

Note of Meeting
22 January 2015 in Summerhill Methodist Church

Present Susan (Chair) Rob (WPO), Kit (Memb Sec) , Margaret (Cttee), Clare (Cttee), Rod, Richard, Elaine, Helen (Minutes)

Apologies: Norman, Fabian (Cllr) Steve Pearce (Cllr)

The note of the November meeting was approved without amendments. Susan invited all present to introduce themselves.

Issues and thank yous for Parks staff

- Rob explained the new personnel arrangements in Bristol Council Parks department. Peter Staddon (grounds maintenance supervisor) with responsibility for teams carrying out practical works in the Hill, and Peter David (client liaison officer), report to the Parks Manager, Richard Fletcher. He in turn reports to Philip Thomas (Parks Operations Manager). No individual had been allocated specifically to Troopers Hill. Keith, who knows the Hill well, had remained with the team. Adrian Pannett was named as a valuable contact with responsibility for the management plan. Susan and Rob met with Peter Staddon and Peter Dave and agree the winter works list and requirement day-to-day maintenance of paths. So far no issues have arisen. Rob had obtained an assurance that maintenance of the recently refurbished steps would be addressed.
- Kit mentioned the need for some maintenance of grass at the edges of the accessible path to the Chimney.
- A bundle of grass, etc – possibly a bird's nest – had been found attached to the end of the ropes inside the chimney. Becky Belfin and Christina Radden had arranged its removal. The re-pointing of the chimney was likely to be completed during the current year.

Troopers Hill Field

- The stump remaining from a fallen tree has been ground out and replaced with a new memorial tree (hornbeam). Two dead hornbeam saplings were due to be replaced in February
- The muddy patches in front of the football goals were due for remedial attention.
- A Mr Chris Deane had contacted the group with an interest in children's play facilities. He had been due to meet local councillors recently and had been invited to the Friends' January meeting. The St George Neighbourhood Partnership Plans includes improving the play area as a neighbourhood priority.

Work parties 6th December and 10th January (change of meeting point for the latter)

- Only Susan and Rob attended the new January meeting place in January, the others had gathered at the corner of Green Down.
- On both occasions, participants addressed bramble growth in an area above the lower chimney.
- Eight new volunteers attended the January work party including Michelle, the recently appointed curate at St Aidan and St George church. .

Next work parties before the next meeting:

- **7th February** :Rob and Susan will be attending a Parks Forum/Neighbourhood Partnership event and Kit would be leading the work party.
- **7th March** Arrangements were still to be made for providing a FOTH presence at the Community Fair while simultaneously holding a work party.
- Rob proposed to arrange another Community Payback visit at the end of February to tackle either gorse or bramble in Sally's Glade.
- He mentioned that the Council had appointed a named individual to co-ordinate initiatives for corporate volunteering.

St George Strollers Walking for Health update

- The Strollers would provide a representative for the Community Fair (to be arranged)
- The group had continued to provide two walks per month.
- Their Christmas meeting on 19 December had proved productive
- The grant from the St George Neighbourhood Partnership Wellbeing Fund for special walks had been extended, thanks good choices of walks and price negotiation, to cover five walks instead of four. Voluntary donations had been reduced to £1 following grant funding from Sovereign Housing Association.
- A new walk leader had led the recent Tyntesfield walk. The initial reccie had covered public walks in the vicinity of the estate but the paths had proved too muddy to use. For the final reccie access had been prevented by filming. The eventual walk was well attended; the walkers included four new participants.
- The next two local walks would start in St George and then the group would repeat the Montpellier to Muller Road walk.
- The forthcoming programme would be agreed at the next walk leaders' meeting.
- Meeting expressed thanks to Clare for the original initiative.

Events

Slide Show Review AGM - 4th December

- The slide show that Rob had provided attracted praise and the arrangements for providing tea and cakes at the end of the meeting had been successful, and encouraged networking among those who attended.

Events for 2015 and grants

- The completed events leaflet was circulated.
- Music on the Hill had been arranged for 27 June, a band called 'Shooting the Crow' – a three-piece country/blues band – had been arranged, attempts to engage a youth band had been unsuccessful. The date fell five days after the 20th anniversary of Troopers Hill's designation as a Local Nature Reserve.
- Susan reported that Ruth Coleman involved with a community orchestra who might be an option for 2016.
- For Good Friday, display boards and leaflets would be placed in the church but no-one needed to be present except to put up and take down the stand. Kit made the point that the church should be given the key code for access via the gate to the Field
- Bugs and Beasties (August).
- Dog Show (October).
- Rob explained the St George Neighbourhood Partnership grant funding and arrangements for guided walks in co-operation with Dundridge Lane and St George Park, including funding for publicity costs. As a result, all FOTH's walks this year were fully funded.

Before our next meeting

- **Star gazing in February** : Nineteen individuals had registered an interest to date. The event could only happen on one of three nights in the month. Rod notified a likely change of astronomical society secretary but their e-mail address would remain the same. He confirmed, in principle, that there was no obstacle to having a star gazing event during January when nights were generally cold and clear and sunsets earlier.

Networking

- The meeting agreed, after a brief introduction and discussion, to support the proposals for local council electoral ward boundary changes within St George, such that Troopers Hill Field would be in "St George Central" and Troopers Hill Local Nature Reserve in "St George Troopers Hill".

Action: Chair to respond to the consultation.

- Rob is still Chair of the St George Neighbourhood Partnership at least until the AGM in June. The Partnership aimed to encourage more residents to join. FOTH was invited to decide who would be their representative on the NP.
- Summerhill Academy had asked FOTH to give a talk to the Year 3 students.

Action Rob to respond

- The Bull Inn had re-opened on the basis of a five-year lease. The building was an Asset of Community Value and FOTH would be advised of any future sale proposal. The manager had become a Friend of Troopers Hill, and it was hoped that a helpful relationship would develop. Susan had asked the Council to consider re-instating The Bull as a local polling station and a reply was awaited.

Facebook/Twitter/website update

The current numbers were 459 likes on Facebook and 387 Twitter followers, continuing a rising trend. Rob continued to keep the web site up to date. The FOTH membership (mailing list) contained approximately 450 names.

Newsletter

Members complimented Kit on the latest (Winter) edition of the newsletter, in particular, for attracting contributions from Steve Shepherd. Rob was invited to write an article on Green Capital events for the next (Spring) issue.

Action: anyone having ideas for articles to let Kit know.

Next Meeting

Thursday 12th March, 7.15pm, back room of Summerhill Methodist Church, 5 Air Balloon Rd.