Bristol Walking Alliance

campaigning to improve Bristol's walking environment
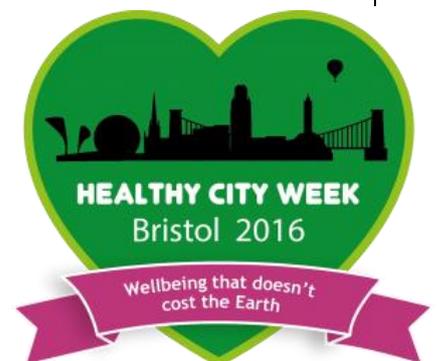

Report of **Walking in Neighbourhoods** event

Prepared by Suzanne Audrey and Kelly Theis

Healthy City Week

15th October 2016

Triodos Bank open space

Contents

Discussing issues, priorities and solutions for walking in neighbourhoods

Summary

- The Walking in Neighbourhoods event was attended by 41 people including representatives from 16 neighbourhood partnerships, Bristol City Council, equalities groups, and voluntary and community organisations.

- Bristol Walking Alliance is a collaboration of organisations campaigning to improve the pedestrian environment and aims to ensure that the needs of people who walk are represented in negotiations and decisions relating to transport and city design.

- There is general support for the Disability Equality Forum's position that what's right for disabled people in the pedestrian environment is good for everyone.

- Some problems with the pedestrian environment relate to poor design by policy makers and practitioners e.g. uneven surfaces, positon of bollards, steep dropped curbs, shared use routes. Other issues relate to inconsiderate behaviour of some residents and businesses.

- Parking on pavements, on street corners and at junctions pose significant problems for people who walk and especially for disabled people.

- Multiple bins obstructing pavements is another common problem. Other obstructions include A-boards, overhanging bushes, fly tipping, shopping trolleys.

- Bristol City Council website and FixMyStreet are useful websites for reporting problems. The Bristol Bugbears website has also enabled reporting of minor issues that cause problems in the walking and cycling environment but to date has had a stronger focus on cycling.

- Enforcement of current legislation and policies relating to pavement obstructions is essential, but there is currently insufficient enforcement by Bristol City Council, the police and traffic wardens.

- The volume and speed of motorised traffic causes problems for pedestrians of all ages and abilities. Actions to reduce motorised traffic volume and speed in neighbourhoods should be enforced and expanded.

- We can all play a part in helping to improve the pedestrian environment e.g. reporting or removing obstructions, working with Neighbourhood Partnerships and residents' groups, helping neighbours.

- Walking groups can be good for health and inclusion, and for supporting efforts to improve the walking environment. Producing local maps, and undertaking community events and projects, can help to generate interest. These activities should give due consideration to the needs of disabled people.

- Third Sector organisations can play an important part in helping to improve the pedestrian environment e.g. Sustrans community-led street design projects, Living Streets walk to school programme.

Programme

9.30am   **Arrivals - Teas and Coffees provided**

10.00am   **Welcome**
Kelly Theis

Introduction to Bristol Walking Alliance
Alan Morris, Chair

10.10am   Cllr Asher Craig, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods

10.20am   **Accessibility of walking routes**
Gordon Richardson, Bristol Disability Equality Forum

10.30 am   **Issues and solutions in Neighbourhood Partnerships**
Roger Gimson, Bishopston, Cotham and Redland Neighbourhood
Partnership

10.40am   **Issues and solutions in your area**
Small group discussion

11.00am   **Break**

11.15am   **Let's Clean Bedminster**
Ben Barker, Greater Bedminster Community Partnership

11.30am   **Rate your neighbourhood's walkability**
Suzanne Audrey, University of Bristol

11.45am   **How should people report problems?**
Tracey Edwards-Brown, Bristol City Council

12.00 mid-day   **Easton Safer Streets Update and Imagine St Paul's**
Patrick Williams, Sustrans

12.15pm   **Bristol Bugbears**
Philip Wright, Cycle Ambition Fund Programme Manager, Bristol City
Council

12.30pm   **Priorities for your neighbourhood**

Thank you and close

Space available until 1.00pm for informal discussion and networking

Key points made by speakers

Introduction
Kelly Theis, Project Coordinator for Living Streets, welcomed participants to the Walking in Neighbourhoods event and outlined the timetable. Alan Morris, Chair of Bristol Walking Alliance, gave a brief overview of Bristol Walking Alliance.

Cllr Asher Craig, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, explained that the Bristol Walking Strategy 2011-2021 is currently being refreshed. A list of ten action points has been drafted as a predominantly technical document. Cllr Craig stressed the importance of a 'plain English' version with which people in neighbourhoods could actively engage.

Accessibility of Walking Routes
Gordon Richardson, Bristol Disability Equality Forum, argued what's right in the pedestrian

environment for disabled people is good for everyone. Wheelchair users do not like cobbles and damaged pavements, and want smooth surfaces and level pavements. He described the problems of pavements that slope towards the road, which can lead to the wheelchair tipping over. He stressed the need to get the message across to policy-makers and people who do the work. Other hazards and obstructions for disabled people include: A-Boards (especially difficult for the blind); café chairs and tables spilling out into the street with no barrier; parking on pavements; chaining bikes, leaving insufficient space on the pavement; scaffolding; dog poo, which can get on hands with a manual wheelchair; overhanging hedges; poorly sited lamp-posts, bollards, phone boxes; steep dropped kerbs; puddles, which make the wheelchair handle wet and the user can lose grip; cyclists who do not give enough clearance on shared-use routes. Gordon suggested that pedestrians seem to be given less priority than cyclists and motorists. Enforcement of current legislation and guidelines in relation to pavement obstructions is important.

Issues and Solutions in Neighbourhood Partnerships
Roger Gimson of Bishopston, Cotham and Redland Neighbourhood Partnership described some of the work the neighbourhood partnerships can do to improve the walking environments in their area. This includes producing maps and trails (e.g. Let's Walk Bishopston, Green Treasure Hunt); encouraging walking groups, although this depends on volunteer leaders who can be difficult to find and recruit; reporting obstructions such as

cars on pavements, including alerting the police to the worst examples; individuals placing polite notices on obstructions; tackling tagging, fly-posting immediately, for example through establishing a street scene group and also involving the community payback scheme; providing signposts and noticeboards, and seats as resting places; haloes on zebra crossing beacons to enhance visibility; requesting build-outs and no-parking lines at corners. Working groups can focus on specific issues e.g. street scene, parks. Small grants from Bristol City Council (BCC) can be helpful. Roger expressed concern that BCC is consulting on a proposal to remove funding for NP highway schemes, and he suggested participants might want to comment on this [see https://bristol.citizenspace.com/bristol-city-council/corporate-strategy-2017-2022/].

Community Speedwatch
During the break Lauren Curl of Bristol City Council 20mph team was available to talk about Community Speedwatch, a traffic monitoring initiative which enables local people to get actively involved in the road safety of their neighbourhood. To find out more, and sign up for training, contact lauren.curl@bristol.gov.uk @bristol20mph
[see www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/csw].

Let's Clean Bedminster
Ben Barker of the Greater Bedminster Community Partnership shared ideas that can be implemented at local level without too much cost. He felt a logo is important to raise awareness and activities such as a street art walking tour, can encourage people to get involved. Bedminster Access Group (BAG) has recently been set up, and there are plans to give certificates to the most accessible shops – 30 each year.

Rate the Walkability of your Neighbourhood
Suzanne Audrey, Senior Research Fellow in Public

Health at the University of Bristol, undertook a short exercise asking people to vote on several items relevant to the walkability of neighbourhoods. The main problems identified were crossings, motorised traffic and pavement obstructions.

There are enough pavements for walking	Agree
Pavements are well-maintained	Not sure
There are enough safe places to cross roads	Disagree
Motorised traffic is not a problem	Disagree
The pavements are generally clear of obstructions e.g. bins	Disagree
Routes for walking are well-lit	Not sure
The area is generally free from litter or graffiti	mixed views

How should people report problems?
Tracey Edwards-Brown, Bristol City Council Neighbourhood Officer, described several ways in which people can report issues of concern in their streets and neighbourhoods. These include the Bristol City Council website https://www.bristol.gov.uk/report-a-street-issue or by telephone 0117 922 2100. Issues can also be reported through FixMystreet at https://www.fixmystreet.com/around?pc=bristol

Imagine St Pauls and Easton Safer Streets Update
Patrick Williams, Engagement Manager at Sustrans, described two projects that involve working closely with local communities using community-led street design in areas prioritised by local people [see sustrans.org.uk/community-led-street-design]. Imagine St Pauls focused on Rosa Parks Lane, a key walking route to St Barnabas School and involved workshops as well as on-site meetings and activities. Easton Safer Streets is in progress and is investigating road closures and possible one-way traffic [see Easton-Safer-Streets-Project-Progress-Summary-Jul-2016]

Bristol Bugbears
Phillip Wright, Bristol City Council, is overseeing developments arising from the Cycling Ambition Fund which also includes improvement to the pedestrian infrastructure. He said it is important when consulting to move away from 'design/consult/defend' to 'engage/design/deliver'. Phillip described the Bristol Bugbears website which enables people to report smaller problems with walking and cycling infrastructure. He has received 1698 comments but there is only £300k to spend. He is currently developing a strategy for how to communicate back. The Bristol Bugbears site is currently acknowledged to have a cycling focus in the reporting categories, but the BCC team is learning to incorporate walking interests.

Participants' issues, priorities and potential solutions

Inconsiderate and dangerous parking
Parking on pavements, on street corners and at junctions were repeatedly raised as problems for people who walk and especially for people with disabilities. An additional problem related to heavy lorries parking on, and damaging, pavements. Suggested solutions were:
- New one way roads system and dedicated parking 'lanes'
- Better parking strategy
- Raise awareness of consequences for pedestrians and hope that drivers become more considerate
- Traffic/parking wardens
- Enforcement of illegal parking i.e. traffic warden in neighbourhoods

Volume and speed of motorised traffic
Participants were concerned about the amount of motorised traffic and the speed with which it travels in neighbourhood streets. Suggested solutions were:
- Reduce traffic (maybe extend RPZ)
- Reducing traffic of buses/lorries/cars
- Overcome car culture – now including additional commuter parking exported from city centre RPZs
- Encourage people to cycle/walk – not to take car
- Better public transport with commuting strategies
- Bus survey - listen to what people actually feed in
- Enforce 20mph
- Enforce 30mph
- Community speed watch resident groups

Bins and rubbish
Multiple bins obstructing pavements was a common problem raised. This could be compounded by fly tipping and shopping trolleys. Suggested solutions were:
- Combination of enforcement, community action and greater flexibility from Bristol waste re requirements
- Notices through the letterboxes of persistent wheelie-bin pavement blockers
- When recycling bins and rubbish bins are emptied they should be put back inside gates or premises
- More visible information regarding how to report flytipping/shopping trolleys
- Action needs to be taken once issues are reported (bins/flytipping/shopping trolleys)

Enforcement and clarification
It was felt that enforcement was essential but there may not be funds or political will for enforcement. Suggested solutions were:
- Traffic/parking wardens in neighbourhoods
- An audit of streets and mapping problems including on BCC website

Overgrown/overhanging hedges
Obstructions from overhanging shrubs and hedges cause problems for pedestrians and especially people with visual impairments. Suggested solutions were:
- Local leafleting to raise awareness of overhanging shrubbery
- Telephone number to report overgrown hedgerow

Shared space
Cycling on pavements, and the Bristol to Bath railway path, can cause safety issues for people who walk and can be a particular problem for people with heating impairments. It was suggested that shared space did not specify the space needed around walkers to ensure their safety. Suggested solutions were:
- Improved shared use
- A complex issue (railway path) needs a stakeholder solution and stewardship

Safety and crossings
Other concerns about safety include cars failing to stop at zebra crossings, problems crossing near bus stops, and ambiguity about road/footpaths where roads have been raised to pavement level. A suggested solution was:
- Pedestrian crossing at every bus stop

Walking to school
The school run can result in cars blocking roads and insufficient space for pedestrians. In some cases walking routes and access to school is poor. Possible solutions are:
- Block the end of road to school traffic, park a bit further away and walk
- Schools to take part in projects such as Living Streets' WoW - the year-round walk to school challenge
- Park and Stride sites
- Walking zone maps
- Crocodile App for walking bus

Involving people
It was felt important to involve local people in improving the walking environment in their neighbourhoods but this could be difficult. Suggested solutions were:
- Awareness of Highway Code (cyclists/motorists)
- Use free local newsletters and magazines and raise awareness
- Neighbourhood Partnerships have a representative for walking that goes to different walking groups to represent walking environment
- Roles for people who hate meetings
- Street champions
- Stalls at community events

Disability
Some specific points were raised in relation to disabilities:
- More walking groups welcoming the disabled
- Have a representative for disabled in walking groups to be aware and friendly

- In local maps show which areas are problems e.g. steep dropped curbs, and should be avoided by disabled
- Have Community Access advice

Funding

Changes in built environment need funding, which is limited. Suggested solutions were:
- Community organisations bidding for money
- Allow cheap and simple street interventions

New/large developments

New housing developments may lack the right facilities. In addition DIY streets can't solve most major problems. A suggested solution was:
- Make comments on planning applications for major developments

Some useful contacts and websites

Bristol Walking Alliance http://www.bristolwalkingalliance.org.uk/

Community speed watch training for resident groups, get in touch with
lauren.curl@bristol.gov.uk   @bristol20mph   www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/csw

Bristol Bugbears https://travelwest.info/projects/cycle-ambition-fund/bristol/bristol-cycling-walking-bugbears

Report a street issue to Bristol City Council, online at https://www.bristol.gov.uk/report-a-street-issue or telephone

Report a problem on a street in Bristol, or look at problems that have already been reported, at Fix My Street   https://fixmystreet.bristol.gov.uk/

Easton Safer Streets Project, Easton-Safer-Streets-Project-Progress-Summary-Jul-2016

Living Streets, https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/

Sustrans Community Led Street Design, sustrans.org.uk/community-led-street-design

Appendix 1.

Issues raised by participants	
Ashley	Parking on pavements
Bishopston	Speeding
Bishopston	Parking on pavements
Bishopston	Overhanging shrubbery
Bishopston, Cornwall Road	Lack of space for pedestrians near school access
Bishopston, Cornwall Road	Build out needed near school access (not on corner but where alley joins road) for school kids and parents, with benches and trees
Bishopston, Dongola Road	Crossing Gloucester Road safely at bus stops due to speeding cars
Bishopston, Nottingham Road	Motor vehicle volume and speed
Cotham, Stoke Bishop, Redland	Get more walking groups to be welcoming to disabled people
Cotham, Stoke Bishop, Redland	Shared space, a relatively small area – look at the bigger picture
Cotham, Stoke Bishop, Redland	Get clarification from parking services on lorries parking on and damaging pavements
Dundry View (Hartcliffe/ Withywood) Crox Bottom and Wilmott Park	Overgrown hedges
Dundry View (Hartcliffe/ Withywood) Crox Bottom and Wilmott Park	Recycling bins and rubbish bins
Dundry View (Hartcliffe/ Withywood) Crox Bottom and Wilmott Park	Rubbish (fly tipping)
Dundry View (Hartcliffe/ Withywood) Crox Bottom and Wilmott Park	Shopping trolleys
Easton	The railway path conflict between cyclists and other users
General	Speeding traffic
General	Getting people involved
General	New housing developments lacking the right facilities
General	No money
General	Parking on pavements
General	Cycling on pavements
General	Failure to stop at zebra crossings
General	Cultural difference/ lack of awareness of Highway Code (foreign cyclists/motorists)
Greater Bedminster Community Partnership	Enforcement – irresponsible parking

Greater Bedminster Community Partnership	Enforcement – pavement obstruction
Horfield/Manor Farm, Tilling Walk	Parking issues – cars on pavements. Related to Southmead Hospital. Has eased a little since new lining but hospital still 400 spaces short (Bristol Post report)
Knowle, Filwood & Windmill Hill NP, Cotswold Road	Pavements blocked with cars
Knowle, Filwood & Windmill Hill NP, Cotswold Road	Bins often obstruction
St George	Cars, cars, cars
Totterdown	Parking on pavements
Totterdown	Bins!
Whitehall, Johnsons Road	Walking to Whitehall School/The Limes Nursery. There are many initiatives to help travel to them (walking buses, encouraging cycling) but people drive into the road to the school which blocks.

Priorities	
Bishopston	Reduce traffic (maybe extend RPZ)
Bishopston	Keeping parked cars off the pavements – needs thorough appraisal of new one way roads system and dedication parking 'lanes'
Bishopston, Dongola Road	Speeding of cars
Bishopston, Dongola Road	Air pollution
Bishopston, Dongola Road	Parking on pavements
Bishopston, Nottingham Road	Car speed
Bishopston, Nottingham Road	Pavement parking
Dundry View	Health, social isolation, friendship. Community involvement
Greater Brislington	Reduce parking/driving on pavements
Greater Brislington	Encourage people to cycle/walk – not to take car
Greater Brislington	Ambiguity of road/footpaths where roads have been raised to pavement level
Redland	Parking at junctions
Redland	Parking on pavements
St Andrews	Clearing the pavements! Combination of cars nose to tail parked halfway across the pavement, combined with wheelie bins (several outside each HMO) and recycling boxes which are never taken in, makes walking impossible. It is always necessary to keep cutting out into the road in order to keep walking. Parking across corners is a major hazard for pedestrians. We **never** see wardens in St Andrews!
St George	Reducing traffic of buses/lorries/cars. But no funding to enforce (or political will?)
Stockwood	Obstructed paths (vegetation, pavement parking)

Stockwood	Overcome car culture – now including additional commuter parking exported from city centre RPZs
Stockwood	The school run – note especially lack of access on foot between Stockwood and the Brislington Oasis Academy
Stoke Bishop	Overhanging bushes

Possible solutions	
Ashley	Parking strategy. Better parking strategy detailing
Ashley	Better public transport with commuting strategies
Bishopston	Enforce 20mph
Bishopston	Raise awareness of consequences for pedestrians (of pavement parking) and hope that drivers become more considerate
Bishopston	Local leafletting to raise awareness of overhanging shrubbery)
Bishopston, Dongola Road	Enforce 30mph speed limit.
Bishopston, Dongola Road	Pedestrian crossing at every bus stop
Brislington East	'Make Sunday special'
City wide	Community speed watch resident groups get in touch with lauren.curl@bristol.gov.uk @bristol20mph
Cotham, Stoke Bishop, Redland	Have a representative for disabled in walking groups to be aware and friendly
Cotham, Stoke Bishop, Redland	Shared space doesn't mention space needed around walkers e.g. if deaf don't hear cyclists
Cotham, Stoke Bishop, Redland	Neighbourhood Partnerships have representative for walking that goes to different walking groups to represent walking environment
Cotham, Stoke Bishop, Redland	Have Community Access advice (like Community Speed)
Cotham, Stoke Bishop, Redland	Do an audit of streets and map them, and on Council site
Cotham, Stoke Bishop, Redland	In local maps show which areas are problems e.g. steep dropped curbs, and should be avoided by disabled
Cotham, Stoke Bishop, Redland	Use free local newsletters and magazines and raise awareness
Cotham, Stoke Bishop, Redland	Let Asher Craig know about Green Partnership award for Crocodile App for walking bus being used in Henleaze
Dundry View (Hartcliffe/ Withywood) Crox Bottom and Wilmott Park	Telephone number to report overgrown hedgerow
Dundry View (Hartcliffe/ Withywood) Crox Bottom and Wilmott Park	When recycling bins and rubbish bins are emptied they should be put back inside gates or premises
Dundry View (Hartcliffe/ Withywood) Crox Bottom and Wilmott Park	More visible information regarding how to report flytipping

Dundry View (Hartcliffe/ Withywood) Crox Bottom and Wilmott Park	More visible information regarding how to report shopping trolleys
Dundry View (Hartcliffe/ Withywood) Crox Bottom and Wilmott Park	Action needs to be taken once issues are reported (bins/flytipping/shopping trollies)
Easton	A complex issue (railway path) needs a stakeholder solution and stewardship
General	Community fair (BCR NP does it); explain working groups, community groups to have a stall, community organisations bidding for money
General	Local councillors receive emails about issues, can encourage them to join NP group
General	Roles for people who hate meetings
General	Street champions
General	Bristol City Council 20mph enforcement
General	Make comments on planning applications for major developments
General	Allow cheap and simple street interventions
Greater Bedminster Community Partnership	Better citizenship/awareness
Greater Bedminster Community Partnership	Improved shared use
Horfield/Manor Farm, Tilling Walk	Wish we knew. I rent out my driveway so that makes a difference to one person. (*Parking for Southmead Hospital*)
Horfield/Manor Farm, Tilling Walk	Bus survey. Listen to what people actually feed in.
Johnsons Road, Whitehall	Block the end of Johnsons Road to school traffic, park a bit further away and walk.
Knowle, Filwood & Windmill Hill NP, Cotswold Road	Enforcement of illegal parking i.e. traffic warden in neighbourhoods
Nottingham Road, Bishopston	Enforce 20mph. Increase number of one-way streets.
St Andrews, Cornwall Road/ Belmont Road/ North Street	Parking wardens!
St Andrews, Cornwall Road/ Belmont Road/ North Street	Notices through the letterboxes of persistent wheelie-bin pavement blockers
St George	Changes in built environment and provision of public transport that works. But these need funding. DIY streets can't solve most major problems
Totterdown	Combination of enforcement, community action and greater flexibility from Bristol waster re requirements

Appendix 2. List of participants

Name	NP area	Role
Patrycja Pinkowska	AELH	Community Engagement Officer
Jess Read	AELH	
Carolyn Johnson	AELH	
Anja Dalton	AELH	
Kevin Molloy	BCR	
Marcus Grant	BCR	
Kevin Goodenough	BCR	
Anthony Negus	BCR	
Roger Gimson	BCR	
Fiona Reid	BCR	
Pauline Allen	CCH	
Jason Edwards-Brown	DV	
Suzanne Audrey	FKWH	
Andrew Brown	FKWH	
Janice Rossiter	FKWH	
Christine Higgott	FKWH	
Tony Carey	GB	
Donald Branch	GBCP	
Celia Phipps	GBCP	
Ben Barker	GBCP	
Anna George	HL	
Gordon Richardson	SBWoTH	
Steven Ewens	SBWoTH	
Jenny Hodges	SBWoTH	NP Equalities rep
Alan Morris	SBWoTH	
Pete Goodwin	SHW	
Asher Craig	St G	
Diane Jones	St G	
Peter Symes	-	-
Amira Hussain	-	-
Tony Cowley	-	-
Suzanne Wilson	-	BCC City Innovation Manager
Donald Branch	-	-
Alex Geddis	-	-
Vicki Woolley	-	BGCP
Ursula Lucas	-	Action on Hearing Loss
Lauren Curl	-	20mph
Patrick Williams	-	Sustrans projects
Kelly Theis	-	Living Streets
Tracy Edwards-Brown	-	BCC Neighbourhoods
Phil Wright	-	BCC Cycle Ambition Fund Programme Manager

Neighbourhood Partnerships

Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill
Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston
Bishopston, Cotham and Redland
Central, Clifton and Harbourside
Dundry View
Filwood, Knowle and Windmill Hill
Greater Bedminster Community Partnership
Greater Brislington
Greater Fishponds
Henbury, Brentry and Southmead
Stoke Bishop, Westbury-on-Trym and Henleaze
Horfield and Lockleaze
St George
Stockwood, Hengrove and Whitchurch