

# Bristol Fawcett Annual Report for 2013

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 seventh 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 2012 to December 2013. Information about our membership, communications and finances are provided at the end of the report.

This year we have really seen our methods of working in focussed issue-based campaign groups take off, and the number of things that we have achieved is remarkable. Huge thanks to all of our amazing and dedicated members, as well as to our friends and partners in Bristol and beyond who contribute to our work and support us in what we do.

Helen Mott  
Co-ordinator  
December 2013

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## Our 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. We have developed a number of sub-groups so that our members can work together in detail on projects that they as individuals are particularly suited to. The sub-groups which were active this year cover: Women's Poverty; Counting Women In; Women in Sport; and SEVs (Sexual Entertainment Venues). We also continued our campaigning work on Gender in Education.

### How do sub-groups work?

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 policy and communications, to feed in about activities and to draw on the resources of all our members. 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.

### Confronting Women's Poverty (CWP) Sub Group

The aims of this group for this year were:

- to continue to highlight and object to government policy disproportionately impacting on women and the most vulnerable in society.

The group develops our policy in relation to the local and national cuts to public spending and co-ordinates our 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 and take part in the Bristol-wide "Confronting Women's Poverty" activist group.

Our report from 2011, "**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. Members of the group have worked with other women's organisations in Bristol to produce a response to the Mayor's budget proposals for Bristol 2013-16:

[www.bristolfawcett.org.uk/Documents/Economy/BFawcettResponseBudgetDec13.pdf](http://www.bristolfawcett.org.uk/Documents/Economy/BFawcettResponseBudgetDec13.pdf)

### ***Bristol City Council Budget Cuts Equality Impact meeting***

We attended this meeting in January and made a formal statement regarding the disproportionate cumulative impact of the national and local public sector spending cuts, together with the changes to benefits and social security, upon women and single mothers in particular.

### ***International Women's Day – Friday 8th March 2013***

On International Women's Day we held a day event at Bristol City Hall entitled '**Confronting Women's Poverty: turning things around**'. We had 100 registrations for

this event and had to turn 20 people away. It included key presentations from women representing three important sectors:

- (1) a trade unionist (Vicky Boroughs) who presented '**A trade union perspective on poverty**'
- (2) a feminist activist (Pamela Trevithick, a member of the CWP group) who presented '**Women's poverty and the wider picture**'
- (3) a welfare rights co-ordinator in Bristol (Jane Emanuel) who presented '**Welfare Myths**'.

The folk singer Rosie McGregor sang some rousing songs for us, and then led a sing-along session which was very much appreciated as a mood-lightener. The day was very successful and was much enjoyed by the delegates.

Presentations from the event can be downloaded from the blog or from the Economy page of our website (see below).

Many thanks to Vicky, Pam, Charlotte, Natasha, Jackie and Jane for organising this event and thanks also to our partners, contributors and donors.

### ***Gender and Austerity event (UWE)***

On the 8th May 2013, some members of our group attended an event at the University of the West of England (UWE) entitled 'Gender and Austerity: the impact of the recession on women'. At this event, the following papers were presented:

1. 'Gender and the crisis' Professor Sylvia Walby
2. 'Women's pay and poverty' Jackie Longworth
3. 'Managing to survive: gender and household strategies in the recession' Professor Harriet Bradley
4. 'BME women's experiences of the recession and austerity measures', Runnymede Trust
5. 'Gender and austerity: can the Equality Act 2010 help?' Dr Hazel Conley

Further information about this UWE event can be found via:

<http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/bl/bbs/research/cesr/Genderandausterity.aspx>

Jackie Longworth's presentation on women's pay and poverty in the south west can be downloaded here:

<http://www.bristolfawcett.org.uk/Documents/ConfrontPoverty/JackieLongworthWomensPay%26Poverty.pptx>

### ***Under-Occupancy Charge / "Bedroom Tax"***

One focus of the group's campaigning this year has been the impact of welfare benefit changes on women, and in particular those stemming from the implementation of the "bedroom tax"<sup>1</sup>. The effect of this on women has to be seen in the context of gender inequalities and the gender impact of other policies:

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<sup>1</sup> Housing benefit rules from April 2013 mean that individuals in council or housing association properties who claim housing benefit to pay for some or all of their rent, and are deemed to have a 'spare bedroom', are likely to see their housing benefit cut by 14% (for one extra room) and 25% for two or more spare bedrooms. They will either have to make up this shortfall themselves, or move – at enormous cost to themselves and their families.

- Women earn significantly less than men, and more women than men have become unemployed as a result of recession.
- Consequently, women are much more likely than men to have to claim benefits, and have been more affected by the cuts to welfare benefits and services than men.
- Women are much more likely to be single parents.
- Women are much more likely to experience domestic and sexual violence – which also significantly impacts on the hardships caused by the 'bedroom tax'.

On 29<sup>th</sup> July, two representatives from the sub-group (Pam and Jackie) presented evidence to *Bristol City Councillors' All-Party Members Working Group on the Under Occupancy Charge ("Bedroom Tax")* whose remit is to present a report to the Bristol Mayor (George Ferguson) - and the whole of the Council - outlining proposals and recommendations about how the City Council might respond to the government's Bedroom Tax policy. The paper presented on 29<sup>th</sup> July is available from our website here:

<http://www.bristolfawcett.org.uk/Documents/Economy/%27bedroom%20tax%27%20impact%20on%20women%20BCC%20July13.doc>

Members of our group attended and contributed to a range of local and national meetings and events throughout the year concerning cuts to health and welfare and their impact on women.

## Links

<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)

## Counting Women In Sub Group

The Fawcett Society has its roots in the campaign for women's suffrage. Equality for women in political and public life remains a central concern for Fawcett both nationally and locally. Last year we focussed our energies on the Mayoral and Police & Crime Commissioner Elections of 2012 and on producing our report "The Right Man for Bristol?". This year, we have begun to plan some campaigns to tie in with the local elections in May 2014 and the General Election in May 2015. We report here on our plans.

**Membership of the group:** Our partners include Bristol Women's Voice and the Centre for Gender Research at the Department of Politics, University of Bristol.

### Aims of our group

- To record & report data – how are the political parties doing in selection of women candidates for winnable seats? Are they promoting policies that are designed with women in mind as 51% of the population? How are current politicians in Bristol doing in terms of their commitment to issues of concern to women?
- To work with and advise politicians
- To provide information to inform voters
- To increase voter registration and turnout among women - especially groups of women less likely to vote

For the local elections, we aim to contact candidates and ask them for their views on issues of relevance to women locally, which we will then publish.

For the General Election, we want to ensure that hustings are held in each of the 4 Bristol constituencies, focussing on issues of concern to local women.

We intend to work with partners and with students from our Universities, to develop an effective campaign encouraging women to register and to use their vote.

### **Other related activities**

During the year we have also given a number of presentations on women's representation in political and public life, including a presentation to Bristol Women's Commission in July and participating in a panel as part of the University of Bristol's Thinking Futures Festival in November. In April we joined with Bristol Feminist Network in their campaign to lobby candidates in the local elections to preserve and enhance funding for violence against women services. We were also pleased to take part in an event in October, "Meet Bristol's Women Leaders and Be Inspired to Join Them", held by Bristol City Council and Bristol Women's Commission.

## **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. 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 April, we delivered an information session to Avon and Somerset's Police and Crime Commissioner, along with partners in The White Ribbon Campaign and the Centre for Gender and Violence Research at the University of Bristol.

In August, a petition was launched calling on the City Council to reduce the number of SEVs to zero in the city. The local media picked up on the petition and approached members of Bristol Fawcett on a number of occasions to be interviewed on the subject. We expect the level of media interest to increase when the petition is closed in March next year.

In September, Temptations lap dancing club in Old Market was fined nearly £20,000 for breaching its licence on several counts.

In November, we delivered an information session to teachers in Bristol with responsibility for PSHE (Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education).

In December, we responded to Bristol City Council's consultation on its revised Licensing Policy.

We are currently consulting with Bristol City Councillors on their views about SEVs.

During the year our members attended and made statements at all SEV licensing hearings as well as documenting and reporting on the proceedings. We also contributed to the Council's Inquiry Day on the Night Time Economy.

In 2011, Bristol City Council decided to set a cap of two SEVs in central Bristol and one in Old Market. This year, as last year, the Licensing Committee has awarded SEV licences in line with this cap so the number of licensed SEVs in the city has remained static at three. We hope to see further reductions in future.

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

## Women in Sport Sub Group

In April 2013 Bristol Fawcett began a project looking at girls and women in sport. The objectives of this project are:

1. To improve the coverage and visibility of women's sport and sportswomen
2. To support and promote sport for girls and women
3. To challenge gendered assumptions about women's sport

Achievements so far:

- Launch of **Sport Watch Bristol** – a fixtures calendar and blog. The concept of Sport Watch Bristol is simple – we provide up to date listings of women's sporting events in Bristol and invite everyone to show up and support. Our first blog post was published on 22 September 2013. Since then the site has been viewed over 2,000 times. On 20th November (the day we went to the Mayor's Sports Commission) we had 418 views by 342 unique visitors.
- Launch of the twitter account **@SportWatch\_** which has grown in popularity with 105 followers since our first tweet on 19 September.
- Attended the **Mayor's Sports Commission** to give evidence on the situation for girls and women in sport locally and make recommendations, read more here: <http://sportwatchbristol.wordpress.com/2013/11/22/sportcommission/>
- Attended the inaugural **Women Play Sport** 2013 national conference on 8th November.
- Started a really positive dialogue with **Wesport** (the local sports partnership) in relation to: supporting the February 2014 conference with the Women's Sports and Fitness Foundation; launching a women's coaching network; and working with primary schools to identify good practice in using the school sports premium to support girls in sport.
- ...and we've watched a lot of women compete and learnt rules for sports including rugby, cyclo-cross, rowing, football, soon to be followed by korfbal and roller derby!

For helping us in starting this work we would like to thank in particular Melonie Gregory and her colleagues at Wesport, Tanya Joseph, Fawcett Trustee and Director of Business Partnerships at Sport England. And Paddy Richardson for helping us with our fab logo!

<http://bristolfawcett.org.uk/Sport.html>

<http://sportwatchbristol.wordpress.com/>

Twitter: [@SportWatch](#)

## Gender Equality in Education campaign theme

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 our members are helping to put in place an ambitious, achievable project to change our city. The "**Bristol Ideal**" sets out a standard for all schools and early years providers across Bristol to be effective in tackling and preventing VAAWG, by encouraging young people to develop the skills to enjoy healthy and respectful relationships and by providing staff with the information they need to help young people to be safe. Every young person deserves to be equipped with the tools to recognise, challenge and prevent gendered violence in their lives. Currently even though research shows that young people are not happy with the lack of education they are receiving in this crucial area, there is no requirement for Relationships and Sex Education to be a part of the curriculum. There are young people in our city who are experiencing violence, abuse and sexism at home, at school and in their relationships – and they are not accessing support. The absence of a steer from national government is not a reason for Bristol to do nothing. In Bristol we will do what is right for young people. The city is uniquely well-placed to take the initiative and lead the way with our strong partnerships of skilled professionals, effective campaigners, specialist academics at both of our Universities and genuinely committed politicians. We believe that the Bristol Ideal, which is being launched in Spring 2014, has the power to transform lives. Our members have contributed in a number of ways to the development of this project from project planning to IT support to briefing a range of interested parties. We will continue to give our wholehearted support to this fantastic project.

During the year we wrote to David Cameron as well as to a number of Bristol MPs, as part of the End Violence Against Women Coalition's Schools Safe 4 Girls campaign calling for mandatory sex and relationship education in all UK schools.

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

## Other activities

This year we were pleased to take part in the Bristol-wide campaign funded by Safer Bristol and the Police and Crime Commissioner to tackle attitudes and myths about rape. We helped to write the myth-busting booklet accompanying the “**This is not an excuse to rape me**” poster campaign. The booklet and more information about the campaign are available at: <http://www.thisisnotanexcuse.org.uk>. We also worked on a range of materials concerning **violence against women** with a number of national partners throughout the year.

We are also delighted to be represented on **Bristol Women’s Commission**. On International Women’s Day in March, Mayor George Ferguson signed the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life – making Bristol the first city in the UK to do so. Bristol will develop, implement and adopt a strategy and action plan to give effect to the Charter – this work will be undertaken by the Commission for Women led by our friends from Bristol Women’s Voice. The Commission has task groups working on: Women in Public Life; Transport; Safety and Violence and will be developing task groups on the other priority areas of Caring Responsibilities and the Economy.

In October our member Nicola retired from the national Board of Directors of the **Fawcett Society** after serving a maximum 6-year term. During this time, she was able to bring crucial insights from a local perspective to the work of Fawcett in addition to her expertise in local government. She also led for the Board on governance. We congratulate and thank Nicola and we also congratulate Anna, our member who has been elected to the Board of Fawcett from 2013.

Our membership officer – also a (different) Nicola – is stepping down this year after three years of invaluable service managing everything to do with membership enquiries and records. Thank you so much, Nicola – and welcome to our new membership officer, Can.

This year has also seen our member Jane’s project “**What the Frock**” all-female comedy nights go from strength to strength – congratulations, Jane!

During the year 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:

- We attended the Distinguished Professorial Address at UWE by the UN’s Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls and we look forward to welcoming her back to the UK and hopefully to Bristol when she makes a formal country visit in April.
- We attended the launch of, and assisted with promoting, the Tara report on homeless women in Bristol.
- As partners in the End Violence Against Women Coalition, we signed a letter to David Cameron calling for the loophole that prevents rape pornography from being illegal to be closed. He announced in July that he will act on this.
- We signed the Refuge petition for an inquiry into domestic violence responses.
- In February we attended the Zero Tolerance of FGM event in Bristol.
- We contributed our views on a range of issues including women’s poverty as part of Bristol City Council’s Equalities Stakeholders consultation in June.

- We responded to Bristol's consultation on its Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy in June.
- We took part in Bristol's Anti-Trafficking Conference in July.
- We took part in Bristol University's Exchange Programme, participating on a panel on Equal Opportunities for Social Welfare, in July.
- We spoke at the Bristol Radical Film Festival in February and again in August about our work confronting women's poverty and about women and media representation.
- We took part in a panel on women and political representation as part of the University of Bristol Thinking Futures Festival in November.
- We lobbied MPs and Lords about the potential damage to campaigning organisations such as ours set out in the proposed Lobbying Bill

And more...!

## 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. This year, 19 people expressed an interest in joining Bristol Fawcett as committed activists. These expressions of interest have resulted in 4 new active Bristol Fawcett members for 2013. There are 29 people on our Yahoo eGroup and this is representative of the number of active core members of Bristol Fawcett. In addition to our core members, there are an additional 10-15 individuals who work with us in our sub-groups. 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 Facebook group and our Twitter followers, and who take part in and advise us on our activities.

We warmly welcome new members and new supporters.

Nicola Garwood  
Membership officer

Membership enquiries: [www.bristolfawcett.org.uk/Join%20Us.html](http://www.bristolfawcett.org.uk/Join%20Us.html)

# Communications

A significant feature of Bristol Fawcett – which contributes to 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.

We have an average of 3,000 visits per month to our website. This year our events page and our pages on the economy and on SEVs (lap dancing) were the most visited.

Our Facebook Group has 188 members, and we have over a thousand followers on Twitter.

Our work and campaigns have also been highlighted in various **media** throughout the year, including interviews with: Radio Bristol, BCFM Radio, Ujima Radio, and the Pixel Project.

Website: [www.bristolfawcett.org.uk](http://www.bristolfawcett.org.uk)

Facebook: Bristol Fawcett Society (group) or

[www.facebook.com/groups/134736719941910/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/134736719941910/)

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

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

# Finance

## Bristol Fawcett – Summary of Accounts 2013

### Revised opening balance:

The opening balance in the Fawcett accounts for 2013 was £3940.85.

### Income:

Income received in year totalled £692.22. This was made up of:

Funding stream	Amount	Description
General funds	£3.77	Interest on current balance
General funds	£250.00	Bristol City Council – handling fee for VAWG booklet
Confronting Women's Poverty	£88.45	Proceeds from What The Frock quiz
Confronting Women's Poverty	£150.00	PCS Union
Confronting Women's Poverty	£200.00	Unite Union
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£692.22</b>	

Bristol Fawcett would like to express our thanks to What The Frock for raising £88.45 towards the Confronting Women's Poverty campaign.

### Expenditure:

Expenditure paid in year totalled £467.05. The breakdown of spend is as follows:

Funding stream	Amount	Description
General expenses	£35.86	Web & e-mail hosting
General expenses	£40.00	Sport conference travel expenses
Anti-trafficking campaign	£36.14	Art materials
Confronting Women's Poverty	£355.05	Childcare costs, insurance for Confronting Women's Poverty event, meeting expenses, materials
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£467.05</b>	

### Closing balance:

The closing balance at the end of 2013 is £4,166.02. The breakdown of funds is as follows:

Funding stream	Amount
General expenses	£2,140.76
Cutting Women Out/Confronting Poverty	£1,533.40
Counting Women In	£70.00
Anti-trafficking	£421.86
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£4,166.02</b>

Stephanie Poyntz  
 Treasurer, Bristol Local Fawcett Group  
 13<sup>th</sup> December 2013