

Riverbank collapse causes road closure chaos

Part of the New Cut riverbank along Cumberland Road collapsed on 24th January. This bit of riverbank was already known to be unstable and with the Chocolate Path there had been fenced off for over 3 years. At time of printing, Cumberland Road was completely closed as a precaution - causing chaos for residents and businesses on Spike Island.

Back in October the Council made a decision to spend £5.5m necessary to shore up the 80m stretch of bank (with a piled concrete retaining wall), and to use the opportunity to do extra flood protection. The works were expected to run summer 2020-2022, but that many now change. The engineering works for repairing the Chocolate Path will apparently require the Council to close the road eastbound near Avon Crescent because half the road will have construction works on it. Rather than operate traffic both ways on traffic-lights, the Mayor has chosen to allow only buses eastbound. Fully closing the road eastbound will cause huge problems for businesses around the marina and for many residents, and local councillor Mark Wright is not yet convinced this is the best option.

"The Council and the Mayor need to answer serious questions on why they took 3 years to schedule this repair, which meant a catastrophic failure occurred. The Council should now bring forward the contract to repair the riverbank so that things can get back to normal as quickly as possible. The Council also needs to do thorough surveying along the whole stretch of the New Cut because widespread construction could have disturbed the soft banks at any point on the river."



↑ The collapsed section of riverbank has taken the chocolate Path and railway track with it. It has been unstable for 3 years...

Boris Johnson wins big majority to implement Hard Brexit

The big news over Christmas was the Prime Minister winning a considerable majority in the snap general election. No seats changed hands in the Bristol area. In Bristol West, despite the Lib Dems standing-down as part of a national "Remain Alliance" agreement with the Green Party, the Green Party was unable to dent the huge Labour vote in the seat, which went down by a mere 185 votes to 47,028. That alliance is now expired and the Lib Dems are back in action across the seat.

With city-wide local and mayoral elections in May, the Lib Dem team will be out and about as usual in Hotwells, Harbourside and Brandon Hill. If you want to help us in any way, please get in touch with the H&H team using details overleaf. PM Boris Johnson has used his increased mandate to drive his vision of a very hard Brexit through Parliament, and sadly the UK left the European Union on Jan 31st 2020.



↑ L to R: Cllr Mark Wright with Lib Dem Bristol campaigners Mary Page, Stephen Williams - demanding a "4th Option"

Cumberland Basin update

In November the Council finally released the investigation report by Arup of the 10 possible options that were considered for the Cumberland Basin. The Arup report is online here: <https://tinyurl.com/rffjqd3>

A Cabinet report for the Mayor expresses a slight preference for the 'Eastern' option, which involves putting a dual carriageway across the New Cut by Avon Crescent and then over the harbour near Nova Scotia Place and the Pump House. It says further work will now be done on this option, and possibly 'other unspecified options'. The Riverside Garden Centre have a petition against this option, as it would eliminate their current site: <https://tinyurl.com/sws6nan>

Cllr Mark Wright says, "The Lib Dems and I are totally against the Eastern Option. One of the Arup report's options, 'Option 4' is the one that I and many others have been arguing is a better option that has been unfairly dismissed by the Mayor. At a full Council debate in December I argued that this option needed to be worked-up to the same degree as the other two preferred options for a proper comparison."

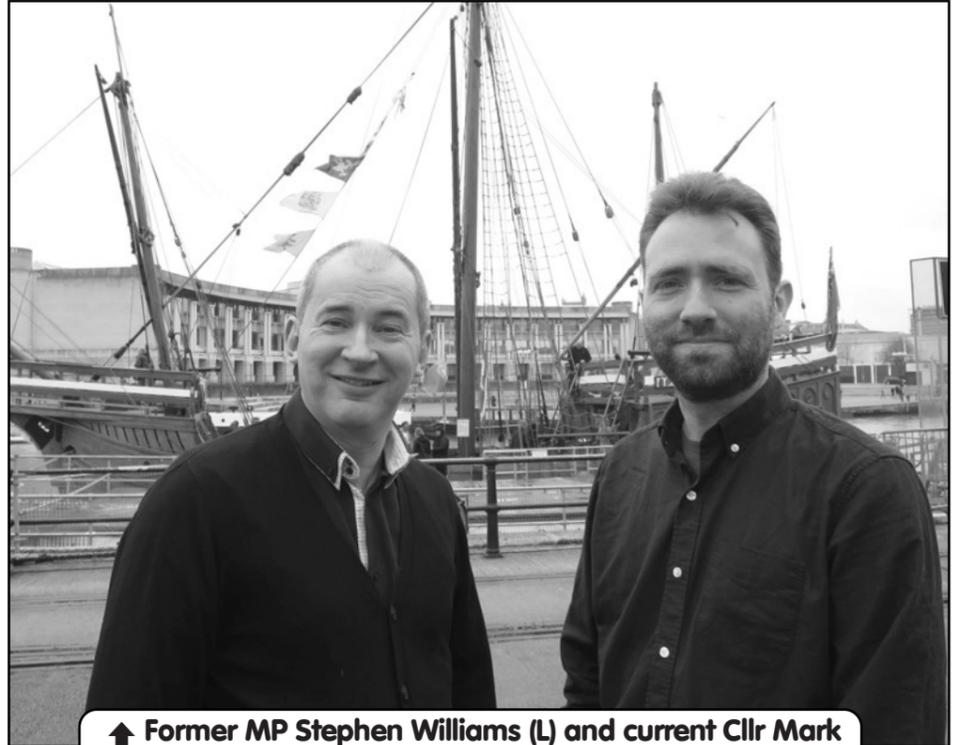
The Mayor announced two advisory groups to help shape the development. Lib Dem Mayoral candidate Mary Page criticised both for being hand-picked by the Mayor and excluding local representatives, "Decision-making should be at the heart of communities not taken remotely by the Mayor. I'm so committed to empowering Bristolians that I will vote to scrap my own role."

Working all year round, not just for elections

Local Cllr Mark Wright standing down Former MP Stephen Williams to stand

Veteran city-centre councillor, Mark Wright, will be standing down at the May local elections. After 15 years in 4 terms as councillor for central Bristol, Mark says it was one of the toughest decisions of his life. "I've put my heart and soul into this job for the last 15 years, but recently I've found it difficult to juggle this job, and a full-time 'day' job, and being a dad to a toddler...it was with a heavy heart I realised something had to give. But I'm pleased that local Lib Dems chose another veteran, former local MP Stephen Williams, to succeed me! I've worked with Stephen on issues in our area for nearly 20 years and I know he'll be great."

Stephen says, "I want to thank Mark for his great service to local residents and to the city. I've worked with him for many years on a huge range of local issues. I'm delighted to be able to stand to take over from him in the ward that I served myself as a councillor for 3 terms in the 1990s and then for a decade as your MP. There's always something going on in Hotwells, Harbourside and Brandon Hill and I look forward to working with residents to defend their interests on issues such as major developments planned for the Cumberland Basin, the Clean Air Zone and the many other planning and transport issues that impact their lives."



↑ Former MP Stephen Williams (L) and current Cllr Mark Wright. Stephen was councillor for this area in the 1990s



↑ This is the first artist's impression of how the Council's planned flats on the Caravan Park might look. There is commerce at ground level.

Baltic Wharf Caravan site plans

The Council has published images of its plans for the Baltic Wharf Caravan site. There will be consultation in February/March according to the media release, so look out for that. The plans include around 165 new homes, around 66 of which will be affordable, as well as some commercial space on the ground floor.

Cllr Mark Wright says, "The buildings in the images are a bit taller than I'd have liked, but otherwise I think the plans look reasonable. Over the last year I have been repeatedly nagging the Council's Tree Officers regarding how many of the big trees growing on the caravan site they will be trying to save. The mature trees currently there are significant and will add value and ecology to the site if planned well. Neighbouring Baltic Wharf has lots of greenery which works well."

Mayor's Clean Air Plan passed

The Labour Mayor, Marvin Rees, has passed his new Clear Air plan. It now fuses the two previous options, of a small-area diesel ban and a wider-area charging zone. It also contains the unexpected detail that Cumberland Road will be permanently closed to eastbound traffic in 2021! This comes as a total shock, and the purpose of the closure is not yet known; but it is believed the closure-point will be at Gas Ferry Road. The Lib Dems have criticised the lack of mitigation measures for existing residents inside the diesel ban area.

New COOP store on Coronation Rd

A new COOP supermarket has opened up under the new flats development just over Vauxhall Bridge. For people in and around Baltic Wharf, it now becomes the nearest walkable supermarket, which is welcome news.

New Post Office on St George's Road

Clements News at 87 St George's Road has now become a Post Office. After so many Post Office closures in the city centre this is great news, so please do use it!

Do you want to help?

Cabot News is written, printed, delivered and paid for by Mark and local volunteers. This takes a lot of time and effort that could go elsewhere!

If you can help us in any way, maybe by sparing an hour every few months to help deliver it to other houses in your street or a street nearby, please get in touch by emailing the address over to the right of this page.

Other News in Brief

Council parking permit change cause chaos

In November the Council suddenly announced it was moving all parking permits to an electronic system. Chaos ensued. Some key updates:

- The Council will refund visitor permits if they expire in less than 12 months
- Scratch cards will be available till end of 2020 for those without internet
- Guest permits can be used by several cars in the 24 hours period. Residents must use the Mi-Ticket app to change the car registration each time, or ring 0345 520 7007

Resident permits: <https://tinyurl.com/r97h2sk>

Guest permits: <https://tinyurl.com/tv6axv3>

Those without internet ring: 0345 520 7007

Get Cllr Mark Wright's email newsletter

As well as this quarterly Cabot News, your local councillor also sends out a monthly Cabot eNews by e-mail. If you want to receive this, sign up to receive it here:

<http://eepurl.com/dwgCtP>

Merger of St Michael's and St George's Schools

St Michael's and St George's Primary Schools have been run as a "federation" for a few years with a shared head-teacher. In November, unexpected news emerged that governors of both schools proposed merging the two schools into a new school on the St Michael's site. The Council then formally consulted on the same proposal at the schools' request.

Mark says, "I was a governor at St George's from 2005 until 2011, and I helped lead the campaign that defeated the Council's attempt to forcibly close the school 11 years ago. I am aware of some other school mergers in Bristol recently that have gone very well. Because of this, I am currently keeping an open mind on these proposals."

Contact your local Lib Dem team

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