

# Friends of Stockwood Open Spaces

Public Forum Statement to the Neighbourhood Partnership, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012

## Item 15 - Protecting Open Spaces through Town Green registration

This agenda item and report arise from a request raised by FoSOS in a public forum statement at the March meeting, when it was agreed to seek a report advising on the pros and cons protecting key open spaces for residents by voluntary registration as Town Greens.

Neither the decision nor the statement appear in the published minutes of the meeting, so the key passage from our public forum statement is reprinted here:

*Further, we would like to see the strongest possible protection for valued open spaces in Stockwood and elsewhere in the Neighbourhood and the city. To this end, we hope the Partnership will look closely at the potential benefits of Town Green registration, with a view to asking the registration authority (the City Council) to consider voluntarily registering key open spaces to protect the freedom of local residents to use them for recreational purposes in perpetuity.*

The officer's report today merely reviews the current council process for dealing with Town Green applications. It does not address the possibility of voluntary registration, or the consequences of registration, that were at the heart of the request. We're really no further forward than we were in March (though a look at [Defra advice](#)\* does help fill the gap).

Voluntary registration is distinct from the better known process of proven use over a long period (as in Briery Leaze, Ashton Vale, etc). It does, however, bring the same rights for the shared recreational use of the land (normally by the residents of the area), simply by the voluntary agreement of the landowner, Bristol City Council.

Presumably the wishes of the Partnership on this matter are unchanged since March, and it would still like advice before considering whether to seek voluntary registration of the most valued open spaces.

Therefore, I'd like to suggest making a clearer request to officers to bring out the effect of voluntary registration, by asking:

***“What benefits and disbenefits might be felt by a) local residents, and b) the city as a whole, if the council agreed voluntarily to a request from the Neighbourhood Partnership to register council owned public open space as a Town Green?”***

Finally, we request that this public forum statement be included in the published and on-line minutes of this meeting

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\* <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13733-rural-villagegreens-voluntary-guidance.pdf>