

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION NEWS

JUNE 2022



1 Progress on 99 Devonshire Road

West-tec have kindly sent through an update on progress with completion of their works at 99 Devonshire Road.

The most important point is that they hope to be finished by the Autumn!

The gutters are on their way any day now. The internal drying out work has been tested and it has worked. Damp-proofing and finishing the ground floors will be finished in June then stairs can be put in and internal fitting out started.

Message for immediate locals: West-tec have managed to keep the side lane clear since they first started. They will be rendering the big side wall in wc.26th June and will need to use a temporary scaffold for work on the lower part of the wall. That will prevent vehicle entry but pedestrians will still be able to pass. This access should only be blocked for a few days, so please bear with them.

2 Proposed Belvedere Road Nursing Home Extension

There have been over 50 objections to yet another application for the change of use of 7 Belvedere Road from three flats to an extension to the nursing home at 8-9 Belvedere Road. The Community Association have objected on the grounds that the proposal would further increase demand for parking spaces on roads already full to parking capacity, creating even greater hazards for all road users. The proposed development would also add to the constant disruption and disturbance already suffered by local residents by virtue of having three care home businesses in the road.

This is the third application submitted by the nursing home owner in recent years – the previous applications having been refused both by the City Council and on appeal by the planning inspector.

A decision on the latest application is expected shortly.

3 St. Christopher's

Over 600 objections have been made to the St. Christopher's application including objections from Bristol North West MP Darren Jones, local councillors, Bristol Civic Society, Historic England and The Tree Forum.

As yet we do not know when the application will be decided – if the case officer recommendation is to refuse the application it may not go to the Development Control Committee to be decided by elected councillors.

The Community Association and the St. Christopher's Action Network (SCAN) remain in close contact with the case officer and are primed to make statements to Committee should this be necessary. Consideration is also being given by SCAN and the Community

Association to what might be appropriate development were the current extra care scheme not, for any reason, to proceed.

4 A Note on House Extensions and Permitted Development

Certain 'small' changes can be made to our houses through what is generally called 'permitted development'. Planning permission is not required but you have to send drawings to the Bristol City Council planners for them to check and confirm that is the case (or not, in which case permission must be secured).

What counts as permitted development has been extended in recent years, including in one area where there has been concern expressed by many living in Westbury Park – house extensions. The new regulations allow larger side and rear extensions to be built without requiring planning permission (e.g. up to three metres high at the eaves if the proposed extension is within two metres of a property boundary and, in the case of terraced houses, up to three metres beyond the rear wall of the original house). The changes may be welcomed by those wishing to extend their properties but there will often be downsides – the negative impacts on neighbours (loss of light, greater enclosure), neighbour disputes and the loss of gardens.

Regulations have also been relaxed in other areas. For example, if someone owns a shop and wishes to convert it to a house, that is usually now a permitted development. There are examples in our area where this has happened both before the changes to the regulations (e.g. the launderette on Coldharbour Road) and since. The new relaxed regime further threatens neighbourhood shopping streets like ours and all those around the country.

The general feeling nationally is that the extension and easing of permitted development rights has been damaging but it is unlikely that the regulations will be tightened up again in the short term

5 Planning “Densification” – Appropriate for Westbury Park?

Increasing housing densities is a concept doing the rounds a lot at the moment with government as well as planners, architects and others as it is seen as potentially beneficial in relation to climate change and sustainability.

The idea is that if we could get more development in all our neighbourhoods and increase the population that would make local shops and facilities more viable and closer to more people and therefore reduce the need for people to travel, especially by car. It is often summed up as '20 minute neighbourhoods', i.e. all you need day-by-day within easy walking distance (for most).

Bristol City Council are pushing 20 minute neighbourhoods by trying to raise housing densities across the city hence 'densification'. Note also that the idea was mentioned by one of the team involved with the St. Christopher's proposals as some sort of spurious justification for their attempt to put a quart of development into the pint pot of a highly constrained site.

So it is important to be aware of these pressures but to question where and how far densification should be applied. It may be appropriate for lower density neighbourhoods but should it be applied to areas where housing densities are high? Westbury Park is already a

20 minute neighbourhood – we have shops, restaurants, cafes, cinema, library, churches, schools all within a 20 minute walking distance. Do we need to be further densified.

6 Henleaze Senior Film Club, The Drive, St. Peter's Hall, Henleaze

2.00 pm, Monday, 27th June

Belfast (2021) – an award-winning British drama starring Judy Dench.

2.00 pm, Monday, 25th July

The Full Monty (1997) – a comedy drama starring Robert Carlyle.

Tel: 0117 435 0063/64

Easy access, carers welcome, refreshments £4

If you know anyone who would appreciate level access to a film, please let them know about this opportunity.

WPCA – 16th June 2022