



NOTE OF MEETING  
**Thursday, 28th July, 2022 7.15pm**  
**Online Zoom Meeting**

Present: Susan, Rob, Rod, Margaret, Freya, Elaine, Rosie, Dominic  
Apologies: Adam

**1. Approve May minutes**

The May minutes were approved.

**2. Projects**

- **Path to Troopers Hill Chimney from Troopers Hill Field** – the path has been completed and benches refitted. The red and white fencing was eventually removed.
- **Conservation work fundraiser/grant applications**– There has been no money added to the conservation work fundraiser but Susan has applied for a £5,000 grant to cover this work. The grant is offered for work that is beneficial for ecology or climate change, and Susan has applied on the basis that the removal of gorse would fit the criteria. She expects to hear in the next few weeks whether the application has been successful.
- **Public Art** – The meeting with Bricks to discuss this further has not yet taken place, due to their holiday and then Covid, but Rob hopes to arrange a meeting in August. The first step, if they go ahead, would be to apply for a small grant so that Bricks can scope out what the public art project might be.

**3. Nature Conservation work on Troopers Hill**

- **Nature Conservation work parties**–Rob reported that they had had a very useful work party with a group of sixth formers from Cabot Learning Federation in June, focusing mainly on clearing bracken but also taking out saplings in the gully. Other work parties in June also focused on taking out bracken and since then the Council have also cut back large areas of bracken. At the Parkwork work party in June they took out some blackthorn saplings in the area of grassland near Greendown. The July 23<sup>rd</sup> work party was cancelled due to Covid, as was the Parkwork work party today. Rob hopes to organise an extra work party in August.
- **Summer works from Bristol City** – The strimming back of the edges of the paths, by the Council, was done a bit later than usual with the result that the paths became rather overgrown. Since then it has been so dry that there has been no growth at all.

- **Troopers Hill Field – Nature Recovery**– The Council have done a survey of various sites which could be enhanced for wildlife, and Troopers Hill Field was one of the sites surveyed. They will announce which ones have been selected at the end of August.

Susan reported that they have received some negative feedback from a resident living near Troopers Hill Field, about the areas of grass that are being left uncut, as the resident feel this has led to brambles, nettles, etc growing in their garden. There was also concern about nettles near the play area, which Rob therefore cleared. Susan explained that the reason Parks do not trim near the play equipment is that this might damage the equipment.

Parks have also stopped using pesticides to control weeds as far as possible but they have identified a problem with weeds growing in the safety surfacing of play areas, in that when pulling up the weeds there is a danger of also pulling up the surfacing. They have, therefore, started using pesticides again in those areas. This problem applies to the older type of surfacing, such as in the play area. The newer surfacing under the slide does not have this problem, but it is considerably more expensive. Rosie asked whether the Council could use non-chemical weed killers, such as salt. Rob replied that they have looked at alternatives: salt would affect the grassland area.

#### 4. Events

- **Drop in gazebo – 29<sup>th</sup> May**–It was agreed that this went well and some useful conversations took place. The next one will be in October.
- **Wildflower Walk – Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> July** – Susan will probably cancel this as she is still feeling unwell with Covid
- **Bugs and Beasties – Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> August – 4pm** –Susan is waiting to hear back from Mali about whether she is able to provide some children’s activities for this event. Rupert will be there to help identify specimens as usual. Volunteers will be needed from 3pm to help put up gazebos and then to hand out nets and pots. Margaret, Rosie, Elaine and possibly Dominic all offered to help.

Susan usually books a portable toilet for this event but the firm that used to supply it (who would take it away the same day) are no longer active and she has not found another firm who provide the same service. Susan has emailed a contact in Parks in case they are aware of a supplier but, if not, she asked whether we should set up a tent and small toilet, for volunteers only, as has been done in the past. After discussion, it was decided not to do this. Susan also wondered whether she should still add the suggestion that people stay on the hill after the event to watch the balloons. It was agreed that she could still do this.

Rod asked if Susan has been in touch with Fiona about the Astronomical Society providing telescopes for solar observations, at this event. Susan said she had, and will check with Fiona that they are still able to come and also warn them about the lack of a toilet.

## 5. Troopers Hill Survey – 20 years on

Rob explained that in 2002 Sally Oldfield, the Nature Reserves officer at the Council, undertook a survey of local residents to ask their opinions about Troopers Hill. This was the first step in a process that led to Friends of Troopers Hill being set up in 2003. The survey asked questions such as how often they visited the hill and what they liked and did not like about the hill. There are links on the website to the report and some of the text answers:

<http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/plan/2002VisitorSurvey.pdf>  
<http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/plan/2002Responses.pdf>  
<http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/plan/2002Questions.pdf>

Rob suggested it would be a good idea to repeat the survey, 20 years on. The original survey had involved 1000 printed surveys with freepost envelopes being delivered to streets local to Troopers Hill, with copies also being made available in libraries and schools. Today, it would be done mainly through social media but there would still be a need to think about how to reach people who do not use social media or the internet. Rob would prefer not to tell people the results of the original survey at first, so that they did not have any preconceived ideas about what to say, but he could then produce a report afterwards comparing the two. There would be an explanation, though, that this was repeating a survey done twenty years ago.

Rosie suggested having the questionnaire ready to be handed out at the October gazebo. Other suggestions included publicity in local newspapers, community notice boards, and school newsletters. This could tie in with the work primary schools are doing on their local area. Fliers could be put through doors with details of the internet link and also a phone number people could call to request a printed copy if they do not have access to the internet. Susan asked for volunteers to deliver the fliers: Margaret and Freya (?) both said they could help. Rod also suggested putting information in local pubs.

Action: Rob will sort out getting the survey ready in time for the October gazebo and Susan will look into finding a local printer for the fliers. Dominic had quickly checked the price that a German company he knew of would charge: £42 for 1000 fliers. Susan would use this as a guide when obtaining quotes.

## 6. Networking

- **RHS South West in Bloom – IYN and Pride in Parks** – The assessment by RHS South West in Bloom has had to be postponed twice, due to Susan and Rob having Covid. Once a new date has been arranged, Susan will ask whether anyone is free to come to the assessment. Young people and people with young children are particularly welcome.
- **Summerhill Methodist Church** – the church has now closed down. Rob and Susan were unable to attend the closing service due to Covid but Susan would like to write a formal letter of thanks to the Church for all their support. Everyone was happy for Susan to do this.

Rob said that this leaves a potential problem when we have corporate groups coming for the day as the church had provided toilets, somewhere for the group to have lunch and to shelter from the rain if necessary. Susan and Rob are looking at alternative venues.

**Next meeting**

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at 7.15pm