



NOTE OF MEETING
28th September 2010 7.15pm
Summerhill Methodist Church

Present

Susan (Chair), Jude (Treas), Kit (Memb Sec), Rob (WPO), Bryan (Cttee member), Dave (BCC), Jules (BCC), Margaret, Helen (minutes).

Apologies John (BCC), Gary (BCC), Fabian (Cllr)

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved unchanged.

Issues and thank yous for our Community Parks Officer, Area Parks Manager, Park Keeper and Landscape team

- change of Area Parks Manager

John Williams (JW) had been seconded to the Area Parks Manager post. It was suggested that Friends might remember him from the opening of the play area on Troopers Hill Field in December 2009. He had requested a walk-round of the Hill, and a date of 6th October was proposed.

- completion of the YANSEC project (planting at Greendown)

It had hitherto been expected that the work (temporary fence and planting) would happen in October but no precise date had been forthcoming. Jules explained that he had been detailed to undertake the work.

Action: Chair to write to JW expressing disquiet at the long delay and asking what plants had been identified.

- continued excellent maintenance on the Hill

Rob and Susan reported that the Hill was looking well-kept. Jules said that he had widened the DOE path earlier in the day and further work was planned to enlarge the glade area and cut back undergrowth along the edge of the Field generally, every second year.

Rob and Susan reported on a recent discussion with Jules at which the extent and detail of the winter maintenance works had been established.

- estimate for works on Troopers Hill - "Stepping Forward"

Rob said that Jamie had encouraged an application for community spaces funding to repair the various flights of steps on the Hill and address the drainage problems in the Field. Paul Cox from Parks landscaping and Susan had produced estimates and Rob had compiled an application on the basis that the improvements would attract more community groups (eg. walking for health) to the site. Rob had included leaflets and a celebration event in the scope of the application, also a consultation about waymarking the paths in the woodland or signage to Troopers Hill from the river path. Jules mentioned an initiative elsewhere in Bristol to signpost a local access path. A brief discussion of the design details ensued. The cost of minor works and a project manager were factored in and the total had amounted to £31,920. Kit emphasised the importance of resisting change to the nature of the paths. The desirability of installing a tarmac path between the Summerhill entrance to the Field, and Malvern Road - at some future time - was agreed, (but this

proposal would be outside the scope of the Stepping Forward grant application.) Friends expressed appreciation to Rob for the work involved in preparing the grant application.

- Green Flag award

Susan confirmed that the Flag had been officially awarded. Friends had raised the new flag during the August work party.

- litter bin

Thanks to contributions from local people (the total amount was yet to be notified) the bin had been installed on a concrete base at the entrance to Troopers Hill from Troopers Hill Field. A small amount of work remained – infill around the base. Jules reported it was well used

- the mine shaft

Jules reported that digging out of the spoil had apparently found nothing untoward, a reasonable amount of turf had been carefully replaced and the site left in reasonable condition, but it was not known precisely what works had been executed. Margaret said she thought it had been capped with concrete. The fence would be left in place for some time to allow the grass to regenerate.

- falling soil on Troopers Hill Rd

Preliminary clearing of undergrowth had been completed. Jules described the extent of the work that had been done (without traffic lights) and outlined some of the potential problems. An explanatory letter to local residents was needed as soon as possible. Susan reported that a form of words had been agreed with JW. Friends would deliver the letter to residents of Troopers Hill Road. Susan explained that a grant from the St George Neighbourhood Partnership had been applied for to pay for some associated tree works. She hoped that the grant would be forthcoming shortly.

Formal Response to Proposals for Troopers Hill, Field and Woods in the Area Green Space Plan

Susan had received no objections to her draft formal response and proposed to submit it in the current form. A short discussion took place about the use and provision of marking and nets for the five-a-side football pitches. It was agreed that the Field was used for the kind of informal recreation that would not require the pitches to be marked or nets in the goals.

Work parties

- completed since the last meeting

Saturday, 7th August – put the flag up, and oak saplings removed.

Saturday, 4th September – removal of bramble and other undesired plant species at the top end of Sally's glade.

- Next work parties Saturday, 2nd October – It was intended to return to the broom above Sally's glade. A sub-group would repair the DOE steps. Jules requested an opinion on the extent of strimming required.

Saturday, 6th November – likely to be a litter pick. Given suitable weather, Kit suggested maintaining a presence on the Hill in the evening of Friday 5 November to discourage bonfires on the hill and encourage revellers to take the remains home.

Jules mentioned that around the time of the Autumnal equinox he had found the remains of circle of fire together with remnants of coal and firewood. There was speculation about the identity and intentions of whoever lit the fire.

Susan described a problem concerning Bristol Parks having given permission for burial of ashes on Troopers Hill. JW was investigating, with a view to preventing further

occurrences. Friends were reminded of a limited number of opportunities for dedicating memorial trees on Troopers Hill Field, the upper limit being set by the number of trees, four, indicated on the plans.

Events

- Since our last meeting

Sunday 8th August – Tai Chi on the Hill had gone very well and had attracted positive comment.

Saturday 14th August – Family Fun Picnic – this event had been cancelled due to poor weather

- Next events

Sunday 3rd October - Kite Flying – The organisers needed one gazebo. The meeting discussed the weather forecast and it was agreed to put up a FOTH gazebo as well, for an 11.00 start. [subsequent note – event cancelled due to unsuitable weather]

Action: Rob and Susan to liaise with the organisers.

Sunday 10th October - Family Fun Dog Show

Kit enumerated the likely stall holders and confirmed that the council Dog Warden had promised to attend the show. Bryan kindly volunteered the use of his van. He suggested that the sound equipment be located inside the van and other weatherproofing arrangements were discussed. The likely attendance by Friends was discussed. At least four and possibly five gazebos would be needed. Commercial stall holders should be asked for a donation. The event would be cancelled only if prevented by very bad weather.

Action Susan to contact Wesley Memorial Church for tables, and ask Liz to clarify whether the Cats protection league would attend.

On 1st October, Rob would be giving a talk to Summerhill Junior School children about Troopers Hill.

On the following Wednesday, 6th October, Jules would give the same children a guided tour of the LNR.

Fungi Foray would take place on 7th December

Reflective Jackets

Rob modelled the waistcoat he had obtained @ £30 for 6 with the FOTH logo printed on them. He explained that volunteers were required to wear high-visibility clothing at 'official' events sanctioned by the Council.

2011 Events - planning meeting

Susan noted it was time for the next planning meeting for 2011 events and proposed a date in November (probably a Tuesday or a Thursday)

Funding

- Wild City

Rob had no further news on the appointment of a Wild City officer.

- Beeses Beer Festival

From the proceeds of ticket sales at their recent Beer Festival, Beeses had kindly proposed donations to Friends of Troopers Hill and Friends of Eastwood Farm, of about £300 for each group. It was recognised that such donations are particularly valuable because they carry no restrictions on how the money is spent and can therefore be used for meeting running costs (normally excluded from grant aid).

Networking

- Consultation on the Area Green Space Plan and Site Allocations

This agenda item was covered by the discussion (above) – ‘Formal Response to Proposals for Troopers Hill etc.’

- Bristol Parks Forum

The next Parks Forum meeting had been arranged for Saturday 9th October at Netham (9.30 am) It was proposed that Rob should raise the subject of provision of dog waste bags. Jules reported that supplies were running short and it had been suggested that parkies should charge for them. Jules was resistant to this, not only because of difficulties with handling cash and associated auditing requirements. Dave said he thought the message about picking up waste had been getting through to dog walkers.

- St George Neighbourhood Partnership and influencing grounds maintenance

Rob anticipated some discussion about how the proposed mechanism for this might affect focus on the management of Troopers Hill. It was recognised that budgetary considerations would be paramount in any event.

Newsletter

- Chair thanked Kit for the Autumn issue of the newsletter. Kit said the next issue would be published after the Annual General Meeting in December.

Next Meeting

- Tuesday 9th November 7.15pm at the Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Rd, next to the Air Balloon pub.