

## **'Save Turbo Island' releases campaign update ahead of October 12th free party**

Save Turbo Island campaigners are working with local organisations in Stokes Croft to bring Turbo Island under community ownership, ahead of the October 16th auction.

Stokes Croft Land Trust, who took over the initial crowdfunder on October 4th, are now coordinating a consortium with various buyers who've offered funds towards the purchase of Turbo Island.



Turbo Island is frequently used as a space for graffiti, murals and public notices.

The Trust, a grassroots organisation dedicated to preventing gentrification in Stokes Croft, previously launched a successful share offer to buy [the PRSC building in Jamaica Street](#).

Campaigners have stated they do not feel that current owners — London-based advertising agency Wildstone — have given the community enough time to raise funds to participate in the auction, despite ongoing demonstrations of interest in the space.

Turbo Island, which has been up for auction since August 30th, has been [marketed as a mixed-use development site](#) for a ground floor restaurant/shop and up to 4 floors of accommodation above.

A £6500 upfront fee is required to participate in the auction, and the starting bid is at £50,000.

**“With real community engagement and minimal investment, the space can retain its function as Stokes Croft’s village green, and reduce negative impacts on residents and local businesses”**

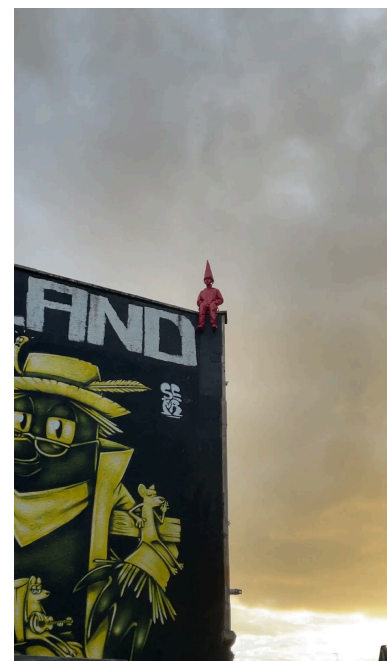
The People’s Republic of Stokes Croft, [who’ve been trying to buy the space since 2014](#), has also submitted applications for Asset of Community Value and village green statuses for Turbo Island, in an attempt to delay developers from buying the space for commercial use and legally cement its value to the community.

Asset of Community Value (ACV) status, if implemented by Bristol council prior to the auction, could allow the campaigners to propose a Community Right to Bid. This would result in planning authorities suspending the auction for a six month period, in which the community could raise finances to bid on the land.

Even if the bid was not ultimately successful, ACV status would validate the long term community investment in the land, and any deviations from this in future planning applications would likely not be permitted, other than in exceptional circumstances.

Village green status, which requires evidence of recreational use of the space in the past 20 years, would prohibit commercial building on the land by any future owners. Campaigners have been urging the local community to provide any witness statements, as well as written and photographic evidence to support the application.

Both of these applications have been acknowledged by Bristol council, and potential buyers have been notified of the application for ACV status. Campaigners hope that this will ‘severely limit the scope of any potential commercial uses of the land, and discourage commercially-minded buyers’ ahead of the auction.



Child in a Dunce Hat sculpture by James Colomina

Although infamously known for its fires and late night parties, Turbo Island is an established social hub for the Stokes Croft community, particularly local homeless people. Outreach work, by organisations including the People's Republic of Stokes Croft and [Bristol Free Shop](#), has taken place there consistently over the years.

**“If you live on the street and you don't have a phone, or you can't get charge or credit, then you have to go somewhere central to meet your friends. That's what Turbo Island is for a lot of people. Most of those spaces have been closed down so people can't do that — the Bearpit used to be that until the council gentrified it and pushed people out.”** - Benoit Bennett, director of the People's Republic of Stokes Croft

Speaking to campaigners, locals have highlighted Turbo Island as being like a 'community centre' and a place of 'unity'. When asked about ideas for the space under community ownership, suggestions included building public toilets, e-scooter chargers and functional sculptures.

The Save Turbo Island campaign is hosting a free party at Turbo Island on October 12th to celebrate the space and raise awareness of its community value.

Update as of 16th October, 3pm:

Turbo Island has since been sold to a buyer outside of the auction, for £100,000. This is despite owners Wildstone rejecting a community bid of the same amount prior to this. As of now, the identity of the buyer is unclear, however they are said to be 'local' in a statement from a Wildstone spokesperson.

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