

Present: Susan Acton-Campbell (Chair), Val Harris, Rob Acton-Campbell, David Gladden, Gary Ratcliffe, Norman Spalding, Sue Fowden.

Apologies: Virginia Spalding, Peter Harris, Serena Parker and Malcolm Fowden.

Minutes of Last Meeting: agreed as written.

Future Format of Minutes: Sally suggested that they might be written in the form of a newsletter which could be distributed to the wider interest group. David and Susan felt that this may reduce their effectiveness as an organising tool and suggested that a newsletter be constructed from the minutes to be sent out by Virginia. Sally and Val suggested that this be done by a committee response to the E mailed minutes. David volunteered to write this. Sally offered to use Council funding to distribute the newsletter to the 100+ names on the original mailing list. Meeting agreed. Committee members to E mail David if they wish with suggestions for items to include on newsletter by Friday 23/1/04.

Feedback on Last Work Party: Rob reported on fence mending and creosote painting and thanked Gary for his prompt repair to the NW corner kissing gate. Gary reported changes in the financing of repairs within the Council with the disappearance of the scheduled budget leaving only a “response” budget for 2004/5. He also said he had filed bids for a dog bin at the Greendown (NE) entrance and has completed a risk assessment of the steps on the path below the chimney (F on Rob’s plan). He has used this to ask contractors to quote for remedial work but its completion depends on the prioritising of other demands on the budget.

Plans for Next Work Party: This to be on 7/2/04 and to involve bramble clearance, followed by another on 14/2/04 for the rehang of the gate on Troopers Hill Road (E on Rob’s plan) Rob passed round the wording for new notices he’d prepared. Everyone most impressed! Gary asked if notices this far out of the Centre had to be given the “Legible cities ” seal of approval. Sally volunteered to check this out with the appropriate authority. David asked Gary if it was possible to buy Oak posts to hang the gates on as they would last much longer. Gary talked of the possibility of buying GI Jones gates (large gates with special locks that allow wheelchair access). Rob circulated list of Proposed Tasks and asked committee members to E mail comments or bring response to next meeting adding any tasks that had been omitted and/or prioritising those on the list. Meeting discussed and then agreed that benches without backs would be best choice for Hill with perhaps gravel around the base to prevent current erosion problem. Susan suggested trying to get local suppliers to provide gravel free of charge – some discussion about importance of getting stone type that suited Hill i.e. Pennant sandstone.

Action Plan: Rob suggested a Five Year Plan of action to link in with grants that are being applied for. Gary suggested that improving existing benches, dealing with the kissing gates onto the Hill and onto Malvern Road Playing Field, and putting in at least one dog bin would be financially viable this year.

Health and Safety Training: this is planned for 24/1/04 10am – 1pm at Susan and Rob’s house. 6 people from the group have agreed to attend. The Dundridge Park and Eastwood Farm Group will also be sending reps.

Contact with Other Groups: Susan and Val have met Bernard Merrick from the Dundridge Park Group. He has various items which they are prepared to loan the group. He also gave useful advice on sources of funding and where to best put the money once we’ve got it!

Gary said that he had approached other Park managers with the idea of financing a tool/glove reservoir with which to supply groups like ours.

Susan, Rob and Sally attended the last St George Partnership Meeting, they reported that it was “interesting” and offered plenty of networking opportunities. Susan is going to Email the minutes to committee members who should respond if they can with ideas about how the Group could help us achieve our aims.

Bank accounts: Val reported that Bernard Merrick had advised us to use the Alliance and Leicester because it has free banking, internet and phone access, Val suggested having a deposit for grant money and a current account to feed the cheque book. This to be controlled by three signatories of which two would be required to validate any payment. These three were suggested as Val, Susan and David – agreed. Val, Susan and David to meet at Susan’s house at 7.30 on 19/1/04 to complete application form and sign. David asked Val if she knew whether we could claim tax exemption on the accounts – Val agreed to ask the Alliance and Leicester to find out.

Fund Raising: Bernard had told Susan that the Council had start up grants for groups like ours. Sally denied all knowledge(!) but promised to investigate and feedback findings at the next meeting. Susan volunteered to ask Bernard if he could provide any further details of Council grants that they had received.

Susan listed possible sources of funds for the group:

- Awards for All England (Lottery based) - £0.5k – 5k available to successful applicants
- Peoples Places 3k – 10k
- Living Spaces 1k – 100k

Susan said she had begun to complete an application to Awards for All England; passed around copies of the form and asked that all committee members look through it and provide feedback if they wanted to by 24/1/04

Research Coordinator Feedback: as Carole was absent there was no feedback available. Sally circulated a photo of the old Tar Works. Rob suggested a working party style meeting to brainstorm ideas. Meeting suggested for week commencing 23/2/04 Susan to contact Carole and firm up date.

Publicity for Group: Newsletter to be key form of contact with 100+ other names on mailing list. Topics for newsletter to include work done on last 3 work parties, items from this meeting, plans for next work party and contact details.

Rob spoke about the web site which he has now registered at www.troopers-hill.org.uk. He handed round print outs of a holding page that now sits at this address. Everyone very impressed! Rob has also set up various forwarding E mail addresses on the site so that no one has to give out their actual E mail addresses.

Dawn Chorus: Sally told the group that a date has been set for 24/4/04 at 7 a.m.! Preceded by evening talk at The Bristol East Allotments Pavilion on 22/4/04 starting at 7.30 p.m. The aim of this talk is to identify the birds that hopefully we will hear two days later. Sally said she had advertised this event in the new pamphlet Park Life – a very colourful and impressive booklet, copies of which she handed round.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday, 12/2/04 at 7 p.m. Some debate over the venue as members thought that St Aidan's might be cheaper. Susan to find out via Jonathan Lane and let people know.

AOB: Sally spoke of action currently taking place to clear trees along the contour path that runs between the south western corner of the Malvern Road Playing Fields and Lamb Hill. Richard Ennion (Council officer in charge of clearance) had asked group to respond to residents' requests to fell three established trees (Ash, Hawthorn and Sycamore) because they are obscuring views at the rear of their properties. There was a debate within the group with David arguing strongly that the trees should be retained. Rob suggested that someone write and register our view that the area be managed as established woodland so that the trees be pruned but not felled unless beneficial for the management of the woodland. David agreed to do this. Rob asked if anyone knew anything about the service on the Hill on Good Friday. Members offered a few titbits of information and advanced the view that we should perhaps try and win over support for the Group by using this event in some way.

Meeting closed at 9.00p.m.