

**13th September (Bristol Half Marathon)** could continue the running theme with shorter runs for everyone who couldn't manage the whole event.

**25th October (Bristol/Bath Marathon)** will be an opportunity to sum up the achievements of Bristol's Green Capital Summer.

The Portway Sunday Park Committee will represent interested parties and we will undertake to coordinate publicity and promotion, liaise with City Council and authority and the matters most easily dealt with on a central basis in order that the myriad of events can just get on with organising their own thing. We will also evaluate the benefits and identify how to improve matters for future years.

Access to the Portway will be best by foot and cycle. Sea Mills station has two trains an hour from Clifton Down and east Bristol and will make for a most convenient starting point to the whole of the Portway Sunday Park project. The existing bus services over Cumberland Basin will remain operating which will give good access to this end of the scheme. If additional car parking is required then the section of the Portway between Sea Mills and Sylvan Way could be used on a temporary basis on the day.

**Practicalities and project development**

The beauty of the Portway Sunday Park is that it makes use of the City's existing resources in a creative way. Portway traffic flow on Sundays is different in volume and nature to weekdays and can easily take alternative routes. The only properties directly affected

in terms of highway access along the whole length of the road - St. Vincent's Terrace - would gain a whole day of blessed quiet and peace and could easily be accommodated in terms of Sunday access.

The capital and operating costs of opening up this huge linear park - 25 acres or more, or 200 plus, depending on how extensively you consider that adjacent fields, woods and riverside areas are blighted by the traffic at present - is very small and represents extraordinary value for money.



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At this early stage of the year the list of interested organisations is evolving all the time, and may include;

Avon Gorge & Downs Wildlife Project

Avon Outdoor Activities Club

Avon Wildlife Trust

BadTri

Bristol Baroque Chamber Music

Bristol Big Green Week

Bristol Bike Project

Bristol City Council

Bristol Cycling Campaign

Bristol Drawing Club

Bristol Manor Farm FC

Bristol Nature Network

Bristol Nordic Walking

Bristol Orienteering Klub

Bristol ParkRun

Bristol Rocks Railway

Bristol Running School

Bristol Walking for Health

Bristol Zoological Society

Clifton and Hotwells Improvement Society (CHIS)

Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust

Clifton Wood and Hotwells

Community Association

Climb Bristol/ The British Mountaineering Council

Cycle In Cinema

Destination Bristol

Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge

Gert Lush choir

Goodgym

Groundwork

Grow Bristol

LifeCycle UK

Moti Bristol

Natural England

North Somerset DC

Panasonic Steel Band

Portway Rugby Development Centre

Portway sub-aqua club

Really Useful Bikes

Roll for the Soul

Sea Mills Association

Sky Rides

Sneyd Park Residents Association

Society of Merchant Venturers

Sports England

TriCoaching Bristol

UWE Centre for Transport and Society

Woodland Trust

Proposals to use the Portway for a wide variety of public uses on the FIVE days the road is to be closed for existing planned events -eg the Marathon

Bristol's selection as Europe's Green Capital 2015 has enormous potential to enhance Bristol's existing excellent reputation as a place to live and work. The challenge for Bristol is to make the most of this opportunity and to build on the City's reputation for creativity and innovation. Here is a simple project to promote our Green Capital ambitions and to draw in the widest possible community. The Portway Sunday

Park Project proposes to take advantage of the existing events by extending their road closures to dusk on these five days, in order that the whole road, the world famous Gorge and the environs either side can be available for public use and enjoyment.

31st May, 14th June, 21st June, 13th September, and 25th October 2015



Detail from a wood engraving by Peter Reddick

## PORTWAY SUNDAY PARK: THE PROPOSALS IN BRIEF

This year 2015, there are five planned events which take place on the Portway and require the road to be closed to traffic. These are 31st May, 14 and 21st June, 13th September and 25th October for the marathons, 10km run, cycle ride and triathlon. In each case the Portway is closed through to late morning or early afternoon. We simply propose that these closures remain in place till dusk, and on midsummer's day, to midnight.

At a stroke, we create a major new linear public park to use for walking, running, cycling, wildlife watching, social gatherings and cultural events - all in the majestic surroundings of the limestone cliffs, the tidal river, and Leigh Woods. Portway Sunday Park will, without question, rapidly become an established and popular feature, on a par with the Downs and Ashton Court, if only on these five days. And it will be cheap to provide, free to use, easily accessible and wheelchair-friendly.

And more than this; we will demonstrate how Bristol has the vision and creativity to make innovative, cost-effective and flexible use of its resources; we will enable even more of its citizens to take their leisure close to home; it will promote fitness and health through the addition of new opportunities to walk and cycle a good distance within the City boundaries; it will restore vistas over the tidal River, to its ebbs and flow and the raw power of nature and tranquillity to the Woods and the Downs for these five days; and it will open up possibilities to reactivate sites along and at either end of the road closure, including Cumberland Basin Piazza.

With all of this on our doorstep, it is hard to conceive of any project which is more suitable or emblematic of Bristol's ambition for Green Capital 2015.

### How will it all work?

The five road closure arrangements will be left in place for the whole day, along with any temporary toilets and other supporting arrangements. The Portway will then be open and available for everyone in the City to use and enjoy, to join in formal events and activities, or to just picnic and relax in this memorable location.

The programme will be coordinated by the Portway Sunday Park Committee which will endeavour to dovetail activities together in a complementary way. At present we propose themes for each day as follows.

**31st May (Bristol 10K)** will be Green Capital Day and an opportunity for every Green Capital Scheme in the City to relax and enjoy the natural environment of the Avon Gorge. It is the last day of Bristol's month long "Walking Festival" which could end with a walk along the Portway and an ascent of each of the linking paths to the Downs. It will be an opportunity for the public to walk and cycle down to see the Avon Wildlife Trust's new reserve and hopefully to enlist the public at large to have a massive clean-up of all the plastic and debris on the banks of the River Avon.

**14th June (Bristol Triathlon).** This is the first day of Bristol's "Big Green Week" which could celebrate the Green City with a pageant along the traffic free Portway. This might be billed as the Arts and Culture day with painting and photography, music concerts and open air cinema. Throughout this and all five days, walking and cycling events, large and small would be able to take place along the length of the road.

**21st June (Bristol's Biggest Bike Ride)** - note at the time of writing this is not a certain fixture, but if the road is closed this day then it should be through to midnight on this Midsummer's Day)



## PORTWAY SUNDAY PARK for BRISTOL GREEN CAPITAL 2015



### Notes for map covering various points

- 1 Portway closed from the Plimsoll Bridge at Cumberland Basin to Sylvan Way (5.2kms).
- 2 The temporary barriers required for the main event would be left in place at Cumberland Basin (under Swing Bridge), Cabot Way (off Plimsoll Bridge), top of Bridge Valley Road, Roman Way, Sea Mills Lane, Riverleaze and Sylvan Way. Over this last section, from Seamills, local residents and the Rugby Club could use the road to Sylvan Way as necessary. The Portway itself could be used as a carpark for the Sunday Park days.
- 3 The Cumberland Basin area is the focus of ongoing community action.
- 4 Direct connection with the Harbourside Walkways leading through to Queen Square, 2.25kms away. Only works required are to make a safe crossing of Merchants Road by Junction Lock Bridge to reach the Pumphouse. These are in hand as part of the City's Cycling Programme and could be usefully brought forward to be complete by the summer.
- 5 Attractive paths leading away from the Portway, scarcely used on account of the heavy road traffic, including the Zigzag steps to Sion Hill, the Bridge Valley Road to Clifton Down, the New Zigzag, the Gully, the connection over the railway bridge to Old Sneyd Park and the Woodlands Trust land, to the Trym Valley and to Kings Weston across the Golf Course.
- 5a The former tramway (used to fill the quarry on the Downs) could make a brilliant path to the Great Quarry
- 5b The Rocks Railway could be opened each Sunday and the public climb its steps to Sion Hill.
- 6 Bridge Valley Road would make a beautiful location for hill-climbing races by cyclists, and downhill for skateboarders.
- 7 The old towpath and all the woods on this side will benefit from a day of quietness.
- 8 The riverside paths are good places to get close up to the tidal waters. Also the Portway Sunday Park will be an opportunity for a large scale clean up of the debris all along the river bank.
- 9 The Trym Valley provides a green corridor through to Blaise Castle, whose café is 3.7kms from the Portway.
- 10 Houses in St. Vincent's Terrace would benefit from a traffic-free day. Provide passes for occupants to drive to and from Dowry Square.
- 11 The Great Quarry will be a lovely spot for picnics and informal events away from the road.
- 11a Former sports fields now owned by Avon Wildlife Trust. The Portway Sundays will give the public a first opportunity to appreciate the new wildlife space being created here.
- 12 On four of the 5 days high tide is conveniently in the early evening and it may be possible to see boating events on the water for the three hours before.