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**BOPF OPEN FORUM Zoom Meeting**  
**Thursday 24 March 2022, Zoom Meeting, 10:30am – 12.30pm**  
**MINUTES**

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**Present** **Trustees:** Christina Stokes, **Chair**; Trish Mensah, **Deputy Chair**; Judith Brown, **BOPF Ambassador**; Ian Bickerton, Sarwat Manzur, Tara Mistry, Gloria Morris and Lyn Porter.  
**Staff: Minutes:** Yolanda Pot, Finance and Administration Manager; Ian Quaife, Development and Engagement Manager.  
**Zoom Registrations: 40**

**Apolog.** David Elson (DE), Kay Libby (Age UK Bristol)

1. **Chair's Welcome - Christina Stokes:** Zoom housekeeping and introductions.  
You can activate your **subtitles** at the bottom of the screen. Feel free to use the **Chat** facility. If you would like to speak, please **put your hand up**.
  
2. **BOPF Minutes of the previous meeting**  
There were no matters arising from the minutes of the Open Forum on 10 February 2022. The minutes were agreed.
  
3. **Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC), Mark Shelford (MS)**  
***Economic and Cyber Crime***  
MS spoke about the **ROLE of the PCC**  
**What does your Police and Crime Commissioner do for you?**  
The role of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is to be the voice of the people and hold the police to account. They are responsible for the totality of policing.  
PCCs aim to cut crime and deliver an effective and efficient police service within their police force area. They are elected by the public to hold Chief Constables and the force to account, making the police answerable to the communities they serve.  
PCCs ensure community needs are met as effectively as possible, and are improving local relationships through building confidence and restoring trust. They work in partnership across a range of agencies at local and national level to ensure there is a unified approach to preventing and reducing crime.  
Under the terms of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, PCCs must:
  - secure an efficient and effective police for their area;
  - appoint the Chief Constable, hold them to account for running the force, and if necessary dismiss them;
  - set the police and crime objectives for their area through a police and crime plan;
  - set the force budget and determine the precept;
  - contribute to the national and international policing capabilities set out by the Home Secretary; and
  - bring together community safety and criminal justice partners, to make sure local priorities are joined up.

## **Fire Governance**

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 introduced opportunities for PCCs to take on responsibility for fire and rescue governance.

**Q1 Judith Brown - Re: Misogyny** why are there still so many entrenched attitudes towards women? Why isn't rape and domestic violence taken seriously and dealt with speedily.

**Q2 Judith Brown - Hate crimes** towards older people should be accepted by the policy as a group and should be measured in the same way as other hate crimes. What is the present position?

**A1 MS Re: Misogyny and the police.** I chose Sarah Crew as Chief Constable who is the national lead in dealing with sexual violence of women and girls. She has an Oxford academic background given the task to look at the whole criminal justice system from an academic perspective to work out why we weren't getting the write number of people through the courts and not prosecuting cases. Why cases were taking 18 months from event to court. She has produced Operation Bluestone, which does two things: **1) The emphasis is now placed on the perpetrator, not on the victim.** This has doubled the numbers being prosecuted, though the number still too low.

**2) Re Misogyny** within the policy is something I take very seriously. I think this is a leadership problem. Low level leadership don't get any training. I am focusing on the leadership academy in order to change that.

**Q2 MS Hate crime** is incredibly difficult not my area of expertise. I will find out where we are with this and let you know. **Christina Stokes:** Could you send that back to the forum address, so that we can circulate.

**Q3 Eileen Means** - given the rising cost of living and difficulties families and pensioners are facing, why is the police precept element of our local Council Tax bill rising the most, at 4%, yet the safety of women and prosecutions of sexual offences are at such a low rate?

**A3 MS** The rise is 83 pence a month. We, like everybody else, face rising inflation and I want to keep people safe. 5 million equates to 250 PCSOs we would have to take off the roads, we would have to take the entire car fleet of the road, we would have to close a significant amount of police stations. Its one of those things we have to balance. Violence against women and girls is one of my policing priorities and is included in my **police and crime plan** with its metrics of success. We are doing better, but it is still not good enough, that is why I monitor it on a monthly basis.

**Q3 Anna Sweetham - Traffic issues** are made worse by the **electric scooters trial**. What input will the police have to the decision of this trial?

**A3 MS** I think scooters are a menace and take them very seriously, as does the Mayor of Bristol. We had a focus group in Bristol about a month ago and had a plan to educate people. There is a hire group of scooters which are legal, though not always driven in a legal way. There are also unlicensed private scooters, some of which are not limited in their speed. There is a big push to try to get them banned. From my perspective, we have to make them safer by making people wear high vis., and helmets. Private ones need to have MOT, insurance, etc and anyone who doesn't drive them correctly needs to be fined. The polices view is to give them on chance, on a second occasion they should be lifted from them and crushed and the public ones should be fined

**Q4 Bob** - In our district there are two **drug gangs** operating. One of the gangs was involved on a cash point raid recently. Any thoughts?

**A4 MS** I am not responsible for operation policing, that sits independently with the police, so

am not aware of that specific case. Generally speaking, we try to stop people getting into drugs gangs in the first place by trying to stop drugs getting into the South West and educating children.

**Q6 Sharda Lavingia, Re: Disabled parking with blue badge.** Can we introduce a law, that if someone parks illegally in a disabled slot, can we take a picture and send to you?

**A5 MS** - Disable parking is both a council and police issue. Be very careful when taking photos, that you don't put yourselves in danger. You can upload photos of people committing crimes on the website and the police will respond to the photos. Most disabled slots are only advisory, so someone without a disable badge is not parking illegally. It is a convention that people don't. This is not something the police deal with; the community usually deal with this. There are very few laws around disabled slots. There are a few disabled slots which Councils have, which are legal for only people with blue badges.

4. **Nikki Cotterill (NC), Professor in Continence Care, Centre for Health and Clinical Research, UWE**

**Context:** Nicky is a nursing professor with a focus on continence, that is bladder and bowel leakage for all ages and genders. She works at UWE and Southmead Hospital, and is Director of a **The Bladder and Bowel CONFidence Health Integration Team (BABCON HIT)**, based in Bristol bringing together a focus across all of the systems, so working in partnership with the Commissioning Group, the Bristol City Council, the Universities, the Hospitals, to try to take a broad look at incontinence, because it can slip between the gaps of all the different organisations and specialities. **They want to bring a focus of improve the experience and symptoms for people living with bladder and bowel leakage.**

Over the last year the Health Integration Team have conducted two projects that have relevance to **toilet accessibility**. **Nicky shared some high-level finding. There will be two publicly available reports due to be released imminently, which I am happy to share with the forum.** I am hoping these reports will provide a voice and evidence as to why this is so important for older people.

I have also had many conversations with Ben Barker, a leading light in toilet accessibility. We met with someone from the council before Christmas. So, I will provide some updates in terms of productive relationship in this area.

**FIRST PROJCT**

**The first project was in partnership with Healthwatch**, working across the whole of Bristol, North Bristol and South Gloucestershire. We wanted to explore the experience of people trying to use bladder and bowel services during Covid, and did a parallel piece of work asking healthcare providers what it was like providing services during Covid.

**We also asked about the impact of public toilet closures during Covid.** There were 42 responses. One of the striking findings was that 71% had been affected by toilet closures. There were many emotional accounts. But importantly, what this showed that this issue predated the pandemic.

**Some findings:** People said they couldn't go for walks and had to stay at home. There was an increase in pad use with cost implications. 1 in 3 people can experience bladder and bowel control issues. This imposed further isolation during the pandemic.

**SECOND PROJECT**

We also worked with the **Academic Health and Science Network in Bristol**. An NHS organisation of a network of 15 across the country. This is about implementation. We worked with them to run workshops, a survey and some 1-2-1's to hear broadly the experiences and problems of people who experience bladder and bowel leakages from all

different ages and genders. We generated “*problem statements*”, that is sentences that summarise the issues and address the problems. The importance of public toilets accessibility and the state of the toilets was a key issue.

### **Our work with the Bristol City Council (BCC) & the Toilet Map**

Ben Barker and I met with someone from the council prior to Christmas with responsibility for the **community toilets scheme map** held on the BCC website.

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/streets-travel/public-toilet-map>

The map labels the public toilets that are still open and highlight premisses that have agreed to be on the map to make their toilets available to the public. There is a sticker they can stick on their window.

**Outcome from the discussion:** no appetite to re-open those toilets that have already closed, due to expenses and maintenance costs. Though there is an appetite to make toilets available through other avenues/premisses. We raised the issue of reducing the red tape to make it easier for premises. The council said they would try to simplify the process. After Xmas 2021 the council went around to check that all those toilets that were on the map previously were still available, bearing in mind that many premises had closed due to the pandemic. So, it is about making sure that the toilet map is as up to date as possible. Many premisses are happy to be asked, but don't want to be on the map. So, though it was recognised by the council that toilets are key, they do not necessarily want to fund them themselves. So, work in progress.

**BABCON developed the Confidence App** to help people with bladder and bowel leakage.

<https://www.expertselfcare.com/health-apps/confidence-app/>

Flyers of the Confidence App have been taken to premisses on the toilet map. Libraries (27) have also agreed to circulate flyers.

**Q1 Barbara Segal** – I have been involved in the Acorn campaign about trying to get the toilets which were closed to be opened and we have also been looking at the Council scheme with business and in my experience that scheme is not working or fit for purpose. I have been to 30 out of the 120 on the list and only 3 new they were part of the scheme and only two had the poster outside. They are very small black and white A4 posters, so not visible. Workers of these places have not been informed by their managers that they are part of the scheme. Unless we have a scheme like Italy, where all cafes and bars are obliged by law to let people use their toilets. I think there has to be some public provision, it is no good just leaving this up to the private sector, particularly if they are getting nothing for doing it.

This does not just affect older people, it also affects bus drivers, taxi drivers, young people out drinking, visitors to the city.

**Q2 Jenny Smith** - Have we officially written to BCC raising BOPF concern about this? Have we thought about a petition?

**A2 IanQ** I will discuss what BOPF is looking at doing under BOPF Work Update.

**BREAK**

## **5. BOPF Work Update - Ian Quaife, BOPF Development Manager**

**Ian Quaife** - Toilets is an equalities issue which I think contravenes the Equality Act 2010.

People from all different backgrounds need to use accessible, clean and safe toilets.

BOPF Trustees have supported the **Acorn campaign letter** and the **Bristol Disability Equality Forum statement** to the Council, which sets out clearly what an accessible toilet facility could look like.

I have also spoken to someone from the **Bristol Sight Loss Council**, and Alen Davis, the new **Equalities Commissioner** in Bristol, who think we need to go even further and to include **“talking toilets”** so that people with sight loss are able to use the toilet facilities in a dignified way. There is support to develop that within the Temple Meads regeneration sight. Due to government/council funding cuts, I can't see that public toilets can reopen. However, we are putting together a **BCC Toilets Task and Finish group** with the City Office/**Once City Plan** to find workable solutions around this problem. It will allow BOPF to directly feed ideas through to the council in a formal way in order to influence the politicians, policy makers and decision makers.

### **Ben Barker's Views.**

**Background:** In Bedminster, 10 years ago we started our own toilet map. At that time there were 4 public toilets in the greater Bedminster Area: 2 in parks and 2 in streets. Shortly afterwards one of them disappeared and they were unreliable as you could never be sure if they were open and clean. So, we thought we needed to do the thing ourselves so we initially drew up a toilet map with about 20 places with toilets. The only other place who created a map was Brislington.

As Nicky said we had a meeting with a Council Officer before Christmas. Though with a huge job description and therefore not the necessary time to address the issue properly. It is therefore the management that is not really addressing the issue in a sensible way.

**There seems to be two lines or argument:** **1.** Reopen as many public toilets as possible, which won't work. **2.** Then other way is to talk to local businesses to open their toilets, with the advantage of the opening times being greater and better spread across the city. But this is not being successful.

**The problem:** My view is that the Council's policy is correct, but their implementation isn't working. I think this is partly because the wrong people are asking the questions to businesses. If a council officer approaches a business, the business's response is to think, well why should we if you have just closed your toilets. However, if someone from the community is received in a very different way. So, I would advocate that the council should not be working with its overworked officers, but should be talking to community organisations across the city giving a small amount of help; the main cost is printing.

**Solution/Conclusion:** So, if the council wants to have large numbers of toilets available, right across the time scale, in all communities, they need to be working with community organisations and get them to lead.

**Q1 Bianca Rossetti, Age Friendly Project Manager, Age UK Bristol.** Last week we launched our **Age friendly Strategy and Action Plan**. In the Action Plan we have 41 actions and have with almost all of them have managed to get an organisation, charity or council department to take responsibility for delivering that action. There is an action around toilets, trying to make the community scheme work better, as this is a major equalities issue disproportionately affecting older people. Accessing a toilet is not just an inconvenience, it affects people's sociability, including enjoying Bristol's cultural institutions, access to health care and transport. I will be working with the council and the BCC Toilets Task and Finish Group to raise awareness to the businesses that have signed up to the toilet scheme, for example, improve signage, to have good bins and ground floor access.

**A1 IanQ** I think it is more than raising awareness, we need to be pushing to get this sorted out. The council need to understand it is an issue of discrimination and need to have a rethink on this.

**Q2 Tom Doyle, BCC team leader with council sheltered housing service.**

**Re what Ben said about community groups approaching businesses.** I think it needs to be a

joint venture about what the council can offer. Businesses pay business rates. If you ask a business to provide a public service for the community, it will have a financial impact, so there needs to be some kind of incentive/recognition.

The cost of providing effective provision through the local authority is a lot higher than providing it through businesses.

**A2 IanQ**, Yes, we have discussed a financial incentive and I think we need to revisit that as why would businesses do it for nothing. There needs to be a working partnership between the council and community which needs to be pitched to businesses in the right way.

**Q3 Nicky** – When we spoke to the Council Officer, he said that one of the key factors was that they used to incentivise it. Though it wasn't enough to cover the cost. We have talked about reviving that. Through BABCON HIT we have talked about possibly matching some funding, to give it a kick start.

## 6. **Open Forum - anyone can raise issues of concern**

**OF1 Trish Mensah** - A planning application about the toilets at the Suspension Bridge has been submitted to the council and hope that work will start within 3 months

**OF2 Tara Mistry - Report back on: Health and Wellbeing Board** on behalf of BOPF. There is a public questions slot, but here was nobody there and were surprised to see me there. There is a new Integrated Care System in Health which is going to be implemented from July. It was a throwback to the last restructuring we had with the same issues about scarcity about people being able to attend all the meetings. For the South area they didn't have enough people with lived experience on these boards. There are two priorities about mental health and ageing well. Not good clarity from the Government about Integrated Care Partnership and Health and Wellbeing board.

There was a presentation on the Bristol Health Protection annual report. In hospital the MRSA infection rate is coming down, but Clostridioides difficile for older people going into hospitals is a big issue as its rising. There were also issues around food safety back log and a few other things around operational matters.

I am not sure how valuable going to these meetings will be in future. What I want to suggest is that I could check the agendas regularly and if there are issues that we want to comment on I can go on our behalf.

**OF3 Judith Brown** - The meetings I go on are in my Ambassador's report. Yesterday I went to the new **Home and Communities board**. I asked what they achieved last year and they said not very much. However, they have set priorities for this year around homelessness, the sorts and number of houses there are, so as Tara said, it can seem turgid, but nevertheless, I think it is good to represent BOPF on the board and will be putting a more detailed analysis of what sent on in my Ambassador's report. I said that Home Choice is only online, so it discriminates towards the digitally excluded.

**OF4 IanQ - Re OF2 Tara**. Yes, there needs to be more older people sitting on boards with lived experience. Serona of Public Health are setting up new structures. **Re OF3 Judith**: There is the BOPF Housing Action Group which we would like to align with the Home and Communities board.

**OF5 Ben Barker** - I also work with a number of wildlife groups across the city which are raising

awareness of wildlife. They are trying to improve their habitats to increase wildlife, this includes gardens, parks, allotments, church yards. If anyone is interested in getting involved they can get in touch with me.

**OF6 Cristina Stokes Re Bristol Parks** - I have been sitting on a group to developing a new strategy for Bristol Parks with a 10 year plan drawn up in the next few months. They are running groups under the two headings People and Places. Get in touch with BOPF if you would like to get involved.

**OF7 Ben Barker** - I am involved in Bristol Parks discussions and there is a close link to the toilets issue in open spaces.

**OF8 Cristina Stokes.** If you have any issues or speakers that you would like us to include in these meetings, please let us know.

7. Close Open Forum meeting at 12:30 hrs

**Next Open Forum Zoom Meeting:** Thursday 12 May 2022, 10:30 - 12:30 hrs

Signed (Chair):

Date: