

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)
Minutes of meeting held at the Southville Centre on 5 June 2008

1. Present

Helen Adshead (Riverscapes project worker), Richard Clutterbuck, Margaret Fay, Roy Gallop, Tess Green (Chair), Ed Hall, Derek Hughes, Colin Jefferson, Adrian Mantle, John Purkiss (minutes), Angie Tonge, Martha van der Lem, Paul van der Lem, Tracy Whale, Sara Worth, Jo Young.

2. Apologies

Ben Barker, Charlie Bolton, Chris Hanmer, Alex Woodman.

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2008 were agreed as correct.

4. Matters arising

Power from the Cut

Paul reported that he had not heard from Loadpoint Ltd since he submitted winter river flow records to them. An engineer had also informed him that it was highly unlikely that power could be generated from the Cut. Tess reported that John Sweet (the Loadpoint rep) had received the figures and was grateful for them, but he could not make any progress with a trial project or feasibility study as funding was not available. In view of this, it was decided there was no point in Paul recording summer river flows. The meeting thanked Paul for the work he had undertaken.

Chocolate Path / Bus Rapid Transit system

John reported that he had not received a reply from two e-mails he had sent to Cllr Bradshaw requesting information on the BRT plans. We do know however, that public consultation is due to take place during the next few months. Colin Jefferson informed the meeting that the Transport Alliance is campaigning for an Ultra Light Railway to be routed alongside the Chocolate Path and over Ashton Bridge. Concerns were expressed about the effect of this proposal on pedestrians and cyclists using this route, the effect on Colliters Brook and the possible disruption of Butterfly Junction. Anyone wishing to contact Colin direct should e-mail him at colin.jefferson@uwe.ac.uk

5. Treasurer's report

Tracy reported no change since the last meeting.

6. Plans for 2008

Wildflower walk and AGM

Pam Millman from the Bristol Naturalists' Society had confirmed her availability to lead a guided walk to discover and identify wildflowers on the Cut. This will start with an introduction and a brief AGM at 7.00pm on Thursday 10 July. Venue to be confirmed.

Bug Group

An initial exploration of bugs on the Cut had taken place on 3 June – organised by **Ben**, led by Tony Smith from the Bristol Naturalists' Society, and attended by 3 members of FrANC. Beetles, snails and a harlequin ladybird had been observed. Further events will take place on Tuesday 17 June at 6.00pm, Saturday 21 June at 2.00pm and Sunday 29 June at 10.30am. Meet next to Vauxhall Bridge (Coronation Road side).

River awareness fortnight

John to meet with **Helen** to plan awareness-raising events to take place between 4th and 19th October. It was suggested that promotional events would help our campaign to have the Cut formally recognised as a Local Nature Reserve and that schools could be involved. Roy and Tess reported that South Street School had expressed an interest in discovering facts about the Cut's history and wildlife during the summer term. They will notify us if they require extra help with this.

Local Nature Reserve

John reported on a special FrANC meeting held to discuss plans to campaign for the Cut to be formally recognised as a Local Nature Reserve. Several people have already expressed their support for the plan, including Cllr Bolton (Southville) and Cllr Woodman (Cabot). Details of actions being planned are shown on page 4.

7. Planning of Cut 200 celebrations

Events to celebrate next year's 200th anniversary of the completion of the Cut are taking shape. Charlie had e-mailed Councillors to see if there are any official plans to celebrate either the Cut or the Harbour in 2009 – it appears there are not.

Photographic exhibition

John reported that several people have expressed an interest in taking and displaying photographs, and the Create Centre is happy to let us use their gallery space for an exhibition. The Southville Centre and Spike Island are other possibilities.

Boat trip

Roy reported that the boatman he knows has sold his boat! Ed pointed out that no company has a licence to carry passengers up the Cut, so any boat trip will need to be kept as a private affair. **Roy** suggested that we arrange a private trip and take a video of the journey, which could be put on show at the Create Centre. **Richard** expressed his interest in making a video recording during the event.

Party on Vauxhall Bridge

We agreed to hold this on Monday 4 May 2009. The railway will be open on that day, and they have expressed an interest in being involved – possibly with a jazz band on board. The open top bus company owner has said he would be willing to run his service along the Cut for the day. **Sara, Martha, Margaret, Jo and Angie** have offered to help organise the party. A planning meeting will take place on Thursday 3 July starting at 7.30pm at 88 Cumberland Road (Sara's house). All welcome.

Other ideas

Other suggestions for activities have included:

- Closing Cumberland Road and running a street party
- An event on Gaol Ferry Bridge to involve commuters – possibly making birthday cards to display on the bridge.
- A walk with people dressed in costume as worn in 1809
- A pram/buggy circuit round the Cut
- An evening launch of 200 little rafts decorated with night lights
- A treasure hunt.

Some of these ideas could possibly be included in the party on 4 May. Others (especially a street party) would involve a lot of organisation, which we lack the capacity to undertake. The question of whether or not we should raise funds to employ somebody to help organise events will be discussed further at our next meeting.

Reports and any other business

Lack of time prevented any further items being considered.

Date and place of next meetings

- AGM at 7.00pm on Thursday 10 July. Venue to be confirmed.
- FrANC meeting at 7.30pm on Thursday 24 July. At the Southville Centre.

**Avon New Cut Local Nature Reserve
Action plan to gain formal recognition**

What	When	Who	Progress
Contact Avon Wildlife Trust to find out criteria for recognition	June	Martha Paul	AWT suggested another contact – John to follow up
Observe and record bug life on the Cut	June	Ben + others	Dates fixed
Map existing LNRs and show the Cut fills a gap	June	John	
List walks, events and clear-ups we've organised over the past few years	June	John	
Map access points and good observation points	June / July	Ed	
Plan an awareness raising day to take place in October	June / July	John Helen	
Produce a simple questionnaire to hand out to commuters in October	Sept	Martha Margaret Angie	Tracy to help distribute
Produce a FrANC newsletter devoted entirely to the Avon New Cut LNR	August	John	
Press release re October events and the importance of the Cut. Send to The Pigeon, Evening Post, radio and TV	Sept	John	Contact person / people will need to be identified
Prepare and distribute a postcard petition	Sept	John Jo Roy	Tracy to help distribute
Set up an on-line petition	Sept	?	
Mural of the Cut's history and wildlife on developer's hoardings	?	?	Involve Bower Ashton and/or Spike Island?
Obtain letters of support from other groups, Councillors etc.	Sept / Oct	John +?	

Note: Helen received an e-mail from a man suggesting that the River Avon between Temple Meads and St Anne's is more deserving of LNR status than the New Cut.