

ISSUE 1:
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EASTSIDE VOICE

EASTON, EASTVILLE & GREENBANK COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

This newsletter has been produced by an ad-hoc group of local residents concerned about quality of life and the environment in our neighbourhood. If you have questions or want to get involved, you can contact Josh Hart at velorution@yahoo.com or 0753 113 4666

Chocolate Factory Land Sale Raises Eyebrows

While many believe that the redevelopment of the Elizabeth Shaw Chocolate Factory in Greenbank will have positive benefits for the community overall, many are increasingly concerned about the sale of a strip of publicly owned land along the Bristol and Bath Railway Path, currently the subject of a consultation by Bristol City Council. **If the sale is approved, the 170m long strip of mature hedgerow - habitat for foxes, badgers, and birds - would be destroyed and developed into a 7-storey tower block and 'cycle houses.'** There is also concern about the 250 parking spaces proposed for the development, likely to generate a significant amount of traffic in this currently quiet corner of Easton.

The land sale consultation comes after embarrassing e-mails (obtained by a Freedom of Information request) between the Planning Director David Bishop and the chief architect for the project, George Ferguson revealed that council officers were planning to dispose of the land against the recommendation of wildlife and parks officers, and without any input from the public or local councillors. "These kinds of backroom deals make a mockery of local democracy," says Caroline Lee-Smith, a Whitehall resident who works for an environmental charity.

The plan also violates the Bristol Local Plan that states, "It is vital that the wildlife network is as continuous as possible... any severance can seriously reduce the nature conservation and landscape value of a corridor." According to Kingsley Rd.



Wild in the City? Squarepeg would like to destroy the historic hedgerow on the left of this photo to make way for 'cycle houses' and 'landscaping'.

resident Tom Beale, "The Railway Path is not only a strip of concrete- it is a linear park and important 'breathing place' for the community. It is also critical habitat and a migratory route for wildlife, who use the railway path much as humans do, to get safely from one area of Bristol to another."

Jan Walters, Bristol's Nature Conservation Officer, has stated that **"(if this project is approved) the character of the path will change fundamentally. It will set a precedent for further development pressure along the Railway Path.** While I applaud the scheme's intentions to retain and reuse the existing buildings and capitalise on the links with the Railway Path, this *should not be at the cost of loss of integrity of the (wildlife corridor).*"

The land sale consultation so far has been far from fair and honest, with leading

questions on the official questionnaire such as, "do you think regeneration is important for Easton?" implying that if the sale of the land does not get approved, the whole project will be ditched - an unlikely scenario. Local residents who have called the 'public information line' have discovered to their dismay that this is not a Council number, but in fact a private firm, PPS. There are even reports that PPS has refused to convey unfavourable feedback to the Council. According to Camelford Rd. resident Josh Hart, "If public feedback is being filtered to obtain a desired outcome that will benefit developers at the expense of local people and the environment, that is an insult to our community."

Local residents are urged to attend the open house on Saturday the 17th of January from 10am-4pm at the Pickle Factory, 13 All Hallows Rd. Easton and send the enclosed postcard to the Council. You can also find out more about the proposed land sale, and provide specific comments to jane.greenaway@bristol.gov.uk or 922 2694 (do this even if you have completed the online survey or responded by phone). You can also still make comments or queries about the planning application to chanelle.brodie@bristol.gov.uk or 922 3031

Further details and background on the development and proposed land sale available at <http://keepgreenbankgreen.blogspot.com> More info about the threatened hedgerow at <http://thetoryofahedge.blogspot.com/>

SAFE SPEEDS FOR BRISTOL: TWENTY IS PLENTY!

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The east Bristol community has been hit particularly hard lately by a series of road deaths and injuries. Following the hit and run death of Charles Small in November and 3 elderly pedestrians killed at Junction 2 of the M32 in Eastville (see article), local residents have called upon Police to strictly enforce speeding and aggressive driving, which have become an epidemic. The threat is not equal throughout Bristol

- **for every Clifton child that is killed or seriously injured, over 24 Easton children are** (source Bristol Quality of Life Report).

We are calling upon the City Council to establish a 20mph speed limit for all residential areas in Bristol - not just isolated pilot areas as they are proposing now. More information about the 20mph campaign at <http://20splentyforus.org.uk/>

You are encouraged to send the attached postcard to the council and let them know you support safer streets! You can also attend the local forum that helps set local police priorities to call for safer streets-Wed. 14th January 2009 at 7:00 PM at St Anne with St Thomas Church, St Leonard's Road, Greenbank or you can provide feedback online at: <http://tinyurl.com/8epe2h>

Community Demands Safety Fixes After 3 Deaths on M32 Slip Road in Eastville

You may have heard the tragic news that over the past 18 months, 3 elderly people have been killed and one seriously injured walking to Tesco across the southbound M32 slip road at Muller Rd. While there are alternatives to crossing at this point, none of them are considered safe, with the existing tunnels a haven for crime, and the level crossings out of the way, especially problematic for mobility-limited elderly



Death by Design- 3 people killed at the same location and the Council refuses to do anything except put up a sign blaming the victims...

people. A Junction 2 Safety Alliance has formed in the neighbourhood and we are asking the City Council and Highways Agency to fix this junction to make sure no more lives are lost. Specifically, we are asking for:

- A safe, level signalised crossing, coordinated with the lights at the roundabout
- Closure of the entrance of residential Stapleton Rd. at Freemantle Gardens (this would simplify a very complex junction, as well as closing a gap between the 'Easton Bypass' cycle path along the M32 and routes through Eastville Park)
- Lowering of the speed limit on the slip road and urban sections of the M32 to 40mph

To support these measures, please send in the attached postcard.

You can also e-mail or call MP Kerry McCarthy at mccarthyk@parliament.uk or 0117 939 9901. To be kept informed about the campaign, please e-mail Josh Hart at velorution@yahoo.com or call 0753 113 4666.

Railway Path News: Gritting, Signage, Tree Root Damage, Police Patrols

After a number of serious falls due to ice and tree root damage on the Railway path, users of the path are happy to see that the council is finally gritting the path in freezing weather and repairing the tree root damage. The police are now regularly patrolling the pathway, and more people than ever are walking and cycling along

our local linear park. In addition, improved signage is planned for the route. The best way to improve the safety of the path (and to reduce your carbon footprint - not to mention your waistline after the holidays) is for more people to use it at all hours. So pump up those bike tires, lube that chain, and get out on the bikeway!

Motor Vehicle Traffic Degrades Communities, says UWE Research

In September, a study done at UWE found that those living on very busy streets had less than a quarter the number of friends on their street as those on a nearby quiet street. Through interviews with dozens of residents living in north Bristol, the

study entitled *Driven to Excess*, found that car traffic is having a considerable negative impact on quality of life, safety, and health in Bristol. To read more, go to <http://tinyurl.com/6329rz>

KEY LOCAL WEBSITES:

Bristol Indymedia

<http://bristol.indymedia.org>

Bristol Traffic

<http://bristolcars.blogspot.com/>

On the Level Car Free Blog

<http://onthelevelblog.com>

Green Bristol Blog

<http://greenbristolblog.blogspot.com/>

Keep Greenbank Green

<http://keepgreenbankgreen.blogspot.com/>

Easton Discussion Group

http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/easton_bristol/

CYCLE EXPRESSWAY Reconnecting Easton to St. Werburgh's Across M32

A campaign has been launched by residents on both sides of the M32 to extend Bristol's greenway network, with the dream of a pathway along the disused railway line between Lawrence Hill station and Filton Abbey Wood, providing a safe, level crossing of the M32 between Easton, St. Werburgh's, and Lockleaze with a branch to Redland along the Severn Beach line. This has been referred to as the 'Cycle Expressway' but would in fact be open to walkers, runners, wheelchair users, as well as cyclists. In response to the campaign, the Bristol City Council is currently conducting a feasibility study that should be available soon.



Could this bridge over Stapleton Rd. become a safe route between Easton and St. Werburgh's?

To support this project, please send the enclosed postcard and tick the appropriate box.

To stay informed, or to join the newly formed Bristol Greenway Network Campaign please send your name, address, and e-mail to Paul Grimshaw at pkgrimshaw@yahoo.com or 0117 902 4328

Railway Path & Royate Hill LITTER CLEAN-UP: SAT JAN 24TH

Join us for an hour or two to clear up litter along the cycle path, meet your neighbours, and get to know your local open spaces better. Saturday January 24th 10am at the top of Gratitude Rd, next to the entrance to the Railway Path. Bring bin bags, gloves, and wear old jeans and sturdy shoes. (Rain date: Sunday Jan. 25th 10am)