

NOTE OF MEETING

Thursday December 5th 7.15 – 9pm

Summerhill Methodist Church

Attendees: Adam, Margaret, Jude, Mali, Rod, Rob, Freya, Chloe, Bill, Susan

Apologies: Fabian Breckels

1. Approve October Minutes

The October minutes were approved.

2. Projects

a. Progress on Access to Nature (Paths)

After delays and setbacks due to staff shortages, Bristol Parks now have the resources to commence the planned works to the tracks and paths on Troopers Hill Field. The ground is now too wet in these winter months, and it is hoped work can commence in early March 2020. The deadline for spending the money from the project grant will expire at the end of this year. An extension will be requested, and Rob is confident it will be accepted since grant funders, Enovert Community Trust and Ibstock Enovert Trust have been kept informed of the project status and delays.

b. Wild play, Natural Learners, The Hive and Future Work

Amy was looking at applying for funding from the John James foundation to fund Wild Play and Natural Learners in 2020. Amy had feedback that funding from John James is unlikely they do not like funding projects which use freelancers.

Susan and Amy have exchanged emails whether to submit a request to John James or look for alternative options. Susan has a login for Funding Central and will work with Amy to see it can be used to find alternative funding sources.

Rob shared feedback from Ella Hogg at Bristol City Council that the 4 videos created by the Hive were brilliant. Ella has been sharing the videos within Bristol City Council as an excellent example.

c. Protecting Nature (update on expenditure and celebration event)

It is estimated that £700 will be left over from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This is mainly due to savings by using a local contractor who was able to use their own local compound for storage.

Susan asked the group if anyone has ideas of how the remaining £700 can be spent within the rules of the grant, they should let her know. If the money is not used, it will be returned.

d. Celebration event

The celebration event for protecting nature is planned for Saturday, January 25th. The event will be held at the entrance opposite 111 Troopers Hill Road.

The event will include: Formal signing ceremony of the conservation management plan, unveiling of a new interpretation board, and Rupert Higgins of Wessex Ecological Consultancy will lead a walk to show people what has been done as part of the project, explain the conservation work and plan.

Two gazebos will be erected for the event. One will be used for display of the project and another by Mali who will be leading activities for children and families.

Invitations have been sent to all who wrote letters of support to be submitted with our grant application, including Professor Jane Memmott who presented the case for the importance of pollinators to Parliament.

Susan asked the group for volunteers who can help erect gazebos for the event and support on the day.

The event is expected to finish by 4pm.

3. Conservation work on Troopers Hill

a. Bristol Parks winter works and meadow cut by Greendown

Bristol Parks will make a number of visits with their cutting equipment over the winter to remove areas of scrub from targeted areas. Where required, they will also push overgrowth back 2 meters from paths.

Areas of winter works can be seen in appendix 1.

Next winter, Bristol City Council plan to use "Robocut", a new remotely operated machine that can be used for cutting. A remotely operated machine will allow access to areas such as slopes where machinery has not been used due to risks of people or machinery falling.

Plans are being made for Bristol Parks to cut bracken next June and August. Cutting in June avoids the risk of releasing spores which would occur, if at all, in August.

b. Heritage Fund - Funded update to Conservation Management Plan

The new management plan has been signed off. The new 10-year plan divides Troopers Hill into 17 compartments (previously 12) and details year by year work regimes for each compartment.

New compartments can be seen at

www.troopers-hill.org.uk/plan/Compartments2019.jpg .

c. Do we need to fund raise to cover future conservation work and events?

Rob explained that once the Access to Nature paths are complete, all work planned since 2013 will have been completed.

There is enough money in the bank to fund events planned for next year.

d. Heritage Fund works for the coming winter

Last year, £6000 was spent from the fund to remove some gorse and carry out other conservation work.

The gorse regrowth will be cut again this year and work to do this and other conservation work will start on Monday 9th December on this.

Posters are being displayed at entrances and on boards around the hill to inform the public of works being completed by Green Mantle who will also chop and remove all cuttings that cannot be concealed on site.

e. Heritage Fund - Invertebrates survey

David Gibbs has shared some preliminary findings of the invertebrates survey which will be published in full this January.

Preliminary findings include:

- Another species of bee has been identified, taking the total species found on Troopers Hill to 79.
- Spotted bee fly continues to be still found on Troopers Hill.
- A treehopper, Gargara genistae has been found which is the rarer of the two treehopper species found in this country.

f. Volunteer conservation work parties and other works

Rob reported the following for each of the past work parties:

- Saturday 5th October – Works completed in the area around the channel left by the old duct leading up to the upper chimney removing bramble and saplings.
- Thursday 17th October – Broom and bramble cleared in compartment no 5.
- Saturday 2nd November – Work party cancelled due to wind and very wet ground.
- Thursday 21st November – ParkWork completed some work around the willow marker. In compartment no 6, bramble, saplings, sycamore and goat willow were tended too. A new flag was also put up.

g. Environment Agency volunteer group 15th October

Rob reported that the work party for the Environment Agency went very well. The group focused mainly on work to repair the main path leading up Troopers Hill. Bristol Parks tipped 2 tonnes of stones which the group moved using Wheelbarrows from Bristol Parks to the path to rebuild and pack areas that needed attention.

Some of the group also did work in Sally's Glade.

Work was finished by 3pm.

The group donated £45 which has been spent on new gloves and secateurs.

h. Next work parties before the next meeting

Saturdays - 7th December, 4th January

Thursdays – 19th December, 14th January

The work party on Thursday 19th may be required to finish early at 11.30.

4. Troopers Hill Field

a. The Slide – An opportunity for public art and a new slide?

The slide in Troopers Hill field has now been removed as one of the legs had rusted and become a health and safety hazard. The rubberised surface remains in place which Bristol Parks will remove in March 2020.

Susan has been in touch with Bristol City Council to enquire about costs to have a new slide installed. It is recommended that a new slide is placed on the activity trail where it is believed it will get more use and be accessible to children.

There is no money or grant to cover the costs of a new slide and it is thought it will be difficult to secure a grant for a slide on its own so considerations are being made to whether getting a new slide could be included as part of another FOTH project.

One such project could be to place an art sculpture in place of the old slide that portrays and celebrates the nature of Troopers Hill. Susan is investigating this option and contacting the public arts team at Bristol City Council.

Chloe has a contact at Touchwood Play who may be able to point us at funding.

b. Brownies – Wildflower planting on Troopers Hill Field

Freya is arranging an event for her Brownies group to plant wildflowers in an area of Troopers Hill Field that was previously occupied by upright logs.

The logs are no longer in the area, and after some tidying, it will be suitable for planting. Rob said that ParkWork can trim the area and he can arrange that for the event.

A risk assessment has been completed and will be sent to Teija (Bristol City Council). Freya is making arrangements for evidence of public liability insurance to be sent to Teija for the event.

Bristol Parks will supply bulbs for the group to use if they are given details of quantities.

The event will take place one Tuesday in March between 17:45 and 19:00.

The group will consist of about 25, 7 to 10 year olds.

5. Troopers Hill Young Rangers (Future Proof Parks) – Progress on Arts Trail

No updates have been given from the Young Rangers or Courtney on the proposed Arts trail to coincide with the 25th anniversary event.

6. Events

Past Events

a. Fungi Foray – 9th November

This event was unfortunately cancelled due to rain. However, Bristol and North Somerset Fungus group still came to Troopers Hill and completed a survey where they identified some species new to Troopers Hill's records.

A report of the survey can be found on the website.

The group gave feedback that is difficult to provide a guided walk for the public and undertake a survey at the same time. They would prefer to alternate the walk and survey each year.

Future Events

b. 25th Anniversary - New flag

The new flag to celebrate 25 years of Troopers Hill being a nature reserve will be erected during one of the January work parties.

c. Celebration Event – Saturday 1st January

Details of celebration event covered in section 2d.

d. Star Gazing – February

Rod has contacted the deputy chairman of the Bristol Astronomical Society and the process is underway to arrange a star gazing event in February next year.

Past events have been a huge success and always well over subscribed. FOTH as well as Bristol Astronomical Society are very pleased to hold the event again next year.

The event will take place in the last 2 weeks of February. A rolling 24hrs notice system is used to let people know which night the event will take place, based on cloud cover and the weather conditions.

Consideration needs to be made that if the event does not happen in February, it cannot happen in March when Bristol Parks are doing works on the paths.

e. St Aidan's Community Fair – Saturday 14th March 11am to 2pm

FOTH have been asked if they would like to have a stand at the community fair.

FOTH have had a stand at the fair in past years and it's proven to be a good way of promoting FOTH, nature, volunteering and conservation work.

Rob and Susan are away and asked if anyone in the group would like to help setup and man the stand.

Bill, Freya, Margret and Adam all said they would be happy to do this.

f. Avon Valley Walk – Sunday 24th May

Rob is proposing to lead a walk next year.

g. Bugs and Beasties – Saturday 8th August

This event has been called off for the last 2 years so everyone is keeping their fingers crossed for good weather next August.

The event will run from 4pm to 6pm.

A bugs and beasties expert will be at the event to identify species found. Mali will arrange some activities for children.

Rod also said it could be possible to do some solar observing with special telescopes. Susan will contact the Bristol Astronomical society to ask if they would be interested in arranging this.

h. Moth Night

Ray Barnet from city museum and Bristol Moth group has agreed to run a moth night on the August bank holiday next year.

Exact date to be confirmed.

i. Planetarium

The planetarium event discussed at the last meeting is planned to go-ahead.

The organiser recommends the event is split into three different shows. One show for pre-school children lasting 24 minutes. One second show for key stage 2 children lasting 35 minutes. And one show lasting 40 minutes for children 14+.

Susan will confirm numbers that the event and shows can accommodate and start the process of promoting the event once a date and all details are agreed.

Susan will be seeking volunteers to help setup and run the event.

7. Networking

a. St George and Redfield Voice

Susan writes an article each month for St George and Redfield Voice.

The January article will cover the celebration event.

Susan asks if anyone would like to write an article, or has ideas for future articles, they should let her know.

b. Talks by Rob

Rob has a talk arranged next year with Avon Wildlife group in Keynsham who will also visit Troopers Hill next April for a guided walk.

Rob also has a talk arranged with Barton Hill history group.

c. Website

The colours have been changed on the website. Rob changes the colours 4 times a year to mark the changing of the seasons.

d. Volunteer for making posters

Freya, who has been doing an excellent job of making posters for Troopers Hill, is having some computer problems that will get fixed at the end of the year.

Susan asked if anyone is able to help in the meantime with posters and be a backup to help with making posters.

8. AGM

a. Accounts of the year

Rob took the group through the accounts for the year and thanked Margret for the excellent job she has done to manage them.

The most important point Rob explained is that FOTH has broken even this year, and there is enough money to cover 2020.

b. Elections

Rob nominated Susan Acton-Campbell to continue as chair of the committee. All present voted in favour.

Susan said she is happy to do it, but also commented it would be good if someone else was able to do it.

The other members of the committee elected were Rob Acton-Campbell, Margaret Watson (treasurer), Jo Terry, Rod Davis, Richard Evans, Mali Kedward, Freya and Adam Jenkin (Secretary).

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held from 7.15pm-9pm on Thursday 30th January in the back room of Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Rd, BS5 8LB.

Appendix 1.

Troopers Hill Winter Works 2019/20

