

Minutes of Friends of Troopers Hill Meeting  
Thursday 12 June 2025 7.15pm  
Wesley Memorial Church Hall

Attendees: Rob, Margaret, Rod, Willy, Fran, Neil and Rosie  
Apologies – Councillor Fabian Breckels, Susan, Elaine and Tim and Luke from the Birch Collective

The meeting agreed that Rob should act as Chair in Susan's absence

1. **Approval of Minutes from March 2025**

These were approved.

2. **Nature Conservation Work on Troopers Hill**

- **Work Parties**

Recent - Rob reported that the last two work parties had been cancelled because of rain. There had been 3 in May which had concentrated on cutting back brambles in the area where Himalayan Balsam grew; this seemed much improved from the previous year. There had been 3 in April. As usual, photos were on the website. Forthcoming – 28 June. Comments were made that the groups seemed smaller than those in the winter months.

- Bristol City Council (BCC) had strimmed along path edges and the steps and the edge of the path from the field into the woods

- They had also been asked to cut bracken on the Hill which seemed to be reducing over the years

Mary O'Connell had returned to her role in the Council so again was the contact other than Teija.

Neil had seen some information from Parks, possibly on Facebook, about being aware of toxic plants and how to deal with them. Rob said that it was possibly cautionary and may have been about Giant Hogweed which was different from Hogweed and mentioned bracken spores which we took into account when organising work parties.

3. **BCC Active Travel Grant**

- **Strollers 300<sup>th</sup> walk celebration and information board**

Susan had applied for the grant which had already been received in the name of the Strollers. 27 June is the date for the actual celebration.

- Interpretation Board, Troopers Hill Field (replacing notice board)

Susan had proposed a new welcome board for Malvern Road entrance to replace the notice board and to match the other information boards on the Hill which would encourage people to enter and to take exercise/walk. A paper with the draft words and pictures was tabled. This will be funded by the Active Travel grant so we no longer need the funding we had asked for via CIL. So we have asked for the CIL application to be changed to propose the information board at Crews Hole.

- Audio Trail Update

This had been done on the basis of “match funding” by demonstrating volunteers’ time, as experts, in financial terms e.g. Rob being an expert history guide and Kit as an audio and sound technician. Thanks were given to Kit for helping with this.

#### **St George Active Travel Group Grant**

- Strollers Weekend Walks

Two walks had been proposed – one in the north and one in the south of St George. Again, on the basis of match funding and volunteers giving their time. The Strollers will benefit by some consumables being funded, paper, laminates and ink cartridges. Margaret noted that the Treasurer of the Strollers needed to be briefed.

#### **4. Maintenance and Projects - Hill, Field and Woods**

- Play area benches repaired

They had been fitted at no cost

- The missing plaque for the paths had been relocated and refitted
- Repairs to steps needed

Some steps on the Hill need replacing. **Action: Rob will carry out an audit.** BCC may well do it.

- Repair to Interpretation Board at Summerhill Terrace

The board had been put up in 2012 and a leg had rusted badly. New structures were now in aluminium. It was proposed to remove the steel legs and use the existing board on a new stand which would be installed close by. A quote had been received from Arien Signs for £753.60. It was suggested that we might save on delivery costs if both the new boards could be delivered together. Margaret wondered if the proceeds from the sale of books could be used. Rob and Susan to discuss with BCC.

- Greendown entrance

There are two wide and high hawthorn hedges at that point which hide some of the gate and seemed unwelcoming if not intimidating. Rob was proposing to reduce them in size, rather than prune them occasionally. Information leaflets would be put through local residents’ doors and we would liaise with members who lived on Greendown.

- Crews Hole Layby complete

It seemed successful – there had been no fly tipping to date. Rob noted that Crews Hole Road would be closed from 16 June for two weeks for new crossings and improvements.

- New Interpretation Board at Layby

Susan had applied to Community Infrastructure Levy funding for this.

- Birch Collective, Woodland Management

This group is based in Strawberry Lane Allotments and they work in the woods every Tuesday. They had planted 3 trees in a pit they had dug which they had named “Wishing Trees”. They liaised with BCC and had some ecological knowledge themselves. Rob was encouraging them to apply for a grant for the repair of the steps into the woods.

A small amount of graffiti had appeared on the chimney. BCC was dealing with this with the appropriate materials.

Susan had written to the owners of the Blackswarth Road wood (Afeni Properties Ltd) in order to acknowledge that permission had been granted for their request for tree works for road safety reasons and to raise the issue of necessary repairs to a wall that had collapsed, that was now exposed due to vandals remove heras fencing that was preventing rubble and soil landing on Crews Hole Rd.

A request had been received to install another bench on the Hill. This was not needed. Rob thought that one of the red benches on the field might be worth replacing. They are in touch with BCC.

## 5. **Events**

- Since last meeting

Bird Walk Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> March – very successful with Ed Drewitt and had been sponsored so no cost

History Walk Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May – Rob had received some very nice feedback and quite a lot in donations

Gazebo Drop-in Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> May – very disappointing as so few people had been there. Possibly because it was a Saturday and not the usual Sunday? It was decided that Sundays would be a better day for future Gazebo events.

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> June – Mirror Box. Very interesting and successful. 160 people had attended in 6 hours. Amanda and Jill had helped on the day as well as Rob. Rosie commented that Rob and Susan had put a lot of work into this before and after the event which had doubtlessly enhanced our reputation and spread the name of FoTH.

Rob added that he had gone back on our website and counted 162 posters since 2015 which Susan had produced!

- Future Events

Bugs & Beasties Saturday 9 August

Rupert had confirmed. Margaret and Rosie volunteered to be there. Rod asked if anyone had contacted the Astronomical Society. It had been mentioned at the star gazing event but Susan would be asked to contact them more formally. Action Susan to contact Allan McCarthy

Fungi Foray and Bat Walk

Being discussed. Two separate events in the autumn

## 6. **Networking**

- History Talks

Rob had given a talk to the Longwell Green Wine Society. He had been given a cheque for £50.

He was due to give a talk to Friends of Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives on 12 July at the M Shed

- Sales of Donated Books

All the books by David Stephenson had been sold, bar two which were to be collected, for a total of £522.31. The Barton Hill History Group was also selling books and it was suggested we might help them to do this at a small charge. It was decided

not to do so as it may have been seen as overstepping the mark with Friends of St George Park.

- Bull Inn ACV Application

Fabian had asked if we could apply for the Bull to be an Asset of Community Value, something that the group had done in the past, as there had been a Planning Application to pull the building down and build flats. This application was refused. There should not be a problem with the ACV application as a pub by its nature is a community asset. Our application, if successful, would be another hurdle to overcome for any future demolition plans.

Elaine had suggested that we might produce posters for special events highlighting the risk of BBQs in hot and dry weather. Susan would be asked to produce one for the Bugs & Beasties afternoon/Balloon Fiesta viewing evening.

7. **Meeting closed at 8.45pm.**

Next meeting to be held on 25 September 7.15pm - in person Wesley Memorial Church Hall