

BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL GARDENS:

A second phase of positive engagement has begun.

CRS remains totally committed to supporting a sustainable and realistic plan for the Gardens which can enjoy the full support of the local community. Our widely circulated Report is based on our response to the Draft Plans for BBG revealed by Calthorpe Estates in November 2016. Over a period of 7 months, 25 members of CRS devoted their professional expertise to analysis of the plans and other related documentation. We took this step because of our general concern about the social impact of the recent waves of intensive development across Edgbaston which, in our view, threaten to change the character of the area in a fundamental way. We see the plans for the Botanical Gardens (our "green heart") as a crucial litmus test which will reveal the true underlying vision and intentions for the future of Edgbaston.

IEWS OF THE CALTHORPE
RESIDENTS' SOCIETY COMMITTEE
CONCERNING PLANS FOR THE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE
BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL
GARDENS.

REPORT JUNE 2017

The Report, written by Professor Ron Amann, highlights the key risks to the community which are inherent in the current plans. The preservation of the beauty, history and character of Grade II* listed Gardens in a Conservation Area is potentially threatened. There is also a real risk of 'creeping development' which needs to be addressed. Furthermore, the scale of the Draft Plan suggests imbalance between a commercial 'Pleasure' Garden and a 'Botanical' Garden.

In addition to being widely circulated to residents and being available on our website, the Report has been shared with Trustees of Calthorpe Estates and their Agents and Trustees of BBG. We have indicated that unless these risks are mitigated or removed, CRS will not be able to support any future plans that contain them. By acting promptly and maintaining a steady, well balanced approach, CRS has created a window of opportunity for constructive discussion aimed at resolving these issues.

< Key stakeholders.

The second phase of work has now begun. This is complex scheme of development. Calthorpe Estates is the landlord, with schools, clubs, organisations and residents all important stakeholders. CRS has welcomed the prospect of playing a leading role in a programme of constructive engagement.

By organising a series of seminars, we are encouraging BBG to engage more widely with the community in order for them to be exposed directly to the full range of residents' views around the central question of 'What kind of Botanical Gardens do you want?' Furthermore, we are deepening our own understanding of the key issues of Urban Conservation and the

particular issues of the Edgbaston Conservation Area by inviting experts to join us at an open meeting in November. It will be at least two years before any plans are formally submitted. We hope to influence these plans, and by this wide programme of positive engagement ensure that BBG secures a sustainable future fully supported by the community.

Left to right: Peter White (BBG), Cllr Deirdre Alden, Cllr Matt Bennett, Martyn Liberson (BBG), Prof Ron Amann, Peter Arnold, Liz Dancey (CRS)

