

Responses by Susan Acton-Campbell of Friends of Troopers Hill to some of the points made in David Gibbs' 2019 Invertebrates Survey of Troopers Hill

In January 2020 we received [the report](#) of [David Gibbs'](#) 2019 invertebrates surveys, funded by generous Big Lottery players via our grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. He recorded 321 species of invertebrates during his 4 visits. This included 44 species of bee, 6 of which had not been included on our records for Troopers Hill before. This means that we now have details of 84 species of bee recorded on Troopers Hill Local Nature Reserve. According to the "Field Guide to the Bees of Great Britain and Ireland" there are over 270 species of bee in Great Britain and Ireland.

We were delighted to learn that Troopers Hill is still a really high quality space for its diversity of invertebrates despite its relatively small size of 20 acres.

As well as all the good news David made a number of points that needed a response. These are the responses made to David in an email in January 2020:

1) Page 16 "the abundance of perennial flowers, especially yellow composites, is of considerable importance to many species. If there is any evidence of a decline in the abundance of such flowers then this could be a real problem!" I responded to David that my impression, if anything, is that there has been an increase in yellow composites. *Solidago virgaurea* (Golden rod) seems to have really increased; mouse ear and cats ear hawkweeds seem as abundant as ever. However I have put the question to Bristol City Council's conservation officer as to whether there is an easy way that we can quantify the abundance of perennial flowers on site and continue to monitor this from year to year rather than just relying on a subjective view. She has asked me to list the compartments where yellow composites are abundant and to contact her in early summer 2020.

2) On page 17 David questions the clearing of a patch of broom later shown at point A on map Figure 1 on page 18. I fed back to David, 'Ironically the reason why broom initially disappeared from point A on map Fig 1 (ref on page 17) was a fire in 2013 <http://www.troopers-hill.org.uk/visiting/NoBBQs.htm> The area did regenerate but with a lot of bramble as well as broom and the succession process appeared to accelerate. This area was cleared in December 2018 following the guidance in the site conservation management plan. Some broom will be allowed to regenerate in this area.'

3) David makes recommendations on page 17 about the slope above Mama Bear's Nursery. This could be very helpful if/when we come to need funds to do work on that slope. He says, 'One area that has in the past been important for nesting Aculeates, but which is in danger of becoming over shaded, is at the southern end of the site (area C, map Fig 1). It is steep so tree and scrub clearance will be difficult but needs to be done. There are several scrub oaks here that at least need to be reduced, if not coppiced right down.' The conservation management also describes a need to reduce scrub on this slope.

4) David makes a point about pushing back woodland on page 17. Some has been done in December 2018 and December 2019 although not in an extensive way. It is a useful point because I had doubted the value of pushing back the woodland in areas where we knew tipping (mainly building rubble) had been carried out in the 1970s. My thought had been the heathland and grassland would not regenerate in these areas, having been completely lost, but David seems to present a case for

this to be done. I will seek Bristol City Council's Conservation Officer's and ecologist Rupert Higgins' thoughts on this. I would be reluctant to take up his idea of planting male sallow unless his recommendations are supported from these two sources. Sallow spread themselves naturally on Troopers Hill without the need for planting.

5) David comments about an annual grasscut on the area bounded by Greendown backs up the recommendations in the site's conservation management plan. This is usually carried out at the end of each summer, although recently there was an issue with the availability of cutting machines that could access the site. This has now been resolved.