

Minutes of Friends of Troopers Hill Annual General Meeting 2025
Thursday 4 December 2025 7.15pm at Wesley Memorial Church Hall

Attendees: Susan, Margaret, Rob, Cllr Fabian Breckels, Laura, William, Jill, Richard, Alvaro and Rosie
Apologies: Fran, Neil, Elaine and Rod

1. **Approval of Minutes from 25 September meeting**

These were approved

2. **Nature Conservation Work on Troopers Hill**

- Nature Conservation Work Parties

Rob reported that there had been six since the last meeting and work had included Sally's glade, the top of the gulley (broom) and the duct from the chimney and alongside the path. There were two to come this month one of which was fully booked (Saturday 13th) so Susan was leading another on that day. Forthcoming dates January to March were now on the website. The focus would be on bramble while still out of bird nesting season.

- The meadow and the hedge cuts had been completed.

- The planned winter works by Bristol City Council (BCC) had started. The funds of £1460 from the Land Stewardship Fund had been obtained plus £2000 from FoTH meant that the contractors could start their work in January/early February, including dealing with the Himalayan Balsam. Not enough funding had been obtained for the rope work needed on the very steep slopes above the nursery and at the end of the gully.

3. **Funds**

- BCC Active Travel Grant

This grant had funded the St George Strollers 300th walk celebration where walkers had given some input into the design of the interpretation board for at Troopers Hill Field. The Malvern Road board had been removed in preparation for the installation, in its place, of the new interpretation board.

- Events funded by Lamplighters

They had sponsored two events – Fungi Foray and Bugs & Beasties both successful events. The Church Road Lantern Parade was on the coming Saturday (6th) and three extra stewards were needed if anyone wanted to volunteer.

- Charge on bank account

The monthly charge of £4.99 by Santander that was meant to have started in October had not appeared on the statements.

- Funding for information board by layby entrance at Troopers Hill Woods

On 12 November BCC St George Councillors had agreed the Section 106 money for the above board in Crews Hole Road. Ideas for the design would be considered in 2026. All the boards were of a similar design and had a collective look. They were on the website for anyone to see. <https://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/sundry/board.htm>

4. **Maintenance and Projects – Hill Field and Wood**

- Red bench

This bench on the field had been replaced by a sponsored bench and was now in Rob and Susan's garden waiting for a refurb. It could possibly be put outside the play area. The wrong invoice for the new bench had been received from BCC but this was being rectified.

- Repairs to steps in the woods

The grant application in collaboration with the Birch Collective had been unsuccessful. A new Management Plan for the Woods was being produced by the Forest of Avon Trust. Any future grant application would need to consider this plan.

- Repairs to steps on Local Nature Reserve

There had been no proper audit yet. Rob was hoping that a corporate group might do it in a half day work party.

William asked if he could give our details to a contact of his as they had asked about corporate working days. Yes – usually the groups were between 10 and 12 people and would last a half day – since there were not any toilet facilities.

- Greendown entrance timbers and hedge

Action for Susan from previous meeting re. timbers deferred. The hedge looked so much better after the summer cut and removing some sections near the entrance would be a much easier job now. Susan would check it soon.

- Birch Collective Woodland management

See above

- Proposal for more trees on Troopers Hill Field

John Atkinson from One Tree Per Child initiative had visited to go over and clarify details including the site and the tree species. They would be situated just outside the play area on the south side, to give shade, and would be non-seeding. Three miniature Japanese cherries would be included to reference Bristol's links with Japan.

5. Events

- Since last meeting

Fungi walk – Sunday 8 November

This had been very interesting and hugely popular. The ranger/expert had been very knowledgeable and engaging. It was disappointing that there had been very few fungi around but it had been acknowledged that it had been a very bad year, not a more sinister problem at this stage.

- Proposals for next year

An events planning meeting had been held which had produced a long list of possible events which would be considered and confirmed at a later date.

Rob added that there would be a history walk in May – details to follow.

6. Networking

- History Talks

Rob would be giving a (free) history talk at Meadow Vale Community Centre on 15 December and another for a group at Hanham Reform Church. The latter had been particularly interesting as one of the Butler ancestors was buried in their graveyard.

- Bull Inn ACV application

The owners had requested a review of the ACV decision and Rob had input into this. It was up to BCC. Fabian added that he had tried to obtain updates from previous interested parties but had heard nothing back.

- Messaging about the Balloon Fiesta – Rod's email 12 August

Two formal messages had been received about the crowds, traffic and potential danger there had been on the Sunday evening of that weekend, much of which had been caused by the early announcement of a take-off. The early announcement had not happened in previous years so Susan would contact the BCC Events team to point this out. Fabian agreed that it was a reasonable request. It was agreed that this was not the responsibility of FoTH once this had been done. There was a fine balance to be had between usage and enjoyment of the area and maintenance and care of it. Council resources were already stretched.

- Emra plaque

Rob said that the unveiling of the plaque in Harvey's Lane was to be held on 14 January 11.30 with the Lord Mayor. There would be coffee afterwards at the Orchard café followed

by lunch for those who wanted to stay on. He asked the lunchers to inform him so that he could give numbers to the café.

- BBC Make a Difference award

Susan showed the 'highly commended' award that she had won and gained a round of applause. It was well deserved.

- Money from Southmead Hospital fundraiser

Susan had completed her sponsored walk of 26km and had raised just over £500 which meant she had also donated £500 to FoTH.

FoTH had also won a South West in Bloom "It's Your Neighbourhood" award which Jill had received at the celebration event (and had to make a speech!). Richard suggested that we should try to include the certificate on one of the information posters. Photos would follow.

- Water and Soil Sampling

Ros Death from University of Bristol had been in touch and it had been decided that this year her students' project would be the study of the effect of gorse on soil. This would be in the early part of next year.

Richard mentioned that a construction company called Shields had moved into the empty former Lidl site in Hanham. They appeared to be introducing themselves to the community and sponsoring several local initiatives. He wondered if it was a good idea to contact them. Jill added that they might even be able to offer building material such as wood for the steps.

7. **AGM**

- Constitution proposed amendments

Rob tabled the proposed amendments to the Constitution one of which was to redefine an "active member". This was agreed with the addition of the clarification that the voluntary work of a member must be in the previous 12 months. Richard asked whether the wording under the heading "Work Parties" was correct and that FoTH did the risk assessments. This was not right and the wording would be amended to make it clear that BCC was the final authority on this. The changes were unanimously agreed.

- Accounts for the Year

Rob and Margaret tabled the accounts. The income strands were listed. It was noted that the general fund was higher at the end of the year but £2000 would be spent early in 2026 and one cheque had not yet been cashed. The budget was tabled. Two small amendments were needed – income under Other Projects should read \$106 not CIL and the year 2025 at General Fund should be changed to 2026. They were unanimously agreed.

- Elections

The committee could have a maximum number of 9 and there were currently 8 who were all happy to continue. Neil had asked to stand. This was unanimously agreed and Neil was elected, together with all existing members.

Susan (Chair) gave notice that this would be her last year as Chair and would be stepping down in 12 months. She agreed to compile a list of her responsibilities, duties and activities so that the committee could consider a future role. Susan stressed that the model of FoTH may look very different in the future and could be pared right down.

Margaret also said this would be her last year acting as Treasurer.

8. **Meeting closed at 8.50pm.**

- Next meeting to be held on 5 March 2026 at Wesley Memorial Church Hall