



**Friends of
Troopers Hill**

**Note of Meeting
Thursday, 12 January 2012
Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Road,**

Present: Susan (Chair) Rob (WPO) Kit (Memb Sec) Bryan (Cttee) Clare (Cttee)
Jude(Cttee) Margaret (Cttee) Denise (BCC) Jules (BCC CPK) Elaine, Roy, Steve,
Val,Helen (Minutes)

Apologies: Norman (Treas) Fabian (Cllr)

The minutes of the AGM (8 December) and the last meeting (10 November) were approved without amendment.

Issues and thank yous for our Community Park Keeper, Area Parks Manager and Grounds Maintenance team

There had been a fair amount of rubbish deposited on the Hill over the Christmas period, nevertheless, the Hill had been well maintained. Kit had identified various 'hot spots' for litter and had collected a bag per day on average. He also mentioned waste from the allotments and had found plastic insulation stripped from wire. It was noted that any 'drinking dens' should be reported to the police. It was suggested that Jules might monitor the path along the allotment margin.

Action: Chair to e-mail Pete Crawford about stripped out insulation and 'drinking dens'.

Leylandii close to the boundary of Mama Bear's Nursery

Denise reported her conversation with the nursery managers, who did not object to the removal of the leylandii. It was proposed that the removal would be more practicable if done from the nursery side of the site and would need removal of a section of fence. Kit suggested a clear-up of the area while the access existed.

Troopers Hill clean up campaign

Susan reported two circle spraying exercises had been carried out at specific times and places and the sprays had been counted. The next circle spraying would probably take place next Monday with enforcement action to follow. The Greendown hedge area was noticed to be a bad spot on Saturday. Susan reported positive feedback via Facebook and circulated copies of the new Council-approved posters. Jules suggested that they should be displayed in schools, health centres, shops and libraries etc rather than private homes and there was discussion of locations for distributing free poo bags. It was felt that owners were more likely to clear up after their dogs on Troopers Hill Field, in recognition of its use as a play area.

Action: Kit to include an article on the campaign in the next news letter.

Progress on the "Stepping Forward" grant

Rob reported a recent meeting with the contractor aiming to start in 3 weeks time or so and outlined the working arrangements. Most of the steps would not be blocked except

those to/from the lower stack (and then only during working hours). He hoped the work would last only three to four weeks

Other Works

Community Payback had improved the paths behind Malvern Road and the lower path through the woodland by clearing bramble and hawthorn. Leylandii trees had been found growing behind a certain house

Action: Denise to write to let the occupiers know the trees would be removed.

A bench is to be placed at the top right of the DoE steps, particularly aimed at helping people with mobility problems to enjoy the view. Community P/B would be required to clear and level the area. A meeting was arranged for 17 January to evaluate the quotes from prospective suppliers and choose providers. A request for volunteers from the committee to monitor project progress had generated a few responses.

Rob was looking forward to a meeting with BTCV on 10 February concerning a rebuild of the DoE Steps, to begin in April, materials to be provided by the Trust.

Jules queried the placement of an interpretation board in the Field showing a map of the Field, the Hill and the woodland trail. Susan explained that the survey results had indicated no more interpretation boards were needed on the hill itself while more signage was needed for the Summerhill entrance to the field, and that plans had been made accordingly.

An order had gone in for the a dropped kerb opposite the Greendown entrance and opposite the entrance at the bottom of Troopers Hill Rd. [work since completed].

Work parties

completed since the last meeting

- Saturday 3rd December - participants had cut cherry and bramble by the lower stack
- Saturday 7th January – volunteers had pruned the hedge at Greendown, the clippings had been taken away by the Clean & Green team. Given the current size and maturity of the hedge, Jules suggested that contract flailing could be considered for the future.

Action: Jules to find out the timing and let FOTH know.

before the next meeting

- Saturday, 4th February (bramble among heather in vicinity of oak tree close to Greendown)
- Saturday, 3rd March (tba)

Management Plan update

Rob brought the meeting up to with the latest position. Comments had been made on the final draft. The Council was adjusting the design of the publication to correspond with plans for other Green Flag sites. He considered that the revised plan contained no dramatic changes from the previous edition. It included a mention of the role of the Park Keeper using skill and judgement in deciding the priorities and timing of tasks.

St George Strollers Walking for Health update

Clare updated the meeting with a report on the last six months' activities. The group was maintaining a size of between 10 and 18 walkers who were willing to contribute their views and had been appreciative of the walks organised. The walkers comprised retired people, in the main, with a few exceptions. The next initiative would involve outreach to the

Meadow Vale and Speedwell areas. Jules suggested it might be useful to approach health providers for assistance with distribution of publicity materials. The scope for occasional partnership walks was discussed.

The anniversary of the start of the project would fall on 25 May. To celebrate the anniversary, St George Strollers and FOTH had booked Ed Drewitt for a wildlife walk on 21 May. Clare would be preparing a report for the occasion. She looked forward to providing a positive response to suggestions of carrying the project into next year. Clare thanked everyone who had contributed to the success of the Group.

Events

Since our last meeting

- AGM and Film Show - 8th December 2011. The meeting had been well attended and had generated a great deal of positive comment.

Before our next meeting

- Forest School – for 7-9 year old children on Saturday 4 February 10:00 until 11:30 (three places already booked).

- St Aidan's Community Fair 24 March 11 am – 2pm. Volunteers were invited to host a FOTH stall publicising the Stepping Forward project. A separate stall would be hosted by St George Strollers. Publicity for the fair possibly to be included with the next FOTH newsletter.

- A Defra Biodiversity team-building (5 people) visit would take place on one weekday between April and June [since arranged for Monday 16 April].

Funding

Community Festival and Events Fund

The completed grant application was due in by 9 February to cover 'educational' walks. Since FOTH Had received grant money for this in the two previous years it was not certain that another application would achieve the same success. Existing funding would be capable of covering the cost in the event that the application was unsuccessful this time.

Facebook update

In Jackie's absence it was reported that the membership had increased to around 80 including two people who had used pictures of Troopers Hill on covers of their CDs. Jules said he was not getting notifications and the meeting discussed other problems associated with Facebook.

Newsletter

Susan mentioned that the 'letter to Santa' and Russell's interview article in the most recent edition had received favourable comments. An approach from the sports centre at Hartcliffe had not been followed up by the sports centre. It was agreed that the Council should be given the Chair's telephone number and the Membership Secretary's e-mail address for its list of contacts associated with newsletters in Bristol.

Ideas for the next issue included following up on the clean-up campaign, emphasising that the initiative is not being aimed at those dog owners who currently behave responsibly; and the scope for wider publication of the newsletter.

Next meeting

Thursday 29th March, 7.15pm at Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Rd.