



Bristol Tree Forum meeting minutes.

Filwood Community Centre Monday 10th February 2025

Luke Cooper, Stephanie French, Sean Harding, Sue Holden, Vassili Papastavrou (Secretary), Jim Smith (Vice Chair), John Tarlton (Treasurer),

A number of apologies were received prior to the meeting.

1. The meeting started with introductions and an open discussion.

Jim agreed to chair the meeting but suggested that we might rotate the chairing of meetings in the future. In an open discussion, John suggested that we need to spend more time doing things that are fun such as visits to important trees/parks and practical activities. In this context, Luke drew attention to the tree pruning workshop on 2nd March.

Sue pointed out that sometimes the volume of messages on the various WhatsApp Groups gets overwhelming. The idea of setting up the “essential” group was to restrict it to a few, but important announcements and keep the chat on the other group. It was agreed to send out a message reminding people what should go on each group and encourage better “lane discipline”.

Stephanie said that some of the planning modules she has written need to be updated (two done already, but not yet posted on website) and made more accessible, with perhaps a “Trees and Planning” link on the front page of the BTF web site. Following this, it was suggested that we take a general look at the front page of both websites in order to make it easier to access the huge amount of information that is on the websites.

John reported that the Baltic Wharf development does seem to be going ahead with a S106 document made available. At the Development Control Committee we were told that sites for the 160 off-site replacement trees would be found in the next few weeks following the decision. However, we are now told that there are only sites for 37 trees. We had always known that finding replacement sites might not be possible and this has proven to be the case. Once again it is likely that money will languish in the Section 106 funds with few trees actually planted.

John also reported that the big tree giveaway is going well, with 1650 trees of 12 species donated by Maelor and delivery due in late Feb.

There was a brief discussion of BNG and where the biodiversity is being replaced (following an Avonmouth development where the net gain is happening in Lewes, Sussex). John suggested trying to get a student project going to look at this in more detail

Sean will progress a veteran tree day workshop. He also suggested a competition for a BTF tree Calendar, with trees photographed in the correct month as a fundraising tool.

Jim reported that following the tragic deaths of two lads, two oak trees have been planted close to St Barnabas Church. The committee thanked Jim for his low-key efforts to facilitate



this. Jim attended the Green Mingle and suggested that John speak to the next meeting in March about the Tree Giveaway.

2. Reports from Officers.

John reported that we still have £745 in the bank. The Big Tree Give Away is cost neutral

Stephanie reported that she attended a Planning Appeal supporting a BCC Tree Officer in his decision not to permit a 50% reduction to a beech tree (in Shirehampton). The appeal was won. In discussion Sean stated that BS3998 states that percentages should not now be allowed.

Stephanie also went to the BCC Merrimans Cycle Hub consultation. Stephanie highlighted three very important oriental planes and these are now listed for retention.

3. Safeguarding policy

Vassili introduced the safeguarding policy, a draft of which was circulated prior to the AGM and again prior to this meeting. Following a discussion, the Safeguarding Policy was adopted and will be put on the BTF website. Vassili has agreed to be Safeguarding lead for the time being. We will come back to the issue of safeguarding in future meetings and can of course amend the policy if this is needed. At present we will limit activities to try and ensure that safeguarding issues do not arise as a result of those activities.

4. New Positions on the Committee.

We decided to create two new positions on the committee. Mark as Planning and BNG Lead, and Luke as Volunteering Lead. For the time being we will rotate the chairing of meetings. When it is needed for external reasons, those on the committee can state that they "represent the BTF on behalf of the committee".

5. Next Tree Champions Meeting

We agreed that it was very important to hold another half day Tree Champions meeting. Given the problems of liaising with BCC over more than 6 months it was felt that we should go ahead regardless of possible BCC participation and support. It was decided that we should push the meeting back from March into the first two weeks of April to allow sufficient time. Stephanie would check the availability of Stoke Lodge for weekends and come back very soon with a date. It was felt that this time around the meeting would be more informal and less rushed. Sean offered to focus on tree care and include a wander around Stoke Lodge to look at the various trees there.

Following the meeting, the date was confirmed as Saturday 5th April.

6. Badged vests.

This item deferred until Chris is able to be there

7. BTF membership

The meeting discussed the issue of BTF membership and how it might extend beyond the TCs in order to encourage a wider participation in BTF activities. Whilst we have a mailing list, there is no obvious way to check that those on the mailing list are still active. The



problem is that we do not charge an annual subscription. It was felt that if we had a process requiring people to respond to an email on an annual basis, we might simply lose many of our supporters who, whilst perhaps still interested, might not get around to responding. The item was therefore deferred to the next Committee meeting so that we could benefit from Chris's input.

8. Date and Place of next meeting

Vassili will consult and come back with a date in May

Vassili Papastavrou 18th February 2025