

Lottery Players protecting Troopers Hill

Thanks to National Lottery players over £20,000 of work has been carried on Troopers Hill during this past winter and spring. More will be spent over the remainder of this year.

This project, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, is called "Protecting Nature". A record of progress on the project can be seen on www.troopers-hill.org.uk/waystonature. The most visible impact so far has been the conservation work carried out over winter, reported in January's St George & Redfield Voice, and the new fencing and gates on Troopers Hill Rd.

The old rotting wooden fencing and gates are now a swiftly vanishing memory. They had been in place since the 1990s and were on the point of falling. A collapse of the fence would have left the Local Nature Reserve open to access by motorbikes. This would have represented a danger to the people and dogs using the Hill and had a severe, negative impact on the site's ecology. Local people responded to the Friends of Troopers Hill survey in 2017 strongly supporting the replacement of the fence with metal estate fencing and gates. This was part of the evidence of need and support for the work, presented in the original application for funding in 2018.

Next to appear will be a beautiful interpretation board about the fungi to be found on Troopers Hill. Designed by Clare Challice of Inkwood Design, with artwork by Abi Stubbs, this interpretation board will not only describe some of the interesting, sometime beautiful, fungi found on Troopers Hill, it will also acknowledge the contribution of Justin Smith, mycologist, who recorded many of those fungi and sparked people's interest as he led guided walks across Troopers Hill.

Other funded work included a Dawn Chorus walk led by ornithologist Ed Drewitt in April and the first of 4 planned invertebrate survey visits to by entomologist David Gibbs. During his visit David identified a species new to Troopers Hill and unrecorded in this country for more than 10 years. His find was a male *Dasystema salicella*, a day-flying moth.

Last month's issue of St George & Redfield Voice highlighted the funded outdoor learning visits from the Hive, a drop-in centre for adults with learning disabilities. Bristol Natural Learners hosted another session in June, this time looking at plants.

During Bristol Balloon Fiesta weekend, on Saturday 10th August, from 4pm, the funding will be helping the Friends of Troopers Hill run their Bugs and Beasties event. They will be supplying nets, bug pots and the skills of expert, Rupert Higgins, to identify your finds. The Bristol Astronomical Society will be there to help you make solar observations. For those who enjoy puzzles, Young Rangers from the Future Proofing Parks project will be offering a Scavenger Hunt. Bristol Natural Learners will be hosting nature-themed activities. We are hoping for good weather so people can stay on with a picnic and watch the hot air balloon ascent from Ashton Court. As ever, the advice is to walk, cycle or take the bus to Troopers Hill, there is no onsite parking.

Your help is very much needed to care for this wonderful site. Why not come along to the next Friends of Troopers Hill conservation work party and learn about the new conservation management plan that guides all the work carried out on Troopers Hill.

There is a conservation work party on the 1st Saturday and 3rd Thursday of every month, starting promptly at 10am and finishing at noon. The volunteers meet by the red slide on Troopers Hill Field.