



**Present:** Susan (Chair) Jude (Treas) Kit (Memb Sec) Rob (WPO) Jules (Bristol Council CPK) Gary (Bristol Council CPO) Dave (Bristol Council Head Gardener), Bryan, Margaret, Maureen, Gill, Roy, Helen (Minutes).

**Apologies:** Fabian (Cllr), Pauline.

The minutes of the March meeting were approved without amendment

### **Introduction of new Community Parks Officer (CPO)**

The meeting welcomed Gary Brentnall, formerly the CPM (Community Parks Manager) for north west Bristol. He looked forward to the challenges of this new posting, including his remit to deal with anti social behaviour among other things. He offered support to FOTH.

Dave mentioned that above the Head Gardener another tier of management was responsible for strategy for evolving the parks service to develop green flag applications, management plans etc. Jamie Roberts was the new Area Parks Manager under Peter Wilkinson

### **Any issues and thank yous on Troopers Hill to be passed to CPO**

Jules said their team and the nature conservation officers were pushing for a new local nature reserves/wildlife officer (cf Sally Oldfield) who would have the scope to work outside of the office.

It was recognised that further changes in council office personnel would be unlikely to occur soon, given the need to develop business cases in a climate of funding constraints and organisational change.

- The new benches and tops had both been delivered. They had been dedicated, in the grant application for their purchase, for use on the Hill. The locations would be as described in the minutes of FOTH meeting of January 2009. Jules demonstrated with the aid of photographs the nature of the excavations necessary for installing and concreting in the benches. The logistical problems of transporting the concrete were discussed.

- Works on the replacement fence and gate at Greendown

It was established that the new design gave a considerably safer egress route from the LNR. It was reported that there had been objections to the unsightly and ugly concrete ramp being unsuitable for disabled access. Kit read a disapproving e-mail representing those views to which he had replied clarify that the ramp was not intended for wheelchair access, particularly given the terrain on the other side of the fence.

The grant from YANSEC covered funding of the fence, gate and benches. Gary said there might be a possibility of funding to extend the fence a short distance along Troopers Hill Road at the lower end. It was clarified that the design did not obstruct access to the path behind the top house at Greendown. Update – work is stopped because the 2m circle may not be big enough and might be made bigger. Debate over the diameter of the circle had held up the work. The Council's landscape architect would be taking a view on the way forward on her return from leave.

Bryan suggested that a news release setting out the facts might be worthwhile. It was generally recognised that most local people held a positive view towards the improvements on the Hill and the negative views expressed were those of a minority.

- "Camp" by lowest Troopers Hill Rd entrance

There had been problems with trees being felled and fires, including mattresses being set alight, resulting in an attendance by the Fire Service. The site had been cleared by Jules today (13 May). Chair expressed thanks for the speedy response

- Duke of Edinburgh award candidates had worked on extending the steps but the lowest steps had been pretty much wrecked. Jules had found much of the wood in the undergrowth. It was suspected that someone in the neighbourhood disliked the changes and used opportunities for negative action. Jules had cleared some working space around the path for the DOE to undertake remedial work, and secured a roll of wire netting to help make the steps more substantial.

- Jules highlighted a problem with strimming between the border of the LNR and the allotments. A dead hawthorn tree in Troopers Hill Field would be felled in the following week.

- Thanks were expressed to Jules for the continued excellent maintenance on the Hill. He had noticed recently that the litter problem had diminished possibly due to local individuals picking up litter and taking away their own discarded bottles etc. Cardboard was less of a problem

- Jules passed on feedback received from Green Down residents who now have visibility of the area beneath the large oak tree. Rob enquired about frequency of grass cutting in that area. Jules described his vegetation management to promote the growth of the more attractive wild flower species such as rosebay willow herb and vetch, without over-trimming which gives the impression that the LNR is being turned into a park. Julian proposed to treat the hay cut area it as a rough and rural cut avoiding the best flowering times.

- There was a brief discussion of the problem of soil from the Hill falling on to Troopers Hill Road. It appeared that the only practicable solution would be a strong retaining wall. There were obstacles to building of such wall including, principally, the cost, and obtaining a decision

Actions – Gary to make a risk assessment presentation to his seniors with the intention of inviting them to view the problem.

### **Consultation process for play facilities on Troopers Hill Field**

Chair reported that she had received a summary of the consultation so far. The indications were that a fairly low-key provision was preferred. News was being awaited of the next stage. The rubber surface at the bottom of the steps to the slide had been patched.

### **Work parties**

- completed since the last meeting

Saturday 7th March -weeded and mulched the hedge, cut saplings, removed bramble.

Saturday 4th April - some work in Sally's glade on bramble and other invasive species.

Saturday 2nd May disposed of cherry saplings and bramble in Sally's glade, also some litter picking. There was concern over the amount of bramble at the edges of the glade/

- Next work parties

Saturday 6th June –[note - cancelled because of heavy rain]

Saturday 4 July - TBA

In addition, the DOE candidates would be undertaking separate activities. Jude asked to be put in touch with Chris for times of work parties.

## **Events**

Barton Hill History Group exhibition, 28 March. Chair thanked the volunteers who provided a presence at the FOTH stall.

Good Friday service and Easter Egg Hunt, 10 April. FOTH had received a big "thank-you" from the Churches Group. Rob read out the letter of thanks. An estimated 200+ people had attended the service. Chair thanked everyone who had assisted.

Avon Valley Walk, 19 April. Rob had led an excellent walk. Two participants had almost become lost, but were successfully retrieved. The walkers had been grateful to Somerfield for use of their facilities.

### **- Next events**

Wildlife Walk 17 May would be led by Rupert Higgins, it was said that those interested should book a place but booking might not be essential as the Park Life event listings booklet had not yet been published.

Music on the Hill 20 June, Bristol Concert Wind Band. It was requested that the Council should confirm that an events licence was in place and provide someone from Parks to attend on the day for insurance purposes. Rob explained that arrangements which would be similar to those in previous years. In addition, Friends would provide a gazebo from 5.00pm onwards for the display of Play Area consultation material.

Tai Chi 12 July at 10.00am, this would be the first in a series of four free classes on Troopers Hill Field, subsidised by Bristol Primary Health Care Trust. The remaining sessions would take place on 26 July and 2 & 9 August.

## **Networking**

### **- St George Neighbourhood Partnership**

Chair had ceased to be involved in the Partnership because of personal time constraints. The Partnership had agreed to fund an additional dog waste bin for the Hill. There was discussion over the siting of bins for litter and dog waste. It was proposed to site a dual-purpose (larger) bin at the Summerhill entrance given the extent to which it is used and relocate the existing one to the 2<sup>nd</sup> entrance up from the bottom of Troopers Hill Rd.

### **- Green Flag**

Gary reported that Green Flag judging is going to proceed bi-annually. A mystery shopper visit would be conducted, and a review every two years for those sites scoring above a certain figure.

### **- Area Green Space Plan consultation**

The departure of the official concerned in the consultation had deferred the next stage of public consultation. A further meeting would be held in June and another in the autumn.

## **Newsletter**

Those present at the meeting offered praise for the most recent edition. Jules's contributions to the newsletter were welcomed. Chair suggested a short article to let readers know the contact details of the council and the relevant emergency services, especially as the Chair's home phone number had been used, while she was away on a fortnight's holiday, for reporting incidents that were more properly matters for the immediate attention of the authorities. The next newsletter was due to be published in June, before Music on the Hill.

**Other Business**

Maureen regrettfully informed the meeting of the recent demise of Mr Lippett, a Friend of Troopers Hill who had often expressed positive support for the group's aims and actions.