must be investigated and prosecuted in full.

Likewise, I know that we all condemn the antisemitism, islamophobia and violence that has bubbled up from the depths of UK society.

I urge Bristol City Council to use every means it has at its disposal to call for a peaceful resolution to this conflict, and to support the communities most impacted here in Bristol. And I urge fellow councillors of all stripes to use their voices within their respective parties to call for the same: a ceasefire, an end to the siege, and for a just and lasting peace.