



**NOTE OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 5 AUGUST 2004
AT SIKH TEMPLE, 11 SUMMERHILL ROAD, ST GEORGE.**

Present: Susan, Rob, David, Val, Liz, Fran, Kit, Helen, Gary, Sally.

Apologies: Carol, Virginia and Norman .

Actions from the previous minutes: Susan reported a single outstanding action: David had yet to speak to his neighbour about a possible dog show/competition. It was confirmed that he still intended to do so.

Approve previous minutes: Rob said the last minutes had omitted to mention the favourable comments on the last newsletter. The minutes were approved.

Feedback and plans for work parties: Two attempts were made at a work party in July. The first had failed principally because poor weather had made it unsafe to proceed, and few people attended. The second had been given less publicity, but nevertheless attracted five (lady) volunteers in addition to the WPO. On this occasion a tree fallen across a path had been cut back sufficiently to clear the path. The pathway to Sally's glade had been cleared. By 9.00pm darkness was beginning to fall, indicating that any future evening work parties would be best planned for May, June or July, possibly with a 7.00 or 7.30pm start time, depending on participants' work commitments.

The next work party was planned for Saturday 7 August, to clear bracken encroaching on a path. WPO had prepared a risk assessment for discussion with Gary. It was reported that a common format for such risk assessments – in particular in relation to the use of tools for slashing - was currently being explored within Bristol City Council. Risk assessments, though onerous, are found useful for explaining Health & Safety instructions at the start of operations. They are mainly precautionary and show that possible dangers have been anticipated. Each assessment must be specific to a certain event.

Feedback on Joan Day's talk: The meeting agreed the talk had been excellent, enjoyable and surprisingly interesting. The Riverside home had subsequently engaged the speaker. A conversation ensued about the date (pre-1800?) of the chimney at the top of the Hill. The arrangements for funding investigation of the chimney, and the associated stone lined ditch in the Hill, might depend on its age. Sally/Gary would investigate whether the chimney appeared on the council's list of ancient monuments, and if so, what other information appeared on the listing. Liz knew an archaeologist in Glebe Road with whom she would make contact.

Action Plan Progress: Rob mentioned that copies of the Action Plan were available and that a link to it also appeared on the FOTH website.

Grant funding was available for notice boards. Sally estimated that Council ones would cost around £600 each: they were large enough to take A3 posters: however it would not be necessary to place one at every entrance to the LNR and they required maintenance. WPO demonstrated a possible model for a notice made of aluminium and Perspex, being as vandal-proof as possible. It was agreed that these were a good idea. The meeting discussed whether

notices could be fixed to existing fences. It might be wiser to use a separate post to protect fences from damage. The fence at Green Down was reported to be in reasonable condition for the purpose. Gary said the sign cases currently available were quite good and wipes for clearing spray off signs were available. It was agreed that sign “legs” would be appropriate for main entrances and that at other locations signs could be fixed to fences. In any event the best affordable signs would be sought. They would need to be priced with and without “legs”.

The question of avoiding visual intrusion was raised. A sign by the main chimney was thought perhaps to carry the most impact but might affect the ambience. There was support for an interpretation board explaining the characteristics of the chimney.

Gary intended to try to obtain more dog clean-up signs, at least three more were required.

The vegetation around the chimney at the foot of Troopers Hill Road was identified as a Health & Safety issue. Vegetation was also encroaching on paths. Gary was seeking alterations to the current Hill management contract, so that the majority of it would be managed by the contractors as “woodland” including path clearance, instead of the current overall designation of “grassland” whereby a small area received a hay cut at intervals. The contractors’ other priorities had meant, for instance, that issues such as Japanese knotweed had not been successfully addressed. It was acknowledged that a hay cut was a good ecological option in combination with as much work as possible on path clearance as possible under the terms of the contract.

Any other issues on Troopers Hill that need to be passed to Gary: The bottom wooden step at gate from Troopers Hill Road/Crew’s Hole Road had become detached and removed for safe keeping. Repair, re-instatement and replacement options were considered.

First Aid and Health & Safety training: Susan reported on the courses for First Aid Appointed Persons Certificate. The St John Ambulance course would cost £70 + VST per person; no dates were available in September but a Saturday in October was looked at. The Red Cross would charge £540 + VAT for a group of between 9 – 12 people on a Saturday. Bristol Community College charged £245 for up to 12 people. FOTH’s volunteers included the Chair and one (possibly two) other/s. Valerie offered to ask Pete whether he wished to attend. The Dundridge Lane Association had indicated it might send four persons but confirmation was awaited, and it was possible that Eastwood Farm might show interest. No response had been forthcoming from the Parks Forum. Susan would forward the relevant e-mail re: costs etc to interested recipients. Sally would find out Eastwood Farm’s interest in First Aid training, and ask Richard Fletcher about the possibility of part-funding delegates attending such courses, perhaps splitting the cost amongst the various groups.

Susan also reported that Bristol Community college would charge only £34 per person for a Monday course and she would speak to Jackie about possible attendance.

Health & Safety refresher courses would soon be required. It was thought possible that some sessions on the new procedures would arise in the future and FOTH members might be able to attend other groups’ training sessions.

Contact with other groups: Susan reported on a meeting with the local community police officers (Rob Poulson and Greg Bennett). They noted that a £25 reward had been suggested by a local resident for information leading to the identification of whoever had burned the bench. Their advice was that such initiatives tended to artificially “glorify” the culprit and therefore were not encouraged. There were enormous difficulties in gathering evidence of sufficient reliability to support any charge against an alleged perpetrator. The meeting noted that the culprits seemed to be aware that the police would do nothing in response to their

activities. Apart from that incident, problems at Troopers Hill seemed fairly minor. The police officers base was moving from Trinity Road to a new station at Kingswood.

Fran had attended a meeting with St George Community Partnership most of which had been devoted to an exposition of management issues by one of the community development officers. There had been an adverse change in the structure. The publication "Partnership Times" was running out of money.

A celebration event was being planned for parks groups in the area to launch the purchase of toolkits and other things. Their first meeting in a couple of weeks, to involve Richard Fletcher, would discuss the timing of the event – expected for the autumn or early in the new year.

Susan had filled in and returned surveys from Parks and Parks Forum.

Rob reported on the success of the Bristol Museum Walk as an opportunity for networking, for instance with members of the Arnos Vale and Calington Road Groups. Displaying FOTH information boards at the start of the walk had generated interest, and ten more people had joined the mailing list.

Thanks were expressed to the Council for continuing to print the FOTH newsletter and Susan sought volunteers for hand delivery of newsletters. Helen and Liz expressed willingness to assist.

Sally announced the Bristol Festival of Nature event on 9 to 31 October 2004. A consortium of organisations including @Bristol, Wildscreen and the University were arranging the event, which would involve a conference, free wildlife films and other activities. At the launch, participants would have stalls all around the Council House Area. There would be a reprise of the River Avon Trail walk on Sunday 10 October. Susan and Sally to discuss the publicity budget outside the meeting.

Fundraising/Bank Accounts: South Gloucestershire Council had paid for the River Avon Trail walk, a cheque had been received for the display boards. The possibility of Council funding for Joan Day's talk and hire of the Community Centre was discussed. There were plans to raise funds for the gate between Malvern Road and the Open Space. Also a notice inviting donations had been placed near the fire-damaged bench, and some offers of contributions had been received. Any money collected in excess of the required figure could be put towards additional seats. It was suggested that using FOTH volunteer labour to assemble and paint a replacement bench might keep down the costs. Gary would obtain bench cost quotes from Bristol Contract Services.

History Project progress: Rob supplied a picture of rock seating. A circle or horseshoe shape of large sandstone rocks could be gradually set up and carved as funds permitted (but not on the skyline). A reply was awaited to enquiries of two quarries seeking the availability and feasibility of Pennant sandstone. Callington Road LNR was considering a similar idea.

Balloon Fiesta event: Help would be required in setting up the event, sell drinks, collect money and organise children.. Two gazebos were planned. Susan thanked members for the feedback on the proposed quiz, which would be used at another event. Martin Maudsley would charge a reduced rate of £50 (to be found from the Education budget) for providing entertainment, including a story walk, involving the use of "story sticks", between 4.00 and 5.30pm. Fran offered to supply sticks. The meeting discussed the supply of materials for making badges (including sticky tape instead of safety pins) and Sally would provide English Nature books.

Website: The Council would be improving their web site over the next eighteen months and Gary would be seeking park groups' input on its content. There was a question over whose server the FOTH website resided. Liz mentioned setting up a guest book and Rob offered to provide help with links to the url and the use of fonts.

Dates and Venues for future meetings: The next meeting was arranged for Tuesday, 21 September at 77 Firtree Lane St George. The following meeting would take place on Tuesday 2 November (venue to be arranged) and the Annual General Meeting would be on Tuesday 14 December. It was noted that Summerhill Retirement home had meeting rooms available.

Timing of next newsletter: David confirmed that there would be a newsletter in October and was content to produce them at two-monthly intervals, so the following one would appear after the AGM in December. Kit volunteered to print labels for the October newsletter.

Any Other Business: It was agreed that requests for participants in a local pantomime should be channelled via the St George Partnership. Kit reported his visit to Alice, and his plans to video the next working party.