

NOTE OF MEETING

Thursday 4th October 2018, 7.15-9pm

Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Road

Present: Rob (committee), Margaret (Treasurer), Rod (committee), Brian, Keith, Fabian Breckels (Cllr), Judith, Richard (N), Jo (Secretary, minutes), Patricia (UWE student), Arielle, Norman.

Apologies: Susan (Chair), Mali (committee & Natural Learners)

Chair for the meeting: Due to Susan's absence it was agreed that Rob would chair the meeting.

1. Approve June minutes

Rob & Margaret noted that an amendment was needed to clarify that the committee changes were agreed at the meeting - as our constitution states, these will need to be formally confirmed at the AGM in December. Subject to this change the June minutes were agreed.

2. Troopers Hill issues and news

- Committee changes: Margaret has now taken over from Norman as Treasurer. Everyone thanked Norman for all of his hard work over the last 5 years and wished him all the best for the future.

Action – Formally minute new committee at AGM

- Geology interpretation board: The Geology interpretation board was previously made with a plywood backing which Rob reported has now started to split. Arien Signs have replaced the backing with plastic and this should prevent deterioration but Rob suggested that we remember to specify that any future orders are made with a plastic backing.

Action - The board needs to be put back into place.

- Frayed flag: The flag at the Greendown entrance of Troopers Hill has started to fray. We do have a spare if it is unable to be saved. It will need two people to take it down and put back up.

Action: Susan to see if it can be repaired and two people to help get it down. This could possibly be done at the end of one of the upcoming work parties.

3. Conservation work on Troopers Hill

The Heritage Lottery funding is being used to replace fencing along Troopers Hill Road. There is also funding from the 'Ways to Nature Project' for Rupert Higgins to review the Troopers Hill management plan.

Action: A 3-way meeting is needed with Bristol Parks, the contractor and Rupert Higgins to discuss this winter's work.

4. Work parties and other works

When possible the green waste from our work parties is being given to Street Goat to feed the goats to save it being composted. At the last August Saturday work party, bracken was removed from around the steps leading down to the middle of Troopers Hill. On the 1st September the work party was cancelled as many volunteers were away and no one was available to lead it. Despite wet weather the work party went ahead on the 20th September and Brian helped Susan with some work. The weather forecast is not looking good for the next work party on Saturday 6th October. If it rains heavily the party will need to be cancelled for safety reasons as grass gets slippery and paths become too muddy. Other work parties are on Saturday 3rd November and 1st December, and Thursday 18th October and 15th November.

Rob reported that ParkWork came to do some work on the hill in August. This is a scheme to help people get back into work at the same time carrying out conservation work. People can either put themselves forward for the scheme or are referred. On the 18th October, Emma Britton from Radio Bristol is coming along following an invite from Susan when she was interviewed on her radio programme recently.

5. Projects

- Progress on Access to Nature: We are hoping for some good news in the next few days from Enover, a landfill operator who we have applied for funding from to resurface the existing track along the Troopers Hill Field and also extend the path to the play area. Our request to Councillors to match-fund this work by allocating CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funds has already been granted. Rob thanked Fabian for this. These improvements will improve access for buggies and wheelchairs and also prevent visitors to the hill getting muddy.

- Waymarking in the woods: Rob announced that this work is now complete. The Avon & Frome Partnership provided the funding to install the waymarkers from the top of the woodland area down to the entrance on Crews Hole Road.

- Wild Play/ Natural Learners: Rob announced that the funding from Nineveh Charitable Trust has enabled Natural Learners to facilitate 11 wild play sessions and 7 family events. All events had a good turnout. Last weekend 60 participants went along to the free drop in event for families. There are 3 'plant' themed sessions booked in with Summerhill School for the week commencing 15th October. Mali who runs the project is also working with the Hive (a drop-in centre for adults with learning disabilities based in Kingswood) to organise some sessions with this group of the community. The work with the Hive will be funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

- Protecting Nature (fencing and fungi) funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund: Rob reported that the tendering for the fencing should be happening this month. Once the contract is awarded there will then be an 8 week leading time taking us until

Christmas, then followed by 2 weeks to install the fencing. Rob has predicted this work to be complete sometime in January. This work was planned to be done during winter when bramble, etc can be cut. Susan has talked to Claire Challice about a 'fungi interpretation board' and is looking for people to get involved. Brian put himself forward. The idea is to put together an interpretation board all about fungi. It was noted that this should not be used for distinguishing the edible from the inedible as it should be assumed that all fungi is not to be picked. Brian pointed out that it will be difficult to simplify as the subject of fungi is very complicated however it is a good way to highlight the other types of wildlife to be found on the hill which are not already detailed on the existing boards. David Gibbs is going to do a new survey about invertebrates on the hill.

- RHS South West in Bloom, It's Your Neighbourhood Results Day: Troopers Hill was entered into this competition and a judge visited the hill during the summer. The award ceremony was today but Rob reported that he has not heard anything as yet so we will be watching out for news on this.

- Defibrillator: Rob announced that we have achieved the fundraising target and the defibrillator should be installed within the next month or so.

- Bull Inn: Rob has found out that instead of renewing our application to protect The Bull from a change of use, we will need to put in a new application. If we can obtain 21 signatures this will help ensure the use of the building remains the same for another 5 years instead of risking it being developed into flats or similar which the group agreed there are enough of already in the area.

Action: A new application to be made to Bristol City Council in November

- Air Quality Awareness: Rob welcomed Patricia, a student from UWE. Patricia is completing a Master's degree in Environmental Studies and is also employed by Bristol City Council. She came along today to talk to the group about what they know about air quality. She has chosen FOTH as one of 10 community groups to visit to enable her to compile data on the issue. As well as helping her with her studies, this data will also help find out whether people need more awareness about the issue of poor air quality. Fabian highlighted how much of an issue air quality was and that this information would also be useful for the council. All attendees completed a questionnaire and Patricia will let us know the results of her findings when she has them.

6. Troopers Hill field

- Tree sponsorship: There is still space for a tree to be sponsored in the field but it is still not mentioned on the Council's website.

Action: Susan will chase this up with the Bristol City Council.

- The Slide: Rob reported that the supporting legs for the red slide are becoming worse and the council are inspecting its deterioration on a weekly basis. It could therefore be deemed unsafe at any time and will then need to be removed. It is unable to be repaired and it is unlikely funding for a new slide would be approved

considering a whole new play area has since been installed just a short distance away. Bristol City Council have no statutory obligation to replace it which would be likely to cost around £6000. FOTH have asked for ideas of what the space could be alternatively used for when the slide is eventually removed. No viable suggestions with offers of support to achieve them have been put forward as yet.

7. St George Strollers

Rob reported that this has always been a successful activity since it was set up 5 years ago through the council's Bristol Walk for Health' project. The walks are led by Susan or other volunteers. Bristol City Council are removing the support they provide for the group to run. This will mean that individual groups will need to organise their own public liability Insurance. St George Strollers have enough funds to put towards this but they will need FOTH to organise it under their name. Everyone agreed that it was a good idea for FOTH to provide this support to enable the group to continue.

8. Events

- Last events: Rod reported that Bristol Astronomical Society was let down by poor viability as the weather was wet and cloudy and so their planned event on the 11th August was unable to go ahead. Rob reported that Natural Learners hosted their 'Bugs n Beasties' event on the same day and used the shelter of the trees to continue their activities.

- AGM: The next event is our AGM which is on the 6th December. This will no longer include a slide show as we have done in previous years. Our website can be used instead to view our photos.

- Events for 2019: These events include the Dawn Chorus Walk, a Fungi walk, a walk by Rupert Higgins and possibly a Geology walk. Rod expects that a Star Gazing event will also be included. Natural Learners will hopefully continue to receive funding to continue their events.

Action - A separate meeting will need to be arranged in November to agree on a programme of events for 2019.

9. Networking

- St George & Redfield Voice: Susan continues to write articles for St George & Redfield Voice. She has asked that if anyone has any ideas for this or would like to write one of their own to let her know.

- Visit from St Aidan's Brownies: Over the summer St Aidan's Brownies visited and followed one of our trails around the hill. The trail was installed about 5 years ago and some of the metal plates are getting worse for wear. Susan cleaned them up for the Brownies visit but we now need to decide whether to replace them or cease to maintain them. They were designed by school children and it is not known how much use they have had as we have never had any queries about them. There are 3 different trails to follow with a total of about 27 pictures on metal plates dotted around the hill. It would be possible to get hold of the original artwork used to create them to

reproduce them if we thought it was worth the cost. Rob asked the group for their views and it was agreed that a question should be put on the web before making a decision.

Action - A question to be put out on the web to help make the decision.

- Volunteer fayre: Rob and Susan went along to the Barton Hill Settlement for this event on 28th September. A few people expressed an interest in coming along to the work parties and it was a good opportunity to network with other volunteer groups.

- Future Proof Parks: Rob explained about this new initiative which is being set up to try and get more young people (aged 11-25 years) to become involved in park groups. The majority of people involved are from the older age groups and so £300,000 is being spread across the country to try and get the younger age group involved as well. Bristol is one of 5 cities chosen for the project. They are looking to get 12 Bristol park groups involved and have asked if FOTH want to be one of them. Arielle is a trained youth worker and is happy to help with the project. Arielle believes that, rather than being disinterested, young people do not see park groups as being relevant to them. It is hoped that this initiative will encourage more young people to come along to park group events such as work parties.

Action - Susan to talk to Arielle about this. Rob to contact Future Proof parks

- Community Fayre: On Saturday 6th October there is a Community Fair at St Aidan's Church on Fir Tree Lane, St George. Fabian pointed out this was a great opportunity to find out what is happening in the community. It was postponed due to the snow earlier this year and was rescheduled for this Saturday. Volunteers are needed to help man the stall however the event clashes with our work party. It may be that the work party is cancelled due to the bad weather in which case Rob suggested that volunteers could come and help behind the stall at this event instead.

10. Next meeting

Thursday 6th December at 7.15pm at Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Road.