

ON KNOWLE FOCUS

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Peter hands over the keys to Azim



BROADWALK NEWS

So after more than 27 years we have lost Peter and Judy Reid to retirement. With an experienced newsagent Azim Ahmed taking over, the shop will no doubt continue to run smoothly. We are so pleased to retain our local shop and everyone we are sure will miss Pete's dry humour and commitment to our community but we warmly welcome Azim to Knowle.

SALCOMBE ROAD

Parks improvement projects across the city are almost at a standstill with little or no money, but we have now had confirmation that both the playground and the landscaping projects are officially started and are due to be completed by next spring. This is only happening because, having raised the money from the sale of 1/3 of the land for affordable housing, we managed to get it back when the mayor seized it. What the Parks dept. so far have failed to do is meet with interested local residents to agree preferences.

See meeting date page 2

SHOPPING CENTRE INVESTMENT

The new owners of Broadwalk Shopping Centre are proposing a major investment. The aim is to retain all the elements there now but try to attract some more varied smaller shops. There will definitely be some residential properties and the car park will be radically changed. Chris and Gary have already had one meeting and we hope steered the plans towards what local people want. The owners are holding a local exhibition of their latest thoughts on Saturday 21st July. They are not the finished article - local views will be taken into account and may affect changes.

REDCATCH PARK

The long awaited revamp of the main entrance, paid for by money raised from the land sale at Salcombe Road, has finally happened. The Friends and Gary and Chris are chasing some details which diverged from the agreed plan ie. the car bumpers are to be relocated and a gravel path will be laid from the walkway to the existing path.

The much requested top gate from Redcatch Road is also in progress, thanks to a generous local resident - look out for the grand opening soon.



Chief Executive Cover Up

After a smear campaign from the mayor, one of his trusted band put in a complaint about Gary's conduct regarding his statements on the appointment of the previous Chief Exec. After spending many thousands of pounds on an enquiry the independent expert firm concluded that, not only had Gary not broken any rules, but had throughout acted in the public interest. The council's audit committee have now agreed to look at the original actions of the mayor on the recruitment, management and the parting with the ex Chief Executive (and the £70k she received) The council auditors have promised to follow up on some issues raised.

Labour have now forced through, without any discussion, their decision to remove any other party member sitting on their cabinet, or holding any Chair positions on any regulatory committees or Audit. (The chair has the casting vote - as well as being a paid position - what price democracy?) They also made an attempt to grab the post of Lord Mayor every year instead of alternating between parties, but even some Labour backbenchers could not stomach this and rebelled. It has been stopped for now, but let's hope we will not return to the monopoly by one party as in the bad old days.

The Colston Hall

Gary has been a key figure in supporting the rebuild which will now proceed over the next 2 years, with the hall closed during that time. The building belongs to the council and despite the great new front entrance put in a few years back, most of the building is in very poor shape and would have had to shut completely without the revamp. The total cost is around £50M, with the council putting in less than 1/3, and afterwards getting a great new facility that will contribute both culturally and financially to the city, as opposed to an expensive wreck. Money has come from lottery funds and large and small commercial and individual donors. Maybe the trust should have been put in charge of the arena delivery!



Wessex now have contactless payment facilities on their buses so if you have forgotten your cash you can still travel. They have also taken over the running of the 515, so you can extend your journey from South Bristol Hospital to Imperial Park, initially at no cost, but I am sure they will bring in a small charge later.



Bristol Cultural Curriculum at Ilinster Avenue - Pupils learn Maths through dance and Power Dynamics through drama

Ilinster Avenue Primary School

Some years back it was one of the worst in the country with low expectations from staff, letting children down. New leadership has led to massive improvements with it now being in the top 10% nationally and a couple of years back judged the most improved school in the country. What most people do not know about is how involvement from the Bristol Music Trust (based at the Colston Hall) has played a key part. The lessons learnt are now being made available to schools around the UK with the help of U.W. E.

FALSE ALIBI FOR A SELL OUT - BRISTOL'S ARENA

In 2016 it was leaked from the council that, although mayor Ferguson had a good operator in place and had battled through many of the planning hurdles, he had failed to get in the right team and contracts to deliver the Bristol arena at a realistic price. Whilst the bling is important in the selling process, you have to be able to deliver on time and on price. It took mayor Rees a year to replace the developers with the reserve developers, whose specialist team, within months, had knocked £20m plus off the costs. Meanwhile, with the delay, construction cost inflation was pushing prices back up.

The trouble is, by the time they reported, Marvin was getting ready to dump the Bristol arena, and divert many millions of taxpayers infrastructure funding to back Malaysian company YTL's massive development plans at the Brabazon Hangar on the border of Bristol and South Glos. A new property and development manager was appointed by the mayor, who amazed members of scrutiny by saying that the basis of the Temple Meads travel planning should be torn up, and that the arena cost now included £18.5m for a car park. But he could not say where it would be. Meanwhile the previous lead council officer for the arena had moved to employed by YTL, to join the previous chair of the local enterprise partnership!

After earlier discussions, Marvin set off in the late autumn of 2017 to YTL's head office in Malaysia, with tickets and hospitality paid for by YTL. He was armed with a request for money and a brochure, which conveniently portrayed the enterprise zone and arena island without an arena! On his return in December he instructed KPMG to extend their value for money appraisal on the Temple Meads arena to include an appraisal of a YTL arena out of town, and his plans for Temple Meads development without an arena. He set the terms of the report which produced what he expected. The comparisons were of course false, and have fallen apart even in the short time that the Scrutiny Committee had to seek information and put questions.

Liberal Democrat spokesman on the arena Gary Hopkins said, "I have been a Councillor for 16 years and I have seen all too many poor decisions and bad practice, but this debacle takes the biscuit. We have seen through the false alibi. Although the report to dump the Temple Meads arena has probably already been written for his cabinet, the mayor has a few hours left to change his mind, and back Bristol. The reasons why he should take the positive step to get the shovels in the ground at Temple Meads are numerous, and Councillors from all 4 parties in Bristol can see it. History and Bristol voters will not forgive a disastrous wrong decision."

Well, members from all 4 parties on the council, and a large majority of Bristolians will be glad that the excellent work done by the scrutiny committee has stopped the mayor from cancelling the Temple Meads arena, as he had clearly planned to do. The explanation given is that Scrutiny uncovered information for the mayor, from contractors, of which he was unaware, That, if true, is worrying in itself, but given his previous direction of travel, and the red herrings he has thrown in, everyone should be concerned that this is just another tactical pause. If the mayor resumes his plan to kill off the Temple Meads arena he will pay a very heavy political price and will not be forgiven. The final story will be published in our eFocus shortly - *see back page article*

REDCATCH / WOODBRIDGE ROAD SCHEME.

Due to the mayor's abolition of local decision making, the funds previously promised to complete this scheme, which were coming from levies on development, have been reallocated and new planning levy money which should be allocated locally has now been put into a citywide process. The scheme is now back on a waiting list and we continue to point out that this is a scheme already underway that has been consulted upon and that is already part paid for.

LOCAL MEETINGS - Parks Meeting 7pm Monday 16th July at Knowle Park School to discuss play equipment and landscaping of Paignton Park /Salcombe Road Rec. **Knowle Community Meeting** (replacing NP meetings) 7pm Wednesday 12th September at The Park, Daventry Road.. All Knowle residents invited to attend to give their views and hear the latest local news

LIBRARIES SAVED!

We welcome the recommendations to the libraries scrutiny group for a moratorium on the possible closure of 17 of the 27 libraries in the city. Labour's solution on closure was as expected, not thought out, and lacked any regard to combining buildings and paid staff and volunteers, working within a trust or similar organisation. Under the previous Lib Dem administration, 3 new libraries were commissioned, designed as a dual-use facility. Let's hope we keep our libraries for future generations of Bristolians.

PARISH COUNCIL?

The reallocation of the money for Redcatch/Woodbridge Road is another example of the advantage of a parish council. A parish council is a very local body (about the size of Knowle) with elected but unpaid Councillors and the ability to levy a small (£20 a year?) household charge and spend some of the planning money levy. It could be spent eg on our pool, library or parks. With the city council disintegrating into chaos and withdrawing all local funding its time may have come. We will be doing a full consultation on this but are happy to hear views now.

JUBILEE POOL CONSULTATION

Not content with a resounding petition and demonstration in support of saving Jubilee Pool from closure, the mayor saw fit to hold a pool strategy consultation, presumably to limit or close what pools we have. There were 461 responses to the Sports & Active Recreation Facility Strategy Consultation, 162 of which were specifically about Jubilee. All were in praise of our pool, which made a significant difference to the number of responses received. Well done, everyone. See the comments at <https://bristol.citizenspace.com/> The draft strategy is going to the cabinet for approval on 3rd July. Let's hope they take notice that we want to keep our pool!

THE 20MPH REVIEW

The side roads are not up for reconsideration, but some more major roads are. We know it is not universally popular, but we are supportive of retaining the 20mph roads in Knowle and possibly adding on Redcatch "Hill". Redcatch Road needs the planned physical changes outside the park, and hopefully that is now on its way. The ridiculous situation is the mayor conducting this review with no money to carry out any changes needed. Broad Walk has probably been as controversial as any road but we support it remaining 20mph as, although it looks straight and inviting, there are large numbers of children crossing it and the sight lines are often blocked by the lovely trees. There have been fatalities.

E-FOCUS As well as this paper copy we also have a sister e-Focus, which goes to many households in the area. Because of recent data protection legislation we have had to cut many recipients off the list. The e-focus covers some issues that we cannot get into the Focus and can be distributed quickly, so it is popular. If you wish to be on the list please send us an e-mail to say so. You can of course drop out at any time.

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