

Attendees: Susan, Margaret, Adam and Rosie

Apologies: Cllr Fabian Breckels, Rob, Rod, Elaine, Freya and Dom

1. **Approval of Minutes from October meeting**

These were approved

2. **Projects**

- Memorial Trees

Bristol City Council consultation has taken place. We assume that no objections were raised.

Susan will follow this up with Bristol CC

- Memorial Bench

The location has been agreed, the family has transferred the money and the bench has been ordered. The delivery period should be about 8 weeks.

3. **Communications**

- Paper Newsletter

The editor, Ruth, will be having medical treatment very soon and will be out of action for some months so it has been decided that there will be no winter edition. The next issue will probably be in March/early spring although this depended on whether there would be any events to advertise or news to publish. **This subject would go on the agenda for February's meeting.**

4. **Nature Conservation Work on Troopers Hill**

- Work Parties

There had been two in November, since the last meeting. Both days had been dry and had been very effective and successful, mostly working on gorse.

- Progress on Winter Works

Susan was yet to go round the Hill and the Field to check on whether Bristol CC had completed all their listed works although she could see that two of the tasks had been done. Green Mantle would follow up to extend some of those works.

- New Work Party Leader trained

Willy had now been trained as a work party leader and had led a party on 30 November, with lots of support from other experienced party leaders.

- Placing Order for work funded by donations and the BCC Climate and Ecological Emergency Community grant

Bristol CC Conservation Officer, Becky, had now approved the order for further work funded by the above. It should start in January.

5. **Maintenance**

- The hole in the path parallel to Troopers Hill Road

This has now been repaired by the Parks Team, who had also now returned the fencing pins loaned by Friends of Troopers Hill when taping off the area.

- Signs at the square chimney and Greendown entrances

The welcome signs, those with maps, at both these sites, which had probably been erected in 2006 in Sally Oldfield's (former Local Nature Reserves Officer for Bristol City Council) time, were in a state of disrepair. The boards themselves and frames were fine but the plywood backings are lifting and therefore making the structures unsteady. Susan had contacted Teija

and the Fixit team but had emphasised that they were not to be removed. If the Fixit team could not help we would get a quote from a previous supplier to replace the backing with a longer lasting material. Depending on the amount quoted we might consider replacing the board at the chimney (mining bees) at the same time. This was scratched and slightly damaged.

6. **Events**

- Past – Fungi Foray

This had been held on 11 November and had been well attended and successful.

- Proposed events and meeting dates for 2024

The Stargazing and Planetarium event had been arranged for February.

The geology event was currently being discussed and would be in the autumn.

There would be no Bugs and Beasts event this year. Rupert had been told.

2024 meeting dates listed at end.

7. **Response to the Local Plan Consultation**

The Local Plan is intended to guide the Planning Officers for at least the next 10 years. The full Council (BCC) had already approved it and it was now open for public consultation until 26 January for comment or “representation”. It would then go to central government. One of this government’s priorities is to build houses so there was a risk that they may identify a lack of proposed house building in the Local Plan leading to protection for some green spaces being re-evaluated. Of particular concern to Friends of Troopers Hill is Blackswarth Road Wood, recently purchased by an unknown individual.

Susan tabled the review papers, maps of the area and her draft response to the consultation. All agreed it was excellent, but Adam asked if it might be beneficial to highlight actual facts from the local community survey we carried out in 2022 to add emphasis. This was agreed. Rosie wondered if it might be worth mentioning the huge benefit of the area during the pandemic. This was to be discussed and considered.

Susan explained some further details about the Local Plan which included some areas, particularly along Crews Hole Rd and Blackswarth Rd being reclassified from industrial and warehousing use to residential. Anyone can respond to the consultation which can be found on Bristol CC website.

8. **Networking**

- Soil and Water Sampling Project with University of Bristol students

Six locations on the Hill had been selected for sampling for particular reasons, such as unusual plants growing, seeming soil dumping, unusually acidic soil. The students would be asked to take samples, about 30, do the analysis and come up with theories on the reasons for these conditions. The head of the unit Dr Ros Death had agreed to arrange a geology walk on the Hill in the autumn.

- Visit in May from Summerhill Infant School

Susan and Rob were available for that one week in May and would give a talk of about 90 minutes for Year 1 pupils.

- RHS It’s Your Neighbourhood Award

Susan, Rob and Margaret had attended the event to receive this award which Susan showed at the meeting.

- Nominations for Your Park volunteers awards

Susan had nominated Elaine for this award. Everyone agreed that it was a great choice.

Susan also tabled information on the other categories. Anyone can make nominations for these as well as for the Group Award. This can be done via Yourpark.org.uk

9. **AGM**

- Any proposed changes to the Constitution
No changes were proposed.

- Accounts for the Year

These had been emailed prior to the meeting and were tabled. Susan gave huge thanks to Margaret for her work as Treasurer and producing the annual accounts. She pointed out that the figure of £10,090.85 was not really the total balance for FoTH as it included £2000 of BCC Climate & Ecological Emergency Fund, £1987.20 for the memorial bench, £358.72 for the St George Strollers and £1300 already allocated to nature conservation. The total in reality was £4445.13. Rosie asked about the £3366.61 under Donations to Nature Conservation. This was particularly high this year as it included £2500 from the donor in New Zealand when he reallocated his donation to FoTH from the Blackswarth Road Wood purchase bid. Also, over £200 had been raised from Ruth's "sound baths". We do not yet know if we will obtain funding from the BristolCC Land Stewardship fund for nature conservation works so the position has to be clarified before we can budget for conservation work in the coming year. The room hire for the Planetarium event had been paid. This had to be advertised very soon. The accounts were approved.

- Elections

Susan expressed her huge gratitude to Adam for his work as Secretary who was now standing down. Freya was also coming off the committee but would continue to do our Instagram work.

Officers - Susan was proposed by Margaret and seconded by Rosie as Chair. Margaret was proposed by Susan and seconded by Adam as Treasurer and Rosie was proposed by Susan and seconded by Margaret as Secretary. Rob, Rod and Richard were all duly re-elected as committee members.

- Budget 2024

See above under "Accounts".

10. **Meeting closed at 8.30pm.**

Next meeting to be held on 1 February via Zoom

2024 Dates for Meetings all start at 7.15pm

1 February – Zoom

21 March - in person Wesley Memorial Church

7 November as above

12 December AGM as above