

### Tree Matters (and Trees matter)

I am sorry folks but I have not been able to get to any of the three most recent Ward Forums to report to you on trees. I go to a History Class at Stoke Lodge on Tuesday evenings.

But I have not had an idle summer.

Our old NP Group – particularly the ex- Environment Group – put in a bid for some Community Infrastructure Levy funding for some Environment Things, and in that bid I included 14 trees for the old NP3 part of the new Area 1.

Many meetings later, and many e mail discussions and fine tunings with BCC Officers later, we were successful in that bid. Our Councillors were very supportive, attending the early rounds of meetings and then adding their votes to the others from Area 1.

This way of bidding for funds for projects that mitigate against the adverse effects of development is going to be the way for the future, so if you have a specific project in mind take it to a Ward Forum and/or discuss it with your Councillor.

For old NP3 as a result of this round of bidding we shall see trees being planted in:

Abbey Road (2), Great Brokeridge (1), Sabrina Way (2) Henleaze Road Dual Carriageway (Quarry Park) (1), Hill View (2), Woodleaze (1), Roman Way (1), Bell Barn Road (2), Southcroft (1) and Henleaze Park Drive (1).

In addition one of the quite clever members of the Bristol Tree Forum (BTF) spotted that there was an awful lot of tree dedicated Section 106 money remaining unspent in Bristol's coffers. Some of it had been there for 9 years! That is a lot of potential tree growth lost, which is quite shameful really.

S106 money, like CIL money, is money that developers have to pay when they develop a site. This money can then be spent on our environment - visual, atmospheric and needed infrastructure. It is NOT money from Council Tax.

So with the BTF I have worked this summer to identify sites in our old NP3 patch where tree plantings in Streets that fitted the strict criteria of s106 spending (within a mile of the development) could take place. As it is the Councillors who have the power to vote for the distribution of the money we took the plans to the same Area 1 meeting, and I'm glad to say that the s106 spend will see trees planted in:

Reedley Road (1), Bell Barn Road (3), Stoke Lane (1), Cavendish Road (1), Laurie Crescent(1), Oakwood Road (1), Hill View (1), Newcombe Road (2), Canford Road (1), Abbey Road (1), The Crescent (1), Downs Cote Drive (2), Harbury Road (1), Bibury Crescent (1), Coombe Lane (1) and Kellaway Avenue (2). Another 21 trees.  $21 + 14 = 35$ .

I know that the Council Tree Officers are busy preparing for the big plant this season (from now until the end of March) because I keep getting e mails about it.

**Never idle we need to gear up for the next year's round of spending.**

On that subject I used to have a sub group of the NP3 Environment Group to help choose sites for tree plantings from the Tree Sponsorship Council list. Now that is all fallen away this last spend was decided largely by me alone but based upon the tree site choices that had been discussed over recent years, plus some obvious filling in to complete Street Tree re-planting projects already started.

But I cannot go on doing a one man (well, one woman actually) show and I ask for some way for me to be advised of where you the residents want to see trees replaced in your streets, or I'll willingly share the burden and yield the task to a resident who wants to take this on for their Ward. If there is a keen tree person out there please step forward. You only need to know how to find, and work, the Council's Tree Sponsorship mapping and where to find the forms to apply to Area 1 Councillors and you are up and running. Tuition will be given!

The Tree Forum, which I work with, has been busy in other ways.

If you recall the crisis last year when Bristol nearly did a Sheffield and cancelled its Tree Maintenance schedule, which would (not could) have led to massive tree felling across Bristol within five years as trees deteriorated and became dangerous. We got one year's money back and the BTF has been working with the Council, the Forest of Avon Trust (FoAT) and the Woodland Trust to try to come up with a Bristol Tree Strategy to get in place some lasting structure for funding maintenance if nothing else. The retention of trees needed to be justified in terms of Pounds Sterling and Pence, so the FoAT managed an iTree survey across Bristol over the summer to put a monetary value on every tree in Bristol. The United States Forestry Service has devised some software where the monetary value to its existence can be worked out for every tree (how much it saves money that otherwise lost by protecting the environment mostly). This meant surveying 200 sites randomly generated across Bristol.

Volunteers managed to do this in just a few months (I did 5!) and we await the outcome. I quote from a paper written by a learned tree economist Kieron Doick who came to talk at the BTF Public Meeting in June " i-Tree Eco is a software application to quantify the structure and environmental effects of urban trees, and calculate their value to society. Data from an i-Tree Eco survey can be used for making effective resource management decisions, develop policy and set priorities for a town's trees and greenspaces." <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/research/i-tree-eco>

I hope we get some sense into future spending decisions about trees and do not have to live through crisis after crisis. Gradually one of the big costs – the pollarding – should disappear because the trees being pollarded are old and will be lost due to age eventually anyway. Modern methods of planting more suitable species in Tree Pits if they are near roads should obviate the need for the more expensive maintenance costs.

The next public meeting of the Bristol Tree Forum will be on TUESDAY NOVEMBER 8<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm at the City Hall.

Please visit the Bristol Tree Forum website <https://bristoltreeforum.org> to see the candidates for Bristol's Tree of the Year. Voting for your choice starts on Monday 15th October.

Thank you.

Stephanie French. Bristol Tree Forum and Stoke Bishop resident.