

RHS 2023 It's Your Neighbourhood Assessment Form

Name & Area: Friends of Troopers Hill

Judge(s): David Purkiss

Date: 3rd July

LEVEL ACHIEVED

Outstanding

Feedback

Areas of Achievement

Troopers Hill is a large local nature reserve of acid heath and grassland. With its chimney rising like a beacon on a sandstone hillside overlooking the river Avon in a previously heavy industrialised area.

This site provides a unique environment for acid loving plants in the Bristol area (which has predominantly alkaline soil). The Ling and Bell heathers were in full bloom when I visited and buzzing with bees and pollinating insects.

Achievements

The Friends of Troopers Hill group was formed in direct response to a survey held by Bristol City Council over 20 years ago. At that time, a management plan was developed, highlighting a priority of works to be carried out on site. There is also an up-to-date conservation work plan which the group is currently implementing.

In partnership with the Council (and thanks to impressive efforts to secure grants and funding from various other sources), the group holds regular work parties which have large turn-outs. Valuable training sessions are provided for leaders to ensure maintenance and development is carried out correctly, in line with the plans. As well as these work parties, there are a wide variety of events taking place throughout the year.

There is a well-equipped children's play area, disabled access and a level circular tarmac path around part of the site. It was good to see a mature native hedge planted alongside new metal estate fencing which all provides an important habitat and food source for native birds.

As well as an extensive online presence, earlier this year, the group produced its first printed newsletter "Super Trooper" for local residents.

Areas for Development

The group is clearly conscious of the need to review and update development plans and does an excellent job of delivering against them so there is little immediate improvement to recommend.

However, it is advisable to keep the bases of recently planted and establishing trees clear of grass and weeds which otherwise compete for water and nutrients.

Continued vigilance is required to keep on top of litter, dog fouling and graffiti. It is sad to see how hard the group have to work to combat the impact senseless graffiti and vandalism can have on such an otherwise well maintained environment.