

NOTE OF MEETING

**Tuesday 23 January 2007 7.15pm
Wesley Memorial Church, Bryants Hill**



Present: Susan (Chair,) Roger, Carol, Ben, Jen, Vernon, Phyll, Anne, Val, Liz, Alan, Rob, Judith, Phil Williamson (Bristol Parks), Nick, Sally Oldfield (Local Nature Reserves Officer), Maureen, Roy

Apologies: Helen, Kit, Paula

Outstanding actions from the previous minutes

Any outstanding actions to be addressed during the meeting. The previous minutes were approved.

Green Flag Application

Phil Williamson from Bristol Parks gave a short presentation about the Green Flag Award, explained how far along the application process we are and what still needs to be done. The closing date for submission is the end of January, by which time Phil will have “reshuffled” our management plan sufficiently to fit it within the wider council view. A meeting has been arranged on Saturday 27 January at 1 pm to discuss the current draft and offer any amendments before it is finalised. For the purposes of the award, the site has been divided into eleven compartments so that each has its own management needs. The plan would need to be reviewed yearly.

The results for the ‘desk assessment’ of the management plan will be available in April, the judging of the site assessment will take place in May and the results of this will be available in August. If successful, we will need to fly a flag and display the certificate. If we are not lucky this year, we will be given guidelines for future success.

Before the site assessment takes place, certain work was outlined to take place by contractors using money now available because of the Green Flag Award:

- Reduce scrub, brambles and trees by the end of February due to bird nesting
- Reduce dogwood at the entrance of Malvern Road
- Reduce bramble along the allotment edge and the edge of Greendown, leaving a margin
- Reduce bramble at the site of the lower chimney.
- Willow and Sycamore near the entrance to Sally’s glade to be coppiced
- Remove bramble and 50% of birch trees from near Sally’s glade

All cuttings will be removed from site to reduce the nutrients available to species unwelcome on the hill and avoid succession.

Phil proposed new lectern-style signs at the three main entrances to the hill. The smaller ones are to be kept at the two smaller entrances on Troopers Hill Road and the three to be taken down will be kept by FOTH in case of damage. The meeting expressed the importance of keeping an A4 sized clip frame on each of the new signs.

Wheelchair Access Path

The council is guided by the Access Officer who stipulates that the path must be a hard surface as gravel will move due to the slope. Phil said there is a good chance that the Access Team will be able to provide funds for a ‘Resin-bound surface’ consisting of a tarmac base with resin-bound, coloured gravel on the top. If they are unable to find the £10,000 required, the alternative is to use Bredon gravel, which is cheaper but would require more regular maintenance. The plan for the path layout is still as at the AGM, with a maximum width of up to 1.8 m.

Any issues to be passed to John Threadgold

John is to continue with the issues of motorbike-accessible gates and woodchip for the Summerhill Terrace entrance. Plant eradication, including knotweed, is now part of the five year management plan.

Agreement between FOTH and Bristol Parks

The agreement has now been written and will be available in printed copy and via e-mail once typing errors etc have been rectified. Susan gave a brief outline of the content and the response times promised and it was agreed by the attendees.

Invertebrates Survey

A new invertebrate survey was undertaken by David Gibbs during the Spring and Summer of 2006. The report will be e-mailed to Rob to post on the website (DONE) but Sally Oldfield gave a very brief overview of the findings:

- 276 species of invertebrate on the hill
- 23 of these are of conservation significance
- 5 of these are in the red data book
- The quality of diversity is high and has not appreciably degraded since the last survey taken in 2000; however, the two rarest species found in the last survey were not identified in this one.

There was one species found that is new to Britain, *Phytomyza sedi*; 18 male "tiny, dull, black flies" with a 1.8 mm wingspan were identified near the lower chimney.

David gave some conservation recommendations that would favour the invertebrate species:

- Cutting down trees and scrubland as grassland is of the most significance
- Removing bramble from the gully
- Removing some of the broom from the hill
- Remove all cuttings from site

In addition to this, Nick gave details of another new species for Troopers Hill. *Polytrichum commune* var. *commune* is a moss found on damp moors and heath and the next nearest site known for it is in North Somerset. Nick provided an information sheet about where it can be found on the hill. (This is now on our website – Susan).

Leaflet Design

Rob showed the meeting the current draft of the new leaflet but, due to lack of time, a meeting has been arranged on 8 February at 7 pm at 3 Corkers Hill, St George for further discussion of text and other content. It was agreed that the Friends of Troopers Hill logo would not be changed.

Events for 2007

The Events leaflet for 2007 has been drafted although Music on the Hill has not yet been confirmed. The meeting discussed the possibility of using money donated by Somerfield last year to pay the £250 for the band. It was agreed that this would go ahead. The leaflet will be distributed with the next newsletter.

In addition to the events listed, Barton Hill History group are holding an exhibition on 24 March 2007 at Bethesda Church. Phyll, Vernon and Alan will be manning the stand for Friends of Troopers Hill. Others will be checking their diaries. (Note from Susan - more volunteers please to give P, V and A some breaks). The theme will be "Then and Now".

Quiz Night

This is to take place on Thursday 15 February 2007 at 7 pm for 7.30 pm at Beese's Tea Rooms. Teams are committed from Bristol Parks and other local Friends' groups and our own teams will be decided once we have a full list of attendees. The meeting was reminded that use of the ferry is subject to water levels. Ben and Jen will be standing at the top of the entrance on the St Ann's side on the night to guide attendees. There will also be members in the Conham Valley River Park carpark to guide people towards the footpath to the ferry to Beese's. Action: FOTH must confirm with Rob or Susan by 7 February so numbers for a light buffet at £2.50 each can be supplied to Lindy (also known as Ma Beeses).

Work Parties

There is an additional work party on Saturday 27 February to continue cutting bramble and saplings in an area close to Troopers Hill Road. Action: Rob to liaise with John Threadgold about the possibility of having large bags for removing cuttings from the hill. (Done – by Rob and Phil. A big thank you to John for such a speedy response and well done work party for completely filling the bags)

Change to Constitution

A change has been made to the constitution to reflect the decision made at the AGM about consultation. The paragraph about the Chair now reads

" Chairperson, who will act as the main contact and spokesperson for the group and who will keep meetings fair, unbiased and on time. Before responding on any issue where the group is consulted or asked for its views the Chairperson will consider views previously expressed by group members and carry out any further consultation that he/she considers reasonable in the time available."

Originally it read " Chairperson, who will act as the main contact and spokesperson for the group and who will keep meetings fair, unbiased and on time."

Susan has put together a draft policy statement which will be attached with the minutes of this meeting. Please let her know what you think

The message board has been reinstated on the website so that opinions can be gathered by the chair regarding any statements she makes on our behalf. The draft statement is there for you to view.

Susan has written on behalf of FOTH to the local councilor, Margaret Shovelton, stating that we strongly support the Parks Forum note to Bristol councillors recommending Bristol Parks receive an increase in funding for the year 2007-08. The details of this can be found on the Friends' Forum on the website and a copy is attached to these minutes.

Networking

A new conservation group is being set up as the Avon Valley Woodlands Friends. There will be a meeting on 13 February 2007 at 7.30 pm at Hanham Folk Centre for any who wish to attend.

Susan was invited to attend a party to commemorate the achievements of the Friends of Dundridge Park, which has had to disband. Susan was the only non-member invitee who was able to attend and felt very honoured to have been invited.

The Kilvey Hill Volunteers from Wales have given FOTH a book about the Copper industry in Swansea. If you wish to borrow this, or any other books that FOTH has now collected, please speak with Rob. A full list was provided at the AGM under the heading of "Assets". Another copy is attached to these minutes and Rob will put the list on the website.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 8 March 2007 7.15pm prompt at Wesley Memorial Church.