

NOTE OF MEETING
Tuesday 14 July 2009 7.15pm
Wesley Memorial Church, Bryants Hill



Present

Susan (Chair), Jude (Treas), Kit (Memb Sec), Rob (WPO), Bryan, Alex (Cllr) Jamie (BCC), Jules (BCC), Fabian (Cllr), Val, Pauline, Gill, Maureen, Roy, Laura, Helen (minutes).

Apologies None

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without amendment.

The meeting opened with introductions all round.

Issues and thank yous for Community Parks Officer, Area Parks Manager and Park Keeper

Works on the replacement fence and gate at Greendown

Susan explained the funding arrangements. It was recognised that the replacements were taking a long time to complete. It was accepted that the work in progress was unsightly but the finished appearance would represent a considerable improvement. The metal kissing gate was still awaited. The works done so far were looking good and now provided safer egress at the Green Down gate. The fence had been painted black, this was described as the least visible colour. It would soon become less obtrusive as the growth of the hedge obscured it. Options for replanting the hedge were discussed. Jules explained that no hedge or trees had been taken out on the Troopers Hill Rd boundary close to the junction with Greendown. This section, where new fencing has been installed, had been covered in honeysuckle and other creeping plants which should recover quite quickly. The surface for the incline and circle would be tarmac without gravel as the latter becomes detached and a nuisance. Tarmac with a coloured surface coating would be preferable. A local resident who had complained about stone throwing was advised to talk to police.

Action: Jamie to enquire about arrival of the kissing gate (now installed).

Continued excellent maintenance on the Hill

Thanks to Jules for anticipating the works needed on the hill and taking care of them before being asked. The general absence of litter was noted. Friday nights seemed to be the worst night for large numbers of youngsters congregating in the locality.

New dog waste bin

It was recognised that litter bins provided fuel that enabled fires to be lit inside the bins. Comment was made about the helpfulness of contributions by dog walkers to the collection of litter. Jules said that Ashton Court estate had removed the litter bins with some success. Existing signs encouraged visitors to take their litter home.

St George Partnership had funded a new bin for dog waste, at the third entrance from the foot of Troopers Hill Rd, Jules proposed to reallocate existing bins where necessary to accommodate the best design given the variable usage at each location. Amongst this work there would be an opportunity to remove and replace the bin at Green Down (which was generally agreed to be unsightly) to a more suitable location on the Field.

Action: Bristol Parks to ensure an order was placed for the new bin. (now installed)

New benches

Rob reminded the meeting of the locations for benches proposed earlier. An amendment was suggested to the location for the bench at 'Virginia's view', moving it off the heathland to a newly cleared area at the other side of the path where there were views in two directions. Jules proposed a staged approach to installing the benches, putting in the metal bases first and wooden seats later after the extent of vandalism had been gauged.

Kit suggested that instead of putting a bench at the edge of the bomb crater, consideration could be given to installing it on the south side of the gully (subject to practical considerations) or perhaps by the site of the new children's play area (with permission from YANSEC) on the Field. The latter suggestion which received the support of the meeting. The bench at Little Elizabeth's view was said to be in need of maintenance.

Soil falling from Troopers Hill on to Troopers Hill Rd

Jamie reported he had spoken to an ecology officer, and action would not be possible before the end of August. There were three options, to erect a catchment fence, a hand dig or a mechanical dig with minimum intervention. Reclamation and stabilisation works would also be necessary. A managed removal of the fence and periodic clearance of the spoil was thought to be advisable combined with a retaining structure.

Action: Jamie to arrange a way forward for managing the problem with assistance from the council Highways department, ideally in October.

Support for events

To date, a representative from Bristol Council had attended events other than guided walks and work parties, to ensure the activity could be covered by the Council's insurance. Parks were contemplating a case by case decision on whether council representation would be forthcoming at future events. For the immediate future it was confirmed that a council representative would attend the Bugs and Beasties event.

Troopers Hill footpaths

Rob said that the public rights of way did not match the actual paths across the LNR. This year's management plan included a discussion about the rights of way. Claire was going to seek information about possibly diverting the rights of way to align with the paths. It was not considered to be a pressing need for the position to be regularised.

Management plan updates

Susan mentioned that Claire had been working on the revision and Green Flag judges would need to see an updated version next year. FOTH had not seen the most recent version supplied to this year's judges

Action: Jamie to provide FOTH with a copy of the recent version. (done)

Growth covering steps from Lamb Hill onto woodland path connecting to Troopers Hill

Chair expressed heartfelt thanks to Jules for taking care of this major item of work. The improvement was said to be much appreciated by dog walkers

Trees in the conservation area at the former Lamb public house

Rob and Susan reported that in the patch of land next to the former Lamb Inn, at least 5 sycamores had been felled. They had drawn the landowner's attention to the conservation status of the area and that permission would be needed for further felling. The purchaser reportedly intended to build a retirement home and residential properties on the site. The Council had promised to find out more. Conservation area planning consent was needed for demolition and tree felling. Issues around road improvements (straightening and widening) were discussed.

Jamie confirmed that the land in question does belong to the Council. The arboricultural service had been alerted. He thanked Chair and WPO for their diligence.

Jules suggested raising the issue at a future Bristol Parks Forum meeting.

Park Life

The Park Life brochure had been published on the Council web site but no hard copies had been available. It appeared that some information relating to FOTH had been omitted, perhaps next year the relevant details could be included. Susan had contacted the council regarding the problems.

Action: Jamie promised to supply a box of Park Life brochures to the group. Susan to liaise with Gary whose responsibility it was to ensure Parks events were advertised in Park Life.

Publicity

Kit reported that the telephone information line had been set up. The number would be published on web and in the next edition of the newsletter. A recorded message gave details of the site and how to get there and provided a mechanism for publicising cancellations of events.

Helen obtained permission from the Council and FOTH to display the Green Flag and FOTH tablecloth during her forthcoming appearance on the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square as part of the One and Other art project (took place on 3 August 2009).

Consultation process for play facilities on Troopers Hill Field

Copies of the plans had been made available for consultation. The plans seemed to have ignored the suggestions made by some FOTH members for locating the area. However the local schools and scouts had also been consulted and it was possible that other views had prevailed. Jamie reported that since then the location of play area may have been shifted further towards the middle of the field. The materials envisaged would present an appearance very different from a conventional play area. Objectors and contributors to the plans were encouraged to contact the play team

Bryan feared that the area would not be used and would deteriorate into a wilderness in around two years' time through natural wastage. It was recognised that the field was not suitable for a cricket pitch.

Action Rob and Susan to discover whether revised plans had been drawn up and publish on FOTH website, supply hard copies on request. (done)

Events

A Wildlife Walk led by Rupert Higgins had taken place on 17th May

Music on the Hill on 20th June received praise, described as an excellent event. Chair thanked everyone who had helped.

Tai Chi - 12th July had gone very well.

Next events

Tai Chi – 26th July

Tai Chi - 2nd August

Bugs and Beasties – 8th August. Chair reminded members that help would be needed with gazebos and crafts. Volunteers were asked to be there for 2.00pm.

Tai Chi – 9th August

History Walk – 6th September, all invited.

The September meeting of St George History Group would be about Butlers Tar works.

Networking

Area Green Space Plan consultation

Rob drew attention to site specific meetings including one for Troopers Hill Field and the adjoining woodland. The dates had been posted on the forum.

St George Partnership newsletter had become available. There would be a meeting on the following day (15 July) at a new venue detailed in the newsletter

Funding

It was reported that the Museums walk had resulted in a donation of £50. £20 had been generated from a talk given by Rob to the Wesley Wives. Beeses had donated £30 from an impromptu raffle. A FOTH team had won £25 for funds at a recent quiz night.

Next Meeting

Wednesday 9th September, 7.15pm, Wesley Memorial Church, Bryants Hill.