

**Mar 2016**

Apologies in advance to those that do not need to be included on this list.

It is aimed at residents of Knowle and anyone else that would like to know what is happening in the area, or has an interest in some of the citywide issues reported.

You are welcome to stay but please e-mail me if you want to be removed from the list. The E-Focus is an addition to, and not a replacement for, the paper quarterly Knowle focus

**Welcome to new Readers.**

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### **Arena Planning Application**

We are sending this e-focus out now to give everyone the chance to have their say on the Arena planning application. It is a very difficult idea for many to understand but the executive of the council (the Mayor) have to apply for planning permission as does any other developer when they want to build something. The regulatory side of the council has to act quite separately, like a court, to decide if permission should be granted. The planning committee are not looking at the finance or the business deal, but at whether it is sensible to build the arena where it is planned, from a point of view of the environment and issues such as transport. The committee, which has

Councillors from all parties can pass, refuse or pass with conditions.

The members on the committee will be under enormous pressure because so much public money has been invested in the scheme. So far the Mayor has resisted 90% of the suggestions for amendment but, unlike decisions made in council or by other committees, decisions of the planning committee have to be followed. I was a member of the committee but stepped down for this meeting because I had already made clear and public what my position would be. Committee members must not be in a position of prejudging a decision. Right from the start it has been the transport and parking issues that have been the controversial aspects of the development. On Tuesday the Mayor is expected to approve a 500 space car park very near the site. Whether or not you think this is a good idea it is clearly very relevant, but the planning application goes in without it. There is also no transport plan but a suggestion that this will be sorted out later. This is not the sort of thing that the average developer would expect to get away with.

Both Chris and I have submitted our view and we print them below.

Every resident has a right to submit their views in a statement to the committee and to make a short verbal statement summarising their views. If there are a large number of clear statements expressing the same support or concern it can affect the decision of the committee.

Written statements must reach the relevant officer by 12.00 on Tuesday. He is [jeremy.livitt@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:jeremy.livitt@bristol.gov.uk) The meeting will take place at @Bristol (harbourside) at 1.00 on Wednesday. It is likely to be a long meeting but public forum statements are at the beginning. Because of security concerns outside e-mails that have attachments are experiencing delay as they are put in quarantine so we suggest you put your statement in the body of the e-mail.

### ***Statement to Planning on Arena***

"Let us first say that we do not envy the job of this committee today, and having seen the papers, we have to say that we think if this was any other developer this application would not even have reached this committee. Having said that we, along with over 80% of our residents, are in favour of having the arena. We do though share their huge concerns about transport and parking issues and are deeply

concerned that our efforts to input positive ideas and solutions in to the process have been ignored. We therefore seek support from this committee to address the transport issues and implore you not to hope that these issues will be settled later after planning is granted, because they will not be."

"About 2 years ago there was an attempt to put in a 9-5 "residents" parking zone in Totterdown and a small part of Knowle ward. My colleague from Windmill Hill ward will no doubt give you the results of their on-line ward survey conducted in Totterdown about the issue, but the response in Knowle was 75% against, with the reasons being cost and the fact that the operating hours were to be at the time when there is NO parking problem. Around a year ago we started surveying opinion in the new situation of the arena.

Residents in the nearer part of Knowle, Totterdown and a small part of Brislington were asked their views. They were told that up to 3,000 cars might come in on a big night (council figure up to 3,600), that there would be 20-25 of these a year, that there would be 2-3 shows on a Saturday but of lower attendance and that there would be no parking at the arena (there may or may not be a small amount). The results were fascinating and showed that residents had a firm grasp of the reality. We suggested, to take the negative factor of cost out, that the Arena would meet most of the cost. In Knowle ward (not the closest) from 196 paper responses (20%+ of households in affected area with others responding on line) 40 straightforwardly demanded to be consulted on any scheme before implementation and declined to give any preferences for hours of operation. 20 demanded, as did everyone, to be consulted and put 'No' against all 3 operating windows of evening, Saturday and weekday days. 132 ticked 'Yes' to evenings, 129 'Yes' to Saturdays and only 94 to daytimes (even if free). We should qualify the 'Yes' because many wrote comments to say that parking should be provided at the arena, and a number put in colourful comments about the Mayor. A further 143 Knowle households completed on line and the pattern was the same, with many just demanding to be consulted and the daytime during the week causing the least interest. (2 were outside our mile target area.)

We think this gives the message clearly that any need for an RPZ comes from the presence of the Arena and that while residents can adapt to the reality they want to be treated fairly."

We have inserted here the relevant answers given in full council by the Mayor who is effectively the applicant here.

MEMBER FORUM – 10 November 2015 QUESTION LD 4

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Dr Mark Wright

Subject: RPZ

“The original RPZ in Kingsdown within my ward was carefully consulted upon and reviewed. It has been very, but not obviously, not universally popular; the foremost consideration was that it was for the benefit and protection of local residents. Can the mayor confirm whether or not that is still the first priority?”

“When any major development takes place, it is common for there to be some local negative effects for residents. These are very often dealt with by conditions on the Planning Approval to provide mitigation for residents. Can the Mayor confirm that he agrees and supports this principle and it should apply whether it is a private or public sector developer?”

Response to Question 1:

“Residents’ parking schemes have always been provided for the benefit of local residents, organisations and their visitors. This remains the case.”

Response to Question 2:

“Appropriate mitigation is required of all developers.”

"It seems, although positions keep changing, that the capital cost of a possible arena area RPZ will be met by the developer. That is good and as it should be. The Mayor though seems intent on, rather than mitigating, to exploit the residents for profit. We know, from the figures recently obtained by Neighbourhoods Scrutiny, that the operating profit of schemes, especially if there is no capital to pay, is huge. We therefore ask this committee to put in a condition, which says that consultation on a POSSIBLE local scheme should be done under the supervision of the Neighbourhood Committee of the Filwood, Knowle and Windmill Hill NP, and that if a scheme is set up, the charges be agreed by that same committee on a cover-costs/break-even basis rather than as a revenue raiser."

### **The 3 Lamps junction**

"Our survey also invited residents to express an opinion on the 3 lamps junction. At

present there is no right turn from Wells Rd to Bath Rd and beyond and this means that traffic wanting to make this move have to either drive in towards Temple Meads and do a u turn at "Fowlers" roundabout or some coming from further South clog up the already over-crowded Talbot Rd in Knowle-Brislington. There are 5 areas that would be positively affected by introducing this right turn (it can be done - we have measured)

1. Reducing the Talbot Rd problem. I am sure officers will not have shown members this road but it now regularly (partly because of a badly designed chicane) queues back across the Wells Rd to Broad walk on the morning run. These are cars and vans (theoretical heavy vehicle ban as smaller road) trying to get from Wells to Bath Rd.

2. Unclogging the Fowlers roundabout. At the moment there are a significant number of cars that drive past this first u-turn to loop around the Temple roundabout. This u-turn will be removed shortly so adding to the "Fowlers" problem. The outside inbound lane often has a queue waiting to u turn . This is clearly dangerous and a waste of peak road space. If the "white rabbit" car park is built at Kwik Fit there will be even more pressure and even more need to keep traffic away. The only way that traffic could enter this car park from the South is via the Fowlers roundabout.

3. Making it easier for South Bristol residents. Quite frankly we were taken aback by the strength of feeling on this issue and it was 95% + in favour (Knowle 182 paper and a further 141 on line) with many giving good examples. One Totterdown resident said it would be easier for him to get to the new recycling centre on Hartcliffe Way than it is to get to Days Rd even though as the crow flies it is not far.

4. The present layout is a nightmare for cyclists.

5. Reducing car mileage and pollution."

### **Other parking options.**

"Clearly the number of disabled parking bays is way short of what is needed and should be addressed, but we also feel that the option of St Phillips has been disregarded. The Kwik Fit site may well present traffic flow problems but it is clear that a promise has been made to the operator about parking. Bruton Knowles confirmed our view that landowners in the St Phillips area would seek to meet the market demand by offering surface car parking. We counted 1500 potential spaces and they could all be linked by a small bus on a loop. The distances are all walkable for the younger and fitter but we need to cater for all,

It is surely better to do this in a planned way, and it is essential that conditions are put on to make sure parking is pre-sold with tickets and that the sensitive areas are clearly advance labelled as 'No Parking'. This needs to be a condition. It is one thing

having a driver going down a pre-planned route to a known space- it is far worse to have them cruising looking for a space."

### **Three lamps to Cattle Market Rd "pavement"**

"This narrow pavement is at present shared use between cyclists and pedestrians. It is extremely dangerous and has already proved fatal. There has been much spinning of this being addressed but quite simply it needs widening and a separation of pedestrians and cyclists. We need a clear condition. This will not be cheap as a pedestrian bridge will be needed but it is essential. We cannot have more avoidable fatalities. Officers countered in a meeting that the problem could be dealt with by "event management" . This means cones in the Bath Rd. The sheer lunacy of this beggars belief.

We would finally wish to address the matter of consultation with local residents and response. We have carefully monitored the applicants and the planning authorities' efforts at local consultation. Needless to say there was NO information that was distributed regarding the earlier attempted RPZ.

With regard to the arena development there has been a lot of general publicity and if you know where to look a reasonable amount of information on-line. This is though, hidden behind sales pitch. No community events have taken place in Knowle and 1 event took place in Totterdown. This only happened after pressure from a local residents' group. It was held at extremely short notice and no notices were distributed in the Knowle ward. There was a claim that several hundred leaflets had been distributed but of the 150 people present only 1 had seen these. Word of the meeting was passed around in the case of Knowle by local Cllrs, and in Totterdown by various means but not by the council leaflet. Despite the church hall being packed with standing room only 20 mins was allowed for open questions. Half of this was lost in complaints about secrecy and lack of notice. A claim was made (on behalf of the developer although of course the edges were blurred) that it would be illegal to impose some conditions. Shocking! It is of course up to this committee to decide. There has been a constant stream of press releases which focus on the fact that 80% are in favour of the arena, but more concerning is the sometimes completely false information that residents' concerns have been addressed. The misinformation has been particularly concerning regarding the possible RPZ but other areas are of concern. Responses would have been higher but for this misinformation. Over the last 2-3 years we have seen the delivery time for this project slip backwards and we are not keen for further excessive delays. We therefore ask the committee to impose clear conditions so that the potential negatives, of what should be a positive, are taken away and we can move forward."

## **Broad Walk Mess**

The recurring problem is parking and driving on the grass verges. The vast majority of residents are very proud of the highly attractive trees and grass verges and applauded the bulb planting. Many have sent e-mails in support of us taking action. Unfortunately a very small number of residents and visitors have been damaging the verges with cars or vans. Council officers have long been lax about this but 7 years ago Chris and Gary got support from the local police team for a crackdown. It worked for quite a while but this winter it got out of hand again, so we distributed a strongly worded letter to all of Broad Walk with a reminder of the previous police action. There has been an immediate improvement but more remains to be done. The present powers for enforcement are there but messy and complicated. Gary instigated a review of council Bye-Laws prior to the mayor but, with nobody to drive them forward over the last 3 years, they have been bogged down. Unfortunately this is not unique. Two years ago we challenged the mayor about the issue when he made a show of bringing a cabinet meeting to the area. There was a promise to take action. Over recent months reminders to him and senior officers have produced blank looks and confusion. With the backing of a public meeting, Chris and Gary met with police and council officers and put forward plans which have been accepted. They are gathering backing from Councillors around the city, so we might well be able to spread the solution wider. Meanwhile Gary and Chris met with a number of households and council officers have agreed to finish off the job of getting the local mess sorted.

## **Residents' Parking**

Whether you like it or not, it is possible parking protection will be needed for Totterdown and lower Knowle due to arena visitors. We argued very strongly that residents should have a choice on principle and on design and hours. The Mayor has repeatedly said the schemes are not for money making, but in fact massively raised the charges on the one existing, and all subsequent schemes, saying he needs to balance the books. A scrutiny commission now reveals the operating profit is in £Ms and the cost of the first scheme in Kingsdown has already been paid off. The principle that the arena pay the cost of setting up any scheme has been won, but IF a scheme comes in should the residents' charge be fixed by the mayor for profit, or by local Cllrs to cover the running costs? You can influence that decision by sending in your comments to the planning committee  
<http://planningonline.bristol.gov.uk/online>

-Applications ref 15/06069/F or by signing our petition  
<http://www.bristolarenapetitions.co.uk/>.

### **Housing Benefit.**

We reported the awful state of this service because of lack of planning, and resources from above. Glad to report that, following pressure, the manager was able to tell council audit committee that more resources have now been made available, and the standards of service are now returning to acceptable levels. Still individual problems though, so if you need help please ring us.

### **Hydrogen economy**

Well done to Easyjet. Nearly 10% of the carbon emissions from aviation comes from planes manoeuvring on the ground. Easyjet are installing an energy recovery system to harvest energy from braking, and will top this up with small hydrogen fuel generators on each plane.

So Bristol airport will have hydrogen technology, but unfortunately Bristol will not, as the city's previous lead in this area was thrown away by the mayor. Just one of the pledges, given to the Green Capital judges by the mayor, when he picked up the title, that has been broken.

### **Green Capital**

So Bristol's year as European green capital is over. Gary was part of the cabinet prior to the mayor that submitted the winning bid and gathered together the Green Capital partnership.

A year ago Focus encouraged everyone to get involved and not to let the razzmatazz or the mayor put them off. It is unfortunate that despite the large amount of public money put in and the inevitable flood of companies, organisations and individuals who wanted to get involved, after the title was won a large % of Bristolians have had no involvement, or any idea what it was really about.

That is not to say that good things were not done, and a lot of dedicated people worked hard to make a difference. The original purpose involved demonstrating how real jobs and prosperity can come from doing things in a new and sustainable way. A detailed examination will hopefully work out what the lasting benefit has been, but unfortunately the mayor is refusing to disclose the detail of where your £8M was spent. We think this is wrong and our Mayoral candidate, Kay Barnard, has pledged to open the books if elected. Other candidates have followed her lead and we have

launched a petition -

[http://ldbristol.nationbuilder.com/bristol\\_green\\_capital\\_accounts](http://ldbristol.nationbuilder.com/bristol_green_capital_accounts)

### **Council Tax Increase and Service Cuts**

For the last 2 years Bristol city council had vastly underestimated the amount of council tax that it would collect in the coming year. This has led to justification from the administration to cut more services than necessary or put up council tax. (actually both) . Liberal Democrats have pointed out the anomalies and this third year voted against the estimate that was sent to government. Our figures were right for the previous 2 years and could have led to a council tax freeze or less service cuts. We have said this year that the figures are wrong by £3M+, and we are backed up by central government calculations, but we have been refused the right to have this debated in the council budget debate. During the coalition government the mayor, supported by other parties, refused to accept the extra government grant available in return for a freeze. This was a serious mistake and has cost Bristol taxpayers millions and will continue to do so. There is no freeze grant under the new government but the accounting discrepancies suggest that the increased social services investment, which we support, could be achieved without such a large Council Tax increase.

### **Road Schemes**

What is wrong with the mayor's road priorities and delivery?

1. Clarence Rd (near Temple meads) Cost £400,000 Managed to upset cyclists, car users and local residents. Had to be dug up and redone – initially unsafe.
2. Airport Rd Cost £720,000 cycling on pavement scheme that would have been dangerous to cyclists and pedestrians. No checking of road safety issues, no local consultation until too late to amend. ABANDONED after money spent on unworkable design.
3. Queenshill Rd (Knowle Park School) Cost under £20,000 - simple scheme pushed by parents, school and Councillors finally delivered after much delay. Has produced significant change and safer route to school.
- 4, Axbridge Rd Cost to council NIL ( around £50,000 from unused planning levy). Design hampered by Tesco lorry access, but safe crossing and improved safety to those emerging from side roads. Despite chasing, delayed 3 years by mayor. Work now in progress.

5. Ilminster Avenue School crossing. Cost to council NIL (money from unused planning levy) Case solidly made by parents, school and Councillors. Promises made in full council meeting repeatedly broken. Latest estimate March 2016

6 Redcatch Rd crossing road-table at park, and Woodbridge Rd one way. Combined cost under £30,000 . Major school route and Redcatch speed concern. Woodbridge Rd residents have been clear, organised and united. Delayed. Latest promise “This calendar year”.

There is a tragic pattern here where cheap locally well researched schemes have been hampered and delayed, whilst the grandiose, some of them dangerous, get waved through without proper care. This must change!!

### **Buses**

We recently reported that First bus were admitting to a shortfall of 150 drivers. We said that it was poor pay structure. Glad to report that the massively profitable organisation has managed to find the money for a significant pay rise for new recruits in particular and this has plugged the gap.

Unfortunately congestion in Bristol is so bad that drivers are running over their legal hours and services are being cancelled as a result. The 50 and 51 have suffered badly and we are working with Lib Dem Councillor Tim Kent who has posted this survey - [http://ldbristol.nationbuilder.com/hengrove\\_and\\_whitchurch\\_bus\\_survey](http://ldbristol.nationbuilder.com/hengrove_and_whitchurch_bus_survey).

### **Redcatch Park News**

Consultation started at recent Friends of the Park meeting on even more improvements . These include a revamp of the car park and entrance to provide disabled parking spaces and a safer pedestrian walkway. There are plans for a new small entrance off Redcatch Rd, and a new pathway from the Stoneleigh back lane entrance, where extra drainage is also being considered but may not be effective. The Redcatch Rd entrance is being looked at to see if alternative gates would be viable. One side of the Redcatch Rd Privet hedge has Honey Fungus and will need to be replaced so options and costs are being investigated. A bird nesting survey will take place before any decisions are made.

### **Salcombe Road Affordable Housing**

The social housing on 1/3 of Salcombe Rd site has finally cleared all the hurdles and

over 35 dwellings will start to be built in 2 months - 11 x 2 bed, 2 x 3 bed shared ownership, 7 x 1 bed apartments, 4 x 2 bed apartments, 10 x 3 bed homes, 1 x 2 bed wheelchair accessible apartment. Suggestions for a suitable name for the access road are welcome. The major upgrade to the remaining park area will follow the construction. The land sale proceeds are 100% ring-fenced for parks and most of it local. We can now start to deliver other local schemes. Everywhere else in the city is starved of improvement funds.

### **Noisy Neighbours**

Not good news from noise pollution team. Ridiculous cuts to budgets a couple of years back now mean that it is practically impossible to provide a decent service to those suffering with noisy neighbours. Gary has had discussions with the police who need an effective council service to allow them to do their job. We continue to campaign on this.

### **Planning Applications in Knowle**

15/05570/P - 1 x 2 bed & 2 x 1 bed flat, and ancillary building 131 Broad Walk.

16/00439/LA - Listed Bldg - Removal of catafalque wooden box in Non-conformist chapel Arnos Vale Cemetery & widening of doorway in East Lodge.

<http://planningonline.bristol.gov.uk/online->

### **Local Green Space Events in Knowle.**

#### **ARTS IN THE PARK FEST**

On Sunday 11 September 12 - 5 in Redcatch Park

Calling all entrants - artists, sculptors, musicians, crafts people, food providers,  
[www.elknowle.wix.com/elknowle](http://www.elknowle.wix.com/elknowle)

#### **FAMILY NATURE DAY** By the pond

25 July at Callington Road Nature Reserve

#### **REDCATCH COMMUNITY PLANTING DAY**

Look out for notices in park on FB and [www.friendsofredcatchpark.com](http://www.friendsofredcatchpark.com) for flower planting border of the Jubilee Hedge. Suitable for all ages.

**DON'T LOSE YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE!** Election of your 2 local Knowle Councillors and Election of City Mayor on Thursday 5th May - make sure you are registered to vote [www.bristol.gov.uk/voting-elections/register-to-vote](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/voting-elections/register-to-vote) or ring 0117 9223400. For postal vote - [www.bristol.gov.uk/voting-elections/postal-voting](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/voting-elections/postal-voting)

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