

## **Comments and response from Friends of St.George Park to: St.George Park Lake / Island issues and option paper**

[www.tinyurl.com/SGNPenviro/StGeorgeFishing.pdf](http://www.tinyurl.com/SGNPenviro/StGeorgeFishing.pdf)

Thank you to Karen Lloyd, project officer for BCC, for the options put forward in her report.

Friends of St.George Park have some comments to put forward on the possible options and hope these will help as a local perspective that could be submitted to the Neighbourhood Partnership via the environment sub-group.

### **Options considered**

#### **3.1 Ban on Fishing**

See also appendix 1a.

It is interesting to read that the current byelaw states (at byelaw 20) that 'a person shall not, in any lake take, injure, destroy (or attempt to do so) or **wilfully disturb any fish**'. We agree with the report that it could be argued that fishing is disturbance of fish. This means fishing could be withdrawn straight away. The byelaw could be amended to include a new provision banning angling; otherwise a new byelaw should be introduced.

We feel to aim for a total ban of fishing in both St.George Park and Eastville Park is the most logical and simplest route to solve the issues discussed. This may also be the most cost efficient for BCC in the long run.

There is a lot of local support for a ban in both locations. There are alternative venues available.

Enforcement would be necessary and fines to those who offend to provide a deterrent.

#### **3.2 De-stock the lake**

De-stocking the lake could be an option as part of a clean up/ improvement of the lake creating a sustainable ecosystem. However caution should be taken and protection of the fish's welfare should be paramount. The aim of these changes should be to prevent harm to all wildlife.

#### **3.3 Managing the impact of fishing**

##### **a) Option: Establish an Angling club**

The Environment Agency promotes angling and gains revenue through rod licences.

The regular anglers at the lake tried a self policing strategy to encourage better conduct – this had minimal/ no success. They were unable to regulate other angler's behaviour and many regulars have stopped fishing here or moved to other venues because of anti-social behaviour issues.

It could be argued that with better support they may have had more success. However another park on the outskirts of Bristol – Brimsham Park Lake in Yate has faced similar issues. The chairman of the friends group for Brimsham Lake is a keen angler and actively promotes fishing at the lake.

Grants have been given to develop angling there, including finance for fishing platforms and educational events. They also have a closed season. There has been little change in the problems caused to wildlife that share the lake. Swan rescue sites the lake as one of the most visited locations in our area for them to attend to wildlife rescue call outs. Any improvements have been purely to enhance the fishing experience and not to protect wildlife. The nature of angling is that the equipment is a hazard and can so easily be ensnared by even the most careful angler.

<http://www.thisisbristol.co.uk/Anglers-blamed-bird-injuries-Brinsham-Fields-Yate/story-13371908-detail/story.html>

The friends of St. George park group would not be able or want to run a fishing club at the lake because it is impractical. There is an existing fishing club in Bristol, the Alcove fishing club, which includes local venues such as The Lido in Fishponds and Duchess Lake nr M32 Lockleaze. We would argue that anglers could go there, limiting the damaging effect on multi-use city parks.

<http://www.alcoveangling.co.uk/>

Note. There was an angling participation event at Eastville Park in recent years – a few days where children were encouraged to learn skills. Locals have commented that it had little effect on the general angling at the lake and the children were not ongoing users.

#### **B) Option: Introduce park zones**

This is unlikely to be effective. The lake is so small that most areas present problems.

#### **c) Option: Methods to encourage fish away from island, change behaviour of anglers accordingly and reduce the potential for snagging**

These options may encourage anglers to avoid the island but may present new snagging issues in what is a very small lake.

May not be cost effective or solve ongoing wildlife issues or anti-social behaviour.

#### **d) Option: Limit access**

This does not help with any problems around the rest of the lake. Tangled fishing line was found recently outside the bowling green.

In conclusion the friends of St George Park group supports and encourage the process to ban fishing at the lake. We support Bristol City Council if it takes the decision not to allow fishing in its city parks. Other venues are available to local anglers nearby with proper facilities.

At present a very small group are having a huge effect on the park with cost's to wildlife rescue organisations and other park users.

The friend of St.George Park group aim's to create new projects to raise the profile of the diversity of nature at the park. So that schools and local people can use the area as an educational resource as well as a peaceful place to admire the natural world in amongst our urban landscape.

