

## Protect Our Parks

### Badock's Wood – A Statement from Friends of Badock's Wood to Bristol City Council for 14<sup>th</sup> November 2017

**Badock's Wood is a public open space and a designated Local Nature Reserve. It is a valuable community resource which must continue to be cared for using public funds and we see no possibility of it being self-financing nor part of a cost-neutral plan for Bristol's Parks and Open Space.**

Badock's Wood is a public open space in Southmead / Westbury on Trym situated next to Henleaze Lake. It covers an area of approximately 10 hectares. It is a small, semi-natural, broad-leaved woodland situated in a limestone valley (with adjacent areas of grassland) in the north-west of Bristol, between Henleaze and Southmead. It therefore provides a wildlife haven in an urban setting. To the north of the site, in an area of open grassland, is a Bronze Age burial mound (tumulus). The latter has been classified as "Middle Bronze Age, constructed about 1300BC" and is sometimes referred to as the "Southmead Round Barrow".

This open space was provided for public benefit through an agreement between Sir Stanley Badock and Bristol City Council in the 1930s.

Friends of Badock's Wood has worked very closely with the City Council, particularly the Parks Department, for the last 20 years to enhance and improve the open space, resulting in it being awarded Local Nature Reserve designation in 2008.

It is an invaluable free-to-access open space, not only for wildlife but for the local communities in particular residents of Southmead, Henleaze, Westbury on Trym and Horfield wards.

Badock's Wood is an asset which contributes to the public's health and wellbeing. It requires investment from the public purse for this public benefit. This wood (and wildflower meadows) is not a "cash cow". It cannot be exploited commercially. There is no suitable venue space for concerts or other significant revenue raising, profit making events.

What it provides – amongst other things:

- An educational environment for formal and informal learning. Forest Schools are held there. Local primary and secondary schools use it as an outdoor classroom.
- A peaceful, quiet space to be.
- A free place to run around rather than sit indoors.
- All-weather paths which have been way-marked as a 1km Walk for Health – vital for physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- Walking and cycling routes to schools and work – reducing reliance on cars.
- A place for people to exercise. A place for people to exercise their dogs. This needs Council funds to manage dog waste as well as for the dog warden
- A haven for wildlife in an urban area. 40 species of birds resident and migratory are recorded in Badock's Wood annually. Two rivers run through including the Westbury Trym that the village is named after. Three wildflower meadows thrive thanks to the Council, FOBW and local residents and wildlife groups all working together. These play host to large numbers of invertebrates including many butterflies and moths which are in serious decline in the UK. This needs council funded maintenance using professional workers and cannot be done solely by volunteers.
- Ancient trees, veteran trees, hundreds of years old – which need to be actively cared for by trained arboriculturalists – not local volunteers.

It has a long history to tell. Not just its ancient history (there is a Bronze Age Burial Mound which needs to be cared for) but its more recent community, cultural history. It was an allotment site during the Second World War. It was home to people bombed out of their homes during WWII thanks to prefabs being built across what are now the meadows. Horses grazed on what has most recently been a playing field. Local people have many memories and stories to tell. Anyone who grew up nearby has played in the wood. It is an important part of their lives and needs to continue to be so. But no one has talked to us about how the Council plans to continue to look after it if there are insufficient funds allocated to the Parks Departmental budget.

What it needs is guaranteed funding. Not further budget cuts. It is already at the limit, with less management and maintenance funded by the Council than ever before. However local people cannot make up the financial nor the professional short fall. This must be provided by the Council. Badock's Wood cannot and never will be self-financing. It just is not possible.