

Cabot News

Serving Kingsdown, Cotham, Brandon Hill, Redcliffe, Spike Island and the City Centre

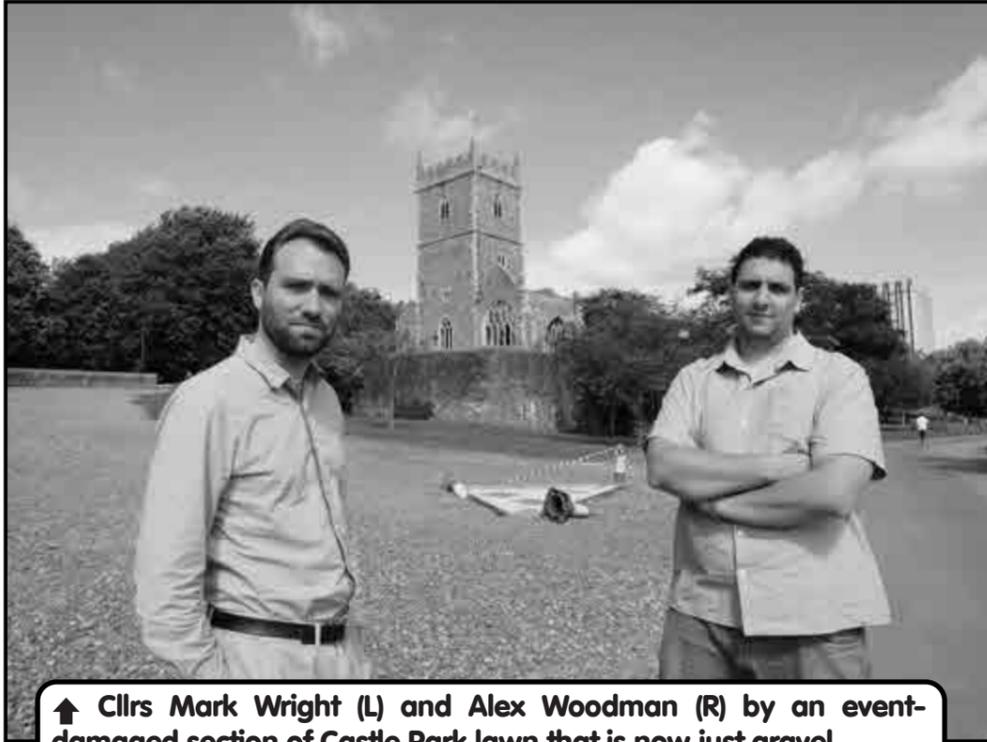
Edited by Mark Wright & Alex Woodman

Autumn 2014

Forty years of service!



Better protection for Castle Park



Many local residents were unhappy at the state of Castle Park following the Love Saves the Day event earlier this year. The park was completely closed for a week, and the event turned the grass into a muddy swamp, making some areas unrecoverable.

In response, Cabot councillor Alex Woodman proposed the following motion to Council, calling on the Mayor to:

- Ensure that, where events are to be held in the city's parks, this does not result in the closure of the entire park
- To work with promoters of 'Love Saves the Day' and other events to find alternative, more appropriate locations within the city for such events
- To ensure that, where park closures are being considered, the ward councillors are notified as far in advance as possible of the closure

Alex says, "Mark and I support holding events in the city - we believe they are part of what makes Bristol a fun and interesting place to live. However, it is vitally important that a balance is struck between events and the rights of local residents not to be unreasonably disturbed or have their access to public amenities limited. From our point of view, what happened with Love Saves the Day suggests that the balance has started to tip in the wrong direction."

The motion was passed unanimously with the Mayor's support, and Alex is now working to ensure that the Mayor responds to this request.

↑ Cllrs Mark Wright (L) and Alex Woodman (R) by an event-damaged section of Castle Park lawn that is now just gravel

School proposal for Caravan Site

Many people were caught by surprise when the media reported that the Council is planning to build a school on the site of the Baltic Wharf Caravan Park when their current lease expires.

The desperate shortage of school places in the centre of the city can only be addressed by finding a site suitable to build or expand a new school, and despite considerable efforts over many years, finding somewhere else has not been possible. It is this situation that has forced the Council and the Mayor to consider using the caravan park site.

Cabot councillor Mark Wright says, "This is far from an ideal solution, and there will no doubt be many people who will be disappointed to lose the caravan site. I lived on Baltic Wharf for 8 years and know the caravan site was a good neighbour. But the Mayor believes the needs of Bristol parents outweigh the needs of tourist caravanners. As local councillors, we feel that we have to stand up for the many local parents worried about the shortage of school places for their children, and so we are supporting him in this. We want the school that uses the site to be St George's Primary, which is currently just off Anchor Road."

We want to know your thoughts on local issues!

As your elected representatives, Mark and Alex speak up for local residents and represent our area in the Council chamber. To make sure that we do that as effectively as possible, it is useful to know local people's views.

Therefore, each year we publish a short survey which seeks a snapshot of local opinion on a selection of issues. Mark and Alex have been taking this survey door-to-door, but also have an online version.

Please therefore take 5 minutes to fill in the survey, so that we can make sure we best represent you. You can find it online at:

<http://bit.ly/CabotSurvey2014>

Local MP opens WUF tenant computer room

Bristol West MP and former Cabot councillor Stephen Williams was happy to be asked to do the official opening of the Waring/Underdown/Francombe tenants' new computer room this summer. The conversion of an old store into a computer room was entirely the idea of the tenants in the flats, and they also did a good deal of the works too! Cabot councillor Mark Wright helped secure £10k of grants from the local Neighbourhood Partnership, to add to national grants secured by the tenants themselves. It's taken a couple of years start to finish but been well worth it. Well done all!

Local MP Stephen Williams (sitting) with Cllr Mark Wright (R) and local tenants of Redcliffe flats who made it all happen ➔



Newsletters all year round, not just at election time

Working all year round, not just for elections

Anger as number 20 bus route cancelled

In August, First Bus announced without warning that it was going to stop running the number 20 bus service, which goes from Southmead to the Centre and is used by many to get to Kingsdown and the BRI. Alex says, "Since deregulation in the 1980s, the Council doesn't have control over buses in the city and has no power to stop First from cutting the service. But the lack of any public consultation by the company is deeply disappointing and has angered many who use it."

A cross-party group of councillors has written an open letter to First criticising the service cuts. Lib Dem councillors for the wards affected are trying to find a way that the service can continue operating - either by inviting another bus company to start running the service, or possibly by trying to find the money to subsidise it. Both of those options are being looked into at the moment, but will need the support of the Mayor if they are to be successful.



Cllrs Mark Wright (L) and Alex Woodman (R) at the Horfield Road and Kingsdown Parade bus stop used by the 20 bus in Kingsdown ➔

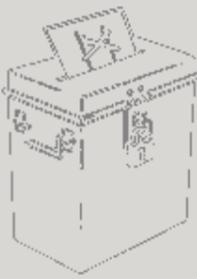
Electoral registration changes

The Government has changed the way that the electoral register is compiled. In the past, one person per household filled out the form on behalf of all residents in that property. Under the new system, individual registration is required, in order to reduce electoral fraud. Even if you don't vote, the law says you must be registered.

For most people who were already registered, you should have received a letter from the Council saying that you have been registered under the new system. However, if you aren't registered, or if you have any queries, you should contact Electoral Services. You can find more details at:

<http://tinyurl.com/lrjkbdr>

One issue that has been raised with Mark and Alex is the fact that companies can purchase the Electoral Register for marketing purposes. This has actually been the case for many years. Under the old system, every person registered was able to opt to keep their details private, and this remains the case with the new system.



Excessive new parks by-laws blocked by Cabot councillor

You may have heard in the news that Cllr Mark Wright ran a successful campaign to block the imposition of large number of new by-laws in Bristol's parks and greens that would create many new criminal offences.

The by-laws were drafted in an extremely loose way, and while many were sensible, others would have banned a large number of activities including: children climbing trees, putting up a wind/sun break, and having a BBQ outside a designated BBQ facility (of which there are none in Bristol).

In addition the by-laws sought to use a new legal phrase to ban activities that were "annoying" people - aimed at football, skateboarding and sounds. Parliament recently threw out an attempt to enshrine this use of "annoying" behaviour in law, but the Council still intended to use it.

Mayor Ferguson withdrew the proposal after Mark's campaign, and currently the plans are being reviewed.

MetroBus works timetable

Both the Ashton Vale to Temple Meads (AVTM) and Hengrove to North Bristol MetroBus routes have now been granted planning permission. The outline programme for AVTM MetroBus is currently as follows:

- Contract Start September 2014
- Main Design Period September 2014 to December 2014
- Advance Works (ground investigations and surveys) September to December 2014
- Main Construction Period January 2015 to April 2016 (16 months)
- Works to Spike Island area to be confirmed by contractor
- Main Works completed and opening April 2016

Cllrs Alex Woodman (L) and Mark Wright (R) at the junction of Cumberland Rd and Avon Crescent, where there will be big changes ➔



Other Local News in Brief...

Wessex bus complaints

Wessex Bus, the company behind the notorious 506 that serves Spike Island, have been complained about to the independent Traffic Commissioner more than 540 times by frustrated bus users. Mark and Alex have long thought that the 506 is the worst bus service in the city, but it seems that there are also other Wessex bus services vying for that title!

Have your say on Harbour Festival

The Council is looking for feedback on this year's Harbour Festival, to help with the planning of the festival and help secure future funding. If you have any views on this year's festival, please fill in the survey: www.surveymonkey.com/s/harbfest2014

Stokes Croft traders new website and leaflet

Traders and businesses in Stokes Croft have launched a new website and leaflet to help boost the experience of visitors exploring the area - best known for its street art, independent retail and 'bohemian' lifestyle. The new website www.visitstokescroft.com (Twitter @VisitSCroft) and leaflet showcase the full spread of Stokes Croft's businesses, and invite visitors to discover the better and the less-known places and businesses in the area - and enjoy the independence, diversity and creativity.

Contacting your local Cabot Lib Dem Team...

www.cabot-liberals.org



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