

Bristol Fawcett annual report for 2012

Bristol Fawcett is an activist group for local members of the Fawcett Society. Our members are volunteers who are committed to being active in the vibrant local campaign for gender equality.

We support the aims of the Fawcett Society and we work at a local level to:

- Raise awareness of Fawcett and the work that Fawcett does
- Campaign and lobby to improve policy and services for women and girls
- Bring an informed gender equality perspective to local decision making bodies.

This is our sixth annual report, which is intended to be a reference point for current, new and prospective members and supporters, as well as a chance for us to document and celebrate all we have achieved. This report provides a short overview of our activities in the course of the last year since our last AGM, from December 2011 to December 2012. Information about our membership, communications and finances are provided at the end of the report.

This has been another busy and productive year for Bristol Fawcett, characterised by great teamwork and skillful planning to make the most of our resources. Our members have worked incredibly hard and several members have reported pushing themselves to try new things this year in the course of campaigning – from media interviews to public speaking, blogging, lobbying politicians and designing campaign materials. We hope that our work has made an impact on a number of key issues for women in Bristol. We have been helped to do this in many ways by many people – a special thanks to all those who have joined our working groups this year, giving their time and energy to our campaigns.

Helen Mott
Co-ordinator
December 2012

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This year's campaign themes and sub-groups

The campaign for gender equality is wide-ranging. Opportunities and imperatives for activism are endless. To keep the task manageable, and to provide clear focus, we select and concentrate on a small number of strategic themes at a time. Since last year we judged that the size of our group is now big enough to allow us to develop a number of sub-groups to enable members to choose to work in detail on specific campaigns - communicating and meeting with each other outside of the main meetings and outside of our general e-mail communication group. General terms of reference and strategy for each sub-group are agreed at main Bristol Fawcett meetings and sub-groups can then meet to work on detail. Sub-groups report back to the main meetings to agree sub-group policy and communications and to feed in about activities. While our sub-groups are led by Bristol Fawcett members, the groups benefit enormously from the involvement of individuals and representatives from other local organisations who share our aims and are able to contribute their time and expertise. The sub-groups which were active this year cover: Cuts; Counting Women In; and SEVs (Sexual Entertainment Venues). We also maintained our work around the strategic theme of gender equality in education, and used some donated money to support anti-trafficking campaigning.

Anti-Trafficking

Our budget holds dedicated funds raised in order to promote awareness about trafficking for sexual exploitation. This year, our members have been active both in fundraising and in working on strategy and campaigns against trafficking. We were delighted to be able to use this money to fund awareness-raising work by the Bristol Anti Sex-Trafficking Group which included: a film screening and post-film discussion of "The Price of Sex"; stickering; flyering; and a magnificent mural on the Stokes Croft PRSC outdoor gallery which can be viewed in our Facebook Group photo albums.

Gender Equality in Education

We remain committed to ensuring that gender inequality, and violence against women and girls, are subjects to be actively and skilfully addressed in Bristol's education settings from early years to colleges in order to promote real social change. Our main route for achieving this is through our ongoing membership of the city's strategic group for the prevention of violence and abuse against women and girls (VAAWG). This group includes representatives from the voluntary and community sector as well as the statutory sector including public health and education specialists. The group meets regularly and works to the city's strategy for addressing VAAWG.

This year we worked with our partners at the End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW) to co-host an event: "**A Safe and Equal Bristol**" at which we discussed the interim findings from a survey conducted by EVAW of how Bristol schools are addressing violence against women and girls. We also heard from local and national activists and researchers about policy and action around VAAWG. We were very heartened that the event attracted support from Bristol's politicians and was attended by our MPs and their

representatives as well as Mayoral and PCC candidates including our (now incumbent) Mayor and PCC, George Ferguson and Sue Mountstevens. Political leadership is crucial for helping our schools to make the safety of girls a priority. We want to work with the Mayor and the PCC to develop action for positive change.

<http://www.bristolfawcett.org.uk/GenderinEducation.html>

Anti-Cuts Sub Group

The aims of this group are:

- to gather evidence of the disproportionate impact on women of cuts and to challenge government and other public bodies
- to raise awareness of the impact of the cuts on women in the general public
- to bring a feminist perspective to consultations and meetings, and interactions with other 'anti-cuts' activities

The group develops our policy in relation to the local and national cuts to public spending and co-ordinates the actions taken in relation to the cuts. Members of the group also share information from the range of local and national partners with whom we have links.

Our report from last year, "**Cutting Women Out in Bristol**", continues to be referenced and used by campaign groups, politicians and all those who want to find out more about the impact on women of local and national decisions. During this year, the Executive Summary was downloaded 683 times from our website and the full report was downloaded 730 times. We have used the evidence gathered by the group to review and comment on Bristol City Council's budget plans and to contribute to the Equalities Impact Assessments of the Council's budget. Data in our report have influenced the development of policies and strategies including Bristol's Poverty Strategy. Our report has been used and quoted extensively in the campaign, led nationally by GoFeminist and locally by Bristol Feminist Network, to end cuts to support services for women and girls experiencing violence.

Members have taken part in many national and local demonstrations against public sector cuts, and have spoken about our work at a number of events including:

- UNISON regional women's conference
- Core Cities Equalities Meeting hosted by Bristol City Council
- University of Warwick School of Law Equality and Human Rights Workshop

The group is currently focussing on an event to be held on International Women's Day next year, entitled "**Confronting Women's Poverty – Turning Things Around**". A range of national and local partners are involved in this event, which will put women's experience of poverty in the spotlight. Our members have successfully begun to fundraise and attract sponsorship for this event and fundraising work will continue next year. The programme is being developed and further information will be available via our website as well as the dedicated blog and Twitter account (see below).

<http://www.bristolfawcett.org.uk/Economy.html>

<http://www.bristolfawcett.org.uk/Documents/Economy/BristolCuttingWomenOut.pdf>

<http://confrontingwomenspoverty.blogspot.co.uk/>

Twitter: [@ConfrontPoverty](https://twitter.com/ConfrontPoverty)

Sexual Entertainment Venues (SEV) Sub Group

Bristol Fawcett has been active in campaigning against the proliferation of lap dancing clubs (SEVs) since 2002. Members of this group collate research on SEVs and their relation to gender equality. Members of the group monitor applications made for SEVs in Bristol and publicise consultations by the Council's Licensing Committee. When we are made aware of breaches to SEV licence conditions we notify the Council's Licensing Team, which we have done a number of times this year. We require the statutory authorities to take their responsibility for equality and safety seriously, which means that as long as SEVs are in operation they must be monitored and assessed and held to account. In March we delivered an information session to Bristol's Sexual Violence Reference Group, and in September with our partners in Bristol Feminist Network we ran a workshop on campaigning about SEVs at the UKFeminista Summer School. During the year, members of the group were asked to meet with a woman who had previously been in prostitution in Bristol and we publicised her account of the harms done by SEVs on our website and in submissions to the Licensing Committee. During the year our members attended and made statements at all SEV licensing hearings as well as documenting and reporting on the proceedings.

Last year, Bristol City Council decided to set a cap of two SEVs in central Bristol and one in Old Market. This year the Licensing Committee has awarded SEV licences in line with this cap so we have seen the number of licensed SEVs in the city reduce by two. We look forward to further reductions.

Bristol Fawcett also campaigned against the decision, in 2010, to award a licence to the sexist American restaurant chain, Hooters. With other groups, we continued to campaign to raise awareness of the harm done to women's equality and safety by commercial sexualisation as exemplified by the Hooters brand. In February of this year Hooters recognised that its business was a failure in Bristol and the doors of Hooters Bristol were closed for the last time.

<http://www.bristolfawcett.org.uk/Lapdancing.html>

<http://www.bristolfawcett.org.uk/Commercial%20Sexualisation%20%26%20Hooters.html>

Counting women In Sub Group

The Fawcett Society has its roots in the campaign for women's suffrage, and equality for women in political and public life remains a central concern for Fawcett both nationally and locally. In the spring of 2012, in response to the referendum that resulted in the election of a Mayor for Bristol we asked a key question:

How can we COUNT WOMEN IN more?

- More women at the top in Bristol's public life & politics
- More woman-friendly policies
- More money earmarked for issues that affect women adversely

We set up this subgroup and joined forces with Bristol Women's Voice (BWV), other organisations and individuals to campaign for change in women's representation in decision-making. This campaign was focused on both the Bristol Mayoral election and the

election of a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Avon & Somerset. The campaign was reviewed and closed on 21st November 2012 although we will continue to work in this area and promote greater attention for policies that address women's concerns, and greater participation of women in political and public life.

Campaign Results

The following all resulted from the campaign:

- Letters to political parties highlighting the need to take action to ensure there were women candidates considered for both Mayoral and PCC nominations
- Letters to council leaders about the importance of women's representation on Police and Crime Panels
- Contribution to Westminster working group on issues for PCC candidates
- Analysis of existing research on the issues that matter most to women in Bristol starting with the recent Bristol Women's Voice survey and undertaking further research with women's organisations in Bristol via a survey designed by Bristol Fawcett supporter Sian Eliot. This focused the issues on:
 1. Disproportionate impact on women of cuts to public services
 2. Representation of women in politics, decision-making and public life
 3. Women's safety, violence and abuse against women and girls
 4. Childcare and caring responsibilities
- A blog: <http://wearsthehoes.wordpress.com/> and twitter account [@wearsthehoes](https://twitter.com/wearsthehoes)
- Web pages: <http://www.bristolfawcett.org.uk/CountingWomenIn.html>
- Set of detailed briefings for candidates on the core issues that impact on women
- Direct meetings with our selected 8 (of 15) Mayoral candidates for Bristol
- Direct meetings with all 4 of the PCC candidates for Avon & Somerset Constabulary
- Evidence that our briefings had informed and influenced the public statements and manifestos of candidates
- 'The Right Man for Bristol?' – research report written for us by Bristol Fawcett supporter Natasha Carver on gender and representation in Bristol, detailing the shocking under-representation of women in positions of power and influence in Bristol:
<http://www.bristolfawcett.org.uk/Documents/CountingWomenIn/TheRightManForBristol.pdf>
- Two leaflets and a poster for women voters:
<http://www.bristolfawcett.org.uk/Documents/Eventsdocs/2012CountWomenInBristol.pdf>
- A number of press releases and good media coverage
- Women's Question Time event for Mayoral candidates – organised by Bristol Women's Voice
- On-line questions about issues that affect women answered by 9 Mayoral candidates (BWV website)
- 'Score cards' reviewing what the main candidates for Bristol Mayor said about the 4 key issues
<http://www.bristolfawcett.org.uk/Documents/CountingWomenIn/CWIWhatTheMayorCandidatesHaveSaidNov2012.pdf>
- Presentation and participation in 'The future of local democracy' panel at University of Bristol as part of the Thinking Futures festival
- Participation in the Bristol Civic Leadership Project run by the Universities of Bristol and the West of England examining the governance and leadership of the city.

Thanks go from the members of the Counting Women In subgroup to:

Natasha Carver (UoB), Sian Eliot (UoB), Pete Quin, The Fawcett Society (particularly Preethi Sundaram, Charlie Woodworth), Nan Sloane (Centre for Women and Democracy), Professor Sarah Childs (UoB), Professor Alex Marsh (UoB), Dr Thom Oliver (Oxford Brookes University), and all those who attended our Dickens themed Fundraiser event.

Other activities

This year we took part in the **UKFeminista Feminist Lobby of Parliament**. Two of our members visited Parliament and met with three of Bristol's four MPs (Charlotte Leslie, Kerry McCarthy and Dawn Primarolo). Topics discussed included women's representation in politics; sex & relationship education and PSHE in schools; sexualisation of women and girls in society; abortion rights and funding for VAAWG services.

We were also delighted to welcome UKFeminista to Bristol this year for the annual **Summer School** event, which brought together feminist activists from around the UK for a weekend of training, skill-sharing, discussion, planning, networking and socialising – including an evening of women comedians organised by our own “What the Frock!” feminist event promoter.

Our members represent us in a number of **groups** and **committees** including:

- Fawcett Society Board of Directors
- Women's Income Network
- Bristol VAAWG Prevention Strategy Subgroup
- Avon Fire and Rescue Equalities Consultation Group
- Bristol Roundtable on Trafficking
- End Violence Against Women Coalition
- Bristol Women's Voice – the new 'women's hub' for Bristol which was launched this year, to enable women across the city to find out how to access services, how to support one another, how to join local organisations and set up new ones, find and promote events and services for women and share ideas. Bristol Women's Voice will also make sure that when key decisions are taken women's voices have been listened to and their ideas and concerns acted on.

We have been represented at a number of **conferences** and **events**, and written a number of **consultation responses** and **reports** not referred to elsewhere in this report:

- Bristol Leadership Programme
- Political Studies Association Women and Politics Conference “Making a Difference for Women”
- Bristol Housing Benefit Poverty Hearing
- Rape Crisis AGM
- One25 AGM
- EveryWoman Safe consultation and Bristol meeting
- UWE Single Equality Scheme
- Bristol City Council: Single Equality Scheme; Hate Crime Response Survey; Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Fair Play South West submission to BIS Select Committee Inquiry into Women in the Workplace

- Campaign led by Welsh Women's Aid for protection of the anonymity of Ched Evans' rape victim following exposure on Twitter
- Recommendation paper to the Fawcett Society on local groups
- Lobbying MPs to support Lords' amendments in family law proceedings
- And more...!

Core Membership

Bristol Fawcett is an activist group, established in 2001, whose members seek not primarily to talk about feminism but to 'do' feminism and make a difference however we can to awareness, policy and practice in the local area. Our core membership is a group of women who give their time, their ideas and their expertise on a regular basis to the projects and events that we undertake, meeting monthly and communicating between meetings via email. There are also many local women and men who support Fawcett's work by contributing financially to the national organisation through Fawcett membership. We have many local supporters who are members of our wider networks including our mailing list and Facebook group and who take part in and advise us on our activities. This year in particular we have benefited enormously from the contributions of people who are not longstanding members, but who have joined our working groups or undertaken projects for us to further our campaign aims.

Membership Update

This year (December to November) 23 women have taken part in our monthly meetings, with some members attending very regularly and others less so.

This year has seen the further development of our subgroup structure and now most of our regular members also belong to one or more subgroups. Some subgroups have been meeting as often as twice a month and this has had an impact on regular attendance at the main monthly meetings, where the average attendance has been 9 members (down from 12 last year). The most popular meeting was October with 13 attendees and the least popular was April with only 4 attendees. Thirteen members have not attended a meeting for six months or longer and in the New Year we will be contacting these members to invite them to return.

We had 20 membership enquiries during 2012 but only 4 of these resulted in attendance at a meeting, with one confirming interest in becoming an active member.

To encourage retention of members and to ensure a welcoming atmosphere, a "welcome role" was introduced in the last quarter of 2012 so that new attenders will know there is a nominated person looking after them. Early indications demonstrate that women appreciate the welcoming face and warm inviting atmosphere that this role has created.

At the end of the year we sent a short survey to the women who had attended a meeting at some point during 2012 (and for whom we held email addresses). We had 9 responses. Of these, 88% said they would be returning to another Bristol Fawcett meeting and one

respondent said “maybe”. There were many positive comments about Bristol Fawcett, including:

“I have met many inspirational women and have learned how to become more active in working for equality”

“My previous environment has been full of a 'Oh well, that's how it is. It isn't fair but what can we do?' attitude. Women in Bristol Fawcett are aware of how change can be achieved and get on and do it!”

“I like to be around passionate people who believe in their cause and give up so much time to make their world, and their community, a better place.”

Areas for improvement identified by the survey include: fostering a more inclusive atmosphere, more women with the time and confidence to lead projects, and more time to develop positions and explain them. These will be areas for Bristol Fawcett to be mindful of as it continues in its good work throughout 2013 and beyond.

Nicola Garwood
Membership Officer

Communications

One of the most important features of Bristol Fawcett – and of our success in making a difference – is the strength of our **networks**. We communicate regularly with hundreds of local, regional and national organisations as well as local activists, via our mailing list, our website, Facebook and Twitter. Our members are active in a number of local and national organisations. This year we have worked with and campaigned alongside a great range of local and national organisations including, to name but a few, Bristol Anti Sex-Trafficking Group, Bristol & District Anti-Cuts Alliance, Bristol City Council, Bristol Feminist Network, Bristol Rape Crisis, Bristol Roundtable on Trafficking, Bristol Women’s Voice, the Counting Women In Coalition, the End Violence Against Women Coalition, Equality Bristol, Fawcett Society, Platform51, UKFeminista, UNISON, the Universities of the West of England and Bristol, What the Frock.

By December 2012, the average monthly number of unique visits to **our website** stood at 2,702. Our busiest month for web traffic was November, when we were publishing information about the elections for the Bristol Mayor and the Police & Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset. During that month, our report “The Right Man for Bristol?” was downloaded 177 times and our summary of the Mayoral candidates’ statements on issues of concern to women was downloaded 627 times. Our pages on SEVs (lapdancing), Commercial Sexualisation and the Economy were the most visited pages, while there were well over a thousand visits to our Events page, signposting women and men to events and activities in the local area.

We have continued to expand our use of social media this year and since last year our

followers on **Twitter** have more than trebled to well over 700. Our **Facebook group** has 147 members, and our Facebook profile has almost 200 friends.

Our work and campaigns have also been highlighted in various **media** throughout the year, including interviews and articles in: Bristol Post, Bristol 24-7, Radio Bristol, Ujima Radio, BBC news, Woman's Hour, the Guardian and many internet blogs.

Website: www.bristolfawcett.org.uk

Facebook: Bristol Fawcett Society or www.facebook.com/groups/134736719941910/

Twitter: [@BristolFawcett](https://twitter.com/BristolFawcett)

Mailing list: contact database@bristolfawcett.org.uk (see our website for more details).

Finance

Bristol Fawcett – Summary of Accounts 2012

Revised opening balance:

The opening balance in the Fawcett accounts for 2012 was £2048.04.

However, there are some revisions to the opening balance due to expenditure accrued in the previous year that wasn't realised in 2012. These items are: £40 for the No Women, No Peace campaign materials and £1200 for costs of the Cutting Women Out campaign which were generously met by Bristol City Council Women's Issues Network.

The revised opening balance for 2012 is therefore **£3,288.04**.

Income:

Income received in year totalled £1,073.21. This was made up of:

Funding stream	Amount	Description
Counting Women In	£70.00	Funds raised by Alex Ivory
General funds	£230.00	Avon Fire & Rescue Service for attendance at equalities meetings
General funds	£353.21	General donations and interest received
Cutting Women Out	£250.00	Bristol Cultural Development Forum (ringfenced for the conference in 2013)
Anti-trafficking	£170.00	Sponsorship raised by Subitha Baghirathan
TOTAL	£1073.21	

Bristol Fawcett would like to express its thanks to the following members who have kindly raised funds for us during 2012:

- Alex Ivory for hosting a fundraising evening which raised £70.00 for the Counting Women In campaign.
- Subitha Baghirathan for raising £170 in sponsorship by completing a triathlon.
- Jackie Barron, Barbara Quin and Helen Mott who have donated expenses and fees for presentations and materials during the year.

Expenditure:

Expenditure paid in year totalled £456.54. The breakdown of spend is as follows:

Funding stream	Amount	Description
General expenses	£118.02	Web hosting, megaphone, travel expenses for PCC meeting
Cutting Women Out	£22.38	General expenses, CD of anti-cuts song
Reps of Women in the Media	£30.00	Meeting room hire
Anti-trafficking	£236.14	Materials for Stokes Croft mural & awareness raising
Counting Women In	£50.00	Poster and leaflet printing costs
TOTAL	£456.54	

Closing balance:

The closing balance at the end of 2012 is £3,904.71. The unrealised expenditure from last year of £1200 will be kept ringfenced for the Cutting Women Out campaign as authorised by the donors.

The breakdown of funds is therefore as follows:

Funding stream	Amount
General expenses	£2012.85
Cutting Women Out/Confronting Poverty event	£1450.00
Counting Women In	£20.00
Anti-trafficking	£421.86
TOTAL	£3904.71

Stephanie Poyntz
 Treasurer, Bristol Fawcett Local Group
 11th December 2012