

ON KNOWLE FOCUS

www.knowlelibdems.com



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OUR BUS SERVICE



We have had huge feedback on the new 51 bus service. The fact it exists at all was acknowledged by council transport officers as a major miracle. They had accepted that it was going, because First told them so. They just sat on this information so that we were left with very little time to do the rescue. We also had little hard information on passenger numbers to give to Wessex, apart from concessionary-fare users. This led to them planning a stunningly good daytime frequency but leaving the peak times a little thin. This together with the terrible Bristol congestion has led to some gaps at peak times, but following a meeting between local councillors and Wessex management they are submitting a new timetable to the traffic commissioner with extra peak time buses. Until this comes into force they are slipping in extra buses as required to cover gaps. The off-peak will not change.

A secondary problem has been caused by some link up problems which has meant that

some of the 51 buses do not show up on the RTI electronic boards at the stops. We now have council officers and Wessex talking to sort this out.

Meanwhile First have been putting effort into making the 50 more reliable. They are still cancelling buses on other routes, but not on this one where they face competition. They have even put on extra 2s travelling the Wells Road. How quickly do you think this would all disappear if the Wessex 51 disappeared?

A New school for Knowle?

Gary and Chris have been lobbying for a new secondary school for Knowle for some years. They have been supported by the Lib dem party and we led a debate in council to highlight the need for a new secondary school in south Bristol. The government does not allow councils to open new schools themselves, so when senior council officers heard of plans for Bristol Grammar School to sponsor a new school they pointed them at Knowle. There was unfortunately a failure to communicate properly, which led to alarm as a media report made it look like there was a plan to take over the site of The Park (ex Merrywood School site). There has also been concern expressed in some areas about the bid to government containing plans for the school to be all-through and include primary places. There is a difficult balance on that issue, as parents want as much choice as possible but we do not want primary schools having difficulties because of over capacity. The bid does not specify a site and we would, if the government approve the bid, ensure that the secondary school and the valuable community facilities at The Park are protected.

A Record of Hard Work

Anyone for tennis?

Thank you to the many Knowle residents who backed up our campaign to keep tennis in Redcatch Park free to use. With some Bristol parks' courts in a poor shape as Redcatch used to be (until local effort secured a grant to improve them; at no cost to the council) the council is proceeding, in partnership with the Lawn Tennis Association, down a route of getting people to pre-pay and pre-book before they can play on park tennis courts. We seem to have won the day with Redcatch being excluded from the charging regime. Redcatch courts will of course need ongoing minor routine maintenance, but with some money from the tennis club hiring for league matches on a few Summer nights, and other small fees for commercial use, we will have that well covered. From next Summer we will also be looking at a small voluntary donation scheme for those who can afford it.



GAME, SET AND MATCH TO KNOWLE

The courts are a great local facility with people of all ages keeping them well used and of course they encourage many people to try the sport for the first time. For those that move on to the next level we have the excellent Knowle Tennis Club just 200 yards away.

School funding

One of the things that Lib Dems were most proud of in the last government was the pupil premium. Every state school (local authority run or academy) is funded from government by an annual payment for each pupil attending. The pupil premium tops up the amount for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds with an additional annual payment. Some of the qualifiers are a poor financial household (free school meals) or forces' children. Schools monitor the attainment of children when they enter the school, and qualifiers are on average found to be around a year behind their non-disadvantaged classmates. The school have the task of helping the qualifiers to catch up, for example by extra coaching. For instance Knowle Park has a significant number of qualifying children who are a distance behind when they enter the school, but almost all have caught up by the time they pass on to secondary schools. This is a massive achievement, as in any case the non-disadvantaged children progress at this school by more than the national average.



WILL I SURVIVE?

There is now a significant threat to all Bristol schools which have made so much positive progress over the last 10 years. The present government have moved to a policy of freezing schools grants. That made life a little tougher, but now there is a funding crisis of a hugely more damaging scale. The government is redistributing the national grant formula so that city children will get less and country children more. Whatever the arguments for this, it will have a very serious affect on Bristol schools. For example Knowle Park will lose over £600 every year for every pupil. Knowle Park is not even the worst affected but these cuts will undo a huge amount of the good work achieved over recent years, including that derived from the pupil premium.

Broad Walk verges and pavement parking

Very few issues have caused as much controversy not only locally but across the city. There are many places where there are angry disputes, between on the one side drivers who say they have nowhere to park, and pedestrians pushing buggies or disabled pedestrians forced to walk in the middle of the road. The position with Broad Walk verges was pretty clear cut with over 90% demanding action against the small minority who churn up the grass, but the enforcement powers of the council and the police are messy and complicated. We are pressing as hard as we can to stop people parking on the grass. A bye-law was clearly needed. However, providing a bespoke traffic regulation order for every street would cost a fortune. After some research we feel we have the answer, to not only our local problem but for the complicated issues across the city. In Milton Keynes they passed one simple Traffic Regulation Order that banned all verge and pavement parking. Enforcing that across the whole of Milton Keynes, and even more so to all of Bristol, would lead to many problems. They came up with the very clever policy of only enforcing the rule when a majority of local people actively called for it to be enforced. Where there is a call for enforcement, traffic wardens hand out tickets and this covers their costs. Where the community do not demand enforcement in extreme cases they fall back on the police powers relating to causing an obstruction. We are asking for this idea to be examined in detail but so far it seems to tick a huge number of boxes.



Local Road Safety Schemes

Road safety schemes in Axbridge Rd and outside Ilminster Ave school have been installed, but with some finishing flaws. Chris and Gary have again met on site with transport officers and agreed some changes that we are assured will be completed quickly. We will not be releasing payment until we have the detailed written assurances agreed. The Axbridge/Tesco scheme was in any event difficult because of Tesco's rights to have delivery vehicles on the frontage, but a further spanner has been thrown in by vandals who have sabotaged the drop bollards which were put in to help stop the irresponsible parking. A tree pit has been installed and a tree with protection will be planted soon with a yellow no parking box.

The scheme at Redcatch/ Woodbridge Rd when it goes in looks like it may be the last for some time as the Mayor is proposing to cut all funding for local traffic schemes.
SEE STOP PRESS BACK PAGE!

BRISTOL - SIMPLY THE BEST!

During 2016 Bristol has been voted one of the best 10 cities to live anywhere in the world alongside Melbourne and New York. And now has been placed 4th in 'Inspiring Cities' based on innovation and creativity after Miami, Bruges and San Francisco and beating London, Paris and Amsterdam.

St Martin's Surgery

Over 6000 patients used to be registered at St Martin's surgery. Since the scare a couple of years ago, when two part-time doctors found themselves running the surgery alone after long serving doctors retired, the NHS stepped in to bring in new managers. But a third of the patients voted with their feet and the decision now is to close down the site. Other practices in the area have increased capacity so there should be no barrier to people getting registered locally, but obviously some will be annoyed about having to change. If anyone has problems with transferring get in touch.

Budget proposals

In an effort to balance the books the mayor is proposing some drastic cuts in services. Some of the proposals are worded in such a way that a clear idea of the results are difficult to work out but cutting out all the school crossing patrols and halving spending on parks are just two of the list that have upset residents. We will keep you informed.



KNOWLE CELEBRATES!

The Park Centre Daventry Road voted Community Venue Of The Year in Bristol, and **Andy's Haven** at the centre was awarded 'Outstanding' In Bristol in Bloom 'In Your Neighbourhood'. **Friends of Redcatch Park** also achieved 'Outstanding'. **The Community of Knowle** (joint entry of local green spaces groups) achieved Silver Gilt in the 'Pennant' category. Knowle Tennis Club teams came top in the Winter and Summer Leagues - (it has full disabled access and is keen to develop wheelchair tennis. www.knowlelawntennis.net)

STOP PRESS!!

COUNCIL BUDGET IN FURTHER CRISIS

In response to a failure to get the books to balance the temporary chief executive of the council has issued an emergency order banning all maintenance work unless it is specifically approved by him. This will lead to further problems as postponing some jobs will make them a lot dearer later. This latest measure follows on from what appears to be a serious failure to deliver promised savings over the last couple of years and the failure of the recent voluntary redundancy scheme to deliver expected savings. So it looks like we are going to be paying wages to maintenance staff and not giving them the materials to do the work. More and more people are reminding us that, when Lib Dems ran the council prior to us getting a mayor, council tax was frozen, services worked and savings were still being delivered as government grants shrunk. The governments remedy is to add to the confusion by forcing local councils in the West of England to have an elected metro mayor to add to the elected Bristol mayor and the historic role of Lord Mayor. BRILLIANT!!

MORE ALARMING NEWS JUST RELEASED - The freeze on council spending includes all Neighbourhood Partnership funding - Wellbeing Grants (including applications below), Traffic Schemes (Inc Woodbridge & Axbridge & Iminster Ave) and Clean & Green Projects

NEXT NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP FORUM MEETING - KNOWLE PARK CENTRE, Crossways Road, TUESDAY 28TH FEBRUARY 7 pm Everyone welcome.

Police priorities - Enforcement of the No Drinking Zone - Speed Watch on Redcatch Road
Knowle Well-Being Fund Applications

Friends of Redcatch Park - Northern Slopes - Bristol Noise

NEXT NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP MEETING

VICTORIA PARK BAPTIST COMMUNITY CENTRE, Sylvia Avenue WEDNESDAY 8TH FEBRUARY 7PM All welcome to discuss green spaces and parks improvements

The Bristol Corporate Strategy consultation can be found at www.bristol.gov.uk/corpstrategy. **NB** Have your say on proposals for the future of services by using the online survey

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



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