

NOTE OF MEETING



Tuesday 13 January 2009
Wesley Memorial Church, Bryants Hill

Present: Susan (Chair), Rob (WPO), Jude (Treas), Kit (Memb Sec) Jules (BCC) Margaret, Pauline, Gill, Dominique, Elizabeth, John & Peter (Scouts) Helen (minutes)

Apologies: Maureen, Fabian, Val, John.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved. There were no actions outstanding.

Any issues and thank-you's on Troopers Hill to be passed to CPM

Rob was expecting to meet Claire on Friday to finalise the plans for winter works. Jules said there were plans to mow over all the ground done previously this year, and to get rid of all the bramble growing on spoil heaps and in the middle of the Hill.

It was reported that the steps in the path through Crew's Hole woodland had become obstructed by buddleia. Rain had washed the topsoil of the steps leading away from the Hill at Sally's glade and the steps were no longer easily distinguishable. The need for a rail was discussed, though the meeting acknowledged that while the land all belongs to the Council, the location was outside the designated Local Nature Reserve boundary. Creating a location to dispose of the cleared branches, etc without encouraging fire-setting might prove problematic.

Gill reported that persons had been seen carrying tree trunks away from the Hill.

There was no news on the question of trees to replace those recently removed from Troopers Hill Field.

- Benches

At the last work party the locations for three new benches had been discussed. One would be placed at the top of the first steps up from the lower chimney stack to provide a view of the heather, or perhaps somewhat lower down on those steps. Another would be situated halfway up the next set of steps at a location known to FOTH as 'Virginia's view'. A place for the third bench had yet to be decided. Suggestions included by the bomb crater; above the second bench at the junction with a path off to the left by a goat willow tree; at the side of the Gully looking down into it, or on the other side of the Gully. Digging out the grass to put the benches in might be environmentally problematic. The health and safety implications were discussed and it was suggested that no more 'furniture' be added to the Hill in future.

- Replacement fence and gate at Greendown

BCC were aiming to have the works done by the end of March (in advance of the Good Friday service).

Work parties

- completed since the last meeting

The Saturday 6 December 2008 and Saturday 10 January 2009 parties had been devoted to clearing bramble from amongst broom near the first flight of steps up from the lower chimney.

- The next work party was planned for Saturday 7 February 2009, pruning the hedge at Greendown, to be followed by mulching in March.

Events

The AGM had been successful. the photo and video presentation was much appreciated. It was generally agreed that the event was worth advertising in future as a video/slide show rather than a business meeting.

Chair distributed the final draft of the new events leaflet for 2009.

-Good Friday Easter Egg Hunt

Gill described how the last egg hunt had been organised. Phyll and Vernon had volunteered to manage it this year. Volunteers would be needed to assist with gazebos and presence as usual. The Vicar at St Aidan's would provide advice on proceedings.

Action: Rob to liaise at the ecumenical planning meetings.

-Tai Chi

Chair explained that plans were in place for four free sessions on Troopers Hill Field in summer of 2009 – dates on the leaflet. She confirmed that funding would be available either from grant or our own funds.

- Bird boxes with Scouts

The meeting welcomed Peter and John – an Assistant Scout Leader working towards Queens Scout award by getting 24 young people through an environmental project; and the Group Scout Leader.

The bird box installation would start at 11 am on 1 February 2009. FOTH to provide hot drinks, Gillian kindly volunteered to make them available. Rob invited any Scouts to attend and assist at FOTH events if this would help them to obtain badges.

The boxes would be constructed on 22 and 29 January 2009. B&Q would supply the tools and materials and a location for building 25 bird and bat boxes. An assortment of boxes would be made (for bats, birds of prey, owls and various other birds). They would be installed at a suitable height and be made squirrel proof. Rob confirmed that the Council's CPM was content with the idea. Jules advised that bat boxes need to be exposed and open with a clear flight path for access, while bird boxes could be more concealed. The Scouts would need help with identifying suitable trees.

It was suggested that the Hawk and Owl Trust, or Ian McGuire, ought to be consulted about positioning owl and bird of prey boxes and perhaps the far side of Dundry Park might provide a suitable location.

The meeting proposed that other suitable activities for the Scouts on the day might include path creation and waymarking.

Action : Rob to discuss with Claire.

Becoming a registered charity?

Brian reported his findings to the meeting. He had sent for a registration pack and guidance, which was expected to arrive in ten days to two weeks. The issues included the availability of certain grants only to registered charities.

Gift aid would not be a significant benefit given the level of donations. The creation of a charity might be complicated, the accounts would need to be professionally certified (at some cost) and there could be other implications such as FOTH members having to be CRB checked. It was decided to await consideration of the registration pack and guidance before taking any decision.

Networking

Chair said that she expected to attend the St George Neighbourhood Partnership meeting next week, she would be encouraging the Partnership's involvement in the Green Space Plan (see below) and to spend its budget before the end of the financial year.

Jules mentioned that recent news reports on the Area Green Space Plan consultation had stated that large elements of the Plan had been put on hold given the recent drop in land values. However work on identifying land uses could continue. Rob outlined how the stakeholder and public consultations would proceed. The land would be sold at a later date. Play areas would form part of the strategy and some funding, from the government's Play Pathfinder programme has been obtained for improving some of them. Troopers Hill Field had been listed for as a beneficiary of some of that funding next year.

Jules briefed the meeting on progress on the implementation of the Bristol Parks management structure. The aim was to complete the organizational changes by the beginning of the next financial year.

Newsletter

The meeting thanked and complimented Kit on producing the Winter edition of the Newsletter.