

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)

Minutes of meeting held at the Southville Centre on 4 October 2007

1. Present

Jenny Crick, Tom Crompton, Margaret Fay, Roy Gallop, Tess Green (Chair), John Purkiss (minutes), Paul Taylor, Martha van der Lem, Paul van der Lem, Tracy Whale, Jo Young.

2. Apologies

Ben Barker, Sean Beynon, Roysten Griffey, Sara Worth.

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2007 were agreed as correct.

4. Matters arising

- It was noted that the proposed repair and refurbishment of Ashton Bridge is a long-term aspiration of the Council. There does not appear to be any timetable.
- Thanks to pressure from residents on Cumberland Road and assistance from Councillor Wright (Cabot), a new litterbin had been installed at the end of the Chocolate Path and signs had been erected along the Path requesting cyclists to give way to pedestrians.

5. Treasurer's report

Tracy reported that our funds now stand at £1925.24. Expenditure since the last meeting amounted to £132 (for postage, room hire, and the fee for our recent guided walk on trees).

6. Reports on projects

Arts

Jo reported on this year's tiles project, which had been well received. The tiles are now displayed on a wall at the Create Centre. We toasted the success of this inspiring project and thanked Jo for organising it.

Themed walks

4 walks had been organised since March - history (1 April), wildlife (20 May), birds (7 June) and trees (13 September). They had attracted over 100 different people in total. It was felt that the history walk and trees walk should be repeated in 2008 – also a bat evening (probably in conjunction with the Create Centre) and a guided wildflower walk. **John** will contact the Bristol Naturalists' Society to ask if they could provide a knowledgeable guide for next year's event.

Clean-ups, litter and lighting

- John reported that we had secured funding from the Safer Bristol Partnership to install 2 new litterbins on Coronation Road (opposite ASDA), to clear litter from the Gaol Ferry slipway, and to install a safety light under Gaol Ferry Bridge (Coronation Road side). Following meetings with the Council, the lighting idea had proved to be impractical because the slipway is not an adopted highway and FrANC would have to pay for running costs and maintenance – something that we cannot take on. Thanks were expressed to Councillors Beynon and Bolton (Southville) for their support in negotiations.

- On a brighter note, the litterbins had been installed and we have been offered £400 to spend on equipment, insurance and volunteers' expenses involved in clearing rubbish from the Gaol Ferry slipway provided we carry out 2 clean-ups by the end of March 2008. This offer was accepted.
- No response had been received from letters sent to the manager of ASDA urging him to erect a fence along the store's Coronation Road boundary to reduce litter blowing into the Cut from the car park. However, a Council Waste & Streetscene Enforcement Officer (Carol Donovan) is now on the case and had arranged to meet the manager on 4 October.

Planning / development

News of new planning applications affecting the Cut had been highlighted in our Spring newsletter. Progress on the proposed development behind the Old Gaol is unknown. The application to develop the Marchioness site had been turned down.

7. Chocolate Path

Margaret reported that she had lodged a complaint with the City Council regarding their removal of plants on each side of the Chocolate Path. Apart from the fact that this has reduced the path to a barren urban walkway, exposing the rusty iron railings and litter strewn railway line, it was brought about by blanket spraying with some sort of heavy-duty herbicide. This is likely to have damaged plants and wildlife through run-off to the banks of the Cut. It appears that the Highways department may be responsible. **Margaret** will keep John informed on the progress of her investigations, and will inform the Cabot Councillors of the situation. **John** will keep FrANC members informed. **All** are welcome to make similar complaints to the Council.

8. Forward planning

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| • Sun 18 Nov (10am) | Clean-up of Gaol Ferry slipway (south side) |
| • Sun 9 Dec (10am) | Maintenance at Butterfly Junction |
| • Sat 19 Jan (10am) | Clean-up of Cumberland Road bank |
| • Sat 2 Feb (10am) | Clean-up of Coronation Road bank |

Ideas for events to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the completion of the digging of the Cut in 2009 were aired. Three suggestions arose:

- A photographic exhibition (**John** to discuss with Ben Barker)
- A celebration to reflect the original celebration (hog roast, local beers, etc)
- A boat trip up the river (**Roy** to check on the feasibility of this).

9. Any other business

- Concerns were expressed on the effect on the Cut of a Severn Barrage, should one ever be built. **Tess** to contact an expert to see if he would speak at a FrANC meeting, which would be opened up to any interested people in the area.
- Ideas to provide greater access to the riverbanks were held over to the next meeting.

10. Date of next meeting

Thursday 10 January 2008 – 7.30pm at the Southville Centre.