

Brislington Community Partnership awarded HLF support for exciting new community project

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The aim of the project is to bring the local river to life and enable the people of Brislington and surrounding areas to discover its history and wildlife through fun activities, walks, talks and events, as well as supporting local people to organise their own river-related activities.

Many residents are unaware of this fantastic wild space right on their doorsteps and the project will help people to discover for themselves the hidden secrets that the Brook has to offer. There will be plenty of opportunities to get involved, ranging from river clear-ups to participating in a performance recreating the ancient Pilgrim's Way to St Anne's Holy Well where people will be able to meet some real live bats and discover this beautiful and much misrepresented creature that lives locally.

The project is being led by BCP in partnership with Bristol City Council, Neighbourhood Partnerships and Young Bristol, with involvement from local schools and community groups; it focuses on the brook, which runs through Stockwood, Brislington and St Annes, connecting these communities and acting as an invaluable wildlife corridor before finally flowing into the Avon.

The river runs through an area known as St Anne's Woods which in Medieval times was a well known place of pilgrimage rivalling Walsingham and Canterbury. The chapel, which once stood there, founded in the 13th century was famously visited by King Henry VII but later destroyed by his infamous son Henry VIII. The Holy Well, reported to have healing powers, still exists and can be visited on a walk along the brook. Very few people know about the rich history that can be discovered along the river both from the distant past and more recently. Another part of the project will involve collecting stories and living memories of the brook from people who live or grew up in the area, and archiving them for posterity.

Commenting on the award, Steve Pearce, local resident and chair of the Brislington Community Partnership, said: "We are over the moon to have received the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund. We're confident the project will support local people to rediscover this hidden jewel in the middle of Bristol and help them to feel proud to live in Brislington."

Explaining HLF's support for the project Nerys Watts, HLF's Head of South West, said: "We are always keen to encourage projects that assist people to investigate the heritage of their own area. The Discovering Brislington Brook project is rich in opportunities for local people to develop their understanding of heritage in a way appropriate to their needs, background and interests, from natural heritage to historic buildings and ancient traditions, and we were delighted to be able to support it".

If you are interested in playing a part in this inspiring project or simply want to find out more, please get in touch with the newly appointed coordinator, Rowan Matthiessen on 07737 344 318 or by emailing rowan.matthiessen@bristol.gov.uk.

Notes to editors

Brislington Community Partnership

The Brislington Community Partnership is based in the southeast of Bristol, UK. We are made up of residents, interested individuals, members of community groups and representatives from business, schools, churches and statutory agencies such as Bristol City Council's Youth Services, Community Development and Housing, Health and Social Services. The Partnership covers both Brislington East and West wards, including, Broomhill, St Anne's, and St Anne's Park.

We came together initially because we realised that to attract funds into the local area we would need to come together with a common voice, which is what the Partnership has been striving to achieve since its inception. The Partnership has had a wide range of successes, from drawing up an initial action plan, to developing a comprehensive community directory, to facilitating such groups as the Friends of Nightingale Valley and Respect.

The Partnership has also organised fun days such as the Big Moan and the Big Grin, to address younger people's issues in the area and foster better intergenerational communication and cooperation. More recently, we have been working with Bristol City Council's Sustainable Cities Team to put together a comprehensive Community Action Plan.

Heritage Lottery Fund

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported over 30,000 projects, allocating £4.6billion across the UK.

Further information

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