



**NOTE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING
Thursday, 11th February, 2016 7.15pm
Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Rd**

Present: Susan (Chair), Rob (WPO), Rod (Committee), Kevin, Kit, Richard, Margaret (Secretary)
Apologies: Helen, Chris

1. Approve November minutes and notes of the AGM

These were both approved.

2. Amendment to the constitution

Susan explained that this was an extraordinary general meeting because she was proposing an amendment to the constitution. The proposal was that the following text be added:

'Income: The group is a not-for-profit organization: funds will only be raised sufficient to meet our aims as stated above. Donations or grants can be accepted and administered by the group for specific not-for-profit projects which benefit the local community, but these will be shown clearly and separately in the group's accounts. The prior agreement of the group's committee to undertake such projects will be required, and this should be endorsed, if possible, by any voting members who attend a group meeting'.

Susan explained the reason for this amendment: Veolia Environmental Trust had received the application for a £25,000 (- 5%) grant towards the new play area. They have looked at FOTH's constitution and want it to be clear, in the constitution, that FOTH is a not-for-profit organisation. They sent a form of words to use, but as FOTH want to be able to have other groups, such as St George Strollers, under our wing, a new form of words has been suggested which Veolia will be happy with.

This amendment will need to be ratified at the AGM. All present voted in favour of this amendment.

3. Issues and thank yous for Parks staff

- Winter works 2015/16: these have not progressed due to the weather.
- Preventing wear and tear on refurbished steps: Rob reported that the steps had finally been topped up but had already started to erode again due to the weather. He had met with Joe from Parkwork and they had looked at the option of putting in another water diverter on the middle steps. As Parkwork now need to be self-funding they would need £350 for labour costs, so FOTH either need to apply to Neighbourhood Partnership for a grant or ask the Parks department at Bristol City Council to fund it. Kit asked whether the work could be done at a work party but Rob said it would need more than 2 hours. It was agreed that Rob would approach Parks first to see if they would provide

funding. Kit suggested that the diverter needed to be wider than the one that is there now.

Action: Rob to approach Parks about funding

- Flag: Susan displayed the new 'Welcome to Troopers Hill' flag which all were happy with. It was going to be put up at the last work party but that had been cancelled due to rain. Kit suggested a heavier rope would be needed than the one provided.

Action: Susan to replace rope with one from a spare 'Green Flag'.

- Management plan update: Susan explained that the 5 year plan should be updated each year but it has been missed for the last 2 years due to the reorganisation at the Council. Changes have been agreed for this year but the final version has not been seen yet.
- Greendown bed: everyone is happy with the proposal that Parks just cut the grass at Greendown bed. Kit asked whether there was a plan in place to replace the wood when it disintegrated. Rob said they had looked at this and it would last a bit longer, but Susan agreed this needed to be thought about for the future.
- Community Payback: Rob reported that Community Payback have cleared another area of gorse.
- Parkwork: Rob reported that Parkwork have been working on the steps through the woodland down to Crews Hole Road. Now that the work on the Lamb Inn site has finished he and Joe have looked at where the steps should come out. The proposal is to put in chicane fencing near the access gate. Kit suggested that it would be good if the layby could be designated as a parking area for Troopers Hill. Susan thought it was unlikely that this would happen but it might be possible to put up an information board there in the future and Rob said that there would be a finger post installed once the entrance fencing has been done.

4. Troopers Hill Field

- Play area update: Susan announced that we had been successful with the £50,000 grant application from SITA Trust and everyone thanked Susan for her hard work on this. Susan said that the work had been led by a small group of parents but she had volunteered to help with the bid. We are still hoping for a further £25,000 from Veolia Environmental Trust. Susan will let them know about the change of constitution and that we have been successful with the bid for £50,000 for the other part of the project.

Susan and some of the parents met with John Knowlson, the lead Play officer for the Council, and Vicki Abel, the Project Manager, to find out how tenders work. The group is going to focus on best design, not just lowest cost. It was agreed to wait until the decision from Veolia before going out to tender. Suppliers will have 4 weeks to respond, there will be 3-4 weeks to make a decision, and then there will be an 8 week lead in time before work starts

The work will take about 2 months, so it is likely it will start in September. Susan will inform the SITA trust of this. The awarding of the contract will enable the money to be released.

- Tree Planting: On 16th February 2 memorial trees will be planted, one of which will be for Pete Harris. There will also be whips planted by children from Air Balloon School.
- Grass cut: Rob reported that we need to monitor the grass cutting. It has not been done lately due to the wet weather but the grass has continued to grow because the winter has been so mild.
- Football posts: Dundry Park are trialling new goal posts and there is a possibility that their old posts could be installed in the Field. The existing posts are very rusty at the bottom.

5. Work parties and other works

The work parties on 5th December and 6th February were cancelled due to rain. Work in Sally's Glade had been done at the 9th January work party, although that had finished early also due to rain.

Work parties before next meeting: Saturdays 5th March, 2nd April, 7th May and Sunday 21st February.

Action: Susan to ask Norman if he is available to lead 2nd April work party

Working with power tools such as strimmers and leaf blowers: Rob reported the Council are planning to allow groups to borrow tools such as strimmers and leaf blowers, following training. Susan said that we would still expect Parks to do the main strimming along paths but this would be to help us at our work parties. This is still under discussion and details are not finalised.

6. Events

Susan reported that the Geology Walk, due to take place on 29th November, had been cancelled due to bad weather. The AGM had gone well and had been well attended. Kevin said how much he had enjoyed the slide show, and all thanked Rob for his work in preparing this.

Kevin asked whether we had tried to capture people's contact details at the dog show to let them know about other events. Susan said that there were lists available for people to complete but it had not been pushed.

Stargazing on 2nd February had been very popular and gone very well. Susan had had 68 expressions of interest and had stopped taking names at that point as there were only 25 – 30 places. 27 attended on the night. She thanked Rod for his accurate weather forecasting. Rod commented, that it was a bonus that they were able to see Jupiter. He will email Dark Skies to let them know about the event, quoting Susan's report and providing a link to the website and Kit's photographs. Rod thanked Susan, on behalf of the Bristol Astronomical Society (BAS) for the donation of £24.53 collected on the night. A total of £49.05 was collected and divided

between FoTH and BAS. Susan expressed her thanks to the volunteers from the Astronomical Society.

The next event will be the Dawn Chorus at 5am on 23rd April. Susan will try and find a café able to provide breakfast afterwards.

7. Funding

Susan reported that Local Nature Reserves can apply for up to £1,000 (Green Capital Funding) from the Council. The purpose of the funding is to help promote greater enjoyment and understanding by the general public and to communicate information about the group and its activities.

This could include (but is not limited to) a contribution towards items such as a website, interpretation panels, signage, trail marker posts or leaflets.

Rob had suggested a Geology interpretation board to be placed somewhere near the Greendown entrance, leading people towards the gully. The board currently at Greendown would be moved down to the next entrance where there is a board which needs replacing. There was agreement with the proposal that we apply for funding for a Geology interpretation board but not necessarily near the Greendown entrance. It was agreed that the funding would be applied for and in the meantime the group would look at possible alternative sites for the board.

Action: Susan to let the group know when she and Rob would be looking at sites on the hill so that others can accompany them.

Next project: Susan proposed that once the play area had been completed, the next project should be replacing the rotten fencing on Troopers Hill Road. It was important to maintain fencing to prevent motorbikes and horses getting on to the hill. There are two possible sources of funding: Heritage Lottery funds could be applied for because the work could involve putting in a platform for a cherry picker to do work on the lower chimney; or Land Fill Trusts who have nature grants. The group were happy that Susan start looking into this once the work on the play project was complete, and thanked her.

8. St George Strollers

Susan reported that 3 new walk leaders have been trained. There was a meeting next week when they would discuss how to best use the Strollers' funds.

9. Networking

- FOTH had decided not to sign up to the Pesticide Safe Bristol Alliance. Susan had intended to listen to them at Bristol Parks Forum, but they did not respond to the invitation in time. A pesticide free weed control regime will be tested by Bristol City Council in Cotham, in an area without Japanese knotweed.

- Discover East Bristol Map- This will be relaunched at the Walking Festival in May when Rob is leading his Avon Valley Walk with the title 'Discover East Bristol'. Susan has submitted two walks from St George Strollers and also a 11 mile walk and other groups, such as Hillfields and Lockleaze & Horfield, are also doing 'Discover East Bristol walks

- Bristol Parks Forum – byelaws: There had been a presentation at Bristol Parks Forum about the new byelaws. Responses were being invited from members of the public and groups. Susan has responded as an individual but it was agreed that she would also put in a response on behalf of FOTH which would request that Troopers Hill Nature Reserve be excluded from the list of sites where people can light barbeques.

Action: Susan to respond on behalf of FOTH.

Susan had noticed that the new Council website did not have all the information about Troopers Hill that was on the old website, and some of it was incorrect.

Action: Susan will contact Paula Spiers about the Council website.

Awards

- Dark Sky Discovery Site: Susan expressed her thanks to Rod in enabling us to achieve this. Rod said the reason for the delay was probably due to lack of resources at the Edinburgh office as their website is now saying there will be no more sites awarded until June. He will chase them about the waymarkers.
- Pride in Parks: We should find out the result of this at the end of February.
- Susan asked whether the group wanted her to enter the It's Your Neighbourhood and Pride in Parks awards again. Rob said that it was important we did this as part of supporting St George in Bloom so it was agreed we should reapply.

Action: Susan to apply for It's Your Neighbourhood and Pride in Parks awards.

Facebook/Twitter/website Update

Thanks was expressed to Rob for his hard work on the website. Rob reported increases in the numbers of followers on both Twitter and Facebook.

Newsletter

Susan reported that a local resident, who wishes to remain anonymous has volunteered to carry on with the newsletter.

She gave a very big thank you to Kit for both the last newsletter and all the ones he has done previously.

Any other business

Rob thanked Kit for nominating him for the Lord Mayor's Medal. The presentation will take place on 16th March.

Next meeting

Thursday 12th May at 7.15pm at Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Road