



Dr Kay Barnard: "My vision is for a Council that listens, cares, acts"

Liberal Democrat Candidate for Elected Mayor of Bristol lays out her plans for our city and says how she will ensure the Mayor listens more, lectures less. Please see Page 2 and 3 to read more about Kay's plan for Bristol.



"I will ensure we have more police on the street to ensure we bring those that commit crime to justice"
Police Commissioner Candidate Paul Crossley

See page 3

BRISTOL REPORTER

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Knowle leads the way

4 years ago, before the mayor, Gary put in place the city wide strategy that protected parks, and also, where local Councillors agreed, to some land sales of under-used green spaces, with funds to come back into parks, and in particular local parks.

In the last Lib Dem budget prior to the mayor £3.5M capital funding was made available to invest in parks to reverse much of the decline, particularly in play space, that had happened in previous years. Over 100 playgrounds had been lost and, as every parent or grandparent knows, a decent local playground within walking distance is important for all children. The local share of the £3.5M was put to good use, with big improvements in Perrets Park and Redcatch Park in particular, and this was topped up with some local funds. We also had Newquay Rd playground funded from the regeneration pot. Just as well as, after slowing the previously agreed investment, no new funds have arrived from the new council administration.

The local committee of Councillors for Knowle, Windmill Hill and Filwood endorsed the decision to sell part of Salcombe Rd rec ground, and also some land below the 3 lamps in Windmill Hill ward.

Regular Focus readers will know that 1/3 of the Salcombe Rd open space has been transferred to Knowle Park School to provide a desperately needed playing field ("Reversing the national trend" as the then head teacher said). The bottom 1/3 will be used to provide much needed social housing, and the sale to Knightstone Housing finally completed on 21st March. Sale price £895,000 (less a potential retention of £107,550 against some contingencies) has been paid and is available for parks investment especially Salcombe..

Following a letter from Gary the council's chief officer confirmed that the funding agreement would be honoured. and that 65.8% would be ring-fenced for local parks.

Lights across the walkway are the first step in major improvements. To the far left of picture will be affordable housing - to the right are two new paths, benches and trees. More landscaping and a play area will eventually turn this neglected area into a popular community space.



A playpark and other investment for Salcombe Rd is essential and we would now want, with funding available, to form a group of nearby residents to help with the design and funding plan.



Exciting "Spinner" to provide for older age .

Sadly Privet hedge is diseased and dying - subject to professional advice on birds and plants, plan is to replace ugly fencing with railings and replant



Broad Walk Entrance More Parking with disabled bays, safe route for pedestrians, improved signage

New 'Pinch' gate from Redcatch Road with short path

MAKING PROGRESS.

It was disappointing that council officers, (whose job it is to provide information to help Councillors make decisions to benefit their residents), were unable to find out about the money and our local opportunity. If Gary and Chris had not been chasing we would all still be in the dark. Disappointingly Park officers failed to attend a recent Neighbourhood Partnership meeting to explain the application process. This is the result of the rapid changeover of staff at the council and consequent failure of the departments to act coherently. The Friends of Redcatch Park have, as in the past, done a brilliant job on their submission. Windmill Hill Councillors (1 Green 1 Labour - having been in office for just 1 and 2 years they are not re-standing in May) were completely in the dark, and so of course were parks groups in that area. As chair of the meeting Gary insisted that information was spread rapidly to encourage catch-up from other parks groups and wards.

It is unfortunate that others were not as well organised and we will do everything possible to ensure that this does not hold matters up for too long.

Gary also alerted the partnership to the likelihood of some of the 3 lamps land being appropriated by the present mayor, for work associated with the arena and the enterprise zone, without consultation or local compensation. Gary said "Some of the land has already been earmarked for a new arena access. We have no problem with that, but there should be fair compensation. I will be writing to all the Mayoral candidates seeking assurances on fair local treatment".

On the Ball -The Friends of Redcatch Park have been extremely alive to the opportunity, as they have been in obtaining previous grants, and submitted a costed plan to the neighbourhood partnership to bid for a list of improvements. These all fall well within the local budget.

Buses

As mentioned in the previous 2 Focuses we had meetings with First group manager James Freeman and we have worked with Lib Dem Councillor Tim Kent (Whitchurch Park and also now standing in the new combined Hengrove ward) as we share some services, and some of our residents contributed to his bus survey. Tim has hundreds of replies and we print here the letter he has received from First. We will be following up as a team.

Dear Tim
Thank you for your letter dated 1st March (which didn't get to us until 11th March, by the way) about services 50 & 51.

We share your concern about the reliability of the 50/51 services which have been a very

considerable headache to operate reliably in recent years and indeed particularly in recent weeks and months. A great many of the problems resulting these days from traffic congestion - it is not an unusual event for a bus to be an hour or more late - and the inevitable consequence of this is that journeys disappear because there is no bus to operate them (as it is elsewhere) this despite the fact that we have taken strenuous steps to address our previous staff shortage.

We are so concerned about the way things have been going that we have been working on a new schedule for the route which is designed to address the problems. As a result, we have now registered changes to come into operation on 24th April (we have to give 56 days' notice) to give effect to this. The basic pattern of service and coverage of the day is unchanged but the key change is that the

service will now terminate at the South Bristol Community Hospital, instead of going on to Hengrove bus depot. The time saved from this little-used extension will be ploughed back into the schedule to increase running times and improve reliability. I am interested and pleased to know that you and colleagues are carrying out a survey of residents' views. We will look forward to reading residents' views. We are under no misapprehensions that this will be pretty reading, but the more we understand about what people need the better chance we have to do something about this.

We'd be glad to meet you to talk about this at a mutually convenient juncture.

Best wishes
James Freeman Managing Director
First West of England

The congestion point made by First is a fair one. At last full council meeting Gary put down a motion calling for more effective action to tackle this in Bristol and also to introduce a low emission zone. There has been a total lack of common sense over the last few years, with no new public transport schemes, delays to pre-existing ones and council initiated roadworks taking far longer than they should. An agreement with the utility companies that was introduced, following a council motion from Gary 2 years ago, has been largely honoured by the companies but ignored by the council itself. Until tackled by Councillor Kent council officers were planning to shut Walsh Avenue Hengrove (a key bus route) for 2 months for minor works. The stationary and slow moving vehicles are a major cause of dangerous pollution and, although supported by the Green party, it was disappointing that Conservatives, Labour and the Mayor again voted against the low emission zone and effective action.

The system of bus management locally is a mess and needs to be replaced with the London model which allows the council to specify routes, timetables and fares. This franchise/contract system means that the actual operation is then down to the company. This power is promised from government with the "combined Avon" authority but, staggeringly, the present mayor has said that it would not apply in Bristol, but we would continue to subsidise the country routes. It has taken years to persuade other groups on the council and government of the need for Quality Bus Contracts only to find the present mayor shying away from decisive action.



FROM THIS

Broad Walk

A follow up letter from the police and council has been delivered and will also go into nearby streets. Meanwhile the council officer tasked with clearing up the present damage has received an assurance from Highways that they will do their bit but want the plan for preventing repeat damage.

Unfortunately housing dept who own part of the land are shying away. Chris and Gary are following this up. We have been very glad to hear from the many local residents backing action and even from some offering to contribute.



TO THIS

The Arena

A second planning application within weeks is being discussed as we print. This does address some of the glaring holes in the first application on public transport, but does not address local concerns. Gary and Chris have submitted statements to the committee, and request -

- 1 That any residents parking scheme is properly consulted upon and is run for the benefit of local residents by local Councillors and not as a money making scheme.
- 2 That there be a detailed appraisal of the remodelling of the 3 lamps junction.
- 3 That a clear plan for major improvement on the Bath Rd from Cattlemarket Rd to 3 lamps be produced and funding identified.

We will report in our online edition how Councillors respond and vote.

HOPKINS Gary



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A RECORD OF HARD WORK