

NOTE OF MEETING

**Thursday, 12th July, 2012 7.15pm
Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Rd**

Present: Susan (Chair), Rob (Work Party Organiser), Kit (Memb Sec), Bryan (Committee), Jude (Committee), Clare (Walking for Health), Fabian (Cllr), Roy, Keith, May, Jackie (Facebook), Elaine, David, Margaret (minutes)

Apologies: Jules (Bristol City Council), Denise (Bristol City Council), Helen, Norman, Steve Pearce

Approve previous minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without amendment.

Susan asked for her action to speak to a flail driver about the Greendown hedge maintenance to be carried forward.

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

The meeting noted the continued excellent maintenance on the Hill. Jules has been strimming in the gully and around the square chimney. He has also done a very good job strimming under the new bench in Troopers Hill field. Susan will request he strims the strip by the steps below Little Elizabeth's bench.

Denise is chasing up about the leylandii close to the boundary of Mama Bear's Nursery as nothing more has happened about this.

Susan and Rob met with the Green Flag judges when they came to judge the Hill on 18th June. The results should be known in the next two weeks.

Following the damage by contractors to the Malvern Road kissing gate, and the repairs which had left the gate very heavy and difficult for wheelchair users, Susan will be meeting with Jamie, the Area Parks Manager and the repairs person to arrange for the repair to be improved. The new sign will not be put up until the problem has been sorted out.

Susan will talk to Julian about clearing the rubbish on the hillside above Mama Bear's Nursery. At present, while there are leaves on the trees, it is not very visible.

The lady who had originally asked to pay for a memorial bench in memory of her husband, has offered to sponsor a tree instead to replace one of the two that had fallen in the high winds. The tree is likely to be a hornbeam, and the tree officer is dealing with this. The same lady has also offered to provide bird or bat boxes to replace the ones that have been damaged by grey squirrels. Roy asked whether the usage of the other bird and bat boxes that had been installed had been checked. Rob said it had not and agreed this was a good idea. Bryan asked about the drainage in the field following the works. Susan reported that it had improved.

Progress on the “Stepping Forward” grant

Rob reported that the steps had now been finished and it was generally agreed they were a great improvement. The new bench has been installed on the field.

The final design has been received for the new interpretation board and this is now under production. It will be sited near the Summerhill Terrance entrance, facing the hill, and there will be two new clip frames alongside for notices. Bryan and Jude volunteered to look after these.

There had been a meeting on 31st May with the woodcarver about the waymarking posts. His drafts for the design of the four posts were circulated. He is also producing two direction posts to indicate the two paths from Lamb Hill. Everyone liked the designs and agreed that there were just a couple of changes needed (altering the shape of the chimney and taking out the boat on one of the designs). The woodcarver has invited anyone to come to his workshop while he is working on the posts and will let Susan know the times and dates. Community Payback will be asked to install them.

As a condition of the grant there needs to be a celebratory event and this will take place on the afternoon of 20th October. Sally Oldfield has accepted the invitation to perform the official opening and there will be walking/story telling as part of the event.

The sustainability grant of £3,500, to encourage people to use the hill, has been awarded. Two projects have been put forward: the first is an audio trail around the hill which can be downloaded to an MP3 player and the second is a project with schools. The schools have requested some symbols on the steps for the children to find (these would be quite small and discreet) and also numbered tags on trees in the woodland which would enable teachers to identify them so that they can then teach the children about the different species. The grant will also be used to pay for guided walks next year; for adding the trail map to the leaflets and for printing costs. Kit pointed out the QR code on the new board which enables people with Smart phones to go straight to the Troopers Hill website.

In addition to the sustainability grant, Rob reported that FOTH have been allowed to use the contingency funding of £2,700. Rob suggested that this could be used to replace the board on top of the hill, changing the map to show the trail, and also for a spare board to be printed. This money could also pay for a board by the lower chimney. This would have a drawing of the engine house and possibly the 1610 map of Kingswood Forest, and would also mention the waymarked trail, with possibly also a piece about the copper slag blocks. Rob has produced a first draft and Susan said she would circulate this by email after the meeting for comments/amendments. There was still some time left with Community Payback and they may be asked to tidy up the entrances to the two paths from Lamb Hill. This still left about £300 to spend. Susan asked for any suggestions to be sent to Rob, and pointed out that this money could not be used to fund a litter bin as Groundworks consider this should be provided by the council. Susan thanked Rob for all the work he had put in to obtain the Sustainability Grant and to retain the contingency funding.

Work parties

- completed since the last meeting

On Saturday, 6th June a small group cleared bramble at the top of the steps opposite Phil and Vernon's.

Saturday 7th July work party was cancelled due to rain.

- Work parties before the next meeting:

An evening work party on Wednesday 25th July, for one hour from 7pm.

Saturday 4th August

Wednesday 22nd August – another evening work party at 7pm.

Saturday 1st September.

Chris Steel has recently qualified as a work leader again, which brings the number of leaders up to 6 or 7.

Bristol in Bloom

The Bristol in Bloom judges came to Bristol on 12th July to judge Bristol as a whole, and Rob and Susan were asked to put up a stand and meet the judges alongside other community groups. FOTH have also applied to be considered for an award under the RHS's 'It's your neighbourhood' scheme and Susan has put together the required two sides of text describing the project. In addition, Bristol is the town representing the UK in the Entente Florale competition this year and Troopers Hill occupies a page in the booklet. The judges come to Bristol on 31st July and FOTH have been invited to have a stand at the M Shed where the judges will be able to talk to the various groups.

St George Strollers Walking for Health update

Clare reported that there are now 5 walk leaders. Since the last meeting they have applied for a grant to the St George West Community Fund which has been successful and this means they will be able to continue providing walks. Susan pointed out that the funding will also pay for the dog show on October 14th.

Events

Since the last meeting:

600 school children from Air Balloon School visited the hill on 1st June for the Diamond Jubilee. It was a very successful visit and Kit has made a video which can be seen on the website.

Music on the Hill sadly had to be cancelled due to poor weather. This only incurred a cost of £100, not the full amount.

The Sunset Stroll on 11th July, led by Rob, went well with a turnout of 12 or 14, mostly people who had not been to an event on the hill before.

Before our next meeting:

Tai Chi on the Hill - Sunday 29th July 10.30am

Avon Valley Walk – Sunday 23rd September 10am to 4pm.

The Dog Show takes place on 14th October, shortly after the next meeting, so Susan will be ringing around for volunteers.

Funding

As mentioned above, the St George West Community First Panel awarded £1830 under the Community First Neighbourhood Match Fund programme for the St George Strollers and the Family Fun dog show.

Also as mentioned in the Stepping Forward notes on page 2, Community Spaces have confirmed an award from their Sustainability Fund of £3,500.

Facebook/Website Update

Jackie reported that 133 people have now liked our page on Facebook. This is partly due to Troopers Hill being part of the A Level syllabus for geography with several of the people who have liked the page coming from a particular college in the north. Organisations such as VOSCUR, Bristol Ferry and Beeses have also signed up as liking us. Susan thanked Jackie for her work on this.

Susan also thanked Rob for all his hard work on the website and Kit echoed this.

Newsletter

Kit said that the next issue will come out in September. Clare will do an article on Walking for Health. Susan asked people to give suggestions for other articles to Kit and thanked him for doing such a good job.

Any other business

David said he had seen some school children on the hill, possibly 6th formers, looking at the wild flowers. Susan said that it has been suggested that a list be compiled of all the species (plants and wildlife) but this had not been started yet. There are species lists on the FoTH website, <http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/info.htm>, and there are separate records at BRERC (Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre). The ideal would be to merge all the records so they are all in a format acceptable to BRERC and to FoTH for their own access and interpretation. Chris has volunteered to do this merging, Susan has to contact BRERC about the format.

Rob publicised an event on 28th July at St Anne's Well, organised by the Brislington Brook Project, re-enacting Henry VII's pilgrimage there.

Next meeting

Thursday 4th October at 7.15pm at Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Road