

MINUTES OF MEETING OF FRIENDS' of TROOPERS' HILL 26/1/05

Present: Rob, Liz, Alan, Hilary, Fern, Carol, Fran, David, Susan (Chair), Helen, Sally, Liz and David Read, and Maureen. Apologies from Norman and Val.

Minutes of Previous Meetings: these were approved with the single amendment that David had given his apologies for the AGM.

Susan reported that most outstanding actions had now been resolved. The most significant being that A4A had given approval for us to move grant money from one heading to another in order to spend as much of it as possible by the end of April. The venue and date of the February meeting had been agreed – see end of minutes for details.

St. George Community Farm: Susan introduced Fern and Hilary from the Community Farm group. Fern then went onto speak of the background to the plan and explained that he hoped to be able to rent the western half of the allotments to the north of the Hill for the siting of an urban farm on the lines of Windmill Hill. He said he hoped it would have rare chicken breeds, an orchard, and a small visitor centre. Their group had over 100 members with support coming in all the time from the local area. He explained that renting this land could nonetheless be the tricky part of the business as Bristol City Council (BCC) would not let the Bristol East Allotment Association (BEAA) sub let a plot of this size. In addition to that BEAA were very suspicious of the Community Farm Group's motives and relations between the two groups were now at a low point. Decisions about his proposal were to be made at a meeting of the BEAA next week (w/b 31/1/05) to which he was not invited.

There followed a lengthy discussion about the impact of the proposed farm site on both the Hill and the Malvern Road Open Space. A consensus emerged within the meeting that Fern's proposal for vehicular access via the Malvern Road gate and an 8 car parking lot on the south-western edge of the farm would probably be opposed by the group. However, there was a general feeling within the meeting that a development of this kind managed with due environmental concern would be a very positive step for such a densely built, urban area as St George.

Rob requested that the Farm Group and their proposals be mentioned in the next newsletter and local reaction garnered.

Malvern Road Open Space: Susan reported on a working party meeting attended by Maureen, Liz, Carol and herself saying that a questionnaire had been designed to use to canvas opinions from upto 1000 local households on the future for the space. Its circulation would be done with the backing of Bristol Parks.

Events for 2005: Susan took the meeting through a spreadsheet of dates and events prepared by Rob with the following results

- Kids Storytelling – rejected
- Family Event at Easter – low key display to coincide with service on Hill, Susan to liaise with Robbie
- Dawn Chorus walk timed for Sun. 8/5 with a pre- event meeting on Thursday 5/5 – venue and time to be confirmed. Liz R. volunteered to be present at meeting to facilitate event as Rob and Susan are away.
- Family Event for Balloon Fiesta Sat. 13/8 with Martin Maudsley. Susan asked Sally to tie the man down to a definite commitment for this day soon given his grasshopper-like reluctance(!) to sit in one place for very long.
- Bugs and Beasties – rejected
- Guided Walk for Adults: to look at flowering plants on the Hill led by Helen hopefully on the Whit Bank holiday (30/5) – date to be confirmed
- Night Time Moth Hunt – sometime in late June, date to be arranged with Moth group Sally to confirm date in due course.
- Fungal Foray – in October date to be set with Justin Smith
- Dog Show - timed provisionally to coincide with Farm Group's Fete on Malvern Road OS on 18/6. Joan Greenaway to be approached by Rob, David agreed to help with organisation.
- Exchange visits – these to go ahead as planned with the Hill the last of 6 walks on 20/8 under the generic title Wildways. First is planned for 19/3 at Golden Valley in Wick. Some limited mention in newsletter was requested.

This agenda item was suspended at this point because of time pressure – it will be completed at the next meeting.

Issues for Gary: none.

Feedback and plans for work parties: Rob passed around a series of photos showing action at the last work party. The February work party will be the Holm Oak Hunt when the evergreen interloper will be identified and cut down.

Rob showed the meeting examples of information sheets on Magpies which he will be placing in the spaces on the new noticeboards. He introduced the idea of a competition to facilitate the production of a number of these kinds of sheets (copyright waived presumably!) with wildlife oriented prizes in 3 categories : primary and secondary children and adults.

SWEET application: Sally gave us the latest on this grant application which is to finance the disabled access proposals as well as more information boards. The first stage has been completed but it may yet be returned for resubmission under a different hand. In any event we will not hear the outcome for at least 3 months.

Susan said her application for the Somerfield charity money had been rejected.

History Project: Sally reported sustained progress on this issue at Air Balloon Hill Junior school now that contact had been made with a class teacher. More news was likely for the next meeting once planning sessions with this teacher had been completed.

Parks Forum/Celebration Event: This event is to be at the County Ground, Gloucester Road, Horfield on Sat 5 March where Rob and Susan would be presenting an illustrated talk on Troopers Hill in the afternoon. All are welcome, indeed encouraged to attend!

St. George Partnership meeting: the next meeting is Fri. 28/1 to discuss reforming the group. Although Fern was going on behalf of the Farm Group the meeting agreed to Susan's proposal to send our apologies whilst nonetheless asking those involved to keep us informed of developments.

Issues for the next Newsletter: David said that he anticipated that the next newsletter would be out by the end of the first week of February and asked for any issues people wanted including besides those already covered in this meeting. The following were mentioned and noted:

- Virginia's death (7/12) and funeral (15/12)
- AGM report
- Upgraded website
- Details of the 21/1 work party with particular focus on Carl Read's comments to Susan!

Date of next meeting: Thursday, 24/2 7pm at Methodist Church, Bryants Hill.

AOB: Susan said that the inclusion of AOB as an agenda item would be discontinued after this meeting as this would encourage people to put items they wanted addressed on the agenda ahead of meetings and of course meetings would be easier for the Chair to time.

David asked about the listing of the chimney. There was no further progress to report. He and Susan wondered if we could interest the Kingswood Industrial Archaeological History Society in it.

Susan reported the arrival of the two "Beware Deer crossing" signs at the bottom of Troopers Hill road in November.