

MINUTES OF MEETING OF FRIENDS' of TROOPERS' HILL, 30/6/05

Present: Susan (Chair), Helen, Liz, Kit, Rob, David, Liz, Alan, Val and Maureen.

Apologies: Norman, Fran, Sally.

Outstanding Actions: These items to be dealt with in context of the meeting agenda excepting the Grayling grant which cannot be addressed because Sally is absent.

Malvern Road Open Space Update: A meeting is being organised for the 17 people who indicated on their questionnaire responses that they were interested in helping organise future events related to MROS. The meeting to be Thursday 28/7 at Wesleyan Chapel. Sally or Richard Fletcher to attend and conduct a similar group exercise to the one we were originally involved in at the initiation of the FOTH meetings. All committee members welcome to attend. The overall aim of this exercise is to create a sub-group that will direct both events and policy in relation to MROS. Some discussion amongst members regarding whether this would lead to the eventual independence of the MROS sub group but the consensus was that overall it was a positive development.

Air Balloon School Project: Susan told the group that the Infants Summer Fair, 9/7, had agreed to find space for the gazebo with the children's decorations. Various people volunteered to help put it up, take it down and man it as Rob and Susan are on holiday then.

Grayling Butterfly: Alex has got 3 volunteers to continue the transects on the Hill and is currently applying for grants to continue the monitoring in 2006.

Mailing: Kit reported his doubts on the efficacy of the E mail distribution of the newsletter. General discussion about way forward in which various members volunteered to deliver more by hand and decision to revert to old system was therefore made. Sally to print off copies for next time as a result. Kit suggested printing off a large print version for the older readers.

Recent events: Helen's plant walk had gone well despite her feeling somewhat *on show* during the event. She is happy to do another but only once a year. The Bat and Moth evening had been a great success, while only a few bats were seen, over 80 species of moth were identified. The Royate Hill visit and the Anniversary Celebration and Visit to the Bathhouse had gone well and a profit had been made on the catering for the later event.

Future events: the Tower Belle boat trip along the Avon was due to take place on the 6/7 during which Rob will do a short talk at the appropriate point on Troopers Hill.

Willsbridge Wildways Walk 7pm – 9pm on the 7/7 contact John Morris.

BBQ at Rob and Susan's 20/8 as apt of the Wildways Walk around Troopers Hill.

Balloon Fiesta Story Telling event 13/8 – Cassandra Wye has been booked to provide children with a wildlife story. The two gazebos will be erected at a distance apart on the Hill, one as a start/information/refreshment point, the other for storytelling. Help was required to execute these plans. Val and Helen volunteered (and Gary Ratcliffe was volunteered in absentia!) Set up for this event to be at 2pm.

Photo/Memorabilia Display 17/9 – this would use John Cornwell's photos and it was hoped the BEAA would join in and possibly provide a BBQ. However at present this is an unconfirmed arrangement.

Fungal Foray, 22/10

Issues for Gary: the ongoing problem of the delayed gate at Malvern Road – the contractor has had the contract for 5 weeks – still no sign of its arrival.

Rob reported the fitting of 2 new dog bins on the Hill inside the Malvern Road entrance and at the bottom by the Crew's Hole Road entrance. The Hill he said was tidier than it had been for a while – the contractors had spent a considerable time on it over the last few weeks – grass had been cut, paths sorted, litter picked, and motorbikes removed.

Work Parties: The agenda for the next work party (Sat 2/7) was cutting bramble in Sally's glade, and then moving on to holm oak thinning and bracken clearance. BCC have now sorted out their policy on Health and Safety and so we need training in the next few months – possibly the September session.

Sweet Application: no news!

Money: a balance sheet from Val was circulated, although the situation is complicated by the fact that various monies had not yet got to the account and similarly there were several bills yet to be paid it was quickly totted up that we currently have £98.87. This excludes £130 which is exclusively reserved to go towards a new bench.

There followed a varied debate on the current situation which focussed in the main on whether or not BCC gave us enough money and how best to increase this source of income. It became obvious that sums received from BCC for mailing and room hire on a claim by claim basis could in fact be aggregated to establish a “no strings attached” annual grant. Some members felt that this was not enough and a more aggressive bargaining strategy was perhaps called for. Others felt that this might be ill advised. There was no clear consensus.

If and when we get the SWEET grant we will need to find 10% of the total ourselves. Discussion focussed around a sheet from Helen detailing possible methods of raising money. Kit suggested a Sponsored Balloon Race on the 13/8 and perhaps selling cheap toys. Kit agreed to investigate these ideas.

Selling sugary junk food to children was highlighted as a good source of income at events, also the provision of collection boxes at each event might help boost income.

Liz suggested selling books via The Book Barn opposite Arnos Vale Cemetery and suggested a newsletter item asking for second hand books. Maureen, Liz and Val volunteered to sort out those books that appear.

Helen suggested a raft or duck race on the river – concerns were raised over H&S considerations.

Kit will collate all our ideas for the next meeting so please send any more to him.

Newsletter: this will need to be produced in draft form at least before 24/7.

Next Meetings: Tues. 9/8 and Weds. 14/9 at new start time of 7.15pm at Wesleyan Chapel, Bryants Hill.