

Friends of Troopers Hill - It's Your Neighbourhood 2025

1. Aims of the Project

Troopers Hill is a Local Nature Reserve extending over 21 acres (8.4 hectares) of acid heath and grassland on a pennant sandstone hillside overlooking the River Avon. This wild and romantic site supports rare plants and wildlife and provides local people with a space for relaxation and recreation. Friends of Troopers Hill is a community conservation group of primarily local residents, formed in December 2003 to:

- provide a friendly community focus for people who care about Troopers Hill
- undertake practical conservation tasks
- organise public events, including walks and talks
- work with Bristol City Council Parks department to ensure Troopers Hill is properly managed.

Our constitution is at <http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/constitutionF.pdf>

2. Achievements since the IYN judging of 2023

In addition to our usual activities (see section 3), we have

- 1) found funding for and managed conservation work by contractors over the winter of 2024/25
- 2) started working in partnership with the social enterprise, the Birch Collective, when they expressed an interest in working in Troopers Hill Woodland on projects to help 16-25 year olds.
- 3) worked with Bristol City Council to remove a flytipping black spot and replace it with a formal layby, a safe pedestrian footway, cycle racks, fencing and a gateway to Troopers Hill Woodland. This entrance is now clearly identified at the gateway to an area owned by Bristol City Council and covered by Parks Byelaws.
- 4) supported the planting of a small orchard of 30 fruit trees in the winter of 2024/25
- 5) helped families sponsor trees on Troopers Hill Field in memory of their loved ones
- 6) helped families sponsor memorial benches by agreeing the bench design and location with Bristol City Council and their cost of installation. We ordered the bench from the manufacturers, checked delivery and installation, made payments and ensured everyone was kept informed, including the public.
- 7) led corporate groups from DEFRA and the Environment Agency on nature conservation work parties.
- 8) welcomed school groups ranging for year 1 pupils from Summerhill Infants School taking a look at nature in their neighbourhood to year 12s from 4 Olympus Academy Trust secondary schools learning about nature conservation and its challenges carried out in this very urban environment.
- 9) found funding to celebrate the 300th walk of our walking group, the St George Strollers and pay for a new information board on Troopers Hill Field to replace the very old battered noticeboard that is there at the moment.
- 10) Welcomed an arts project "I would be here if I could" to Troopers Hill and helped with access and publicity.
- 11) Welcomed Summer Solstice Morris dancers to Troopers Hill for the first time.

3. What we have achieved since we started

In December 2003 paths were obscured under vegetation, large quantities of litter had accumulated, and, most importantly, scrub was invading the acid grass and heathland that justifies the Local Nature Reserve classification. Maintenance visits took place only for brief periods every 6-8 weeks.

Now the site is well managed according to a management plan <http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/plan.htm> agreed with Bristol City Council. This plan links to the relevant sections of the UK and Bristol Biodiversity Action Plans. The latter is supported by bodies including Bristol City Council, Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England.

The site achieved Green Flag status each year from 2007/8 to 2013/14. Bristol City Council no longer had staff resource to support the process so in 2014 we entered the Britain in Bloom South West Parks and Open Spaces scheme and received a gold award. In 2015 Troopers Hill was given the top level, 5 stars,

Pride in Parks award by Britain in Bloom South West. This was repeated in 2016 and in addition Troopers Hill was awarded the Suttons Seeds Cup for an outstanding area of nature conservation. We organise 2-3 work parties every month, mainly addressing encroaching scrub. Bristol City Council undertake machine-based maintenance, while Friends of Troopers Hill continue with manual tasks that would not otherwise be practicable, e.g. removing brambles growing in and around broom plants, and pulling out bracken amongst the heather, etc. Over 50 different local people have volunteered at our work parties.

In 2006, to preserve a boundary, 20 volunteers planted an 80-metre hedge of native species. Local residents were consulted about hedge management: the majority favoured cutting over hedge-laying. Volunteers hand-pruned the hedge annually until December 2012 when it was sufficiently mature for an annual flail cut by Bristol City Council.

We have over 3,000 Facebook followers and 928 Instagram followers. We left Twitter during 2024, leaving a holding page so a fake page cannot be set up. We produce a free email newsletter for 348 recipients which is opened by nearly 60% of the audience. We maintain an informative and regularly updated website www.troopers-hill.org.uk. The website is often a first point of contact for students seeking further information about Troopers Hill.

Notices and details of all the activities are physically posted on the site. We have reverted to physical meetings rather than Zoom and have “drop in” gazebo sessions on site.

Our Ramblers Wellbeing Walks group, the St George Strollers www.troopers-hill.org.uk/strollers, celebrated its 300th walk in May. The Strollers have walked more than 900 miles attended by more than 130 people. In 2022 in addition to our 3-mile/90-minute walks we introduced a 30-minute monthly “St George Park Stroll” which is greatly enjoyed by those with less walking ability. Photos on <https://www.flickr.com/photos/wfhsusan/albums/72177720324298752/>

In addition to work parties and regular meetings, we have organised around 170 free public events since 2004, including guided nature, history and geology walks, concerts, dog shows, tai chi classes, star gazing and craft activities for children and families. We provided virtual self-guided walks and a Zoom poetry workshop during Covid.

Since 2003 Friends of Troopers Hill have raised over £300,000 for different projects, ranging from a play area to paths, fencing and conservation work. A list of our funders and projects can be seen on www.troopers-hill.org.uk/grants.

We work closely with Bristol Parks, are members of the Bristol Parks Forum, and support the St George Community Association.

Troopers Hill is a venue for educational visits by primary school and ‘A’ level pupils. The site provides study material for University undergraduates and Ph D students.

Professor Jane Memmott of Bristol University, who presented the findings of the Urban Pollinator Project to parliament, wrote in a letter supporting our application for a Heritage Fund grant

“Troopers Hill is a very special site in Bristol for both wildlife and people.”

4. What we are aiming for in the future

We will continue with conservation work and promoting Troopers Hill, particularly via events. Better dog control and reducing dog fouling will remain a priority. Both of these issues are visibly improving.

We have now achieved our “shopping list” of Troopers Hill’s major needs. Our community survey, carried out in October to November 2022, showed that what remains is a need for continuous conservation and maintenance, with Bristol City Council and the volunteers playing their part. We succeeded in a bid for a £5,000 grant to fund winter conservation work over the winters 2022/23 and 2023/24. With the news in 2023 that Bristol City Council have Countryside Stewardship funding we used that money to go towards winter conservation work in winter 2024/5 and are looking how to use it to raise more money for forthcoming, much-needed winter work.

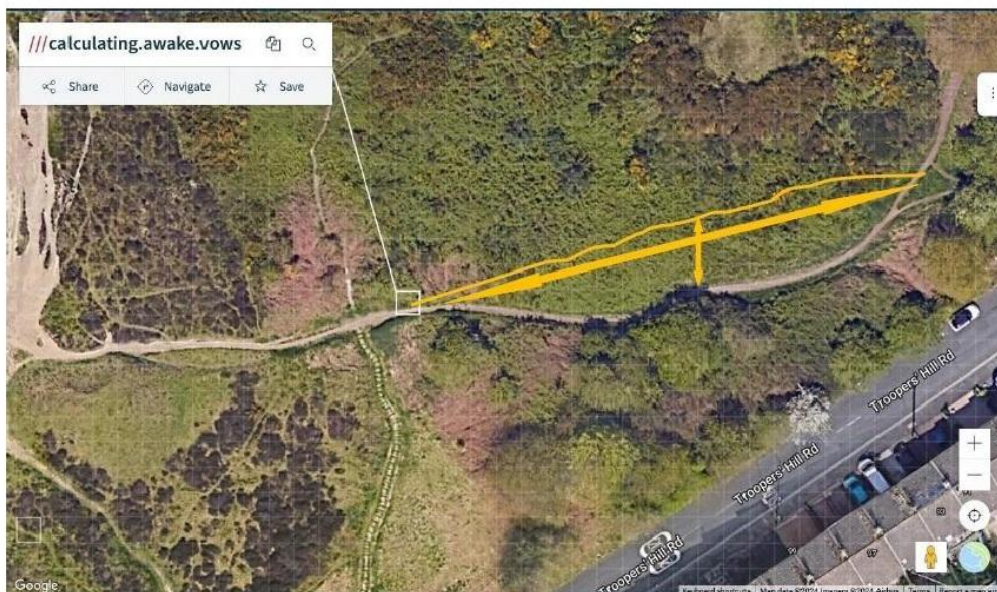
**Conservation work winter 2024/5 funded by £1,400 from
Bristol City Council's Countryside Stewardship funds and
donations made to Friends of Troopers Hill**



**CONSERVATION WORK
PAID FOR BY
FRIENDS OF TROOPERS HILL &
COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP FUNDING
STARTS THURSDAY 23rd January**

To conserve important acid grass and heathland habitats and to allow the removal of the invasive plant Himalayan Balsam, scrub will be cut back in the area shown below.

Thanks to this work many plant species will be able to recover.



The work will be carried out by Green Mantle Ecosophy Ltd

**A skip will be at the contractor's entrance
opposite 115, Troopers Hill Rd from
Monday 27th January to take the cuttings.**

Planting the orchard on Troopers Hill Field January 2025



Working with the Birch Collective

RECOUPE: WORKING WOODS

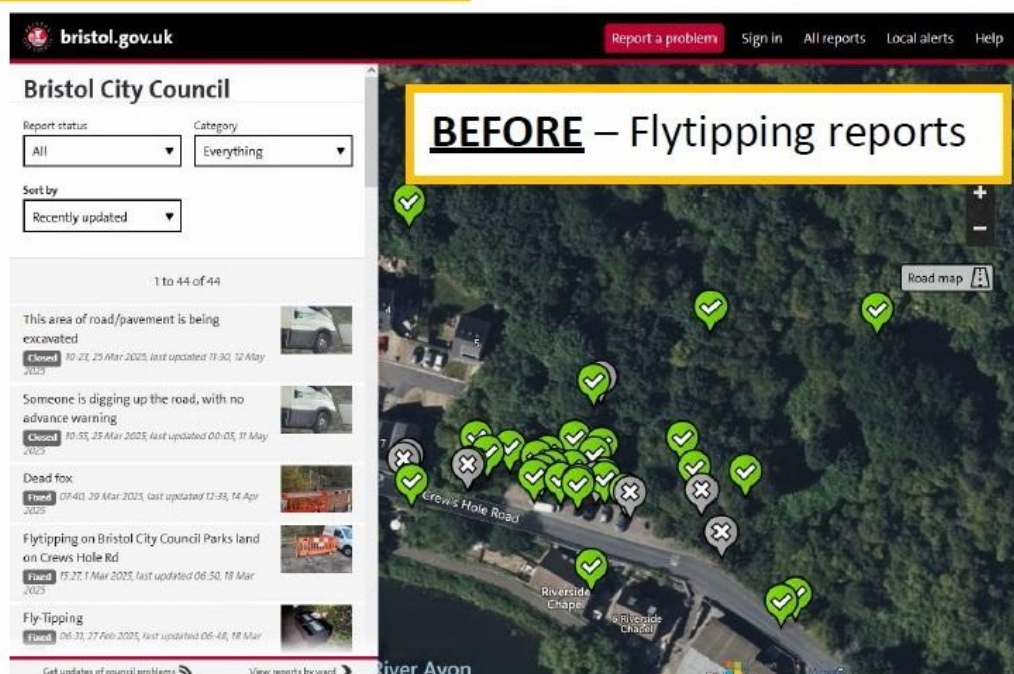
A WEEKLY WOODLAND SESSIONS USING TRADITIONAL
SKILLS IN TROOPERS HILL WOODS

Expect to learn skills in: woodland management for wildlife, coppicing, site maintenance, green woodworking and tree planting.



- ☞ Bring life back to Troopers Hill Woods using traditional skills and community care
- ☞ Learn hands-on woodland skills in free weekly sessions
- ☞ Support wildlife and people by helping create a healthy, thriving woodland

Working with Bristol City Council to remove a flytipping black spot



'I would be here if I could' Arts Project

A Mirrorbox is starting a journey across the UK. It may appear for a few minutes or it might stay the whole day. **Step inside and listen** to a message from a person who has chosen that place - a place they love but can no longer get to. You are invited to **write them a postcard back.**

I would be here if I could

I would be here if I could, is the largest collaborative project in the UK amplifying the absent voices of people living with ME and Long Covid, giving voice and presence to those who due to their condition, are now absent from the everyday.

Through a shared love, memory and experience of place; it is a way to connect us all to a wider sense of belonging.

 Where to find the Mirrorbox:

Troopers Hill 1st June*

Ashton Court 4th June*

Glastonbury Tor 18th June*



*In the event of high winds, dates will be rescheduled. Scan the QR code for times, exact locations and further UK visits.



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



iwouldbehereifcould.com
[@iwouldbehereifcould](https://twitter.com/iwouldbehereifcould)

Summer Solstice On Troopers Hill



Videos of the morris dancers, Heaps Morris, on

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rw7mELAj2CM>

and

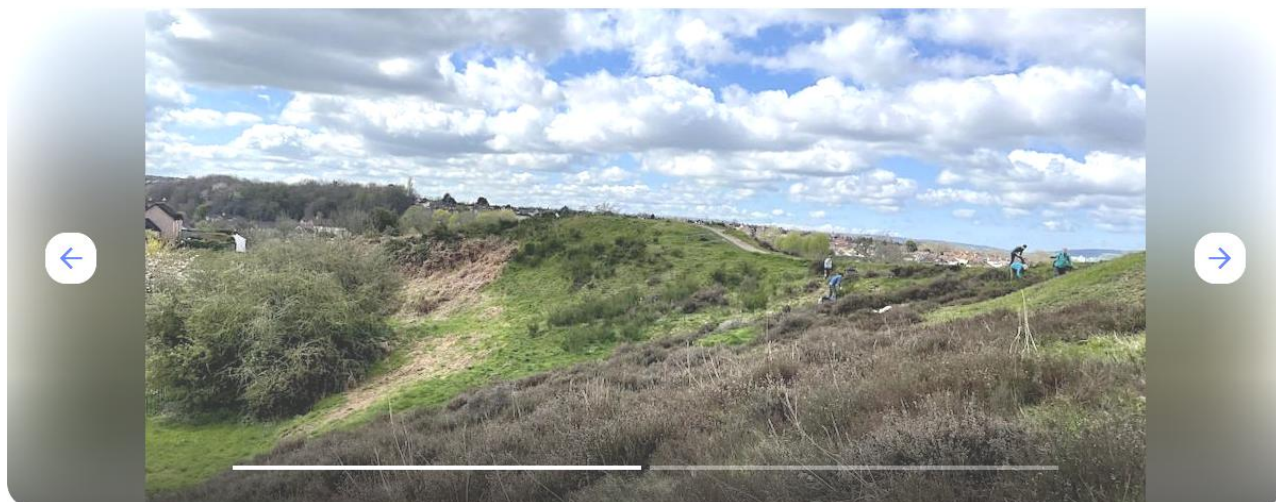
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JL-5gYpz6uM>

There are reports and photos of all our events
on our website

www.troopers-hill.org.uk/events

History Walk 18th
May 2025-07-14





Multiple dates



Troopers Hill Nature Conservation Work Parties

Free

 [Select a date](#)

Many dates for 2 hours "green exercise" while helping maintain the mosaic of habitats needed by the wildlife of Troopers Hill's heathland.