



**Note of FOTH meeting: 11 September 2014
Methodist Church, Summerhill**

Present: Susan (Chair) Rob (WPO) Kit (Memb Sec) Bryan (Cttee) Clare (Cttee) Jude (Cttee) Margaret (Cttee) Fabian (Cllr) Julian (BCC) Keith, Rod, Helen (minutes)

Apologies: Phyll

The minutes of the last meeting were approved without amendment

Issues and thank yous for our Community Park Keeper, Area Parks Manager and Grounds Maintenance team

- Rob reported an absence of progress on the question of preventing wear and tear on refurbished steps. He remarked that personnel changes at Bristol Parks (including Jules's imminent departure) would bring about uncertainties, particularly in relation to this year's winter works.
- The hedge at Greendown appeared to be recovering well from the recent flail cut. The issue of hedge management had been raised with the Ecology Officer (management of nature reserves) on 10 September. She had agreed with the plans of action for work parties. There was concern over the timing of the cut (July – bird nesting season), next year's cut must be better timed. The hay cut was due but had not yet been done. It was reported that the contractors are working to catch up – in common with other LNRs – after cutting the arisings would be taken away and no harm would result from the late cut.
- One of the poster clip frames had been vandalised in August, it was proposed to order a batch of new frames to economise on postage. On the same day, at the Bugs and Beasties event, A sandwich-board displaying information about the event was broken (probably by children).
- Keith reported seeing a barbecue on the hill on 10 September, though barbecues are discouraged on the LNR they are not prohibited by any bye-law.

Action: Fabian to seek any progress on proposals for new bye-laws.

Troopers Hill Field

- The grass around the edges of the field had been mown on Wednesday. Fungi were appearing on the log by the goalposts.

Julian Thomas

- Chair delivered an appreciation of Jules' contribution to the upkeep of the LNR and wished him farewell. She presented Jules with a signed card, a bouquet representing some of the vegetation that he had worked to control, and a tankard as a memento of his association with FOTH. Jules confirmed he wanted to remain a member of FOTH

Work parties – since last meeting

- Saturday 2nd August had been a wet day, Rob, Susan and Kit had undertaken equipment maintenance.
- On Wednesday 20th August an evening work party of people had removed saplings in the Gully
- On Saturday 6th September six volunteers had cut out broom from amongst heather at the side of the Gully and taken the cut material to the Green Down contractors' gate for disposal.

Before the next meeting:

- The Community Payback team would be asked to attend on the following weekend, to clear gorse and bramble on the south side of the hill, creating a fire break in doing so.
- Kit requested a cut of vegetation to maintain the view from one of the benches on the Field – it was reported that Jules had made a start in that location.
- Lloyds Bank employees were due to visit on Wednesday October 1st (weather permitting) or 8th. 15 people to remove saplings and bramble, replace the log in The Field. Activities for 4th October and 1st November were still TBA.
- Volunteer numbers had been low recently and more recruits were needed.

Action: Kit to ask Steve Shepherd to give FOTH work parties publicity

St George Strollers Walking for Health update

Clare reported that the walking group was continuing to observe the altered policy constraints on distance, duration and terrain, which were discussed at some length. Progress on the Sovereign Housing Association project continued, Susan was in conversation with a representative of the association about funding for walks, details would be shared with the walk leaders at the next Strollers meeting.

Events

Since our last meeting

- Family Fun Picnic/ Bugs and Beasties, Saturday 9th August 4.30pm
Considering the weather, the turnout had been encouraging, families with children had become involved in the activities. The flip chart for species recording had been a success. This was regarded as an event that fits particularly well with the FOTH remit. The absence of a craft or storytelling activity had apparently not been detrimental to the experience. In relation to setting up it was suggested that in future, information displays might be located outside the gazebos for preference.

Before our next meeting

- Rob's History walk on Sunday 21st September had already attracted two bookings, Chair outlined the publicity arrangements. On that afternoon the High Waterline Bristol art project would be happening along Crews Hole.

- Falconry Display Sunday 5th October, 2pm to 4.30pm
Kit confirmed that it would not be necessary to book for this event. It would need resources to set up the Arena and PA, tea tent, refreshments, and capture feedback via a visitors' book. Bryan offered his van for the PA. As much help as possible would be needed on the day from 12.30 onwards. A photographic competition would be held at the event. The display had been funded by St George West Community First. Westcountry Falconry would be bringing birds of prey including owls, kites and falcons for flying and standing displays. Paula Spiers would be present to explaining the food chain and the place of raptors in it. In response to a query from Susan, Kit confirmed that the timing of any grass mowing would be unimportant to the event. Publicity would come from 'The Week In', BBC Radio Bristol and BCFM.

Action: **Chair to phone volunteers and ask Liz about availability of extra hot water.**

Planning Meeting: Thursday 30 October

- Usual arrangements for capturing and discussing events for 2015. We have been asking people on Facebook and at events for ideas.

Networking

St George Neighbourhood Partnership had available Green Capital funding of up to £10,000 for which applications were invited for ideas encouraging interest in and access to wildlife, in connection with a city-wide promotion of nature reserves. It was recognised, with regret, that uncertainties in Council staffing had prevented any applications in Bristol for Green Flags in the Green Capital year, and the annual continuity for Green Flag sites had been broken.

- Rob said that St George Park and Dundry Park were represented on the Environment sub-group, both groups having particular issues to pursue via that forum. Rob encouraged FOTH members to attend sub-group meetings. An area in the north-east of St George does not participate in the Neighbourhood Partnership possible because they do not identify themselves as part of St George but as residents of Kingswood. In this context, Keith referred to the Stapleton Road allotments bus route. Also in prospect was a project possibly to be funded by Green Capital money, to produce a map of routes linking green spaces in Bristol.

- It was expected that the results of Best Park/Country Park Bristol in Bloom South West would be announced on 18th September, along with the It's Your Neighbourhood Susan issued an invitation to accompany her to the award ceremony in the Methodist Church on the evening of Tuesday 23rd September.

- Friends thanked Jude & Bryan for arranging the installation of a display case at Beese's to hold Troopers Hill and Eastwood Farm leaflets.

- Beeses' beer festival had appeared very popular and they had once again promised a donation from the proceeds of ticket sales.

Facebook/Twitter/website update

- The FOTH Facebook account had 409 likes and the Twitter account had attracted 333 followers. Numbers continued to rise steadily and apparently had not yet reached their peak.

Action: Rob to research the locations of Facebook friends and Twitter followers.

- Kit proposed that the website discussion forum should be wound up since it was not much used and had largely been superseded by Facebook and Twitter.

Newsletter

- Kit's next edition was due to be published at the beginning of the following week.

Next meeting

Thursday 6th November 7.15pm - Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Rd.