

NOTE OF MEETING

Thursday, 28th June, 2018 7.15pm

Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Rd

Present: Susan (Chair), Rob (WPO), Rod (Committee member), Norman (Treasurer), Jo, Mali (Natural Learners), Richard (N), Margaret (minutes)

Apologies: Fabian Breckles (Cllr), Natasha, Richard (E), Judith

1. Approve April minutes

The April minutes were approved.

2. Troopers Hill Issues and news

- Committee changes:
 - Susan proposed that Mali of Natural Learners be co-opted onto the committee as the lead on play issues, now we have received a grant of £5,380 from the Ninevah Charitable Trust for outdoor learning sessions which are being provided by Natural Learners. Under the FOTH constitution we can co-opt a committee member during the year and it can be ratified at the AGM in December. All agreed with this proposal. Susan welcomed Mali to the committee.
 - Susan also proposed that, as Norman is moving away, Margaret take over the role of Treasurer. Jo has very kindly volunteered to be Secretary in Margaret's place. These changes were also agreed and again can be ratified at the next AGM.

Susan asked Norman to obtain the form from Santander to add Jo as a signatory, and asked Norman and Margaret to arrange a date for handover.

Our full list of committee members are now:

Susan Acton-Campbell – Chair

Norman Spalding – Treasurer (until handover date)

Margaret Watson – Treasurer (from handover date)

Jo Terry – Secretary

Rob Acton-Campbell – committee member

Rod Davis – committee member

Richard Evans – committee member

Mali Kedward – committee member

- Protecting Nature (fencing and more) –progress. Susan was delighted to announce that the Heritage Lottery Fund have awarded us £44,800 for our Protecting Nature project, which includes money for new fencing, a new management plan, conservation work, interpretation board on fungi and all events for next year, as well as 4 sessions by Natural Learners for adults with learning difficulties. Susan spoke on BBC Radio Bristol this morning about this money. This means that we can now move on to applying for money for the other part of the 'Ways to Nature' project to improve the paths. The next step is to ask St George Councillors at the Area Committee meeting in September

to agree with other councillors that £25,000 of CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) money should be allocated to this project. With that £25,000 as match funding we can raise £45,000 from a landfill trust to complete the project.

- Date of judging by South West in Bloom for Pride in Parks and It's Your Neighbourhood: this will take place on 8th July. Mali will come with children, and anyone else is welcome to come along. Susan needs to amend the paperwork to include news of the Heritage Lottery Fund award.
- Byelaws – feedback on how well they are being followed on the Hill: Susan believes the byelaws are mostly being followed, with the exception of some people still having barbeques on the hill. These pose a very real risk of fire and there have been fires on the hill in the past in 1995 and 2013. Susan has talked about the Meteorological Office Fire Severity Index on BBC Radio Bristol, with a proposal that it be added to that radio station's weather forecast. Susan suggested that if anyone sees people having a barbeque on the hill, as long as they feel confident about approaching them, that they speak to them and explain the reasons why barbeques are prohibited on the hill. Barbeques are permitted on the field and other parks on Bristol provided they are on a stand and people have adequate water with them to put them out.
- Conservation work by Bristol Parks – bracken cutting: Susan explained that Parks have been cutting bracken for us for a number of years. This weakens the rhizomes and helps reduce the amount of bracken. Today she had received an email to say that one of the crew members had raised concerns about carcinogens in bracken. Pete, the supervisor, had seen an Avon Wildlife Trust risk assessment which said it is an issue at this time of year and suggested cutting it in September. However, the advice FOTH had received originally was that, to be effective, the bracken has to be cut in June and September. Susan has asked Pete for a copy of the risk assessment because, if it not safe for volunteers to pull bracken at this time of year, then plans for the next work party will need to be changed. Mali asked if the risk was related to the spores from bracken. Rob said it was but FOTH had looked into this before and it seemed that the risk was only if people spent a long time in bracken and also more likely to be a problem in August when the spores are released. Susan emphasised that safety must come first so volunteers will not be asked to pull bracken unless she can confirm that it is safe.
- **Post meeting note** – examination of the bracken on Troopers Hill showed that no spores were present and Bristol City Council agreed there was no risk to volunteers or their work force.
- Repairs by Fix It team to kissing gate entrance: Susan reported that the Fix it team have made a good repair to the damaged kissing gate on Troopers Hill Road (3rd entrance from bottom).
- Cleaned graffiti: Susan has been cleaning up graffiti from the dog bins using cleaning material provided by the Council.
- Should we feed back on the 20mph consultation? Susan asked whether FOTH should feed back as a group on the 20 mph consultation, particularly about

Crews Hole Road. Richard commented that we could encourage people to respond but it would be hard to respond as a group as we do not know what everyone's views are. Jo agreed. Susan will therefore promote the consultation pointing out that Crews Hole Road is one of the roads being consulted on but will not do a joint response from FOTH.

Rob added that safety work on Troopers Hill Road, including speed humps and other safety measures, is due to commence in October. There is a link to this information on the website.

3. Work parties and other works:

Rob reported that the work party on Saturday 5th May, led by Richard (E) and Chris, did work clearing bramble near Sally's Glade and the cuttings were then taken to feed the goats. The 17th May work party with ParkWork took out cherry tree saplings on the lower steps. On Saturday 2nd June work was done on the slopes above the nursery clearing saplings and bramble, and on Thursday 21st June a small team from ParkWork worked on the path from the red bench down into the woods, replacing wood on the steps, while Susan, Rob and Jane cleared saplings on the edge of the gully.

- Work parties before the next meeting:

Saturday 7th July, 4th August and 1st September

Thursday 19th July, 16th August and 20th September (with ParkWork)

Rob reminded everyone that they would be welcome at the ParkWork work parties, which take place every 3rd Thursday of the month, as well as at the normal 1st Saturday of the month work parties.

Susan added that, as there is long grass on the hill, she will remind everyone at work parties about the risk of ticks, particularly as she has seen a couple of deer on the hill recently. Mali commented that she and Amy also talk to parents about the risk of ticks for the children coming to their scheme.

Susan was pleased that Richard (E) has volunteered to train as a work party leader. Mali said that she and Amy may be interested in training as well. Mali added that they could promote work parties at their sessions.

4. Projects

- Wild Play, Natural Learners and funding from the Ninevah Charitable Trust: Mali reported that Wild Play had been going really well and was proving popular. It has been fully booked on at least 3 of the sessions and they have received positive feedback from parents and childminders. It will run until July 17th and then commence again in September. Mali and Amy have also been in talks with Children's Centres to discuss encouraging families to come to the sessions who might not come otherwise. A representative from the Families Team is coming to see a session next Tuesday so that they can feedback to the Children's Centres. The summer holiday sessions have no fixed age range; at their launch event on 1st June they had a children from a range of ages, the oldest probably 12 years. Susan thanked Mali for all the good work she and Amy were doing on the hill and said how pleased she was it was happening.

- Waymarking in woods: Rob reported that the 13 posts to mark the paths through the woods are now being made, funded by the Avon-Frome Partnership. The posts are of a similar design to the existing posts which seem to be fairly vandal-proof. There is no date for their installation yet.
- Bull Inn – Asset of Community Value – ends 20th November 2018 – progress: Action: Rob will liaise with Norman to discuss this.
- Defibrillator: It looks likely that we will reach the target to fund the defibrillator. Any excess donations will be put towards the Ways to Nature project.
- Reptile survey: The person who had suggested doing this survey has not responded to the request from Parks for further information so it seems unlikely this survey will take place.

5. Troopers Hill Field

- Tree sponsorship: there is still one tree available for sponsorship although it is not showing on the map on the Council's website. Action: Susan to chase Council to put this on website.
- Slide: Susan reported that the red slide, which is about 30 years old, is deteriorating. One of the struts has corroded through and the Council has taped it over so that it is not sharp, but it is likely that the Council will say that it is unsafe if further corrosion occurs. It cannot be replaced on a like-to-like basis as slides of this height now have to be built into a bank. It is also not a good position for a play area as it has been prone to vandalism in the past. Susan has put a post on Facebook asking for suggestions and several responses have come in, although nobody has volunteered to lead on the project. Suggestions range from a tree, a board where people can post memories of the neighbourhood, butterfly arch, mosaic, etc. When all the suggestions have come in we may do something to ask people what they would prefer, e.g at an event. Susan will make sure we consult to make sure whatever is proposed is safe.

6. Events

- Avon Valley Walk – Sunday 27th May: Rob led this walk. It was fully booked with 26 people due to come, but thunderstorms just at the time the walk was due to start meant that only 8 people attended. However, those that came enjoyed it, including somebody from Avon Stories who did a Tweet thread and then a blog and was very complimentary about the walk.

Next event:

Bugs, Beasties and the British Astronomical Society with solar observation telescopes plus craft activities from Natural Learners – Saturday 11th August, 4pm. Susan asked for volunteers to put up and take down gazebos, and if possible stay to help hand out pots and nets. Norman, Jo and Margaret all said they would possibly be able to help with this. Susan will liaise with Fiona from BAS. She suggested possibly having a joint picnic with BAS after the event.

7. Networking

- Bristol Parks Forum meeting 30th June: Susan asked whether anyone could help her with the tea/coffees for this meeting which was to be held at Summerhill Church again but unfortunately nobody was available.

Rob paid tribute to Peter Wilkinson who sadly passed away recently at the age of 57. Peter was Head of Parks at the time FOTH was set up and did a lot of work to support FOTH. He came to sign the first management plan at an event on the hill and was instrumental in putting Troopers Hill forward for a Green Flag. He was also a major influence in setting up Walking for Health in Bristol, and although he left the Council some years ago he remained interested in Bristol parks, including Troopers Hill, and was always willing to give advice. He will be greatly missed.

- The Great Get Together – Saturday 23rd June: Susan and Rob were invited to the Great Get Together which was held in St George Community Centre, where they set up display boards about Troopers Hill.
- St George & Redfield Voice: Susan contributes an article to the Voice every month and found it is a good way to raise interest in issues to do with the Hill, for instance the defibrillator appeal.
Richard asked whether there was a list for people who would like to receive the Voice by email.
Action: Susan to ask Richard Foote about an email list.
- History walk for Downend group: Rob led a history walk for the Downend group recently and received a donation of £30. He already has two walk/talks booked in for next year.
- Susan reported that the Brownies are coming on a visit to Troopers Hill on 5th July. She needs to check the zinc learning trail first and Jo volunteered to do this with her.

Next meeting

Thursday 4th October

at 7.15pm at Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Road

Rev A - corrected following meeting on Thur 4th October 18