



**Note of Meeting Tuesday 18th October 2005 7.15pm
Wesley Memorial Church, Bryants Hill**

Present: Susan (Chair), Rob, Gill, Molly, Madeline, Maureen,
Roy, Mike, Sally, Judith, Jon Bown

Apologies: David, Liz W, Alan, Liz R, Carole, Fran, Kit & Helen

In the absence of both David and Helen, Rob agreed to take the minutes.
Thanks to Roy for the donation of a raffle prize.

Outstanding actions from the previous minutes: Chair reported that the outstanding actions had been completed with the exception to her notes of the Malvern Road Open Space (MROS) Meeting which still needed writing up.

Approve previous minutes: Approved, except that Rob noted that the suggested size for the MROS play area was 400 square metres ie 20m x 20m not 400m square.

Community Parks Manager support during Gary Ratcliffe's absence

Susan introduced Jon Bown who was Garry's manager and asked him to explain the current situation.

Jon explained that he was District Coordinator. Gary Ratcliffe had been in his current role as Community Parks Manager for Bristol East for two years reporting to Jon. He had asked to take a year off to spend more time with his children and as part of their work/life balance policy Bristol Parks had agreed. Despite Gary giving 12 months notice it had not been possible to find a replacement. External adverts had not generated any response – this was probably due to the short term nature of the appointment.

Jon went on to explain that they were therefore arranging to cover the post by an internal reorganization and that he hoped to be able to confirm the arrangements before the next meeting. In the meantime Jon was covering Gary's responsibilities himself and asked for patience during this interim period. Jon pointed out that the Council's policy was to reply to emails within 14 days. Susan thanked Jon for his prompt response to her emails to date.

Issues on Troopers Hill to be passed to Jon

Greendown Fence

Susan reported that two rails had been kicked out of the Greendown fence opposite No. 2 where a post was rotting and expressed her concern that if any further rails were removed or the post knocked over the hill would be open to motorcycles. Susan asked whether it would be possible for Jon to supply timber so that repairs could be carried out at Work Parties. Susan also noted the need for the replacement of the fence in the long term and asked whether allowance could be made for this in the budget.

Jon replied that there was only £22,000 left in the Bristol Park's budget for this type of issue for the rest of the year. Bristol Parks operate a policy of Risk Assessments – any repairs that were needed were evaluated as being high, medium or low risk. High risk included those where if repairs were not carried out the result could be potentially fatal. On this scale the fence repairs would get a lower priority than many other items in the City. Jon noted that the state of the infrastructure was an issue in all parks due to lack of investment in the past.

Susan agreed that the issue was not an immediate risk but that it could become one in the future if action was not taken soon. Jon asked that if someone could send a photo of the fence he would talk to the contractors and see what he could do [Rob to take and send photos]. Susan and Rob agreed to look again at the fence and consider if the work could be done at the next work party.

Lower chimney repairs

Rob asked if the work to the top of the chimney had been programmed to be done this year as it had been raised as a risk in the Structural Report. Susan reported that last time work had been done loose stones had been knocked into the chimney and no repairs had been undertaken – she asked that proper repairs were done this time. Jon said he would look into this issue and report back. He noted that repairs to listed structures presented a problem because of difficulties in getting approval for the type of mortar to be used etc. He said that often budget constraints were such that it was necessary to remove loose stones to make a structure safe with the stones being stored for replacement at a later date when budgets allowed.

Post 5th November litter pick

Rob asked Jon to remind the contractors that it had been agreed with Gary that they would undertake a litter pick in the week after Nov 5th when fireworks made litter on the hill a particular problem. Jon to remind BCS.

Change to the maintenance profile

The litter pick issue led to a detailed discussion on the Maintenance Profile on the hill and the arrangements that had been put in place for this year. Rob noted that after some initial problems and a lull in the summer due to holidays maintenance had generally been good.

Jon explained the difficulties in matching the work required on the Nature Reserve into a contract that covered all parks in Bristol East and North East. He noted that whereas the budget for Parks maintenance in Bristol South in 1989 was £1.3m, the whole City was now covered for the same sum.

At this point the issue of vandalism was raised and concern was expressed about the closure of youth clubs. Jon replied that Parks tried where possible to work with youth groups to get them involved. The example of Sally's path clearing with pupils from the City Academy in 2003 was raised.

Returning to the Maintenance Profile it was agreed that Rob, Sally, Jon and hopefully Gary's replacement would meet to discuss possible revisions to be incorporated next year.

Trees /sight lines

Susan summarized the situation and the meeting that had been held with Richard Ennion to discuss cutting selected trees to re-establish a view from MROS. She reported that it had been agreed that a further meeting would be held when the trees had lost their leaves. She reported that Richard had pointed out that there was no

money in this year's budget but that the work could be done if the group was able to raise the money.

There then followed a wide ranging discussion on budgets and how Bristol Parks spend money. Jon pointed out that it was sometimes necessary to spend money on consultations, research and publicity to engage with the public and get their views so that Bristol Parks could access different sources of funding.

Returning to the trees Susan reported that Friends of Troopers Hill had already received a donation for tree cutting.

There was discussion on how the view would be maintained once the initial cutting had been completed. This was suggested as an opportunity for youth involvement. Sally and Susan to investigate if schools or youth groups can be involved in work parties as in 2003. In response to a suggestion, Sally noted that it was preferable not to use poisons on the nature reserve to kill tree stumps.

Jon asked Susan to check with Richard if there would be any planning issues related to cutting these trees. It would be preferable to give people an opportunity to object.

Feedback and plans for work parties

Susan reported that Gillian had kindly donated some timber for use on the hill, possibly for benches. Jon raised concern about splinters which Susan accepted might be a problem. Jon asked whether it could be cut for fence repairs. Rob suggested using it for the planned new steps. Rob, Susan and Gill to agree the best use for the timber.

Rob asked whether Jon was happy for the current system of Risk Assessments to continue pending the introduction of Bristol Park's new procedures. Jon confirmed that as long as Bristol Parks were kept informed then work parties would continue to be covered by their insurance.

SWEET Application Update

Sally explained that the joint application for a grant with Eastwood Farm had been made to SWEET (South West England Environmental Trust). SWEET acts as an intermediary between groups applying for grants and landfill companies who are able to give money from landfill tax for use in their areas. ENTRUST is the national body that regulates the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme. [Note - The landfill tax credit scheme was introduced with the landfill tax in October 1996 and enables landfill site operators to donate up to 6.0 per cent of their landfill tax liability to environmental projects in return for a 90 per cent tax credit.]

SWEET had passed the grant on to YANSEC (Yanley and N.Somerest Environmental Trust) who distribute money for the landfill operator in Long Ashton to projects within a 10 mile radius. Sally reported that YANSEC may choose to spread any award over the year rather than giving a one off grant.

Sally then detailed what had been included in the grant application which was for £5,500 and had been scaled down from the original proposal. The application covered a wheelchair path to the chimney, benches, events and new leaflets for the site. There was general discussion on each of these items and in particular the design of the wheelchair path. It was agreed that a tarmac path would not be appropriate unless coated to improve its appearance.

While discussing disabled access Jon noted that he was happy to give gate keys to anyone requiring wheelchair access on to MROS. Kit to include this in next Newsletter.

Rob asked those present who lived near MROS whether the new gates had been successful in preventing motorcycle access. It was reported that they had. Rob then asked for the meeting's view on chaining open the gate between MROS and the hill. He suggested that this could be done as a short term measure and the gate could be closed again if any problems became apparent. If successful the gate and temporary fence arrangement could be removed. Jon confirmed that Bristol Parks would be happy with this arrangement. No one else present raised any objection. Rob to chain gate open using existing padlock. It was agreed that the situation would be reviewed at the next meeting. [Note – in accordance with the Management Plan the design of the wheelchair path to the chimney assumes that this gate is removed and does not allow for a wheelchair accessible gate at this point.]

Malvern Rd Open Space Update

Susan reported that a meeting was to be held on **30th November at 6pm in Wesley Memorial Church Hall**. The meeting would be led by John Knowlson and invites would go to all those who responded to the questionnaire and were happy to be contacted again. Susan to ensure all present would get an invite.

Susan noted that there was no money available from Bristol Parks but grants could be applied for from external sources. Susan expressed the hope that someone at the meeting would volunteer to take the issues forward.

A general discussion followed on ideas for MROS. It was agreed that the current situation with the lack of swings was unacceptable. Jon noted that due to safety considerations any repairs had to be done properly to British Standards. Possible routes for a path from Summerhill Terrace were discussed. It was noted that there was no worn path because people had to zig-zag round the dog mess. Jon outlined the powers of council officers relating to dog mess and urged that persistent offenders should be reported, car registration numbers should be recorded.

Positive Issues

Jon asked if he could be allowed to raise some positive issues.

He referred to the Green Flag Scheme and said that he believed Troopers Hill may qualify at least in the Green Pennant category given the quality of the Management Plan. This would raise the profile of the site and may help with future funding. There was general support for this from the meeting. Sally and Susan to investigate Green Flag Scheme.

Jon also suggested that Troopers Hill could get involved in the Bristol in Bloom competition again to raise the profile. Sally to investigate Bristol in Bloom.

At this point Susan noted that there was only 15 minutes left.

2005 events

Fungal Foray – Rob reported that this was now fully booked with over 30 people signed up.

AGM - Content

Susan noted that last year's AGM included a slide show, there was general support for this to be repeated and for there to be a mini history exhibition. Susan reported that Mike had generously donated three books from Butlers Tar Works to the Friends' library to be added to the book donated at the September event. Susan to prepare list of Friends' assets for AGM Rob to produce slide show

AGM – Friends’ Officers

Susan reported to the meeting that David Gladden had offered his resignation as secretary due to time pressures from work and family commitments.

Susan asked for her thanks to David to be recorded for his efforts since the founding of the Friends and in particular for the fantastic job he had done in writing the Newsletter and establishing its style and format, his input would be sadly missed.

It will be necessary to find a replacement secretary at the AGM but Susan stressed that no-one should feel under pressure to stand and that she would like to see as many people as possible at the AGM.

Events for 2006/Money/Fundraising/Next Newsletter

Due to time pressure discussion on these was held over to future meetings.

Dates and Venues for future meetings

- **AGM Wednesday 7th December, 7.15pm**
- **Thursday 19th Jan 2006, 7.15pm**
- **Malvern Road Open Space Meeting - Wednesday 30th Nov 6pm**
- **All above to be held at Wesley Memorial Church, Bryants Hill**