

NOTE OF MEETING



Thursday, 4th March, 2010 7.15pm
Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Rd

Present:

Susan (Chair) Rob (WPO), Jude (Treas), Bryan (C'ttee), Dave (BCC), Roy, Val, Gill, Norman, Martin, Laura, Margaret (Minutes)

Apologies: Kit , Helen, Fabian (Cllr)

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

2. Issues and thank yous for our Community Parks Office, Area Parks Manager and Park Keeper

Susan welcomed Dave Cambridge, Area Head Gardener for East Bristol, Bristol City Council (BCC) to the meeting.

Works on the replacement fence and gate at Greendown

Rob reported that the Greendown entrance works have been signed off as complete and the cheque for £21k from YANSEC should arrive any day. This would then be used to pay the BCC for the work done. The grant is paying for the work on the Greendown entrance and fencing, 3 new benches and 3 new signs.

Soil falling from Troopers Hill on to Troopers Hill Road

BCC have applied for a license to do the work to remove the fence and then take away the earth from the road. This should mean that only small amounts of earth will then fall on to the road. The Badger Conservation Society have agreed to this work but, due to a restriction on doing any work affecting badgers setts between January and August, the work cannot begin until the autumn

Continued excellent maintenance on the Hill

Rob thanked Dave for the excellent maintenance work that Parks staff have done on the hill during the winter. Dave said he felt it was going well, and suggested that he walk the hill with Susan and Rob to look at what work needed doing. This was arranged for Friday 12th March.

Bryan raised the issue of the muddy state of the Summerhill Terrace entrance to Troopers Hill field and asked whether anything could be done to improve this. Susan replied that they have applied for costings to have this area laid with tarmac; once costings received they can apply for funding through the Neighbourhood Partnership. There was general discussion about the play area and the placing of the football pitch. Rob believes that there must be a spring under the field, under a layer of clay, and suggested a land drain taking the water away towards the woods would help. Susan said that we could apply for a grant for this type of work.

Action: Rob to talk to Gary to find out who to discuss land drains with so that he can obtain costings for investigation and consultancy, and then costings for the actual work.

Winter works

Trees and brambles have been cleared, and dead gorse removed from top of bank. Dave reported that they had cleared a lot of bracken, but work stopped when they

uncovered two lizards. Rob explained that the plan is to push the bracken back gradually allowing grass to grow.

Subsidence

The subsidence at the bottom of the 'bomb crater' at the top of the hill is getting worse. It may be the site of old mine workings. Susan is waiting for Gary to send a structural engineer, and, in the meantime, the area is cordoned off with tape.

New benches (including memorial bench)

Rob reported that the three new benches, paid for out of the YANSEC grant, were installed at the end of January. Two of the benches replace the ones that were vandalised and the third is in the play area. The benches are metal with wooden tops, so that if the wooden tops become badly damaged they can be removed. There is graffiti already on one of the benches; Dave will arrange for it to be cleaned up. Post meeting note – the graffiti was removed the following day.

Memorial benches

Susan updated the meeting on this issue. Gary had received a request from a gentleman who had seen the memorial bench at the top of steps coming up from Greendown, saying that he would like a plaque on a bench in memory of her father. The issue had been discussed at the last meeting, when the view had been that there were enough benches on the hill, it would not be appropriate to put a plaque on an existing bench and a better suggestion would be a memorial tree in Troopers Hill field. Susan had emailed FOTH for their views. The general view was in support of a tree, with one suggestion of a sculpture or arch marking the entrance to the hill from the field. This could allow for memorials (e.g. leaves or butterflies) to be added. After discussion, there was agreement that there were enough benches on the hill and a tree would be a better idea. However, generally the hill should not have too many memorials so if a tree were provided it should preferably not have a memorial sign.

Dog mess

Dave commented that there was an ongoing problem with dog mess on the hill. Enforcement Officers have been targeting some parks to tackle this problem and he would like to suggest that they do that on Troopers Hill. On the spot fines of £80 can be made and this might help deter people from not clearing up after their dogs. A notice could be put on the notice boards about 'unannounced patrols'. Dave is arranging for Keith to be trained so that he can issue Fixed Penalty notices. The issue will also be raised at the dog show and in newsletters.

3. Events for this year

'Let's Play Outside'

Susan has been contacted by the organisers of 'Let's Play Outside' who are putting together a grant application for a scheme in 5 parks. They would like to put on a kite flying event on Sunday 2nd October on Troopers Hill. They would do all the work and are just asking for the support of FOTH. Agreed to support this.

The Events 2010 leaflet has been produced and was circulated. It will go out with the next newsletter.

4. Events

Next events:

Saturday 20th March – St Aidan's Community Fair – 11am to 2pm in Community Hall. Rob and Susan are away when this event is on, but hopefully Kit will be able to set up the display. Susan asked for volunteers to help set up and take down the stand in case Kit is unable to and also volunteers to man the stand during the day. Val and Margaret to set up and take down if Kit unable to, Margaret and Roy volunteered to help man stand. Susan will ask Phil and Vernon. This event is on the same day as Barton Hill History Group so this year there will be no Troopers Hill stand at that event.

Action: Susan to ask Phil and Vernon if they can help man the stand

Friday 2nd April – Good Friday service on Troopers Hill. There will be no Easter Egg hunt this year, so FOTH will just be needed to set up gazebo and generator, and also to provide blankets; if anyone has any spare blankets can they please bring these. Volunteers are needed to man the tent. Margaret volunteered, Jude volunteered to set up but would not be able to stay.

Sat 10th April – Dawn Chorus Walk – starts at 6.30am at Malvern Way entrance – booking essential.

Sunday 25th April – Avon Valley Walk. Rob is leading this. Booking essential.

5. Work Parties

Completed since the last meeting –

February 6th. Rob reported that the pruning of the hedge went well and expressed thanks to Keith for removing the clippings.

Next work parties before the next meeting:

Saturday 6th March – plan is to clear brambles in amongst the broom and heather; and to clear some gorse where it has spread into heather. Dave said that he would arrange for the debris to be removed early the following week.

Saturday 3rd April - too early to say what will need doing at this and following work party

Saturday 1st May

6. Funding

Grant applications

Susan has sent off grant applications for the dog show, Music on the Hill, the Dawn Chorus walk and the Family Fun Picnic.

Once the costing for the tarmac has been received, Susan will apply for a grant. Similarly for the land drain investigation and work.

Rob reported that the lower entrance and lower chimney will need some work at some point and a grant would be applied for this work too.

7. Networking

Bristol Parks Forum – Rob is a member for FOTH. 50 groups are now signed up to this forum. There have been regular discussions with Tracey Morgan, Service Director for Environment & Leisure (BCC).

St George Neighbourhood Partnership – Susan is back on the committee of the steering group. The Neighbourhood Partnerships are being given more influence over budgets, starting with Highways at the last meeting, where they decided which road and footpath works should have priority. Rob and Laura are both on the Highways sub group of the Neighbourhood Partnership.

Planning applications for developments on Crews Hole Road – Susan reported that the planning application for 9 houses on the old KPG site has been withdrawn. There was mention of a 60 – bed nursing home in the plans, and it looked as though it was going into land owned by BCC, so Susan has written to Tracey Morgan and Cllr Gary Hopkins asking if BCC is planning to sell off this land.

8. Newsletter

Ideas for next issue – There will be a piece publicising the end of the works at Greendown – just waiting for Gary to arrange for the heather to be planted

- dog fouling
- memorials
- booking for events
- photo competition.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 25th May at Summerhill Methodist Church