

NOTE OF MEETING

Thursday, 13 July, 2017 7.15pm

Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Rd

Present: Susan (Chair), Rob (WPO), Norman (Treasurer), Rod (Committee member), Amy (Natural Learners), Elaine, Judith, Keith, Margaret (minutes)
Apologies: Nicola Beech (Cllr)

1. Approve June minutes

The February minutes were approved.

2. Natural Learners toddler group and after school club

Amy gave an update on the toddler (Wild Play) and after school (Outdoor Explorers) clubs that she and Mali have been running on Troopers Hill. They started at the end of March and since then there have been 9 Wild Play sessions and 7 Outdoor Explorer sessions. The toddler sessions have been particularly well attended. Sessions have been held fortnightly since Mali went on maternity leave and they will not run over the summer holiday. In future they may provide holiday activities for older children rather than the after school club but they hope to carry on with the toddler group. The cost of the sessions have been quite low: £3 for toddlers (£2 for second child) and £4 for after school sessions (£3 for second child). They will be looking for funding to be able to continue providing the sessions, possibly from the Nineveh Trust. Susan said that she would be happy to provide a supporting letter. Susan asked whether anybody had been put off by the warnings about ticks, but Amy said she didn't think they had. Rob asked whether there had been any problems for them on the Hill, Amy said not and that they had generally had positive responses from passers-by.

3. Issues and thank yous for Parks staff.

- Bracken: Susan reported that Parks staff have been doing a very good job of cutting back the bracken, with just the gully still to do.
- Keith asked whether Parks were still emptying the bins. Susan confirmed that they were doing this twice weekly.
- Rod asked about the wooden pallets that had been left on Troopers Hill Field near the Summerhill entrance. Rob confirmed that he (and two others) had reported this to Parks and the pallets had quickly been removed.

4. Work parties and other works:

- The 3rd June work party focused on cutting back saplings and gorse at the top of the gully. FOTH were pleased to welcome a group of 11 friends who joined the work party at the start of their Hen weekend. Norman led the 1st July work party when work was done above Sally's Glade, attended by 4 people. On 15th June Parkwork took broom out of the gully. 1 extra person attended this.
- Work parties before next meeting:

Saturdays 5th August, 2nd September and 7th October.
Thursdays 20th July, 17th August and 21st September (with ParkWork)

5. Projects

- New Little Elizabeth bench: Susan reported that Teija (Parks Operations) has chased Richard Stransom (Landscape team) about this and hopefully it will be installed soon.
- Ways to Nature: 2000 questionnaires had been printed at a cost of £260 (£200 from Susan's award by University of Manchester Alumni for 2nd prize as Volunteer of the Year, £60 from money donated following closure of Summerhill Academy after school club). People were asked to say whether they were in favour of work on the paths and on fences. The closing date was 12th July and 223 responses have been received, online and on paper. The vast majority of responses support the proposals for the paths and fences, and a surprising number had also said they would be happy to contribute to the cost. The results will be displayed at the Bugs and Beasties event on 12th August, and on the Ways to Nature webpage. Susan explained that once she has the statistics she will then put in the grant applications. The application will include funding for an invertebrate survey which can then inform the review of the Management Plan.
- Signage for woodland path: Woodwise Academy have provided a new sign for the woodland path, free of charge. Susan has submitted an article for the St George and Redfield Voice expressing our appreciation of this.

6. Troopers Hill Field

- Log Play equipment: This has now been removed as it was rotting. The concrete has been taken out and the area reseeded, with orange netting around it currently to protect it.
- Tree sponsorship and tree maintenance: One of the memorial ash trees has died. Susan has asked for this to be removed and also that the ash tree next to it be inspected as both have had bark stripped from the trunk. She has asked for confirmation that the site can be used for another tree sponsorship. A cage has also gone missing from one of the cherry trees so Susan has requested that this be replaced

7. Events

- Next event: Bugs and Beasties on 12th August. Susan asked for volunteers to help at this. Margaret confirmed she would help. Elaine and Keith both said they might be able to and will let Susan know. Rod confirmed that the Solar Observation team will be there. Volunteers to attend from 3pm. Event will finish at 6pm, when people will then, hopefully, be able to stay and watch the balloon ascent.

8. Impact of Council Cuts to Parks on Troopers Hill

- Petition: Susan reminded the meeting that Bristol City Council were proposing to make Parks cost neutral by April 2019. In response, Bristol Parks Forum have initiated a petition calling on the Council 'to withdraw the current budget plan and work with the Parks Forum and others to develop a realistic alternative'.

Next meeting

Thursday 12th October at 7.15pm at Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Road