

NOTE OF MEETING

Thursday June 4th 7.15 – 9pm

Online Zoom Meeting

Attendees: Rod, Adam, Susan, Margaret, Rosie, Rob, Elaine

Apologies: Fabian

1. Approve April Minutes

The April minutes were approved.

2. Projects

a. Troopers Hill Red Slide

Installation of the red slide has been delayed as the contractors undertaking the work have had difficulty getting hold of materials. The contractors are hoping to start on Monday 12th July.

b. Path to Troopers Hill chimney from Troopers Hill Field

No updates have been received about when the repair works will be starting. Rob has written to Susie twice and not heard anything.

c. Basket Hoop

A member of the public asked Susan whether a basketball hoop could be installed on Troopers Hill field as there is not a lot for older children to do on the field and children in Air Balloon school like basketball.

Susan has been gathering opinion and doing research to feedback.

There is a basketball hoop in St Andrews Park that requires a big area of tarmac for the court. Teija from the council parks department explained that it is often broken because people jump and hang from it.

Rob added that if a project were successful to install a hoop, there could be pressure on the parks service to make the space in a MUGA (Multi Use Games Area), a large fenced in surfaced sports area of the type seen in St George Park. This would be a loss of the open green space that local people have insisted, in all our surveys, is a priority for Troopers Hill Field.

The group had some discussion about the idea, and all shared a concern about losing green space. Rob noted that he had had contact with the organisation "Make Space

for Girls” who point out that this sort of facility is often only used by boys and not teenage girls.

3. Nature Conservation work on Troopers Hill

a. Cross paths drainage

Channels installed into the paths and steps some years ago were becoming blocked and not very successful at diverting rainwater from paths that are becoming eroded as result.

The ParkWork team are trying a new design to divert the flow of water coming down the paths and steps which will catch the water and send it off to the sides.

b. Steps

Park work team plan to repair the steps that are rotting away.

c. Tree popping

Joe from the Park Work team recently removed around 50 poplar saplings by the bench under the birch tree using a tool called a Tree Popper. The Tree Popper attaches to the sapling allowing it to be levered out of the ground.

The saplings must be of a large enough size for the Tree Popper to be able to attach too. If we considered letting some of the saplings grow larger, we could ask Joe to return with the Tree Popper or borrow it to remove saplings in the future.

d. Nature conservation work parties

Rob explained that conservation work parties have been running well. On average, there are three sessions a month. Three sessions were held in May on Sally’s Glade.

Bracken has been removed from grassy areas. This has been very successful, and we can see the bracken is weakening.

Bristol Parks have been cutting the grass on Troopers Hill field. The grass is cut in two stages – firstly with a large machine that does the bulk of the work and then secondly with a smaller machine to cut the edges and harder to reach areas. People sometimes ask why the grass is only half cut as there can be a delay between the larger machine and smaller visiting the field to do the work.

e. Contacts from new volunteers

Susan explained we have been doing well getting new contacts and people have been expressing interesting in volunteering and joining work parties. Some of the people

who have expressed interest have not been able to join as they have been getting called away to work.

f. Photo monitoring (decision on expenditure)

Every 5 years since 1994, a photo monitoring report has been conducted on Troopers Hill to monitor how the area is changing. Each report includes photos taken from 36 different locations and since 1994 each report has been conducted by Rupert who now has a good knowledge of the site.

The report helps us understand that the conservation work being undertaken is correct and is doing its intended purpose.

The cost of the report this year £410+Vat.

Rob asked the group whether they thought we should proceed with this which everyone agreed with.

4. Post-graduate studies on Troopers Hill

Susan has received emails from two post graduate students offering to undertake studies on Troopers Hill.

Susan suggested they undertake a study together to compare plants in worn and less worn areas to see if the increased footfall during the pandemic has had an impact. Susan has suggested 4 compartments to undertake the study in, taking 2 samples in each compartment.

Susan has collected a thesis written by a Hanham post grad student in 1995 which contained lots of old photos.

5. History research and donations

Rob has had a two people ask for history information about the surrounding area of Troopers Hill. Rob was able to supply information and photos to help them for which they kindly gave donations of £75 and £100.

Before lockdown, Rob did a talk for Avon wildlife trust at Keynsham. They are coming for a guided walk on July 10th which they will charge attendees for and share some of the money with us as a donation.

Rob is doing a talk in November for Saltford history group who will make a donation.

6. Events

a. Celebration for Troopers Hill Slide

Susan has proposed an event to celebrate the completion of the red slide with a provisional date of Sunday August 15th.

Mali has offered to lead a children's session at the event that could include something like bugs and beasties. We can also display items from the art competition which are A3 laminated.

b. Bugs and Beasties

Depending on the lockdown restrictions, Rupert is up for leading the event. It's usually held on the Bristol Balloon Fiesta weekend but that is not happening this year.

7. Networking

a. RHS South West in Bloom - IYN and Pride in Parks

Usually at this time of year a judge would come and visit Troopers Hill to assess the site however there is a rumor that judges might not be visiting because of rise of Covid cases in Bristol.

When the judges do visit, Rob asked if anyone would like to join him when he meets the judge as it would be nice to have two people.

8. St George Strollers

There has been no walking since Lockdown however it is looking to start again when the restrictions are raised. Plans are in place and the group are prepared for a large number to turn up to the first walk.

Three different walks have been prepared starting from St Georges Park and going in different directions which will allow a maximum of 20 people per group.

9. AOB

Elaine gave a quick summary of litter picking. Over the last weeks it has been good and much better than previously. When Elaine visits, she is finding very little litter. Elaine suggested that posters could put up to say thanks to everyone for taking your litter home.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held from 7.15pm-9pm on Thursday 7th October 2021.