

Round and About In Knowle

PARK FEST -Saturday 16th May 12 - 4pm at The Park Centre, Daventry Road A free arts festival for all the family. Music, performance, art, crafts, food & refreshments.

YOUTH MOVES Congratulations to Youth Moves who have been nominated for the Bristol Young Heros Award. Four 16 year olds are being recognised - three for the Super Hero award and one for the Learning Hero award and Youth Moves has been shortlisted as Team of the Year. The award ceremony takes place on 1st May and we wish them all good luck and applaud the great work they are doing.. They deserve to be recognised. It is also great news that England rugby player Ellis George has agreed to be an ambassador for them.

GRAFFITI With the owner's permission graffiti on the end wall of a garage in Bayham Road has been successfully painted over. Next we are seeking the bank's OK to remove a large tag mark on their Wells Rd branch. All part of our target of 'Graffiti Free Knowle'.

POTHOLES - Five potholes on the slope to The Park Centre and a further eight around Knowle were identified in our regular street inspections. They were reported and we hope they will be filled soon.

POSTERS - Chris reported the successful removal of twelve large plastic posters fixed high up on street lamp posts in the area from Wedmore Vale to Broadwalk shops. Sadly more have recently appeared near The George and Talbot Hill. Will the company doing this please take them down! Enforcement have been informed and will be taking action soon.

MANHOLE COVER - Several reports from residents of Wells Road near Cleve House School about the noise nuisance from a loose manhole cover. Council workers are dealing with a pot-hole nearby and will inform Chris which of the services to contact to get this repaired.

STREET LIGHTING - Four street lights reported to us have now been fixed. If you see one not working please let Chris know the location and the number.

ILMINSTER AVENUE CROSSING

Just a correction to a report that said a few years back George Ferguson had blocked a pedestrian crossing outside Ilminster Ave Primary School. We did want a crossing and got an energetic campaign moving about it as reported in our Focus 2016, but traffic officers at the time said it was impossible because of the side roads and existing house driveways. That is why we had to settle for a raised table and road markings and bollards. The crossing patrol and the school confirmed this had improved matters a lot and current traffic officers have again confirmed that no light controlled crossing would be possible.

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

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ON KNOWLE FOCUS

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COMMUNITY DEFEATS KNIFEMAN



Rob Day recovering after the attack.

On Tuesday 25th Feb a stranger from Stockwood started a journey up the Wells Rd. He attacked a man on Red Lion Hill. Red Lion carpets sheltered the victim until an ambulance arrived and the police were called. The knifeman then continued his journey up Red Lion Hill and attacked another man in Subway and then chased his victim along Wells Rd outside the shops. The victim ran into the post office where he was protected by staff who blocked the door to stop the knifeman entering. Meanwhile two 'Have-a-Go' hero's came running over and chased the knifeman away from other passers-by. Police arrived with tasers and successfully arrested the attacker, but in the meantime one of the rescuers had been stabbed several times and had his shoulder dislocated in the struggle. Three people are in hospital but none with life threatening injuries and the knifeman

has been charged with three counts of attempted murder.

We know it is not terrorist related or to do with any organised crime. The victim at Broadwalk was South Asian but we do not know if the attack was racially motivated or purely random. There seems clearly to be a mental health issue but what exactly triggered this we do not know.

Gary says "Knowle is one of the lowest crime areas in Bristol but nobody can foresee a freak occurrence like this. What I do know is that local people acted with courage and integrity and we should be even prouder of our community than we were before. Things could have been much worse. I have known Rob Day, the intervener who was stabbed, for 30 years, and it is entirely typical that he put the safety of others before himself. It is also typical that when Gary spoke to him after his release from hospital he was praising the people who tried to help him after the incident. The police put out a statement of thanks and Chris and I have spoken to senior officers about bravery awards .

KNOWLE LIBRARY NEWS

Chris and Gary were at the recent Friends of Knowle Library group meeting. Along with nearly all other libraries a £3000 fund has been made available for library connected community events. Notices will be coming out. The group are of course short of facilities and equipment, so Chris was able to tell newcomers about the longstanding partnership with the Redcatch Community Centre (that he chairs) and offer practical help. This is certainly an improvement on the Mayor's mass closure plan for libraries, and Gary is liaising with the Bristol Libraries Forum which he helped to establish. The Mayor has published a libraries "strategy" that at least complies with the Lib Dem motion, which stopped the mass closure plan, but does not have any clear plans for securing the long term future of our libraries by providing council advice services through them.



BRISTOL ENERGY COMPANY

This is a power supply company, a wholly owned subsidiary of Bristol City Council. It was unwisely set up by the previous Mayor but has grown into a major scandal under this one. Nearly 90% of its customers are outside Bristol, it is losing money at a staggering rate and has so far swallowed nearly £40M of BRISTOL taxpayers money, with very little prospect of any of that being recovered. Yet another secret report has been shared with the Labour cabinet but not with all councillors. Gary is one of the short list of other Councillors that have seen this and is now taking the matter to the council's independent auditors. This is exactly what he did with the Klonowski (ex chief executive) pay off and auditors confirmed that this had been misleadingly described and refused to sign off the councils accounts until they were corrected. Gary is precluded from sharing details of the contents of the report publicly. The Mayor has disgracefully blocked a call-in challenge to his secret decision, so it is likely that a cross-party special meeting of council will have to be called.

COUNCIL BUDGET

The bad news is that, as with every budget since we got the mayoral system, Council Tax has increased by the maximum allowed by central government. Prior to the first Mayor cuts in government grants were covered by efficiency savings with Council Tax frozen in some years.

Opposition parties put forward amendments and these are voted upon, but in practice the Mayor can, and does, ignore others' opinions. Lib Dems found unused money in capital reserves that had been borrowed by the Mayor but not used; planning levy cash unallocated and also proposed cuts to the Mayor's private office/spin machine.

We proposed spending on children with special educational needs and disabilities which is in chaos in Bristol; support for bus service protection in advance of any franchising; parks investment; a young person's travel card and delivery of the much needed swimming pool in East Bristol. Our proposals were supported by both the Conservatives and the Green Party, with some rather silly excuses from Labour as to why they were voting this down. In previous years Labour have voted down our proposals and brought them back next year pretending to have invented the proposal themselves. Bristolians deserve better than this game playing. The unreal atmosphere was added to when Labour brought forward an amendment to their own budget to put up council house rents.

CHALLENGING TEMPLE ISLAND DECISION

Gary led a cross-party group of opposition Councillors challenging the decision to hand a 250 year unconditional lease to Legal and General to develop Temple/Arena Island. We know many people are very unhappy about the decision and the final death knell for the arena but "Call-ins" (challenges) are based upon the process, not on whether we like the direction or not. In this case 4 years of secret talks had led to an announcement of a mixed use development with a hotel and conference centre and lots of affordable housing. The fact is, and this was admitted, because no competitive tendering had been involved there could be no specification on what L and G should build. This would have been illegal. With a Labour majority on the committee we naturally assumed it would be thrown out, but a motion to do that was defeated as a Labour member rebelled. The committee could not agree though on what action to take and the meeting dissolved in confusion. Off the record "talks" led to a re-vote where the Labour chair got what he wanted as the rebel then changed their vote.

18 YEARS OF HARD WORK IN KNOWLE



Mary Page Lib Dem candidate for Mayor who will vote to abolish the role.

BACK HER TO SACK HER!

One of the reasons why so many people want to get rid of the post of Mayor is the cost. Chris recently got hold of two pieces of information that illustrate the problem. The Mayor's office costs nearly £1m a year to run with 11 staff. This is double the cost of the last Mayor's personal office and of course prior to that the leader of council had one part time member of staff.

Highly paid consultants are a problem too. It is understandable if one or two posts are temporarily filled by agency staff, while the right permanent member of staff is recruited, but the average length of stay for these people, who are

paid through their own personal private companies to reduce tax/national insurance, is now 50 weeks and the average DAILY rate is £961. Additionally these people have in most cases never gone through the normal recruitment processes.

Mary Page the Lib Dem candidate for Mayor who is committed to scrapping the post of Mayor said: 'Thanks to Chris for uncovering the scale of the problem. I am committed to getting rid of the culture of jobs for the boys at taxpayer's expense.'

BROAD WALK PROTECTED LAND

Although 90% of the properties along Broad Walk are now privately owned the land in front of them is owned by the Housing department. We have for many years been complaining about the failure of officers to prevent the damaging driving and parking on the grass verges. As a result there have been some households who think it is alright to tarmac over the inner section of grassed area, to park vehicles and effectively increase their land holding. This seizure of council owned land is not only against property law but is causing a huge number of complaints from residents who quite rightly want to see our beautiful road preserved.

Chis and Gary have finally had a meeting with a senior housing officer who seems to understand the problem and is now meeting with lawyers to get an enforcement plan agreed. We will report back.

One resident commented. "If householders in Clifton started tarmacng over The Downs the council would act." Quite right!. We have made it very clear that we will keep pushing until proper action is taken.

THE FUTURE OF BRISTOL PARKS

After giving up on their original plans to set a zero budget for Bristol's Parks there is now a new spin being applied. A short presentation to some Councillors gave a few vague ideas of some kind of trust, and of getting other organisations to put in cash to balance the books. A series of "community meetings" are being held, but the one for our area is in the Knowle West Media Centre and no sensible notice was given (10th March). Clearly there is no intention of really consulting with local people about these vital assets. The document they are following boldly starts with."Everyone will have excellent facilities within 450metres of home within 17yrs" A few simple questions soon revealed that there was no idea of what excellent meant and that they had no idea that in some parts there were NO parks within 450 meters.YOU COULD NOT MAKE IT UP!

