

NOTE OF MEETING

Thursday, 8th February, 2018 7.15pm

Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Rd

Present: Susan (Chair), Rob (WPO), Norman (Treasurer), Rod (Committee member), Richard, Margaret (minutes)

Apologies: Fabian Breckles (Cllr), Judith

1. Approve AGM minutes

The AGM minutes were approved.

2. Issues and thank yous for Parks staff.

- Byelaws notices: the two byelaws notices that had been vandalised should be replaced shortly. If possible they will be fixed in such a way that they will be less easy to vandalise.
- Winter works: Susan reported that they had a meeting with Parks before Christmas to discuss winter works. The Council has fewer resources now to do these, but can provide some and this, combined with help from Community Payback and ParkWork, should enable all the work to be done. Park staff will be on site from Monday 12th February so the works should be completed before the nesting season.
- Slope above nursery: Rob reported that the Council has inspected the steep slope above Mama Bears nursery. Only two issues were raised and these were both low risk: a piece of rock that they needed to check was not loose, and the size of the trees. There may be some work done to reduce the size of the oak trees. The inspection did raise the question of whether the slope should be fenced off, but after a meeting with the Council Safety Officer it was agreed that this was not necessary. However, the Safety Officer did suggest that the muddy area at the top of the first set of steps could be a slip risk. This could be remedied by a bridge or walkway over the area. The Safety Officer will put some thought into how best this could be done and there will probably be more discussion about this.

3. Work parties and other works:

Rob reported, that despite the weather not being very favourable, there has been a good amount of work achieved at the recent work parties.

ParkWork did not come to the 21st December work party so Rob and Susan just did some work, but there was a good turnout for the session on 18th January when they took out some holm oaks and cleared the steps. ParkWork owe 2 sessions to make up for ones missed.

Saturday 6th January was cold and drizzly and only 4 attended but they managed to clear a number of saplings and do a large amount of litter picking.

The weather was also poor on 3rd February but fortunately the rain held off between 10 and 12, and 11 people turned up for this session which they spent clearing Sally's Glade.

- Work parties before the next meeting:
Thursday 15th February, 15th March and 19th April (with ParkWork)
Saturday 3rd March and 7th April
- Street Goat: Susan reported that they had been contacted by a member of Street Goat to ask if they would be able to take the goats over the hill, on leads, to graze. Susan had responded to say this would be okay in principle but the Council needed to give their consent, and they would need to check that the goats would only eat the right things. As a test of this, they tried the goats, in their home in Troopers Hill Allotments, on holm oak cuttings (which we would be happy for them to eat) and broom cuttings (which we would not want them to eat). Fortunately they preferred the holm oak. Susan has written to Becky Belfin at the Council about this.

Rob had the idea that it would be useful to have a gate inserted into the allotment fence on the Greendown side. This would mean that the goats could be led straight out onto the hill and could also be helpful for allotment holders who live on that side. Street Goat are going to contact the Bristol East Allotments Association to ask if they would be happy with this proposal and, if they are, Susan will add this into our Heritage Lottery Fund application.

4. Projects

- Ways to Nature - progress: Susan reminded the meeting that she had made an initial enquiry to the Heritage Lottery Fund which had resulted in them suggesting that they would be unlikely to fund the work to the paths, but the fencing and other proposals were more likely to be funded. They had also suggested that, although the maximum amount that could be requested is £100k, it would be very unlikely that this would be agreed and it would be better to request a smaller amount. As a result Susan has now put together a list of items for the application, totalling approximately £40k, which she circulated.

In detail the application would include the following:

Fencing: Susan has obtained estimates of approx. £20,200.

Invertebrates Survey: David Gibb has been recommended for this and he also did the previous survey for us. His quote is £2,250 for 9 days work.

New Conservation management plan: Rupert Higgins has quoted £1375 for this.

Interpretation Board: Susan has obtained quotes from Clare Challis for an interpretation board of £2633. The board would be on fungi, and possibly lichens if space allows.

Expert led guided walks/nature themed events: £850 would cover 4 events in 2019.

Works to implement recommendations of new management plan: Rob has obtained a quote of approximately £10,000.
Allotment gate – quote to be obtained if this suggestion agreed.

Susan has also talked to Natural Learners about doing 4 sessions, either with children or adults with learning difficulties. The four sessions would be on birds, fungi, invertebrates and plant providing food and habitats for wildlife. These could be included in the application as they would meet the criteria of increasing public enjoyment of the hill. She has received a quote of £755 (but this will increase slightly to include measuring outcomes).

The next step will be for Susan to go through the proposed application with her contact at the Heritage Lottery Fund.

- Troopers Hill flag: this has now been put up.
- Defibrillator: Susan reported that the person who did the Just Giving page for the flag has now prepared one for a defibrillator. The next step will be for Susan to put up posters and publicise this on line to encourage people to donate.
- Projects with students: Rob explained that both University of Bristol and UWE are encouraging students to do voluntary work and projects on local areas. As a result one geology student is already helping at the work parties and plans to survey the geology of the hill. Rob has also suggested that a useful project could be to map the areas of scrub on the hill and show how this has changed. If a student does decide to do this then it would happen this summer.
- Study of effect of light pollution on moths: another student has proposed doing a survey of the effects of light pollution on moths both on Troopers Hill and with the River Avon Trust.
- Reptile survey: Susan has been approached by a member of the Avon Reptile Group about doing a reptile survey on Troopers Hill. Susan forwarded his request to Becky Belfin. Both Susan and Becky pointed out to him that he would need to label the roofing felt squares he plans to leave on the hill with an explanation of why they are there, otherwise people may think they are rubbish and pick them up.

5. Troopers Hill Field

- Tree sponsorship: Susan reported that the Council has still not put up the second tree for sponsorship
- Tree maintenance: The tree cages have not yet been replaced. Susan has also contacted the Council about protective wrapping around the other trees but this has not yet been done.
- Goal posts: Rod asked if there was an update on the goal posts. Susan said that she had spoken to Teija about this. The sockets installed at Dundry Park have been successful but at present there is no funding to install new posts and sockets on Troopers Hill Field. Rob suggested that next time the

posts need moving we should ask the Council whether it would be possible to have the same system as Dundridge.

6. Events

Next events:

Stargazing: Rod confirmed that Bristol Astronomical Society are all ready for the Star Gazing event on Troopers Hill. This is provisionally booked for one night between 19th and 22nd February, but if the weather is not suitable on any of these nights then it will be moved to 19th to 22nd March. Susan said that 104 people have expressed an interest. She is using Eventbrite for this. Once the date is confirmed all these people will receive an email via Eventbrite and the first 25 to confirm will get places. Susan is arranging volunteers to help with the equipment.

St George Community Fair – 3rd March: As this clashes with a work party Susan will try and find a volunteer to man the stand for the first part of the Fair.
Action: Susan to ask for volunteer

Dawn Chorus 5.30 am 24th March – People are already booking this. Susan has found out that the Fountain Café will be open from 7am so she will propose that those on the walk go there for breakfast together afterwards.

Avon Valley Walk 27th May – Rob confirmed that the May Walk Fest is on again this year so his Avon Valley Walk will be part of this.

7. Parks consultation £2.868 million cuts

Rob confirmed that FOTH had responded to the Parks consultation which closed on 27th January. The Council had received about 2600 responses, a good response, although about 1000 of these came in the last weekend following publicity about the proposal for advertising in parks.

The last question in the consultation had been about the suggestion of transferring parks to an independent charity. Bristol Parks Forum, which Rob sits on, decided that this was not a good idea for a number of reasons, and proposed instead a Foundation for Bristol Parks. This could raise money, support volunteers and encourage community engagement, but the parks would still be owned and managed by the Council. A grant is available at present to set up Foundations like this.

Rod asked if there were any Foundations already in the UK. Rob replied that Bournemouth has one although it has not managed to raise much money yet. Milton Keynes has a Trust which was set up when Milton Keynes was established but this is different in that it was allocated commercial property at the time from which they can raise funds. Newcastle-upon-Tyne are also thinking about setting up a Trust. Rob added that the Parks Forum are talking to Bournemouth who want to develop their Foundation further and they may put in a joint application on the basis that Bristol can benefit from Bournemouth's experience. Parks Forum are also talking to Bath as it would be sensible to put in a joint Bristol and Bath application as it would be unlikely

that both areas would be given funds if applying separately. Rob added that they would look for other funding if they were not successful with this grant.

Susan said she could send out the link to the detailed proposal if anyone would be interested. Rod and Margaret both said they would like to receive this.

Action: Susan to circulate the link to the detailed proposal on the Parks Forum website to Rod and Margaret.

8. Impact of public toilet closures on St George Strollers

Susan explained the relevance of this item by saying that St George Strollers had originally been set up by FOTH. The closure of public toilets is an issue for walking for health groups as they need to make sure there are adequate toilets at the start and end of walks, and if possible en route. The Council are working on a communal toilet scheme where they provide details of local businesses (cafes, shops, etc) willing to allow people to use their toilets but this has not progressed very far. At present walk leaders are having to do the work themselves of finding out which businesses are happy for the Strollers to access their toilets.

9. Impact of the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on our mailing list

Susan explained that a new GDPR regulation is coming into force in May which requires holders of names for mailing lists to demonstrate that people have given their consent to go on the mailing list. This is not a problem for our electronic mailing list which is managed through MailChimp but it is an issue for our paper mailing list. Susan asked the meeting to consider whether we needed to continue to hold a paper mailing list. This has been used in the past for sending out newsletters, but since Kit left it has been harder to produce these. Susan has done a couple but it is time consuming and she has not been able to produce one for some time. After discussion it was agreed that we would not be sending out any more newsletters, particularly as our events are publicised monthly in the St George and Redfield Voice, for which Susan also does a regular feature about the Hill, and so we could dispense with the paper mailing list.

Action: Susan to delete paper mailing list and to continue to obtain consent for inclusion on electronic mailing list via MailChimp. Susan to send cards with thank to all the volunteers who have been delivering newsletters over the years.

Next meeting

Thursday 26th April

at 7.15pm at Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Road