

**Minutes of meeting
Tuesday 9 August 2005**



Present: Susan (Chair), Sally, Gary, Val, Kit, Liz R, Maureen, Liz & Alan, Helen.

Apologies: Rob, David, Gillian.

Outstanding Actions: None.

Approve Previous Minutes: Chair had posted the minutes (with certain minor factual amendments) on the FOTH website.

Malvern Road Open Space Update: The Chair reported that seventeen volunteers had been invited to a meeting that included a session on identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats and resulted in a list of actions to be taken forward. Regrettably, nobody had wanted to take the lead in setting up a MROS group separate from FOTH. The next step would be to invite Bristol City Council's Play Officer to the Open Space (if raining at a nearby FOTH member's house) for discussion on future play equipment provision, design, siting, good practice, Council obligations under its play policy and budgetary considerations (including the Lottery Fund for Play for the Community and other potential sources of grants and funding). He would be sent a list of topics in advance of the meeting, to be held at 6.00pm on Thursday 1 September 2005. FOTH/MROS members undertook to raise the subject with neighbours, etc who might have an interest.

Grayling Butterfly: Sally reported the conservationist's response to FOTH's decision not to go ahead with a re-introduction attempt. He understood the decision, accepting the absence of factual explanation for the extinction, that more research would be needed, expressed keenness to help and suggested that other butterfly conservationists would also be interested. He mentioned plants that are good for butterflies (NB for any future planting on MROS). On a visit to TH he had observed that trampling was a risk to eggs and caterpillars. It was noted that three species of butterflies had been able to survive at very low population levels and that the existence of the grayling on the LNR, though a slim chance, could not be ruled out entirely.

Mailing: Kit reported the last mailing had gone smoothly. He thanked the volunteers for their co-operation and would use the same system again. Sally would print and send the newsletters to Kit who would add addresses and distribute them.

Sally to print and post 50 newsletters to Kit for use on 13 August [done] and bring extra to event on 20 August.

Recent events:

The Barton Hill Amblers walking group had visited the Hill on Saturday 6 August and it was reported that Walking the Way to Health groups were using the Hill for their activities.

On 6 July there was a boat trip along the Avon, arranged by the Bristol Green Mapping initiative, during which Rob gave a short talk on TH at the appropriate point. The event had included poetry readings, a visit to the Old Lock & Weir and folk music. Participants agreed the event could have been better attended but was enjoyable nevertheless. FOTH volunteers had visited Willsbridge Mill LNR on 7 July as part of the adjoining counties' Wildways LNR exchange. FOTH had set up a gazebo at the Summerhill Infants school fête, at which thirteen new people signed up for the newsletter. It was suggested that the gazebo sides could be hung patterned side inwards at such events. The Moth Hunt had resulted in recording around 90 moth species (listed on the FOTH web site).

Future events: The Chair asked for volunteers to set up gazebos and sell refreshments at the Family Fun picnic planned for Saturday 13 August – to include a storyteller and sponsored balloon race. Sally had completed a risk assessment for the event. There was general discussion of the arrangements, including provision of folding chairs, etc.

Volunteers to arrive by 2.00 pm.

Wildways Walk and barbecue on 20 August: arrangements were discussed. Rob would give a talk to the guests from other LNRs and FOTH members volunteered various contributions to the barbecue

Helen to assist in setting up barbecue while walk takes place.

On 4 September the Avon Valley Partnership would be hosting a local Volunteers' day including a boat trip along the Avon in the afternoon. It was suggested that FOTH submit a group booking and provide a short talk about TH at the appropriate point.

Kit to co-ordinate bookings.

An exhibition of local history photographs and other items was planned as a joint event with Bristol East Allotments Association at their pavilion on 17 September, details to be arranged near the time.

Susan to approach John Cornwell concerning attendance/loan of items.

Fungal Foray for 22 October.

Issues for Gary.

Slats missing from the bench nearest MROS.

The burnt-out moped in Crews Hole Wood was still there.

Two of the paths through the woodland had become overgrown.

A need for future fence replacements on TH.

Gary explained the Council's parks contracts strategy and provided an update on progress with the delayed Malvern Road gate, apparently the contractor had the gate but was awaiting the fence and delivery was imminent. [*Update – gate and fence were installed and operational in good time for the event on Saturday 13 August*]. Gary also outlined the extent of motorcycle problems affecting other parks and open spaces in East Bristol. The survey of the lower chimney was still incomplete. There were plans for possible excavation of the lower section of the chimney. The Council was arranging for the appointment of Gary's successor but had not yet held the interviews.

Work Parties: The work party on 2 July had cleared bramble in Sally's glade and removed unwanted saplings. The 6 August work party had concentrated on litter picking and bracken clearance, besides giving a talk to the Barton Hill Amblers group. The

Health and Safety implications of using power tools, eg to alleviate some of the hard work of bracken cutting and for fence mending, were discussed. There was a chance that H&S constraints on use of certain chemicals could restrict some of FOTH's conservation work. A future session would need to be devoted to backfilling the tread on some of the steps of the path leading from Troopers Hill Road. The meeting discussed recruiting a large number of volunteers as a one-off to form a human chain for transport of materials up the steps. It was speculated whether a weekday might be a more attractive day for volunteers than a Saturday.

Sally to explore possibilities of involving a youth group to increase the numbers.

SWEET Application: Sally reported that the £20k grant application covering an accessible path to the top chimney and parking bays, brown (tourism) road signs, benches etc had not been approved by SWEET, who had requested more detailed information and reduction of the value of the application. The next SWEET financial meeting was planned for October. The meeting expressed thanks to Sally for her efforts to obtain funding from this source.

Sally to investigate how best to re-define the approach to SWEET.

Money/Fundraising: It was agreed that FOTH should start making a donation box available with effect from the balloon event on Saturday 13 August.

Alan volunteered to make a box [done]

The meeting discussed the principles of seeking a donation in return for the newsletter. The consensus was against, although it was then agreed that it would be appropriate to place an article in the newsletter explaining that in order to continue hosting events, FOTH would need to seek both donations and more volunteers. This led to a discussion of the problems of attracting additional volunteers to working parties, and the observation that people generally appear to be busy and short of time. It was suggested that, perhaps after a year of newsletters, it might not be too much to ask of the recipients to complete a survey aimed at identifying the barriers to volunteering so that FOTH would better information on targeting the future recruitment of willing hands.

The fund-raising ideas included:

Reprinting Elisabeth Emra's book: Rob to investigate feasibility

Open Air performance on the hill – jazz band or brass band – incorporating readings from the book

Children's books for sale alongside the storytelling on 13 August

Val circulated a statement that highlighted problems with the flow of funding between the Council and FOTH. The meeting agreed that it would be desirable if the Council would be willing to make available an aggregated annual sum instead of funding mailing, room hire etc on a claim-by-claim basis. The possibility of drawing up a memorandum of understanding between FOTH and the Council was suggested to clarify roles and responsibilities on each side.

Susan to speak to Richard [Fletcher] about future funding arrangements

Val, Liz R and Maureen to co-ordinate taking books to Book Barn.

Date and Content of next Newsletter:

Bearing in mind the fungal foray date in October, the next newsletter ought to be prepared by the third week in September for issue in the second week in October.

Next Meetings: Wednesday 14 September and Tuesday 18 October at 7.15pm at Wesleyan Chapel, Bryants Hill.