

Save the M32 Maples calls on Mayor Marvin Rees to investigate publicly the false evidence from the Council Planning Dept.

Submitted by: SaveTheM32Maples

Thursday, 27 February 2020

"Student organisers welcome the Maples group to tomorrow's demonstration, where campaigners protest the hypocrisy of "Green Capital" Bristol city council felling three remaining maples on Lower Ashley Road, and ask the Mayor to reopen negotiations he recently dropped. "Come down and measure for yourself."

Save the M32 Maples campaigners, including children affected by the city's asthma epidemic are marching down Park Street, with the university medical students of Health Declares Emergency, to join Greta Thunberg on College Green at 11am. Used Asthma inhalers will be displayed on tree branches to show how important the three large trees are to the health of St. Paul's children, who have a 46% asthma rate.* Medical student Abbie Festa, organiser of the Health Declares Emergency march down Park Street, says, "Trees are the lungs of the world. They contain greenhouse gasses. We are now finding ambient black carbon on the foetal side of placentas, caused by pollution. This is damage to babies not yet born. We are not being adequately prepared for climate change, which is why we are joining up with Friday is the Future and Save the M32 Maples. If we take no action there will be three times the number of pollution-related deaths by 2050."

On Monday night the Mayor sent a statement denying "paternity" of the three maples, after five weeks of investigation, insisting that the strip the trees are located on belongs to landowner John Garlick. Save the M32 Maples say there is "overwhelming public evidence to the contrary." They are calling on the Mayor to reopen negotiations and to "share and compare" the evidence from both sides. The Planning Department, they say, cannot investigate itself and its own cover-ups from 2005.

While the group's lawyer prepares a response, the campaigner's chief forensic researcher, Howard Ogden, stated: "Bristol City Council's carefully worded tree ownership denial fails to assert whether the trees exist on Mr Garlick's land, or their own. Mysteriously, they claim the trees were sold in 2005 with the adjacent land. We have still not been offered any documentary evidence to support this assessment. However, it is most important to note what isn't in the letter - the new maps that we were promised. Where are they? Are they being covered up because they show the maples on Council land? Yes, I think so."

The Bristol Tree Forum's Vassili Papastavrou says, "We are with the students tomorrow. We are no longer in the 1970s. Bristol's planners need to open their eyes to the importance of urban trees. We need a green city, not one where important trees are removed without a second thought on a weekly basis. We objected to this planning application in 2015 but the planners saw no value in the trees and we were ignored. Given the huge amount of national and local press coverage, and the strong local campaign to save them, we must have been right all along."

Student organiser, Heulwen Flower, 17, from Bristol Youth Strike for Climate, says of the M32 Maples campaign, "This is the tenth march I have organised. Our Bristol Cathedral School will be closed tomorrow and probably half of the students will join the march. We should protect trees because of the high pollution level near schools. Trees keep the pollution down, and the council are letting them get

cut down. It is unnecessary to put students at risk just attending school. There are already 300 deaths per year in Bristol due to pollution.”

Dr. Hattie Nicholas, of MedAct and the Children’s Hospital, told a large Save the M32 Maples meeting last week that “On high pollution days in Bristol, there are 4 more cardiac arrests, 9 more admissions for stroke and 12 more children attending with asthma symptoms, of which 5 will have to stay in hospital, plus 4 more adults attending hospital with asthma.

Living next to roads in inner city areas is more likely to produce symptoms.”

Professor John Tarlton, of Save the M32 Maples, issued a challenge Mayor Marvin Rees. Please come down to Lower Ashley Road for yourself, and take the measurements of the land. In 2005 Planning made careful measurements. So let's see them and then work out why they differ from ours. If your department didn't make careful measurements, and are failing to release the topographical survey, then they were simply covering themselves in 2005, which is not definitive proof of ownership.”

Mother and local resident, Nadine Bennett, talked about her daughter Calyse, 9, and said, “I do worry about her breathing when she gets cold and is walking up the hill past the BRI to school. She can get really sick and can hardly breathe. She is now so into the environment and told me off for having a diesel car. She is going with her school, St. Michael’s on the Mount, and they are really into saving world.” Because she , Bennett-Arnold, 10.

A further criticism of the Council’s “paternity denial” comes from Katrina Billings, of the Bristol Clean Air Alliance and the Save the M32 Maples. “One pillar of the Council’s maples ownership denial is that Planning insists that they don’t place TPO’s on their own trees. It took us only five minutes to demolish this untruth, a row of 36 trees exist on Council land less than a mile away, each covered by a Tree Protection Order.”

Frustrated at what another M32 Maples organiser claims is a “dereliction of duty” by the Mayor, to represent his own “patch” of St. Paul’s, Anita Bennett, of Ashley Labour Party, says, “We were called in at the outbreak of hostilities by John Garlick, and had only two meetings at the Council. Just as we discovered the Council’s own evidence that the maples are on Council property Marvin stopped our negotiations. Is it that he is caving in to the city’s Planning Department cover-ups? We are inviting him today to turn things around, to take responsibility and open up the hidden evidence for public scrutiny. By keeping the maples, and honouring our months of doing the Council’s job for them, Marvin, will be showing our children and the young people marching, that we are on their side. No more empty words and platitudes, please, only concrete action.”

Mother Becky Babcock has two children under five who both suffer from asthma. We are living close to M32 and seeing more trees being chopped. My children’s asthma traits have increased. I am sad that Marvin is not negotiating. The motorway is a horrible bit of traffic, and the maples are a lovely filter into St. Pauls There is greenery we are losing right across. I am really surprised at Marvin, because he grew up here, and if he were still living here with his children how would he feel? How can people think that planting new trees will take the place of the maples?”.

ENDS

For more information please call
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Useful Links

Facebook: <https://Facebook.com/m32maples>

YouTube: <https://YouTube.com/m32maples>

Petition

<https://www.change.org/p/mayor-and-council-of-bristol-city-emergency-tree-protection-orders-for-all-bristol-city-trees>

Crowdfunder:

<https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/save-our-precious-trees---we-need-to-breathe>

RESOURCES

MAP showing public ownership of the Maples

<https://tinyurl.com/M32Maples-on-Public-Land>

Bristol Mayor declares Ecological Emergency

<https://web.archive.org/web/20200205105340/https://www.thegu...>

BRISTOL ASTHMA CHILD FIGS

<https://tinyurl.com/ChildAsthmaRates>

<https://bristoltreeforum.org/2020/01/18/shocking-treatment-o...>

Air Pollution and health

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/pests-pollution-noise-food/air-qu...>

<https://www.cleanairforbristol.org/what-is-air-pollution/air...>

Bristol Mayor declares Ecological Emergency

<https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/documents/s34127/Climate%20...>

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/33379/Mayor%27s+C...>

Additional Quotes:

*Bristol Clean Air Alliance - Statement from Tina Biggs (founder member)

“Health and wellbeing – 56 of the 290 Children and young people who attend Full Circle at Docklands suffer with some medical condition from plasters to peanuts. Shockingly, 47% of our young people suffer with asthma. This is concerning seeing as so many of the children who attend Full Circle at the Docklands centre live-in built-up areas where fresh air and green spaces are limited, which would be so beneficial for everyone. Five people considered themselves to be living with a disability all affecting neurological behaviour and learning abilities i.e. ADHD and Autism”

The official medical line from my repeated presentations to the Bristol Health and Wellbeing Board, is that there are many other factors contributing to asthma, such as indoor pollution, and the correlation with NO2 and particulates is weak (see scatter plot). But when I asked the officers to come up with a graph showing asthma versus indoor pollution or versus household income, this was not forthcoming.

As ever, asthma data has to be treated with care – but there is no doubt it is exacerbated by traffic pollution.

Bristol MedAct - Hattie Nichols

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) - 43% of chronic lung disease deaths are due to air pollution, and almost 1/3 of lung cancer, and 1/4 of strokes and heart attacks.
- Most lung damage comes from particulates, pm 2.5 can cross into bloodstream and cause inflammation/oxidative stress in tissue, organs.
- Short term symptoms - irritates eyes, respiratory tract, damages the immune system which predisposes respiratory infection. Causes flare ups of pre existing conditions like asthma, COPD.
- Long term symptoms - heart disease, strokes, chronic lung disease, diabetes, neurological conditions, depression.
- Children are particularly vulnerable, can affect foetal development (intrauterine growth restriction) increased risk of premature birth.
- Major cause of childhood asthma also affects neurological development. 300 deaths per year in Bristol due to air pollution (8.5%).
- On high pollution days in Bristol, 4 more cardiac arrests, 9 more admissions for stroke, 12 more children attending with asthma symptoms, of which 5 will have to stay in hospital, 4 more adults attending hospital with asthma.
- Living next to roads, inner city areas is more likely to produce symptoms.

National News Reports

BBC News, 03/02/20

M32 Maples: Bristol City Council 'owns' at risk trees

"People fighting to stop Norway maple trees being cut down to make way for housing claim they are not the property of the landowner developing the site." - By Liz Lewis

The Guardian, 14/01/20

Bristol residents hold vigil in protest at plans to chop down trees

"St Paul's locals and activists call on city council to prevent maple trees being destroyed"

By Steven Morris @stevenmorris20

BBC Radio 4, 03/02/20

PM with Evan Davis

Suzan Hackett and Vassili Papastavrou of the Save The M32 Maples Steering Committee are joined by a large

crowd of jolly campaigners to talk trees with Radio 4

Local News Reports

First attack: Bristol Post, 10/06/2019

Residents seek protection for threatened trees off M32 as 'opportunistic massacring' criticised
"Angry environmentalists are protesting against trees being pulled down on a road near the M32." - By Andrew McQuarrie

Second attack: Bristol Post 31/12/19

(front page of printed edition, 01/01/20)

Chained protesters stop the cutting down of trees near M32

"Two women chained themselves to a tree in protest over the chopping down of a row of maple trees - which was in disregard of requests from the city council." - By Alex Ross

Bristol Tree Forum 18/01/20

Shocking treatment of Lower Ashley Road trees shows urgent need for Bristol Planning rethink

"Bristol has declared a climate emergency. There is an urgent need for all council departments to re-think the way that they work."

Bristol Cable 29/01/20

Residents Slam Serious Flaw in the Planning Process in Campaign to Save Threatened Trees

"Crucial questions remain unanswered in the ongoing fight to protect M32 Maples, including who owns the trees." - By Lorna Stephenson

BBC Radio Bristol, 08/02/20

Saturday Breakfast with Ali Vowles

Anita Bennett and Howard Ogden of the Save The M32 Maples Steering Committee chat with Ali Vowles on the Breakfast Show