



**NOTE OF MEETING ON TUESDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER 2004
AT 77 FIRTREE LANE, ST GEORGE**

Present: Susan, Rob, Sally, Val, Fran, Carole, Kit, Helen

Apologies – David, Gary

1. Approve previous minutes

Three items were identified for amendment/removal,

ACTION: Susan to edit as agreed

2. Outstanding actions from previous minutes

The following were carried forward:

David: to speak to neighbour re dog-show

Liz: to contact archaeologist in Glebe Road

Rob: to assist Liz with website development

Gary: all the actions allocated to him (except for the three extra dog cleanup signs).

Sally reported she had e-mailed the colleague responsible for the ancient monuments list and was awaiting a reply.

3. Feedback on Family Fun Picnic

Val was thanked for managing the children who attended, and thanks to Sally were expressed for finding the storyteller. The weather had remained fine apart from showers at the start and end. The storyteller had arrived later than expected but kept the children entertained and well-behaved. Some St Anne's residents attended the event, and names were added to the mailing list.

NB: If using the storyteller in future make firm arrangements to picking him up at a pre-arranged time

4. Bench Repairs

Response to the bench funding appeal was described as "brilliant". Liz Watts had received a cheque for £100 from the nursing home where her late mother had resided. Together with cash and cheques donated by individuals this made £380 in total – over £100 in excess of the requirement. Susan assured the meeting that the existing wooden repair was intended to be temporary and would in due course be replaced with metal slats. At the same time, the other bench at the top of the hill had been mended with a wooden slat. Susan reported she had placed a Thank you and well done notice on the temporary bench.

ACTION: Susan to place a notice on the bench explaining its temporary appearance
Plans to install permanent replacement to be made known to Kit for filming

5. Any issues on Troopers Hill to be passed to Gary

Sally reported that Gary is on leave from work following the recent arrival of a new baby. In his absence only minimal cover was available for his duties. Sally recognized certain difficulties existing in the control of contractors' activities. Rob reported that graffiti had been cleaned of the chimney (it took about three weeks) but some orange paint still remained.

ACTION: Sally to report the broken moped taken to Rob and Susan's house after last working party, now awaiting collection. Also that FOTH would need wooden stakes for replacing one of the lower steps where the group had cleared bracken earlier in the year. To report Gary's expected return-to-work date to FOTH.

6. Feedback and plans for work parties

Rob showed before & after photographs of the dogwood that was cut back by the last work party, the work had been achieved well within the time and all the cuttings had been concealed behind the Japanese knotweed. The next work party would resume removal of bramble from amongst the broom following the end of the bird nesting season. Rob circulated the poster showing additional information. The work planned for November would involve fence repairs, preferably following a walk-round with Gary if possible to identify the materials required.

The difficulties associated with tackling soil from badgers' setts breaking the fence and piling up on Troopers Hill Road were discussed. It was acknowledged that the fence was hardly needed given the thick hawthorn and bramble on the bank.

7. Action Plan Progress

Rob reported that a fence and kissing gate had been put in at the Summerhill Terrace entrance to Malvern Road Open Space. He suggested that the concrete bollard needed to be removed. The photograph showed a playground-standard gate that was accessible for pushchairs, and wheelchair users with a RADAR key. Some of the plastic tops had already been taken from the steel tubular uprights of the fence but this did not appear to have any detrimental effect.

Rob also showed a picture of a sign of the proposed size (400mm high x 600 mm wide) affixed to a gate. He described how the sign could be fixed so as to be resistant to vandalism. It was envisaged that one half could carry wording and the other side would be available for A4 posters, behind Perspex, removing the need to laminate them. He had been quoted £235 per sign of this size, and £120 for a smaller one to be located at the entrance to the woodland. Sally remarked there was value in having one at each entrance. Five standard and one smaller sign would amount to £1521.63 inc VAT. The grant available for notice-boards was £1520.00.

The firm that provided the existing signs quoted £440 each for A2 size signs, plus a charge of £450 for artwork. The existing picture of the hill might be useful for a new sign but that could be considered at a later date. Carole thought that the Hill could benefit from a new image.

Rob said the signs could be fixed one at a time by working parties during the winter. The order would depend on the condition of the fence timbers which could be reviewed and renewed as necessary.

ACTION: Kit to confirm whether he has a rivet gun available.

The meeting was invited to comment on proposals for a consultation exercise to find out what residents wanted for the future of Malvern Road Open Space. It was agreed that the play area was in a poor condition. Sally explained that Bristol City Council

Youth and Play Officer was developing a strategy for play equipment provision in the city. Malvern Road Open Space was not classified as a park. It lies between St George's Park and Dundridge Lane which both have good play facilities. Responses to the earlier Troopers Hill consultation had expressed diverse views about situating a play area in Malvern Road Open Space; some residents would prefer it near the houses for children's safety, others would like it further away because of noise and use as a teenagers' meeting place at night. Other possible options for the use of the Open Space included planting it with formal or wild flower beds, shrubs, trees. Carole suggested the introduction of natural child-friendly features such as wooden stepping stones. Sally said the consultation exercise would give rise to ideas. The meeting considered that Liz should be included in developing the consultation exercise as she lives near the Open Space. It was thought that inviting residents to a public meeting might lead to difficulties in obtaining views from large numbers of contributors.

ACTION: Article to appear in Newsletter – possibly in the form of a short questionnaire – inviting views on the future of Malvern Road Open Space.

8. Fundraising / Grants

Sally explained that the South West England Environmental Trust (SWEET) had been set up to administer the distribution of proceeds from landfill tax. A Bristol Council colleague had approached SWEET with a list of applications for environment funding and had been advised to present them as "packages" of similar projects. As a result he was submitting a combined application for funding for Eastwood Farm and FOTH. Applicants would be required to provide 10% match-funding, and it was thought possible that the money collected for the bench could be considered as a contribution.

Susan reported her attempts to secure funding for a suitable gate between Malvern Road and the Open Space that would exclude motor cycles but allow wheelchairs through.

ACTION: Susan to pursue a possible avenue of funding via Somerfield's charitable collections.

ACTION: Val to bank any cash over £20 and to investigate whether part of the funds could be transferred into a savings account.

9. First Aid and Health and Safety Training

It was established that Alan Watt is qualified as a first-aider and Pete was currently on a four-day qualifying course. Susan thought that Awards for All money might be used for training if the terms of the grant could be varied. Many FOTH members had not received initial H & S training in the safe use of equipment. Sally said that Richard Fletcher was reviewing H & S procedures, and might well be organizing free training for groups. In that event it would be worth waiting until the spring.

ACTION: Jackie and Susan to attend First Aid training. Susan to approach Awards for All to investigate the potential for varying the terms of the grant.

10. Contact with other groups

Susan, Rob and Fran would attend the next meeting of the Parks Forum to be held at Windmill Hill City farm. The agenda was circulated. Susan has supplied an article for the Parks forum on event organizing.

Fran reported that the celebration event open to Park Groups (mentioned in previous minutes) would probably take place in late winter/early spring. It would be likely to include an information launch, toolkit advice, guest speakers and workshops. More information would be available after the next Parks Forum meeting.

Sally had given a daytime talk to the Townswomen's Guild's Social Studies group, which was received enthusiastically. They were willing to be videoed, to purchase photographs of the Hill and wanted to be added to the mailing list. One of the ladies said one of her forefathers had taken part in building the chimney on Trooper's Hill.
ACTION: Sally to give Kit contact details. Susan to establish costs of producing a calendar.

Fran reported that although the St George Partnership had secured £2,500 Council funding, the next issue of St George Partnership Times would be the last, following the failure of the Community funding bid. The deadline for contributions to Issue 6 was thought to be the end of September.

It was clear that the Partnership needed management change in order to be of value to the community. She had agreed to make a presentation to the Partnership on options for its future. The Parks Forum might provide a good model to follow.

Helen mentioned that a community arts worker in Barton Hill had asked if FOTH would provide an article for their news letter "Grass Roots", since many people from Barton Hill visited and were interested in Troopers Hill.

ACTION: Helen to give Susan the contact details.

Sally reported exchanges with her colleagues in B&NES and South Gloucestershire who were interested in developing wider interchange arrangements between Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) in their respective counties. She proposed setting up a 2005 diary of guided walks at LNRs; however not all the local groups were officially LNRs, which complicated the picture somewhat. It was envisaged that the events would be publicized via the key contact of each group. The meeting expressed concern that large parties attending guided walks might prove difficult to handle, and Sally offered to operate a booking system to ensure that the optimal number for each event would not be exceeded.

Susan had been contacted by Harry McPhillimy of the Narrowways Millennium Green Trust (NMGT) that had saved an area of ecologically valuable land in St Werburghs from development. He was interested in interchange between the groups.

ACTION: Susan initially to communicate Sally's plans to NMGT and fix dates for exchange visits: then to develop links with Royate Hill and Eastwood Farm.

11. FOTH website

Rob reported he had not yet met Liz to discuss arrangements for the future of the web site. A group (Troopers Freestyle) engaging in activity sports on the Hill had sought a link to FOTH from their website. Sally advised such activities would probably not represent an ecological threat provided the number of participants remained small. However, FOTH could not be seen to condone or support Troopers Freestyle. It would be worthwhile encouraging the group to develop and adopt an appropriate code of conduct.

12. Bristol Festival of Nature

Sally gave out a brochure listing the events. Rob would be providing a guided walk. The Launch Day event would take place outside the Council House on Saturday 9 October. FOTH would have a stall with a Powerpoint presentation, display boards and newsletters.

ACTION: Helen to contact Rob and Susan about sharing duties on the stall.

13. Dates and Venues for future meetings

Next Meeting: 2 November, Wesley Memorial Church Hall (at Rear of Church).

AGM: 14 December, venue tbc.

December Newsletter to record FOTH's 2004 achievements and seek feedback on the group's activities, possibly in the form of a short questionnaire.

ACTION: Rob and Kit to prepare an audio-visual presentation for the AGM by expanding on the Powerpoint presentation made for the Festival of Nature.
Susan to seek a suitable venue for the AGM and to ensure any nominations for office are circulated 14 days in advance

14. Any other business

Susan mentioned her forthcoming meeting with a representative from Council Highways department to discuss the possible provision of deer warning signs.

Sally reported the completion in August of another annual photo survey of the Hill. The survey report was not yet available

ACTION: Sally to bring the photographic survey file to be available for viewing at a future FOTH meeting.

Carole reported the South Bristol dog fouling campaign was over and leaflets were no longer available, though there might be something happening next year.

ACTION: Susan to raise the issue at Parks Forum.

15. History project progress

Item adjourned to next meeting.

16. School/Education Project

Item adjourned to next meeting.