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# The Friends of Troopers Hill

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July/August 2007

## GREEN FLAG AWARD - WE DID IT!

**T**roopers Hill Local Nature Reserve, along with the Downs in Clifton, is now a Green Flag Award Winner! This scheme sets a standard which parks and green spaces have to reach. Several key criteria are used - is the site a welcoming place for visitors, is it clean and well maintained, how it is managed and how much community involvement there is? The assessment process takes account of the fact that sites differ and that somewhere like Troopers Hill would not have the same facilities as a formal park. On Troopers Hill the judges liked the fact that we had provided a surfaced wheelchair path and benches at the top of the hill while maintaining the wild character of the rest of the site. You can read more about the award at [www.greenflagaward.org.uk](http://www.greenflagaward.org.uk)

**T**he judging took place in May, on a day when Troopers Hill was looking really good in the Spring sunshine. The judges were very complimentary both about the hill and the work of the Friends of Troopers Hill. One of our lizards put in an appearance and we saw a green woodpecker and lots of ladybird larvae on the steps from Troopers Hill Rd.

**T**his is the first time for several years that Bristol Parks has put sites forward to be assessed for a Green Flag. Three were chosen: Troopers Hill, The Downs and Queens Square (which unfortunately wasn't successful). Work towards the Green Flag started in the autumn with Phil Williamson putting in many extra hours to re-write our Management Plan and bringing it up to Green Flag standards. At the same time John Threadgold and Sally Oldfield were finalising the work that was to be done to clear areas of scrub and bramble and fell some trees in accordance with the recommendations of the various naturalists who have visited and surveyed the site over the past few years. Friends were fully involved in this process with Phil and Sally coming to our meeting in January and we held our own meeting to review the Management Plan shortly afterwards. Many of our comments were incorporated into the final document.

**I**n the weeks leading up to the judging John and Bristol Parks' Contractors, Bristol Contract Services (BCS,) were kept very busy completing the wheelchair path and dealing with many other maintenance issues. I had several meetings with John, Sally and Phil over this period and I was impressed by the amount of effort they were putting in. Dave, Julian and the rest of the team at BCS also played their part; it was clear that they were taking a real interest in the site and felt responsible for it.

**T**he Green Flag Award doesn't mean that Troopers Hill is perfect. Everyone acknowledges that more work is needed: some of the steps need replacing; the entrances from Troopers Hill Road need improving and there is still too



**I**t's amazing how different the weather can be from one year to the next! Last year we couldn't have had better weather for our "Music on the Hill" concert, with glorious sunshine and not a drop of rain. This year, it was with sadness that we had to cancel the concert as the weather forecast made it pretty plain that the weather was going to be terrible with torrential rains, wind and a severe weather warning in place. We have booked the South Gloucestershire Youth Jazz Orchestra again for next year, so let's hope for better conditions on June 28th 2008.

**T**hose of you who walk the Hill regularly will soon meet and get to know a new regular face - Julian Thomas of Bristol Contract Services. Julian has just been awarded "Contract Services Employee of the year" by Bristol City Council and is now looking after Eastwood Farm, Callington Road and Troopers Hill on a regular basis. He hopes to be on-site roughly twice a week, though that will vary according to needs with us and the other sites. It's very good news for the Hill and will give much needed continuity as he will be able to take care of jobs that are too big for us to handle, but can be dealt with without bringing in a full team. He has already been busy cutting grass and clearing persistent bramble using a power strimmer. We welcome him warmly and are delighted he is joining us in looking after our Hill.

**A**re you passionate about Bristol's parks and green spaces? Then now is your chance to let the city council know what you think about its draft strategy for the future. It covers a number of key issues and a ten-week consultation period began on Monday, July 23. Residents will have the chance to read all about Bristol's ambitious draft plans - and comment on what they think is the best way forward. The draft strategy consultation document is available online at [www.bristol.gov.uk/parks](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/parks). You can also view it at libraries, Brunel House, The Council House and at 33 Colston Street.

**G**reat news about the Green Flag. Many, many thanks to all of you who have turned out over the years to help us get the Hill up to the standard that warranted this prestigious award. Keep coming though - the award is annual.

much dog mess. The award of a Green Flag is only for one year: next year we will be judged again. To quote Phil Williamson "Green Flag is not a seasonal exercise but a 12 months way of life". Bristol Parks are already thinking about what needs to be done this winter to keep the Green Flag next year and that level of ongoing commitment is the real benefit to Troopers Hill of the scheme.

*Rob Acton-Campbell*

*Editor's Note:* On behalf of all of the Friends of Troopers Hill, I would like to express our gratitude to everyone at Bristol Parks, for their efforts, and in particular to Rob for the huge amount of effort he has personally put into helping Troopers Hill win this award. It is as much his triumph as anyone else's.

## BUGS AND BEASTIES!

The next big event for Friends is the "Family Fun Picnic" and "Bugs and Beasties" walk on the Hill on Saturday 11th August. This, of course, coincides with the Bristol Balloon Fiesta and on that theme the first prize for our raffle, which we will be holding on the day, will be a balloon flight for TWO in the Somerfield Hot Air Balloon. There will be loads of other prizes as well including this beautiful vase (it was made from a piece of Silver Birch that was felled on Troopers Hill earlier this year by Tom Thomas of Topwood Crafts); a meal for two at Beeses Tea Gardens; and a book, video and membership from Barton Hill History Group. Weather permitting, there will also be the opportunity to stay and watch the evening balloon ascent from Ashton Court.



Tickets can be bought for 50p each or 5 for £2. This year we are delighted that they will also be available from "Modelmania" on Clouds Hill Road as well as from Susan - see our "Contact Us" box - and through your local Newsletter deliverer. We look forward to seeing you there Don't forget to bring a picnic.

## BEESES BEER FESTIVAL

From Friday 14th September to Sunday 16th, Beeses are holding their second annual Beer Festival. They are planning to have around 12 beers and ciders, live music and good, home-cooked food. Tickets will be available in advance at £3 per day or £6 for a three day pass. Their festival is of particular interest to us this year as they have decided to donate half the proceeds of the ticket sales to the Friends of Eastwood Farm and the Friends of Troopers Hill. We wish them every success and several of us will be there in person - purely to monitor progress of course!

### CONTACT US

If you'd like to talk to us about any issues raised here, please contact:

**Susan Acton-Campbell** (Chair), Tel. **0117 947 5037**.

**Sally Oldfield** (Bristol Council Nature in the City),  
Tel. **0117 922 4429**

You can also write to us at: **3, Corkers Hill, St. George, Bristol, BS5 8DT**

Email:

**chair@troopers-hill.org.uk** or **Sally.oldfield@bristol.gov.uk**

Or go to the online forum at:

**<http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/forum.html>**

## Nature in the City Events.

Contact Sally Oldfield for further details.

**Thursday 30th August:** Aero-Bat-ics, Join us on Troopers Hill, looking and listening for bats!

**Friday 7th September:** Through the Seasons Walk. The third of the series of four short and relaxed guided walks introducing the history and wildlife of the Hill.

**Sunday 9th September:** Avon Valley Walk. A guided walk through Conham, Dundry Park, Troopers Hill, St. Anne's Woods, Nightingale Valley & Eastwood Farm finishing at Beeses Bar & Tea Rooms.

## HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE FUTURE

On Friday, 6 July a major new public consultation exercise was launched by Bristol City Council to give people the chance to influence the Bristol Development Framework - an overarching set of documents which will help guide and manage growth and change in the city over the next 20 years. Change in Bristol is happening quickly; an extra 60,400 jobs, 28,000 new homes and 10% increase in population (39,700) by 2026.

There are two important documents that you are being asked to comment on:

- The Statement of Community Involvement sets out who the council wants to get involved in plan making and development issues and how they want to involve them.

- The Core Strategy Issues and Options paper highlights 18 key issues which need to be addressed in shaping Bristol's future, including economic, social and environmental changes. It also proposes three options for the direction of growth within the city.

The Issues and Options paper will be asking people how they think Bristol can best accommodate the growth in homes, jobs and services that will take place between now and 2026. These options for where growth might take place within the city are: "In the city centre and spread fairly evenly across the whole of Bristol", "Focused on an expanded city centre" or lastly "Based around substantial development in South Bristol".

You are also being asked about how residential development might take place in the city. What land should be used, what types of accommodation should be provided and what can be done to encourage more affordable housing?

The views received will then help shape the Core Strategy Preferred Options to be published in December.

To get involved in the consultation process, download the documents and questionnaires from the council's website: [www.bristol.gov.uk/bdf](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/bdf). Documents can also be picked up from the Planning reception, Brunel House, St George's Road; the Council House, College Green. All libraries in the city will also have the information needed to take part in the consultation process.

Both papers are out for consultation up to 17th August, and you can contact the Strategic and Citywide Policy team on 0117 903 6720 for more information.

*Mark Leach, Sustainable Development Team, BCC*

## Dates for Your Diary

**Saturday 4th August:** Work Party. 10am - midday. Meet at corner of Troopers Hill Road and Greendown. Please come and help us.

**Saturday 11th August:** Family Fun Picnic and Bugs & Beasties Walk. An afternoon of fun for all the family, before watching the Fiesta balloons. Rupert Higgins will lead the hunt for some of the Hill's smaller inhabitants. Supported by the Big Lottery Fund.

**Thursday 16th August:** Evening Work Party. 7pm - 9pm approx. Meet as 4th August.

**Wednesday 22nd August:** Meeting. 7.15 pm. Wesley Memorial Church Hall, Bryant's Hill.

**Saturday 1st September:** Work Party. See 4th August.

**Saturday 22nd September:** Troopers Hill Discovery Day. Celebrate the conclusion of our Breathing Places Project.