



## 2022 – RHS Britain in Bloom South West - Parks and Open Spaces - Marking Sheet

NAME OF ENTRY: Troopers Hill

LOCATION: Troopers Hill, Bristol

ASSESSOR: Guy Rawlinson

DATE: 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2022

WEATHER CONDITIONS: Warm evening!

SIZE/TYPE - Sandstone rock, acid soil. Local Nature Reserve

AWARD - **Gold Star** 5 Star

### AREAS OF ACHIEVEMENT

**COMMUNITY:** - The Friends meet regularly on site and support each other and have a good outreach programme with the local community. They engage with groups and visitors to the site. Whilst fires and BBQs are banned, they still occasionally are brought on site. Being sensitive in how such matters are managed is critical to keeping good relations with users. The site was clear of litter and I was told dog mess! Dog owners help clear litter even when it is not their own dog. These two aspects demonstrate that users have a sense of responsibility and 'ownership' for the site.

Grants have been sought from many sources to ensure that projects that are contained in the year management plan can be realised. The most recent being the laying of a path for wheelchairs and new slide with the latest surface. This surface was expensive but will last longer. Grants made this possible.

**MAINTENANCE & DEVELOPMENT:** - The working relationship with Bristol City Council is positive. A Councillor happened to walk past and commented on what a wonderful space it is and that the Friends of Troopers Hill were vital in ensuring that maintenance is carried out collaboratively!

There is an extensive management plan, which is towards the end of its span. I am sure that the next plan will be equally challenging, but the team will be more than a match to achieve it!

**ENVIRONMENT:** - The site is an especially important LNR in relation to both Bristol and the surrounding countryside. The sandstone, acid soil makes it a unique site in the area and the flora and fauna that grow and inhabit the site are both rare in the area and some rare nationally. The work the Friends carry out as a team and their engagement with BCC council are key in ensuring the survival and in some cases flourish on the Hill.

The management of bramble is a good example. Together with Bristol CC contractors are engaged to cut back the bramble. If this were not done regularly the young sapling birch trees would establish. These are also cut back. There has been opposition to cutting back trees, but if this was not done then the unique habitats would be overwhelmed. This policy is fully explained and most accept this management of the Hill.

Conservation grazing by 'street goats' is practiced. An excellent example of using non machine intervention wherever possible.

### **AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

**COMMUNITY:** - There is already extensive engagement with the users of Troopers Hill. On my visit it was clear that users respect the space. It is a challenge not to make the site too popular. During lockdown it was particularly well used. This led to increased wear of the paths. This can upset the delicate balance of the flora and fauna.

**MAINTENANCE & DEVELOPMENT:** - Continual vigilance is required to make sure that the Hill maintains its unique set of circumstances.

The current management plan is coming to an end of its period. I am sure that the Friends will prepare the next plan to ensure the continuation of the management of the site.

**ENVIRONMENT:** - **Again**, continued vigilance of how the site is used to ensure that it is not over used.

The extremely hot spells this summer are an all too unwelcome reminder about the impact global warming is already having on our climate. Extremely hot weather and the chance of very wet spells can both impact the site. Ensuring appropriate management of site is the best and probably only way to ensure the future of the site.