

NOTE OF MEETING

Thursday, 29th June 2023, 7.15 – 9 pm

St Aidan's Church Hall

Attendees: Ray, Rod, Susan, Adam, Elaine

Apologies: Cllr Fabian Breckels, Margaret, Rob, Ruth, Rosie

1. Approve April Minutes

The minutes were approved. Susan will correct some spelling mistakes that were found.

2. Projects

a. Memorial Bench

A new memorial bench has been put in place by a local family who approached Susan for help to arrange with Bristol City Council to purchase and install. Of the £2,000 paid, £160.40 was left which the family were happy to donate to Friends of Troopers Hill for supporting conservation work.

b. Accessibility Guide to Troopers Hill

The accessibility guide for Troopers Hill has now been completed and is available on the Troopers Hill website. The guide includes suggestions made in the last meeting. Elaine suggested that the guide be added to the Bristol City Council website which Rob will look into.

3. Communications

a. Paper Newsletters

The second issue of the newsletter is at the printers and will be ready tomorrow. The newsletter includes an interview with Rosie, Rupert Higgins and a Bugs & Beasties guide for children.

With help from Rod and the Bristol Astronomical Society, Ruth is considering focusing on astronomy as a topic for the third issue. The fourth issue will focus on springtime and plants.

Susan will follow up with Ruth and Rod to work on the third issue.

4. Nature Conservation work on Troopers Hill

a. Nature conservation work parties

While Rob and Susan were away, Neil and Dom led work parties.

- 8th May – Cancelled due to forecast rain.
- 20th May – A small group continued the work from April of clearing saplings and seedlings in the Gully.
- 25th May – Continuing work on saplings and seedlings near the chimney
- 22nd June – Work in Sally’s Glade.

Work parties are planned for two Saturdays next month which will focus on bracken before the spores could start to be a problem. Susan will reach out for volunteers.

b. Meeting with Bristol City Council’s Nature Conservation Officer

On the 26th of June, Susan and Rob had a very productive site visit with Becky Belfin to review and discuss items that included:

- Stewardship
- Concerns of the growth of trees above Mama Bears nursery
- Bracken and Gorse cutting regimes
- Goats
- Greendown hedge and hay cutting
- Winter and summer conservation work
- Tree plans for Troopers Hill field

Susan, Rob and Becky have taken a number of actions on these topics to action and move forward the initiatives.

c. 84th Bee

During the 2023 City Nature Challenge through the iNaturalist app, Susan spotted and took a photo of a bee called *Nomada zonata* which has been confirmed as the 84th species of bee found on Troopers Hill. With only around 100 sightings in the UK, it is very rare and was first sighted in 2016.

5. Maintenance

a. Fencing repairs

Repairs have taken place to the metal fencing by the 3rd entrance on Troopers Hill Rd. The incident was reported to the police and the council arranged for a welder to carry out the repairs.

b. Crews Hole Rd “layby”

Bristol City Council has been given permission to gather pricing from another contractor to conduct the development works along the layby of Crews Hole Road. Fabian recently held a meeting with residents nearby about their concerns which

included access, parking and fly tipping issues along the layby.

6. Resourcing

a. Two committee members will be unavailable April 2024-October 2024

Rob and Susan will be away during the summer and there will be a reduction of events unless anyone can manage them.

b. New secretary to be appointed at the 2023 AGM

Adam will be step down as secretary after the 2023 AGM and Rosie may take over the role.

7. Issues on Troopers Hill

a. Graffiti on path

Graffiti has recently appeared on the surfaced path behind the bench at the top of Troopers Hill on the right when approaching from Troopers Hill field. Susan attempted to clean but was unable to remove so it has been reported to Bristol City Council. Hopefully it can be cleaned with a pressure washer without damaging the path. If not, it will disappear in time from the rain.

b. Fire

A fire was started in one of the areas where cuttings from work parties are placed. It's believed a fire engine was called and the team extinguished it.

Becky Belfin suggested that the small burnt trees could be removed and burnt branches removed from trees which are still alive. Becky will arrange contact with the tree officer to confirm.

8. Events

Past

a. Troopers Hill History Walk – Sunday 7th May

Led by Rob, well attended and enjoyed by all with some donations made.

Future

b. Drop in gazebo 2.30pm and 20-year anniversary walk – Sunday 2nd July 3pm

Rob, Susan and Elaine signed up to attend the stand so far. Susan will try to find some more volunteers.

c. Sensory walk – 30th July 10.30am

Barbra who has is trained in sensory walks will lead one on Troopers Hill after leading another very successful walk in St Georges Park and will potentially be doing more.

d. Bugs and Beasties – 12th August 4pm

Susan will try to find volunteers who can help at this event. It will finish at 6pm and hopefully be accompanied by the Bristol Astronomical Society running a solar observation event on the same day.

e. Drop in gazebo – 2.30pm – 3rd September

This will be the final “drop in gazebo” event for the year.

9. Networking

a. Pride in Parks and It’s Your Neighbourhood assessment

On Monday, an assessor will be visiting to conduct assessment for “pride in parks” and “it’s your neighbourhood” awards. Susan asked if any volunteers could join her to meet the assessor. She will check whether Tyler and Freya are available.

b. Olympus Trust visit

On the 28th of June, Susan led a group of students on a 90-minute tour of the hill to explain the challenges of conservation management on an urban site. Elaine also spoke with the group who were a very good of group of keen young people.

After the visit, the teacher sent an email to Susan to thank her for leading the group and to share feedback from the students who said they really enjoyed the visit and learnt so a lot. The students have discussed the idea of holding a bake sale to help raise some funds for Troopers Hill. The teacher said she would put some posts and tag Troopers Hill on Instagram. She would also like to arrange another visit and will propose some dates soon.

10. Fundraising

a. The slide painting

The £200 cheque has arrived for the painting which sold when on display at Park Side picture framers. The money will go towards conservation work.

b. Donations at events

Donations from events this year have included:

- Bird walk - £50,
- History walk - £50
- Health walk at Eastwood Farm - £16

- Donations tin £11.30
- GoFundMe - £86.45

AOB

- The Bristol Parks team have agreed to cut back some of the Bracken.
- Rod shared an update the defibrillator has now been installed at the Horse and Jockey pub which was achieved with help and advice from Susan.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be from 7.15-9 pm on Thursday, 26th October 2023 – Online Zoom Meeting

Following Meetings

- 7th December 2023 – AGM - St Aidan's Hall