

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)
Minutes of meeting held at the Southville Centre on 15th April 2010

Attended by: John Purkiss (Chair), Sara Worth (vice Chair), Derek Hughes (Secretary), Tess Green, Angie Tonge, Adrian Mantle, Martha Van der Lem, Richard Clutterbuck, Margaret Fay, Pat Fung, Roy Gallop, Ed Hall, Chris Hanmer, Bill Jones, Kean Lamb, Elizabeth Payze.

- 1. Welcome** – John opened the meeting with a round of introductions. A special welcome was extended to two guests from the Arnolfini - Gill Nicol (Head of Interaction) and Tessa Fitzjohn - who started the meeting by giving a presentation on the “Seeds of Change” Ballast Seed Garden Project (see item 3 below).
- 2. Apologies** – were received from Tracy Whale (Treasurer), Paul Van der Lem and Ben Barker.
- 3. Presentation on “Seeds of Change” Ballast Seed Garden Project** – Gill and Tessa began by describing the history of this project, which is being undertaken as a partnership between the Arnolfini and the University of Bristol. “Seeds of Change” is an investigation of ballast flora in port cities across Europe which has been underway in Bristol since 2007. Ballast, which usually consisted of stones and earth, was used to stabilise merchant sailing ships from the 15th century onwards. The ballast also inevitably included seeds native to the area from where it was collected, and on arrival at the destination port the ballast was unloaded – often illegally – and the stowaway seeds germinated.

The artist Maria Thereza Alves has spent over 10 years researching the history of several European ballast sites, and in collaboration with the Arnolfini is now planning to create a permanent Ballast Seed Garden in Bristol. The proposed site for this garden is the most western end of Spike Island (see Attachment 1), between the New Cut and the Cumberland Basin locks (Roy noted that this site used to be the Dockmaster's garden).

The University of Bristol Botanic Garden is growing ballast seed plants which will be transplanted into the garden. As part of its “Interaction initiative” to work with different communities in Bristol, the Arnolfini will provide project management including consultation events and fundraising, as well as engaging the local community in the realisation of the project. Once established, the Harbourside Estate will be responsible for maintaining the garden, though it was hoped that as a result of the consultation process a group would eventually emerge to take ownership of the land on which the garden will be built. The garden would be accessible by pedestrians and cyclists, and also via the CREATE Centre stop proposed for the Bus Rapid Transit system.

As part of the consultation process, two events will be held in July:

- Maria Thereza Alvez will be talking at the Arnolfini about this project and other work on Wednesday 7th July, starting at 6pm.
- Tours and a discussion event will be held at the Bristol Botanic Garden on Thursday 8th July – see Attachment 2 for details and timings.

Thanks were expressed to Gill and Tessa for their presentation, and they were asked to keep FrANC informed of progress. Some of the members present expressed reservations about the suitability of the proposed site, given that many local people enjoy it as it is, and it was hoped that this would be taken into account

during the consultation process. It was also noted that the proposed site could be subject to flooding during exceptionally high tides, such as those experienced recently.

4. **Minutes of last meeting** (18th February 2010) – these were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

5. Matters arising

- 5.1 **FrANC Bench** – John reported that he had spoken to Mo Mulligan regarding concerns about the security of the four bolts that anchor the bench to its base. Mo's view was that the bench is so heavy that it is unlikely to be stolen, but he will look into the possibility of encasing the bolts in glue to render them tamper-proof. Several attendees noted that the bench appears to be well-used.

- 5.2 **South Bristol Riverscapes Project** – this project, which is being led by Helen Adshead, is now nearing completion. Adrian (who is FrANC's link with the project) noted the following points:

- (i) any requests for copies of photos taken during the course of the project should be e-mailed to Adrian;
- (ii) a Wildlife Survey Report of the Malago River and Pigeonhouse Stream will be published;
- (iii) further consideration is required on how the various Riverscapes groups that have been established can stay in touch after the project ends (e.g. use of networking to share ideas);
- (iv) two FrANC members (Adrian and Richard) have access to the FrANC section of the South Bristol Riverscapes website;
- (v) an audio training session will be held on Tuesday 4th May at the CREATE Centre, from 10am until 1pm. The training session will cover
 - How to plan and design an Audiotrail.
 - How to record and edit an Audiotrail (a good Zoom recorder is available).
 - How to apply the recording to such uses as mobile phones or static displays.

The training session is open to all members of the Riverscapes groups and is intended to enable participants to create their own audio pieces which could be used as walk guides, collections of personal stories and memories, information for the South Bristol Riverscapes website, etc.

- 5.3 **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system** – following the last meeting, Derek contacted Sharon Daly of the BRT Project Team to clarify the following issues which had arisen during a discussion of the BRT "Design Freeze 3" drawings:

- i) Will the existing railings between the BRT busway and the Chocolate Path be preserved? If not, how will the busway and pedestrians/cyclists be segregated?
- ii) Will the existing Victorian stone paving of the Chocolate Path be maintained on the new 200m-long cantilevered section? If not, could any surplus paving stones be used to repair missing stones in other areas of the Chocolate Path?

Sharon's reply to these questions is reproduced in Attachment 4. It was agreed that Sharon's offer for the Project Team to meet with FrANC to discuss any other issues of concern should be taken up at a later date, after the BRT Project enters its public consultation phase.

6. **Treasurer's report** – although Tracy was not present, she supplied a statement of the FrANC Accounts for the meeting which is included in these Minutes in Attachment 3. The only major item of expenditure since the last meeting was a payment towards the development costs for the FrANC website (£2009.25).
7. **Events Planning 2010** – since the previous meeting, a second winter litter clean-up session was completed on Saturday 27th February (North Side), and plans for the following events have either been finalised or are in progress:
- **Wild Flower Walk** led by Pam Millman on Thursday 20th May. Meet *either* at Vauxhall Bridge (Coronation Road side) at 7pm, *or* the CREATE Centre at 7:15pm. It was suggested that the walk could include a survey of the flowers at the proposed site of the Ballast Seed Garden.
 - **Herb Walk** led by Max Drake on Thursday 12th August. Meet at Vauxhall Bridge (Coronation Road side) at 7pm.
 - **Boat Trip up the Cut** – Roy reported that, although he had contacted the Bristol Packet several times since the last meeting, so far he had been unable to fix a date for the boat trip. Ed suggested an alternative contact who might be more helpful. The refurbishment of the Cumberland Basin lock gates that is currently in progress meant that the boat trip would probably not be possible until July or August. It was thought that given the popularity of this event last year the only boat suitable would again be the Bagheera, as this has the largest capacity and also affords the best visibility. However, because of its length, the Bagheera would not be able to travel up the Cut beyond Temple Meads station, so the original plan to reach Netham Weir was not viable. Instead, Roy proposed that after navigating the Cut the boat should re-enter the Floating Harbour and then travel along the Feeder Canal. Roy would provide a commentary during the trip and also offered to provide handouts showing the historical buildings that once lined this part of Bristol's industrial landscape (e.g. Gas Works, Old Paper Mill).
8. **Progress on FrANC Website** – John reported that the website would go live within the next 2 – 3 weeks. In fact, it can be accessed at present via www.franc.org.uk. John will see the website designer, *Springboard Design*, next week to get a manual which will explain how FrANC members can change, edit or add to the website contents. Some of those present who had already accessed the website were of the view that it appeared to be rather 'static' and could perhaps be made more 'dynamic' by the addition of audios / videos / photo galleries / blogs, etc. It was noted that such additions were possible and could be added later, but that this would cost more.
9. **Any Other Business**
- **Article in Cabot eNews – “Have your say on £15,000 of local money”** – the Cabot, Clifton and Clifton East Neighbourhood Partnership have asked for residents' views on how to spend £15,000 of the 'well-being' fund in this neighbourhood area. The Neighbourhood Partnership have set up a novel on-line voting system called "Its My Bristol", which they are piloting, and are keen to hear from people, especially young people, on what ideas they have for improving 'well-being' locally. The pilot is open until 30th June and is accessible via the www.itsmybristol.org forum website.

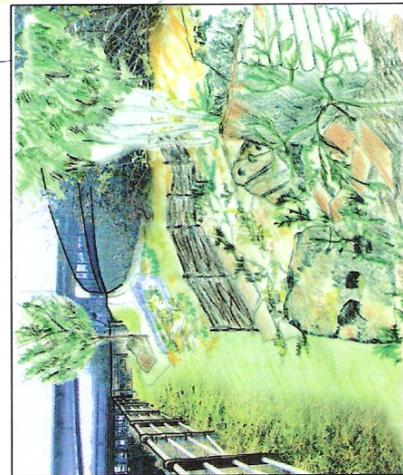
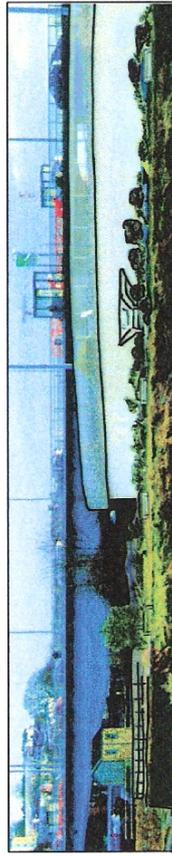
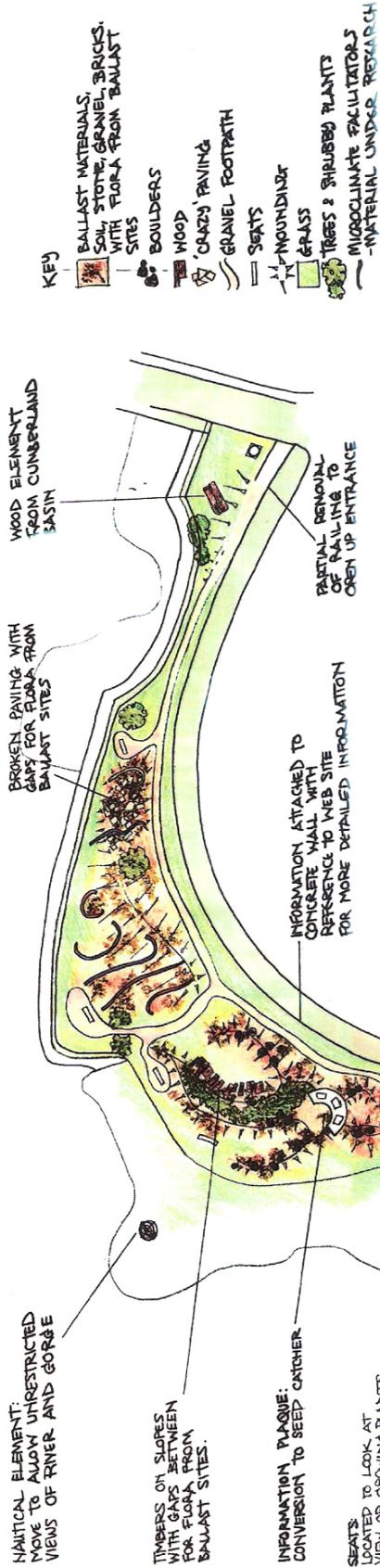
How the money is spent is up to the residents who, via the website, can submit ideas, for what the money should be spent on, comment on other people's ideas or vote for the ideas they wish to support. Whilst the final spending decision will rest with the Neighbourhood Partnership, the residents' votes and suggestions will be the primary deciding factor. Preferably, the money should be used to support several smaller projects, rather than a couple of larger ones.

After some discussion it was agreed that FrANC would apply for £2000 of this money, to be used to promote the New Cut to young people. The money requested would pay for (i) the services of a "guide" to provide tours of the New Cut for schools, and (ii) information packs for the children to take home with them (FrANC already have several sources of information available). [Post-meeting note – Margaret has offered to register this proposal on the www.itsmybristol.org website].

- **Otters in the Cut?** – Roy reported that he and Richard had recently attended an "Otter Day" course at Blagdon Lake, as a result of which he believed that he had during the past few days seen otter tracks in the river mud between Vauxhall Bridge, the CREATE Centre and the most western end of Spike Island (the proposed site of the Ballast Seed Garden). Roy said he would try to photograph them, though it was unlikely that the otters actually live in this area. As a result of this, Roy and Richard were designated FrANC's "Otter Watchers".
- **Highest Tide of the year** was on Tuesday 2nd March. Richard thanked all those who had managed to take photographs of this event and presented a short slideshow on his laptop of the photos that he had taken. It was suggested that during the course of the year attempts should be made to obtain photos at low tide from the same vantage points, to illustrate the difference in water level in the Cut between high and low tide.

10. Date and place of next meeting – the next meeting will include the FrANC Annual General Meeting, to be held at the Southville Centre on **Thursday 15th July**, starting at 7.30pm. (Note that this will be preceded by (i) the Wild Flower Walk on 20th May, and (ii) the Ballast Seed Garden events on 7th and 8th July.)

Seeds of Change A Ballast Garden for Bristol



Maria Theresa Alves

Client No.	Project No.	Scale	Date
BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL			
Bristol City Council City Development Landscape Design Team			
Project Name: Ballast Garden			
Drawn By	Checked By	Approved By	Date
MAT 10	MAT 10	MAT 10	03/11/2009
Layout Plan	Scale: 1:50	Project No: CDC-09	Drawn By: MTA
We do not warrant the accuracy of the information contained herein.			

SEEDS OF CHANGE: A BALLAST SEED GARDEN FOR BRISTOL

Thurs 8 July, 3:30pm-8.00pm

Tours and discussion event at the University of Bristol Botanic Garden, The Holmes, Stoke Park Road, BS9 1JB.

Tours (50 minutes) of the Botanic Garden commencing at 3:30pm and 4:30pm.

Discussion at 6:00pm at the Botanic Garden, and an opportunity afterwards to have a tour.

FREE (but booking advisable)

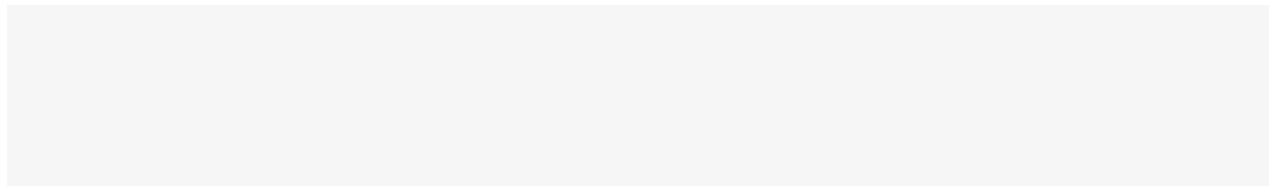
Seeds that came to Bristol in the ballast of ships embody both Bristol's trading past and the stories of the people affected. See and comment on artist Maria Thereza Alves' proposal and plans for a Ballast Seed Garden in Bristol, while enjoying tours of the University's Botanic Garden, and their own version of a Ballast Seed Garden, light refreshments and a stimulating discussion between the artist, biologist Simon Hiscock and environmental historian Peter Coates.

This forms part of a consultation process with communities about the proposal for a Ballast Seed Garden as a permanent public artwork which Arnolfini have been developing with the help of Bristol City Council.

This event is an Arnolfini and University of Bristol partnership

Attachment 2

Publicity for "Seeds of Change" Event on 8th July



Balance on 1st February 2010: £3817.81

Income:

Sale of books: £20.00

Expenditure:

Development of FrANC Website: £2009.25

Southville Centre Meeting Room hire: £24.42

Total Expenditure: £2033.67

Balance on 15th April 2010: £1804.14

Attachment 3

Statement of FrANC Accounts 15th April 2010

Re: FrANC Newsletter and some BRT questions

Wednesday, 31 March, 2010 12:36 PM

From: "Sharon Daly" <Sharon.Daly@bristol.gov.uk>

To: "Bob Fowler" <bob.fowler@bristol.gov.uk>, "Derek Hughes" <derekwhughes@btinternet.com>, "Julia Dean" <Julia.Dean@westofengland.org>, "Steven Penaluna" <Steven.Penaluna@westofengland.org>

Cc: "Sara Worth" <saraworth.88@btinternet.com>, "John Purkiss" <johnpurkiss@talk21.com>

Hi Derek,

Thank you for a copy of the newsletter. Yes, we saw the high tides. Bob and John (our flood risk expert) were both down there and we have some very similar photos.

As your newsletter notes, we have recently had confirmation from the Department for Transport regarding the first-stage funding approval (referred to by DfT as "Programme Entry"). This means that we will be proceeding with the Transport and Works Act application. We expect this to be early May 2010 but we will be in contact when we confirm the date and with details of where and when to see the application documents and how you and your group can make representations on the scheme should you wish to. We would be happy to come to a meeting to talk to your group and answer any questions if you would find this helpful (we are already at another community group's meeting on the 15th).

Regarding your questions below:

Railings

It is our intention to have a fence between the busway and the Chocolate Path. The feedback from consultation is that people would like to see the existing railings retained. It is also our aim to retain the existing nature of the corridor as far as practical. We will of course need to look at the detailed design stage whether the existing railings are fit for purpose, meet safety requirements, other practical considerations etc.

Victorian stone paving of the Chocolate Path

Similarly, it is our intention to retain the existing paving on the Chocolate Path and retain the existing nature of the corridor as far as practical. Where the path needs to be moved out slightly we would re-use/move the existing sets. We have also been asked to consider using any surplus paving stones to repair the path as you suggest. Again, we will look at the practicalities of this at the detailed design stage.

It is our intention to continue to engage with the NPN Community Steering Group and at the detailed design stage discuss these issues and we hope your group would continue to be involved.

Hope this answers your questions for your meeting. As I've said above, we will be in touch closer to the date of application.

Regards,
Sharon

Sharon Daly
Project Manager