



**Friends of
Troopers Hill**

NOTE OF MEETING

**Thursday 10 July, 2008
Wesley Memorial Church, Bryants Hill**

Present: Susan (Chair) Rob (WPO) Jude (Treas) Kit (Memb Sec) Sally (BCC) Roy, Gill, Maureen, Pauline, Anne, Chris. Julie (HEART), Helen (minutes)

Apologies: John T, Claire A, Fabian, Laura.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved. It was agreed that any actions outstanding would be addressed as they arose on the Agenda for this meeting.

Green Flag – appearance

John T had provided fittings to replace the cable ties that could not be tested as the weather had been too windy. Rob suggested removing the top arm at a future Work Party. This time next week there will be an announcement about the 2008 Green Flag award. Judges' scores will become available later in the summer.

[Note – it was subsequently announced that Troopers Hill LNR has been awarded a 2008 Green Flag]. The new flag would be flown subject to modifications to the flag pole and arm.

New Community Parks Manager (CPM)/Bristol Parks reorganisation

Claire Adams has been appointed to succeed John T following his forthcoming retirement. She has already been assisting in that capacity for some six months, so already knows Troopers Hill LNR and its Friends. From 1 April next year the Bristol Contract Services personnel would work directly to Bristol Parks rather than through a contractor. A general reorganisation of the Council Parks is proposed so that their areas would align with the neighbourhood partnerships areas.

Any issues and thank yous on Troopers Hill to be passed to CPM

Following the collapse of the kissing gate at the Greendown entrance, works to the replacement fence and gate had become urgent. Susan was seeking clarification of whether the work could be done by August, meanwhile CPM was attempting to replace the existing gate as soon as possible, and it was explained the replacement gate could later be re-used for another entrance, specifically, the access to/from Lamb Hill. It was reported that someone on a motor cycle had finally removed the gate, however, it was already rotten. Julian had put a red and white bar across on Monday morning to exclude motor bikes as far as possible.

Action: Rob and Susan to continue pressing the CPM for a date for the works.

Overhanging vegetation on Troopers Hill Road was discussed. The hedges were due to be cut in the next few weeks. Anne said that the edges of the path up from the entrance opposite her house had become overgrown with long grass. Rob and Sally confirmed that the grassy area near Greendown would receive a hay cut at the end of July.

Action: Susan to ensure CPM is aware of the particular problem with overhanging trees.

There had been conflicting comments about letting the grass grow and the need for it to be cut. Julian advised that close mowing around features helped the LNR look cared for and accessibility maintained.

Dog owners had reported the occurrence of ticks after being in the longer grass on the LNR. Sally commented that ticks are normally associated with bracken. The recognition and methods of dealing with ticks were discussed.

Special thanks were expressed to Julian for keeping the paths clear in and around the LNR. The Troopers Hill maintenance team had been runners-up for the Community and Leisure Services team award.

Work parties completed since the last meeting:

Saturday 7 work party (morning) had tackled the edges of areas of bracken growing amongst the heather so that Julian could remove the large extents. Wednesday 25 June (evening) - the work party had taken out saplings near paths and cut a drainage channel (as discussed at the Friends' meeting of 28 May) near the steps above the nursery.

Saturday 5 July (morning) was spent pulling ivy off rock face in the gully, trimmed bracken near gully and cut bramble, saplings and silver birch in Sally's Glade.

Next work parties

Thursday 17 July 7pm to be followed by a trip to Beeses (weather permitting)

Saturday 2 August 10am

Thursday 21 August 7 pm

Rob was monitoring attendance at evening work parties with a view to considering their future next year.

Saturday 28 June – Trooping the Hill and Music on the Hill

The meeting expressed thanks to Sally for organizing the Trooping event. It was reported that Kit had attended four preparatory sessions and it had been a big joint effort. About 50 children had participated. Sally reported complimentary feedback from the Beaver, Cub and Scout leaders. Special mention was made concerning Julie from Avon Wildlife trust who had led the educational activities involving recycling and nature. Martin Maudsley and his musical colleagues attracted huge praise. Preparation and execution of the event had in total cost around £3,300.

Because of the direction of the wind the Music on the Hill it could be heard in various locations to the east but there had been no complaints.

Roy commented it had been the best day that had been hosted on the LNR, attended by large numbers of people, including youngsters and people fresh

to the Hill. It was the final concert by the band in its present form. It was recognized that everyone that participated deserved thanks for volunteering. Rob showed the photographs of the events that he had posted on the web site.

For the future, it was remarked that the two events could have been closer together on the day to enable families to stay through, however, this was probably not achievable given the practicalities of having the events in closer succession.

Action: Friends to encourage people who had made positive remarks to post some of them on the forum.

Sunday 8th and 29th June – Chair reported that the Tai Chi had been very popular and had attracted 24 and 27 participants respectively. Those attending had indicated a strong interest in a regular tai chi class. Chair requested those attending the two forthcoming sessions to arrive promptly before the start time, if they were not intending to be present for the preliminary talk on Troopers Hill.

Action: Chair to investigate availability of suitable accommodation in conjunction with Bristol School of Tai Chi.

Saturday 31st May - Avon Gardens Trust Walk (Bath House, Strawberry Lane)
The event had proved very enjoyable and had attracted a donation of £50 from the Trust. Rob reported that the English Heritage listing of the bath house would not be upgraded, but the listing had been changed to reflect the latest information, and the existence of the garden had been acknowledged. Rob was planning to hold a meeting of interested parties to discuss next steps.

Tuesday 1st July - Youth Hostel Group Walk

Following a commitment made at the Promises Auction in St Aidans, Rob and Susan had led the walk, which had finished up at Beeses.

Next Events

Eastwood Farm poetry event 17 August.

Tai Chi – 20th July and 10th August at 10.00 am

Bugs and Beasties – Saturday 9th August – a preparation session for crafts to be offered at the event would take place at Rob and Susan's house, Tuesday 15 July at 7.30 pm

Eastwood Farm Event on Sunday 31 August. The event would need volunteers and anyone interested in participating was advised to contact Rob.

It was suggested that Friends needed their own event insurance (other than for work parties and guided walks) to avoid the need for a representative from the Council to attend events. Friends resisted the suggestion. After some discussion, it was suggested that it would suffice for a "competent person" to be present. A "competent" person would be any member of FOTH trained and authorised by Parks. There are already members of FOTH who are 'competent' to lead walks and run work parties.

Sally to investigate the availability of cover by Council officials for future events.

For the future, it was proposed that the Sealed Knot be asked about a Civil War re-enactment on the Hill. It was recognized that such an event takes a lot of effort and organizing by Friends and the burden normally fell on just a few.

Action: Maureen to ask her contact about it so that Friends could explore the possibility further. [Note – this avenue has since been explored and found probably to be too expensive for Friends to host].

Dog Show on the Field 12 October 2008.

It was envisaged that this would be a Family Fun event to encourage the involvement of children and responsible dog ownership. A small amount might be charged for entry to the classes. FOTH would make a donation to HEART in return for assistance with the show. Julie said she had obtained sponsorship for rosettes and perhaps a few prizes from Lucas Vets. The contest would comprise novelty classes with maybe a very low-key agility contest and a 'child handler' class. Insurance might be available, if necessary, from the Kennel Club. It was proposed to invite the RSPCA and PDSA.

Action: Kit and Julie to take forward the planning and organizing. Kit to sort out the PA. Julie to provide a schedule before the August meeting

Action: Jude to contact Guide Dogs for the Blind

Action: Sally to investigate availability from a BCC representation

Chair reminded the meeting that there would be a public meeting of the St George Neighbourhood Partnership on 23rd July and offered to take forward Friends' views on their three top priorities for St George.

Action: Friends either to attend the meeting or e-mail Susan with their priorities for services in St George.

Next Newsletter

Kit said the next edition would be produced in mid-September

Action: Rob and Susan to ask the Scouts for an article on Trooping the Hill.