

NOTE OF MEETING

Thursday June 25th 7.15 – 9pm

Online Zoom Meeting

Attendees: Rob, Susan, Rod, Margret, Freya, Skye, Tyler, Kit

1. Approve January Minutes

The January minutes were approved.

2. Troopers Hill Young Rangers (Future Proof Parks)

a. Review of art competition

Skye explained the art competition was very successful and received lots of likes on Instagram. Tin Stanton was the winner and is making available prints of the winning entry for £30 each, £10 of which will go towards Troopers Hill. Susan will ask Tin if he has a preference for how the money should be spent.

The competition trophy was paid for by Didac Woodwise Academy. Susan asked if Didac could make a trophy, but instead, they offered to pay for it.

b. Collating Surveys

Tyler has been collating the results of the David Gibbs invertebrates survey for the regional environmental records centre to use.

Tyler has also been gathering information from surveys to use on the Troopers Hill website. He has been going through all the surveys to find pictures of each of the species found on Troopers Hill so that they can be listed.

c. Preparation for physical art competition

Amy Walsh (Young Rangers co-ordinator) will print, laminate and whole punch the winning competition entries.

Susan asked the Young Rangers if they would be interested in attending a specific work party for Young Rangers. The consensus was that they did not really mind. Susan will follow up with them.

3. Projects

a. Progress on Access to Nature (Paths)

Rob explained the new paths are almost finished, are now open and being used.

There is some final work to complete which includes edging, replacing some topsoil and collecting plastic barriers.

Rob had met Councillor Nicola Beach in the Field. She was very pleased and passed on good feedback from locals who were initially worried about how the new paths might look, saying actually they are fine. Also, good feedback from a local wheelchair user saying that she was able to access Troopers Hill for the first time in a long time.

The leftover money project money will be used to repair some potholes and add extra tarmac to the path where it joins Troopers Hill.

Where the contractors altered the mounds to undertake the works, it has made it easier for the brownies planting session as there will be less to dig and turnover.

b. Protecting Nature (update on expenditure)

£1,015 left over at the end of the project.

4. Troopers Hill and “Black Lives Matter”

Inspired by recent events, Rob did some research into the history of Troopers Hill and specifically links with the slave trade.

Rob found the Elton family (Abraham Elton the 1st, 2nd and 3rd) who were owners of the hill in 1700's were involved in the slave trade industry and traded brass and copper for slaves from Africa.

Rob felt this is something we should acknowledge and has updated the history and timeline page of the website with more information.

5. Litter and anti-social behaviour

During the lockdown restrictions there has been more litter on Troopers Hill than ever before. The hill is however being kept tidy and clean by a group of volunteers who are doing litter picks each day. The council has also increased the frequency of bin collections.

There has been some antisocial behaviour by people using BBQ's and the odd fire. Susan explained that overall, the public have been great and contacting the police and fire brigade when appropriate.

6. Troopers Hill Local Nature Reserve

a. Greendown Oak

About a month ago, Rob had a report that the Greendown Oak tree had collapsed. After Susan called the parks team, they were on-site within a few hours and cut the tree down because it was unsafe. Susan made an effort to keep people up-to date with what was happening on Facebook. There was no negative comments or feedback.

Some logs, stumps and parts of the tree have been left. A local resident said it was good to see children and families still playing on it.

b. Bristol Parks conservation work

The main work the parks team should be doing is cutting back bracken. Before June, they said they would be on-site to do this, but they have not been yet. Susan will check with them.

Unfortunately, Adrian Murdoch, one of the Bristol East parks supervisors recently passed away which means Pete will have a lot more work to do covering the area. Susan will ask about the bracken but is understandable if they are not able to get around to this.

The team have a done a great job clearing paths, the bins and the woodland path.

c. Repairs to steps

Rob is going to walk around the hill Jo McKenna of ParkWork to review the where the broken steps are.

d. Volunteer conservation work parties

Tomorrow, the first work party under the new social distancing protocols will be taking place. There will be a maximum of 6 people, a new method of handing out tools and cleaning up after work.

Tomorrow's session is a pilot with existing work party volunteers. If successful, Susan will create a rota and make sure it does not occur on the same time on the same day.

7. Troopers Hill Field

a. Walnut trees

In preparation for the possibility of ash die back killing the ash trees on Troopers Hill Field, there will walnut trees planted between them. There are now 4 allocated on a map so people can sponsor them.

b. Brownies – wildflower planting on Troopers Hill

This is now scheduled for next spring. All brownies meetings have stopped. Susan Barker from the Royal Horticultural Society met Freya to give guidance on what should and should not be planted. She also wrote Freya a briefing note to be used next spring.

c. Slide

The old slide surface is still in place. Susan will remind the council about it after the paths work is complete.

d. Broken tree hanging over fence from the allotments

The tree officer has been informed and will sort out.

8. Events

Past Events

a. Virtual Avon Valley Walk – Sunday 24th May – Twitter thread

Rob used photos of previous walks to post as a series of twitter posts to provide a virtual walk in place of the planned walk.

b. Virtual Wild Flower Walk – Friday 29th May

Susan sent an email with photos of wildflowers on Troopers Hill the Friends of Troopers Hill email list. The email included the what3words location of where the flowers can be found so people can find them using the app.

c. Troopers Hill Art Competition to celebrate 25 years as a Local Nature Reserve

The art competition was very successful and worked very well. There were 52 entries in total which can all be viewed on the website.

Future Events

d. Bugs and Beasties – Saturday 8th August

This event will not take place unless the rules change. Rob explained that we need to consider that if the rules do change, we need to give people sufficient notice, and the council will need at least 3 weeks' notice to get their bits signed. Will leave until the middle of July and review.

e. Moth night – Saturday 29th August

Similar situation to the above. Susan will contact Ray Barnett to review and ask if it's possible to the event with just 6 people.

9. Networking

a. St George & Redfield Voice

Susan explained the paper is not being published at present and very little is being posted on the St George & Redfield Voice Facebook page.

b. Posters

Susan has recently been creating the posters on Troopers Hill Freya will be able to do these again once the holidays start.

c. Ecological Emergency Meeting

Rob explained he is attending a meeting that will discuss how the parks forum will respond to the Ecological emergency. Rob is a member of a working group in the council who are producing an ecological emergency action plan. The aim is to raise the profile of nature and nature reserves in Bristol, get business involved and potentially get more funding. A first draft of the plan will be complete in July and submitted to the cabinet in September.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held from 7.15pm-9pm on Thursday 8th October as an online Zoom meeting.