

Statement - Gillian Risbridger

BANES - A Plea for Urban Trees

Mature trees provide immense, irreplaceable environmental benefits, including massive carbon storage, significant oxygen production, air pollution filtration, and erosion control. They are critical habitats for wildlife and provide shade that lowers temperatures in cities. It takes decades to replace the ecological, aesthetic, and functional value of a mature tree.

Stop cutting down broadleaved mature trees, which are then replaced with a monoculture of willow, saplings or semi-mature trees that are not maintained and therefore die.

Examples

Lower Bristol Road near Cleveland Bridge – 3 different mature trees cut down, replaced by 4 semi-mature willows and grass – 1 tree flourished, 3 chopped down as sickly and replaced with saplings, which were bent over by drunken louts. Maintenance vehicles keep parking on grass, now we are left with weeds and mud and one willow tree.

North side of river, by Avon Street car park, mature trees cut down as they were in the way of the “building site”. Still hideous building site, as covid prevented North Quays development, no replanting. Riverside planting is a monoculture of willows. Wildflowers planted, looked beautiful 1st year, ok 2nd year, now swamped by nettles and thistles. Willow arch never maintained, 1/3 died back, not replanted.

Plant Vegetation, not bollards.

Lower Wells Road recently had new works, no resident consultation. New traffic lights increased asphalt pavement by metre along 12 metres, with bollards to prevent parking. Instead, permeable or porous paving, including gravel, grass-concrete pavers, porous asphalt, and permeable concrete blocks could have been used to let water infiltrate the ground, reducing flood risk and surface pooling. Together with planting vegetation eg small trees, hedges or shrubs – better for nature and better aesthetically.

My asks

- 1) Council must put preservation orders on all mature trees in Bath and developers can work/plan round them, rather than removing them.**
- 2) Nature needs a variety of trees, not a monoculture, plant micro forests**
- 3) Newly planted areas must be properly maintained until vegetation established**
- 4) Porus pavements with vegetation - rather than bollards on wide impermeable pavements.**