



UWE, Bristol/Bristol Parks Forum (Lead Partners): Bristol Green Capital Project 2015 (Title TBC)

Partners:

Avon Wildlife Trust, Bristol City Council, Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives, Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre, Destination Bristol, English Heritage, Knowle West Media Centre, The Restore Trust, Ujima Radio CIC

Bristol Parks Forum: Bristol Green Capital 2015- (Project Name TBC)



1. Partners

2. Context

3. Rationale

4. Outcomes for Bristol Green Capital 2015

Page 1

Page 3

Page 5

Page 7

Context for the Project

Early in 2013, Stephen Hilton, Bristol's Director of the Future identified Bristol Parks Forum as one of the key mechanisms for communicating with communities across the city (both to develop the successful application for European Green Capital, and – once awarded - to achieve its ambitious aims). Prior to, and since successful achievement of the Green Capital award, the city has repeatedly underlined the importance for a successful bid, that everyone in the city should benefit from and contribute to [it] by the end of 2015.¹

[To be considered successful, delivery of the European Green Capital project] will include [Bristol] communities ... sharing their experiences with communities across Europe (ibid: page 5).

This project explicitly sets out to engage with communities across the whole of Bristol, in support of this ambition. Through Bristol Parks Forum's community parks network, the project will enable the city to meaningfully deliver on this aspiration, and support residents across the whole of the city seeing Bristol's achievement of the accolade of European Green Capital 2015 as a benefit for their local areas, their parks and green spaces, and their neighbourhoods.

¹ https://www.bristol.gov.uk/committee/2013/sc/sc024/0124_8.pdf, Page 4

Additionally, Bristol Green Capital Year 2015 will see increased numbers of visitors from throughout the UK, Europe and further afield visiting the city to learn about the achievements of the award, bringing an opportunity for Bristol to further promote its parks and green spaces throughout the city and encourage increased awareness of (and economic benefit to) a wide range of neighbourhoods and across the city which may currently be considered to be 'off the beaten track'. Bristol European Green Capital 2015 provides us with an exceptional opportunity to celebrate and to raise the profile of our beautiful, diverse and wildlife-rich parks and green spaces, and to encourage increased numbers of local residents and visitors (whether from further afield, or just across the city) to visit, enjoy and value these fantastic community assets.

Sustainability, and the development of a meaningful legacy for this project is central to the ethos that has informed the development of this project; in practice, this means that any outcome/s will be produced in a form in which they can be added to, augmented and developed by Parks groups, in partnership with communities across the city, to ensure that this content remains relevant well beyond completion of the European Green Capital Year for Bristol in 2015.

As well as identifying all of the walking routes/trails etc that already exist within the city and developing a means through which this content is made visible to visitors and to residents in the city² (which will mean resolving multiple existing digital assets etc), the project will also focus on the creation of new literary, historical, cultural and environmental routes and tours, the re-opening of a large number of public footpaths and routes which are currently overgrown and/or inaccessible, and the development of a wide range of digital outcomes (e.g Parks Apps, online 'enhanced' route content e.g interviews with local people, oral histories etc - including workshops to enable parks groups (and other local groups where relevant) to develop their own apps, podcasts and audio trails to promote activity and people coming into different areas of the city).

Finally, the project aims to engage with, and to inspire, a large number of young people, through a wide range of learning activities which will encourage young people across the city to explore and engage with the aims of, and opportunities provided by, BGC2015.

UWE is able to activate considerable resource in support of this programme of work, through staff time, graduate and student work-experience, volunteering and graduate internships, as well as contributions in kind of meeting spaces, technical resources and facilities. In tandem with this commitment from UWE, we are now seeking support from Bristol 2015 to raise funding through sponsorship to enable us to work with the wide-range of partners identified in this project proposal to *maximise the benefits for Bristol*.³

² Destination Bristol would like this to contribute to their Visit Bristol website offer

³ BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL, Sustainable Development and Transport Scrutiny Commission, 24th January 2013, available at: https://www.bristol.gov.uk/committee/2013/sc/sc024/0124_8.pdf, accessed 3 May 2014.

Bristol Parks Forum: Bristol Green Capital 2015- (Project Name TBC)

This project proposal has emerged out of a number of ideas raised through Bristol Parks Forum, and has the potential to 'join-up' a wide-range of agendas, aspirations and networks across Bristol, in support of the ambitions of Bristol Green Capital 2015.



Rationale

1. In response to calls for ideas for projects to support Bristol to achieve its ambitions for Bristol Green Capital 2015⁴, a wide range of groups and individuals have put forward proposals to develop walks/routes/trails etc in particular areas of the city (in response to a wide range of agendas including walking for health, active travel, promotion of specific areas etc). Doubtless these will add to the existing, and extensive range of walking trails that already exist within the city,⁵ however – if taking a genuinely city wide, and sustainable view – currently there is no central portal/source of information which presents a coherent means of accessing and navigating this content. **To progress walking and active travel across the city, it is crucial to find a means of making those routes and trails which already do exist more visible (to a city-based, and visitor audience) and then develop new routes and trails which will add to these strategically so that they achieve full coverage across the city (if they are meaningfully intended to impact positively in terms of health, promotional and environmental benefits).**

⁴ See <http://bristolgreencapital.org/european-green-capital-award/> for further information about the outcomes expected of the city that hosts this annual European Award

⁵ A quick internet search for 'Walking Routes Bristol Parks' brings up a wide range of examples e.g Bristol Walking Festival routes, Walking for Health Project routes, previous individual project developments including Bristol Greenways, Skyline Tour etc, but none of these is connected (ironically!) either digitally or beyond predominantly small and/or isolated areas of the city.

2. As well as a need for joining-up of existing trails/routes etc and the augmentation of the existing offer with new routes/trails around neighbourhood areas⁶ (using Bristol's Parks & Green Spaces as the central hubs/focus for these, to encourage increased numbers of visitors), **there is also a need for a coherent promotional strategy** which will ensure that they are visible, and accessible to all.⁷ Destination Bristol's partnership in this project will enable this.

3. **Public sector funding for Parks and Green Spaces nationally has fallen significantly** since 2010, and is additionally **forecast to reduce by up to a further 60%**. Bristol Parks Forum members are **dedicated volunteers** and local residents **from all areas of the city**, who annually contribute thousands of hours collectively to improve, maintain, promote and fundraise for Bristol's Parks and Green Spaces. NESTA's Rethinking Parks (2013) report asserts that **more than 90% of people use their local park⁸** and that *Parks and Green Spaces play a central role to community life in the UK. They encourage health and well-being, provide safe places for children to play, promote civic pride, support biodiversity and are increasingly seen as a key resource for helping urban areas adapt to the challenges of a changing climate.⁹*

This project recognises the importance and value of the volunteers currently working as part of Bristol Parks Forum members' groups, and their crucial contribution to achieving the aims of Bristol European Green Capital 2015. The project seeks to support the development of the volunteers through skills development and training to enable them to continue to make Bristol's Parks and Green Spaces accessible, safe, welcoming and central to community life in the city and to celebrate their contribution to the city for the visitor economy as well as for local residents of all ages. Additionally, it **aims to increase the number of Bristol residents who are engaged in volunteering**, and **to encourage and facilitate increased volunteering from people of all ages** in support of Bristol's Parks and Green Spaces city wide.

4. In addition to city wide walking routes, there are a number of additional 'showcase' projects which will be delivered through this project and will form part of a flagship event at M-Shed Museum in November 2015, which aims to **demonstrate the opportunities that exist within Bristol for partnership working – focussed on Bristol's Parks and Green Spaces - between a wide range of organisations to achieve shared aims which are of benefit to the city as a whole**. These 'showcase' projects build on collaborations and strong existing relationships between Bristol Parks Forum members and other organisations in the city and aim to **inspire and demonstrate the possibilities of partnerships and sustainable collaborative models of working between partners which can be maintained in the city well-beyond the end of Green Capital Year**.

⁶ Currently being proposed as a range of cultural, literary, historic and environmental tours to be developed by UWE Arts and Cultural Industries students working in partnership with Bristol Parks Groups, local history and heritage organisations and Bristol Museums Service.

⁷ This includes a proposal from BPF members for clear signage physically located on signposts/pavements etc. As well as more traditional signage often seen in parks and green spaces themselves, an example of pavement signage made from a new material used during the SEE NO EVIL event in 2012 is pasted in below. This could offer a high level of visibility for the project and new routes developed through it, physically located in areas across the city. It would be useful to understand from John what the durability of this material/approach was in practice.

⁸ NESTA, Rethinking Parks Report, 2013 – Available at: http://www.nesta.org.uk/sites/default/files/rethinking_parks.pdf, accessed 1 February 2014

⁹ NESTA Rethinking Parks, 2013, available at http://www.nesta.org.uk/sites/default/files/rethinking_parks.pdf, accessed 1 February 2014

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Key Words: Volunteering, Bristol European Green Capital 2015 Legacy, Sustainability, Health and Wellbeing, Collaboration and Partnerships, Skills Development for the Green Economy, Culture and Heritage, Walking, Promotion of Parks and Green Spaces

Project Supports these BGC2015 Action Group Themes: Communications, Built and Natural Environment and Land Use, Nature, Wildlife and Green Spaces, Public and Schools Education, Health and Wellbeing, Inclusion, Arts, Heritage and Culture, Evaluation and Research (Knowledge Exchange)



Outcomes for BGC2015:

This project:

1. Is inclusive and socially engaged. The project has city-wide reach and impact, and will be visible in every neighbourhood in Bristol. The project will bring together residents from a wide-range of backgrounds and age groups to achieve shared aims.

2. Will result in the production of a series of tangible outputs which will be visible to all residents in Bristol. These include:

- i) An online portal which will function as a showcase for Parks and Green Spaces in Bristol to our tourist economy well-beyond 2015
- ii) An inspiring and imaginative core skills-training programme for Bristol Parks Groups, to support increased strength and effectiveness of volunteers working in Parks across the city
- ii) Wildlife Trails around Bristol Parks created by children, for children

- iii) Increased numbers of Apps, Films and Podcasts about Parks and Green Spaces in Bristol – increasing visibility and engagement
 - iv) Safe walking routes between schools and local parks, and identification of outdoor play facilities and opportunities for young people
 - iv) New walking routes to/from Parks celebrating local areas and focused on literary, historical, cultural and environmental themes
 - v) Clearance of every public right of way in Bristol (whether overgrown brambles or alternative blockages) to ensure that travel on foot around and between local areas is possible and accessible to all,
 - vi) Showcase outcomes for specific areas of the city demonstrating the potential outcomes and benefits for Parks and Green Spaces of ongoing joined-up working between partners across the city post-2015.
 - vii) A Digital photographic Archive for Bristol celebrating Parks and Green Spaces in the City during BGC2015 which will be housed in the permanent collection at Bristol Museum.
3. Will support raising awareness of Bristol Green Capital 2015 through an extensive network of partner organisations. Information about opportunities to participate will be distributed through UWE (including extensive schools and colleges partnership networks) Bristol Parks Forum, Destination Bristol, Neighbourhood Partnership, Partner Organisations' and Community-based networks.

The project will be match-funded by UWE, Bristol as part of our commitment to Bristol Green Capital 2015, and delivered through a wide-range of activity – draft details of these are listed in the attached appendices. This work can be scaled appropriately as match funding allows.

Sam Thomson, Director Civic and Cultural Engagement, Faculty of Arts, Creative Industries and Education, UWE, Bristol (www.uwe.ac.uk) / Chair, Friends of Horfield Common Community Parks Group (www.friendsofhorfieldcommon.com) / & very proud Bristol Natural History Consortia's 'Green Voluntary Leader of the Year' 2013 (www.bnhc.org.uk)

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University of the
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