

# ON KNOWLE FOCUS

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## LIBRARIES UNDER THREAT?

Lib Dems gave warnings to the other parties a year ago, that, by supporting the mayor's 2013 budget, which included £1.1M cuts to the library service, closures were intended. **We were the only party that voted against the budget.** A different approach was needed and we had already pointed out that the scale of cuts was unnecessary. During the years we ran the council none were closed and brand new libraries were actually opened! We recognised that other services, which would cost the council money to provide separately, could be delivered through the library network. A classic example was the presence of a customer service expert one day a week in Knowle library. They gave face to face service for some of the more complicated problems, or for people who found the on-line or 'phone service unusable. This was introduced by Gary, but cut by the mayor, despite it being a very cheap way to give personal service. Local residents now face a long journey to Victoria St and complaints are rising. As predicted 7 libraries are identified as in danger, although this decision has now been **deferred by the mayor until 2016 following our campaign.** and others including Knowle are threatened with shorter opening hours. One of the libraries the mayor looked to close is Wick Rd in Brislington. Not only would that be damaging for Brislington, left without a library, it would mean extra customers for Knowle, but within shorter hours. The second stage of consultation has begun, so please make sure that you have your say by visiting the library or going to the council website:- <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/leisure-and-culture/future-bristolibraries-consultation> The lending of books is a vital service but libraries provide much more and we need to take a positive attitude about how they can provide even more services. **SAVE OUR LIBRARIES!**

### PUPILS ENJOY TREE PLANTING DAY



### EVEN GREENER KNOWLE

Chris' campaigning has paid off. Eight fruit trees were planted by Knowle Park Primary pupils in Redcatch Park at the beginning of March, along with the final planting of the Jubilee Hedgerow. His further lobbying has secured the planting on **31 March** of a further 21 trees - Silverbirch, Beech, Red Oak and English Oak, American Indian Beam, Chestnut, Cedar, Plain and other varieties (from community funding from local developers). Volunteers to help please. The ambitious planting plan is almost complete. **Be part of it!** On 17th March Knowle Park School enthusiastically welcomed the council tree team to assemblies as they gave an educational talk and offered free fruit trees to the pupils. Parents are making the decisions and we will report back on how many take up the offer..

**ARENA PLANNING?** The arena continues towards completion (2018?) and will give a further financial boost to the city, but questions remain regarding parking and traffic. Many will arrive by public transport, many will not, and with 12,000 capacity, plus the thriving new industry sector, a clear plan is needed urgently. A deadline announced only weeks ago has passed without even an outline plan. This is vitally important as the measures needed, assuming they are deliverable, need to be costed and put into the budget for the arena. One measure is a parking scheme to protect residents in Lower Knowle from arena parking overspill; the cost of this cannot be dumped on residents. Another possible cost is park and ride as there is little public parking on site and there is nowhere available within a sensible walking distance.

**THREE LAMPS** The current design of the three lamps junction means that traffic from Wells Rd to Bath Rd goes past Temple Meads, around the one way system and back. The new design means an even longer diversion. Transport has now agreed with the point Gary has been making for several years, that the junction needs a redesign, but no money has been put in the budget - another bill the Arena will have to meet. We continue to push on all of these areas because, whilst Bristol can benefit from the arena, it must not be to the detriment of residents in Knowle, Totterdown and Brislington. Council officers have accepted the argument from Gary that the three lamps needs to be improved before the arena is completed.

## **TEMPLE MEADS ENTERPRISE AREA**

**More money for new investment !** Nick Clegg made a visit recently to announce a further £18M of investment funding for the enterprise area at Temple meads. When the coalition government came to power they replaced the failing Regional Development Agency with a Local Enterprise Partnership. In Bristol's case this was judged by the Sunday Times business section as the most successful across the country. The LEP is a partnership between councils and local business, and in Bristol it had the huge advantage of building on the partnership between the 4 local councils, who have been working very well together in recent years. It also had a good base with the huge unfulfilled potential at Temple Meads, and good business leaders. The initial phase providing facilities for new high tech and creative industries is bursting at the seams - more firms and ideas come forward all the time.

**TEMPLE MEADS** Just announced- an £11M scheme to remove Temple Circus roundabout. So what would we get for £11M? Not much according to the plans. The planned transport hub next to Temple Meads (where the new main station entrance will be) has been massively downgraded and it will now be impossible for traffic from the South to get to Temple Meads without a long detour. Frankly the scheme still in consultation is a disappointment. The joint scrutiny committee - councillors of all parties across 4 councils - is extremely critical of Temple Meads plans and the failure to produce a coordinated travel plan.

## **THE GOTHIC PILE AND ITS TWIN**

Residents in Tennis Rd, Redcatch Rd and nearby, who were disturbed by the 'Stag and Hen' parties at Gothic Mansions, watched the trial of Michelle Simmonite with interest.. She was prosecuted for repeated breaches of a noise abatement order at 20 Knowle Rd, another of their businesses. This was a retrial and there had been much delaying of the process. The company also ran a distraction defence, claiming they were being picked on unfairly, but did not impress the magistrates. They found the evidence of the defendant and one of her management team to be contradictory and not credible. Fines and costs were £28,000, plus legal costs. It has been temporarily quieter at Gothic Mansions over the last few months leading up to this trial and the appeals. They have now made appeals to the Planning Inspectorate against refusal of planning permission to run their business as they were before, and a full hearing has been granted. Many residents have been puzzled that in the run up to the planning appeals they have received coloured 'newsletters' from mansion management. Is this all for show or are they turning over a new leaf? We suggest you speak to mansion neighbours who of course did not get the 'newsletters'. **Please comment again by 14 April (3 copies required) to The Planning Inspectorate, 3/23 Wing, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, BS1 6PN or at [pcs.planningportal.gov.uk/pcsportal/ViewCase.asp](http://pcs.planningportal.gov.uk/pcsportal/ViewCase.asp) Quote ref A/14/2227376 & C/14/2227336** (People that supplied evidence to the police about one of the Gothic Mansion team, and his activities in May last year, will be interested to know he was convicted of a public order offence.)

## BRISTOL SOUTH SKYLINE WALK



A recent press launch in Perrett's Park was attended by people from an unprecedented 12 community groups from across South Bristol who have come together to develop this major new attraction. This is an amazing project showcasing all our open spaces, parks, green ways and allotments. At the same time we are delighted to hear that the new accessible zigzag path to the playground in Perrett's Park is nearing completion. Well done COPPS! We know that a number of Knowle residents use Perrett's Park, which is just outside our ward boundary, so we have worked closely with the Lib Dem ward councillors. Many said that the pathway was dangerous for wheelchair users and buggy pushers and Gary is glad that he was able to put in the funds for that, as well as the new playground, before the mayor took over.

## TAX DODGING

Thanks to the Lib Dems, the Coalition Government has already done much more on tax avoidance than any other government before - having collected £24bn in the last 4 years by closing tax loopholes. Thanks to steps the Lib Dems have forced the Conservatives to accept, the tax-man will collect around £9bn more of previously dodged taxes than before 2010. However, we can still do much more. "I was shocked to hear media reports claiming that HSBC helped thousands of wealthy clients avoid tax from countries all over the world. The government has closed many of the loopholes and taken action to get back taxes lost in Swiss bank accounts, but there is more to be done. I will push for more to be done in Europe and at an international level to tackle tax havens and financial secrecy" writes PPC Cllr Dr Mark Wright.

**STOP PRESS** - New govn funding secured to build 1,700 houses in South Bristol! Also there has been great interest in the 35 homes on the Salcombe site and work will commence once current consultation process completed. Incidentally at a NP meeting Labour candidate Mr Orlik strongly objected to the use of this land for home building - yet now he says "Get these homes built!" Quite a U turn!

Chris and Gary with other Friends of Redcatch at launch of Skyline Walk



## COUNCIL BUDGET UPDATE

Knowing the mayor could ignore many minor budget amendments our strategy was to try to progress some capital schemes, and suggest a return to the council tax freeze which we had before the mayor. We had already managed to get £10M for the Colston Hall, which will ironically save the council money, and £500,000 to help clear the backlog in local traffic schemes. **We campaigned for the Hartcliffe Way recycling centre and the Bristol East Pool to go ahead**, but although these were voted for, the method of paying for them suggested by Labour is likely to cause difficulties. Sadly these will now be considerably delayed and may not happen at all.

**The other 3 parties and the mayor voted against our council tax freeze. Three years of increase have cost the city £11M in government grant and the average citizen over £200 so far. The surrounding authorities have all managed to maintain our practice of a Council Tax freeze. If other councils can do it so can we.**

It is regrettable that Bristol Labour party (who in the past fought to close Marksbury library but Lib Dems managed to retain) have been claiming to have put an extra £1.2M into libraries, when the net effect of various budget changes is tiny in this area. Most Councillors agreed on measures to use some spare cash more effectively than the Mayor would have done. But of course he could just decide to ignore the views expressed.

# A Record of Hard Work



## YOUNG PEOPLE IN KNOWLE

Following the big interest in last month's list of activities and groups for older people Chris has compiled a list of the wide range of facilities for young people and children. Contact the venue or speak to Chris for more info.

**Redcatch CC** - Toddlers, Mmmmbop music & movement pre-school, Street Dance.

**Wells Rd** - Busy Bee and The Court House Day Nurseries.

**St Gerard's** - Sunshine Pre-School.

**St Martin's** - Sunshine Pre-School.

**Church of the Nazarene** - Kids Group, Toddler's, Young People's Group.

**Knowle Methodist Church** - Toddler's Brownies, Guides and Fun Sunday.

**Buller Rd** - Knowle Sea Cadets.

**St Martin's Church** - Youth Club, Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Beavers, Cubs, and Scouts, St Martins Crew - youth drama.

**Jarman Hall Sydenham Rd** - Ballet, Under Fives, Youth Club, Girl's Brigade.

**Jubilee Pool** - various swimming clubs

**Broadwalk Shopping** - "I Play" Soft Play

**Cricket Ground** - Junior Cricket Club, Junior Tennis Club.

**Knowle Library** - Bounce & rhyme, story time, crafts, Saturday stories.

**Redcatch Park Pavilion** - Knowle East Youth Projects - Jubilee Juniors and The Catch Youth Clubs.

**NB** Key Teas provide refreshments at the park pavilion. It is also a volunteering opportunity for anyone from 18-100, to gain experience and help to raise funds for our youth clubs and provide support for Brandon & Milestone Trusts.

**Knowle** is a great place to live for old and young with wonderful open spaces, lots of facilities and it is the safest ward in Bristol!



## BUS MATTERS

**Shelters** - Once again Chris has approached the Council for a shelter to be installed at the top of Redcatch Hill, similar to the one he secured in Broad Walk. This is now being investigated for the city bound buses, and with the possibility of one for the return stop.

**Bath Bus Route A4 Airdecker** - Concerned residents contacted Chris about the two proposed bus stops along Wootton Park for the new A4 Airdecker Airport Service from Bath to Lulsgate. With the heavy traffic in this stretch and the difficulties of lane changing for the bus stop, it seemed dangerous and impractical. After Chris put these problems to Traffic Management they have now decided not to adopt this scheme but to find alternative stops elsewhere.

**The 36 Bus** - Chris and Gary are trying to rescue the mess created by the drastic cut to the 36 bus route. The two main areas of concern are the service from Knowle to Callington Road Hospital and to Hartcliffe, and also shoppers coming to Broadwalk Shopping Precinct. There may be a possible replacement operator on the horizon, but frankly without the mayor taking the powers of Quality Bus Contracts, and getting a grip on First, life is going to be very difficult. It is all very well kicking the individual motorist but we need the improvements in public transport. The mayor has not developed 1 new transport initiative.

**NB** Many thanks have been received by Gary and Chris from Redcatch Park users for presenting the **only** petition received by BCC demanding retention of our Parkie! Delighted you are staying Fliss!

**CONTACT YOUR COUNCILLORS - We are available every day not just at elections**

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