

WESTBURY PARK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT JUNE 2018



Before presenting a summary of our main activities over the past twelve months I would like to thank the members of the Management and Festival Committees and other active members for the work they have done over the past year. I would also like to thank our ward councillors for the invaluable support they continue to give to the Association with a special thanks to Councillor Clare Champion – Smith. We have enjoyed working with Clare on many issues over the years and were very sorry to hear that she had decided to step down as our local councillor a few months ago.

Main Activities and Achievements in 2017 – 18

Communicating with Members

Over the last year members have been kept regularly informed of social events, and plans and proposals affecting the area through the Community Association newsletter, the Community Association website and by email..

A total of three newsletters and twelve monthly “What’s On” listings were circulated over the period July 2017 – June 2018: the Community website is also regularly updated to report Committee meetings, social events and the latest news on planning issues, traffic and parking issues. Local events are also publicised on the Association’s two notice boards.

Westbury Park Festival

While the Association organises the occasional social event and supports and publicises events organised by other local groups the Association’s primary focus regarding social events is on the annual Westbury Park Festival which has run since 2008.

Many thanks to everyone who organised and supported the 2017 Festival which ran over two weeks in late June and early July. Also thanks to those businesses who supported the Festival and to the Church in Westbury Park for the much appreciated use of their premises for Festival events.

The Art Fair and Open Gardens attracted impressive numbers while the Antiques evening, the Tree Walk and Westbury Park Maps evening were also very much supported and enjoyed.

The Festival raised a total of over £1,500 for charity with £615 donated to The Bridge Foundation, £400 to Cancer Research UK, £270 to Teenage Cancer Trust, £120 to Musicians without Borders and £140 to Avon Riding Centre. Money was also donated to the Community Association and to the Church in Westbury Park, including money towards the cost of refurbishing the Methodist Church kitchen.

The 2018 Festival, running from 10th - 30th June, features a total of 12 events including the "Westbury Park Makes Music" concert which was held on Friday, 15th June. The concert celebrated local musical talent and was a great success: it also raised much needed funds for the Community Association. Many thanks to Jeff Bishop who was largely responsible for organising the concert.

Libraries Review

The last year has been one of City Council budget cuts and threats to Council services: notable among these was libraries. In July 2017 Council proposed to reduce the number of branch libraries from 26 to nine, spread geographically around the city. One of the options for achieving this result included the possible closure of Henleaze Library, the most popular branch library in the city.

The Community Association objected to the Libraries Review on several grounds (eg. cutting the number of libraries so drastically should itself have been subject to consultation, the options gave very limited choice, the role of libraries in meeting wider community needs had not been properly taken into account).

Concerned about the possible threat to the library service in general and to Henleaze Library in particular the Association circulated a Libraries Review leaflet to over 1,000 households in Westbury Park urging residents to make representations to the Council.

In response to the outcry from the public and ward councillors the Council agreed in late 2017 to consider other options for managing the library service. Thankfully the Mayor of Bristol has just announced (19th June) that enough money has been found to keep every single library open. It remains to be seen whether this is a temporary reprieve pending a further review given that the Council's finances are likely to remain in a parlous state.

Resident Parking

At the AGM meetings in 2016 and 2017 I reported that very little progress was being made on resident parking. Frustratingly I have to report the same this year.

It looks as though some areas in Westbury Park that want resident parking will have to wait a long time or be denied altogether. The Council's guidelines relating to new resident parking schemes published in November 2017 were not positive in tone and challenging, both in terms of the complex process for securing a new scheme and in setting a high bar for new schemes (eg. new schemes have to cover areas of 1,000 – 4,000 households). The guidelines also seemed to rule out the possibility of extensions to existing schemes – an option that might have been appropriate in parts of Westbury Park.

The Community Association plans to carry out a straw poll of Members in the Autumn to ascertain views on resident parking in different parts of Westbury Park. A summary of these views will be shared with local councillors who have a key role to play in making the case for new resident parking schemes.

Our ward councillors are lobbying the Mayor and Council's Executive Member for Transport to make the guidelines less cumbersome and more flexible but it seems that resident parking is not a high priority for the Mayor.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

In order to comply with the new GDPR that came into effect on 25th May 2018 the Community Association was required to contact all Members to provide information on the new regulation and to ask Members to give permission for the Community Association to hold their personal information (contact details - primarily email addresses).

Over 200 replies were received from members, all but a handful giving the required permission. No responses were received from about 80 on the Association's contacts list and regrettably under the new regulation they can no longer be contacted by the Community Association.

Many community groups and charities have seen their mailing lists trimmed as a result of the new data protection regulation – caught by a regulation which was primarily introduced to prevent commercial firms passing on / selling personal details to other parties.

Neighbourhood Partnership / Forum

With the demise of the Council's neighbourhood partnership structure (and related grant programmes) at the end of March 2017 due to budget cuts the onus has been placed on community groups and volunteers to organise new partnership structures to support ward councillors and to help facilitate networking, consultations, lobbying, etc. at the local level.

The Westbury Park area is served by two new arrangements – the Henleaze Forum which covers that part of Westbury Park in Henleaze and Westbury on Trym ward and the Bishopston, Cotham and Redland (BCR) Community Partnership that covers that part of Westbury Park in Redland ward.

The Henleaze Forum is convened by the Henleaze Society, the BCR Community Partnership by a Management Committee largely comprising representatives of local community groups. The Community Association is represented on the BCR Committee.

Both the Henleaze Forum and BCR Partnership are committed to holding four public meetings a year. Topics covered at recent meetings include the libraries review, the allocation of funds generated by the Community Infrastructure Levy, the 20 mph

consultation, resident parking, police reports and student liaison. Ward councillors attend meeting, providing an essential interface with the Council.

Priorities in the Next Year

- *To continue to publicise local community and social events.*
- *To support the new community partnership arrangements*
- *To increase membership / contacts*
- *To ascertain views on resident parking and to advise ward councillors and lobby the City Council as necessary.*
- *To publicise and to respond to planned Council consultations on matters affecting or likely to affect the provision of local facilities and services*
- *To continue to run a successful Westbury Park Festival.*

*****Kevin Chidgey

Chair, WPCA
20th June 2018