

RHS 2025 It's Your Neighbourhood Assessment Form

Name & Area: Friends of Troopers Hill, Bristol

Assessor: Guy Rawlinson

Date: 15th July 2025

Feedback

Troopers Hill, only 3 miles from the City Centre of Bristol, is a haven for wildlife. The sandstone rock and acid soil make this site unique in the greater Bristol area. It was used for copper smelting, coal mining and for the extraction of fireclay. It is thought that the chimney, which acts as a significant landmark in the area, was used as part of the smelting process.

Troopers Hill was purchased by Bristol City Council (BCC) in 1956 for use as a public space and declared a Local Nature Reserve in 1995. The Friends of Troopers Hill was established in 2003.

The Friends, in close collaboration with BCC, have worked tirelessly to ensure that the site is maintained and enhanced as a special place in Bristol. There are invertebrates on the site that do not live in any other place in the west country. There are 83 species of bee, including the miner bee. Evidence of their presence was obvious, when you know that they are there, with little holes in the hard and compacted paths.

There is extensive engagement with the community and it was evident that users respect the place and value it in amongst the urban sprawl of east Bristol. There is an active team of litter pickers who keep the space looking attractive to the casual visitor.

Fund raising is a key part of the strategy and many projects have become possible because of the pursuit of funds from many sources. £5,000 has just been secured to enable winter conservation work. This will ensure that bramble is kept in check, vital to ensure the diversity of habitats.

Following an approach by the Birch Collective, a project, with 16-25 year olds has been set up to carry out work in the woodland.

Working with Bristol CC, an area renown for fly tipping by Troopers Hill, has been converted into a layby for parking.

An orchard of 30 trees, with a mix of fruit trees was planted in the winter of 24/25 and despite the challenging conditions this summer, they all to be establishing themselves.

I assessed the Friends in 2023, the last time they entered IYN. I was given a list of achievements since I last visited. I will not list all the achievements here, but it is extensive! The Friends meet regularly on site and support each other and have a good outreach programme with the local community. They engage with groups and visitors to the site.

Grants have been sought from many sources to ensure that projects that are contained in the year management plan can be realised. The most recent being the laying of a path for wheelchairs and new slide with the latest surface. This surface was expensive but will last longer. Grants made this possible.

Areas for Development

I visited Troopers Hill at the end of another heat wave. We do not need results of research to tell us that the weather is different now. The impact the LNR has on local diversity is immense. The Friends are a beacon, showing that doing something to help climate change and we hope that others will follow!

It is almost impossible to make suggestions. Susan is very aware of funding resources and works tirelessly with BCC to deliver projects. All you can really say, is 'keep up the good work conducted by Sue, Rob and the Friends.