



Friends of Troopers Hill

NOTE OF MEETING Tuesday 13 July 2010, at
Summerhill Methodist Church

Present: Susan (Chair), Jude (Treas), Rob (WPO), Bryan (Cttee), Jules (BCC), Roy, Liz R, David, Laura, Margaret, Jean, Pat, Elaine, Helen (minutes)

Apologies: Kit (Memb Sec), Fabian (Cllr)

The previous minutes were approved without amendment.

Issues and thank yous for our Community Parks Officer, Area Parks Manager and Park Keeper

On the subject of completion of the YANSEC project it was said that planting of native ling and bell heather behind stout temporary fencing at Greendown will be completed in October, when the weather becomes more suitable. The Council had provided the invoices requested by YANSEC. Yansec asked us for invoices Council have provided them and they have been sent to Yansec

The meeting generally expressed praise for continued excellent maintenance on the Hill. Jules gave a detailed account of, and advised on, methods for bracken trimming.

Susan remarked that 2010 had been the worst year for incidents of minor fires since FOTH was formed. There were no appropriate bye-laws in force, and it was unlikely that a prosecution, eg for criminal damage, would meet the public interest test. The best course of action was, if safe, to attempt to dissuade anyone seen lighting a fire. In this context the meeting heard reports of mini-bike riders spreading petrol and of groups of young people starting fires. Jude had called the fire brigade. The log climbing structure in Troopers Hill Field had been set on fire on Wednesday 7 July and the fire brigade had been called. The Council Parks officers responded quickly. Jules said the logs were charred but still sturdy as they are set in concrete, and the worst of the charring could be cleaned off.

On Thursday 8 July there had been a fire lower down the hill by the steps up from the lower chimney, it was not thought to have been started deliberately. Susan described the nature of the damage to broom and sheep's fescue.

In the context of glass and starting fires, Roy commented on the increased amount of glass appearing on the Hill and the Field. Jules remarked that more fixed objects (benches, play equipment) provided additional opportunities for smashing bottles. Susan suggested holding more social evenings to deter youthful bad behaviour.

Jules said that the problem was general throughout Bristol Parks. A flash fire across the grass would probably not harm the vegetation long-term. The meeting discussed the cyclical and seasonal nature of the problem and how it could be addressed with the council's co-operation. Jules also mentioned that vegetable peelings were regularly being deposited below one of the dog bins.

- estimate for matting at entrance to Troopers Hill Field from Summerhill Terrace. Bristol Parks had quoted £1200 and Chair would seek grant funding to cover the cost.

- Green Flag judging

Susan explained that the judges had visited the Hill. The result was under an embargo until officially announced near the end of July.

- Litter bin on order

See previous minutes we have had donations of £97 the rest was being found from Friends funds, the bin was on order and should be delivered in the next few weeks. It would be sufficiently robust to resist fire. Susan explained the distribution of bins on the Hill and the Field. Jules outlined the practicalities of disposing of heavy quantities of litter where vehicular access was inconvenient.

- the mine shaft

Jamie had confirmed that a digger would be clearing around the edge of the mine shaft with a view to capping if feasible.

Val reported that the fence had been damaged again. Jules explained that it had been rapidly repaired. A taller fence would be installed soon.

Proposals for Troopers Hill, Field and Woods in the Area Green Space Plan

Rob introduced pages 14 and 15 of the plan for St George, one of 14 plans covering the whole of Bristol. The document contained BCC's ideas for investing in parks over the next 20 years, recorded the ideas and options which had come out of meetings and formed the basis for consultation. He explained that a collective response from the Friends would carry more weight in the consultation than individual responses, so the best way forward would be to respond both as a group and as individuals. He also explained that the outcome would form the basis for future land use planning.

It was mentioned that five caravan pitches had been proposed for Cousins Lane in the Site Allocations document. This is a separate document from the Area Green Space Plan and currently Friends of Troopers Hill are not proposing to make a response to the Site Allocations document .

There was one proposal in the Area Green Space Plan for Troopers Hill LNR re footpaths to improve the connections with the river Avon trail. It was agreed that any proposal to increase the number of paths or to surface the existing paths should be resisted by FOTH.

Troopers Hill Field

A small fenced area for small children to play in a dog-free area. Jules pointed out examples of children's play areas, surfaced and fenced. The meeting discussed problems of vandalism associated with play equipment, and the various reactions of children to natural, informal and formal play opportunities.

Crews Hole Woodland.

Proposals relating to improvement of paths and provision of a few car parking spaces, and the context of the Avon Valley amenities were thoroughly debated.

Susan and Rob canvassed views on all the above and compiled a response on Friends' behalf.

Events – for lack of time, the discussions of events were limited. Susan outlined the programme for the Family Fun Picnic on Saturday 14 August, she reminded members that

volunteers would be needed both on the day and in advance at a craft evening, and took names of those who would be willing. Helen said we had promised to give PCS publicity in the grant application for craft materials.

Attention was drawn to a new event on Sunday 3rd October - a group called Gynormous Rawkus would be running a kite flying event and Susan had agreed that Friends would lend a hand if needed.

The meeting closed without addressing the remaining agenda items.