

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)

Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 20th April 2011

Attended by: John Purkiss (Chair), Sara Worth (vice Chair), Derek Hughes (Secretary), Elizabeth Payze (Treasurer), Adrian Mantle and Roy Gallop (Committee members).

1. Purpose of Meeting – this was primarily to discuss the following:

- Wild City – implications for FrANC
- Update on FrANC activities planned for 2011

2. Wild City – implications for FrANC

The following minutes are partly based on the notes circulated by John prior to the meeting, following an earlier meeting between John and Helen Adshead.

2.1 Background to the Wild City Project

Wild City aims to encourage more people to enjoy the outdoors, including those who face social exclusion or have little or no contact with the natural environment. Funding has been secured from “Access to Nature” (a Lottery fund) to enable the City Council to work with a range of communities and priority groups in and around seven key sites.

The key sites are:

- **The Avon New Cut**
- Northern Slopes (Knowle West)
- Hengrove Park Mounds & Hawkfield Meadow
- Stoke Park
- Callington Road Nature Reserve
- Eastwood Farm Local Nature Reserve
- Lamplighter’s Marsh (Shirehampton).

The priority groups are:

- Elderly people
- People recovering from mental health problems
- Young people
- People wishing to improve physical wellbeing
- People with disabilities
- Black and Minority Ethnic communities
- Adults with learning difficulties

The funding covers the employment of a Project Officer and provision of some project costs. The Project Officer post has been filled as a job-share between Helen Adshead and Paula Spiers. Helen will be working with FrANC.

2.2 Proposed Activities involving FrANC

The activities that FrANC are expected to become involved in are shown in Table 1. They reflect the outcome of a consultation exercise that John conducted with the FrANC Committee in November 2009, when the project was at the planning stage. The top priorities identified by the Committee at the time were Actions 1 and 6 of Table 1.

Each of the six actions listed in Table 1 were discussed in turn by the Committee, the results of which are summarised below:

Action 1 - Development of a Management Plan for the New Cut

The production of a Management Plan will have several benefits for FrANC and the Cut. It will identify who is responsible for what, and will define actions to be carried out over the next 5 years (e.g. it could commit the Docks Manager to a yearly clean-up of debris from the riverbed). The Plan will also be a key element in our campaign for the Cut to be declared a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). The part of the Cut to be included in the Plan is that extending from Butterfly Junction to Bristol Temple Meads station.

To help develop the Management Plan, £1500 has been allocated to cover the cost of employing an ecologist with experience of working with community groups. Helen proposes to employ Phil Quinn, who recently undertook a wildlife survey of the Malago (see <http://www.bristolrivers.com/resource/60>).

We need to set up a working group of 5 or so people to work with Phil (John offered to be one of the members of this working group). The aim is to do the work by the end of the summer. This is likely to involve walking around the Cut and taking an “audit” of its assets. For the LNR application, the ecology of the Cut will need to be highlighted.

The ‘nature walk’ is intended to involve local people – including community/resident groups from Redcliffe – in surveying the river banks, etc., and deciding what needs to be included in the Plan. There was some discussion regarding what “community/resident groups” exist in the Redcliffe area who FrANC could approach - St. Mary Redcliffe School was suggested, as it was understood that the Redcliffe Community Forum has now disbanded.

Action 2 – New Cut Interpretation Panel

Helen Adshead has suggested that FrANC uses the same designer (Danni) who worked on the three existing interpretation panels at Butterfly Junction, Vauxhall Bridge and Gaol Ferry Bridge to design the new one. If we do not need all of the £3750 budget for one panel, we could either produce two panels or renew one or two of the existing panels (the Butterfly Junction panel is in a poor state). The two candidate sites for the new panel are Bedminster Bridge and the Banana Bridge.

We need to set up a working group of 5 or so people to work with Helen (Derek and Roy offered to be two of the members of this working group). Ideally we would include one or two people who live alongside the section of the river where the new panel is to be located. The aim is to do the work by the end of the summer.

Providing evidence that 1500 people have read the panel by the end of 2013 will be interesting!

Action 3 – Walk / presentation training for FrANC volunteers

We need to identify 5 people interested in being trained as guides for school parties (Derek and Sara offered their services if there is an insufficient number of volunteers). Training will involve a session with the trainer, shadowing a school group, then one final session to follow up. Training could start this summer or autumn, depending on the availability of the people who are interested.

Action 4 – Boat Trips

A Boat Trip for 2011 has already been organised by FrANC. The boat normally used by FrANC for such trips is the *Bagheera*. This boat has a maximum capacity of 55 people, which is less than the target number of 80 in Table 1. However, Helen has agreed that FrANC could reduce the target figure from 80 to 55, with the corresponding number of people from “priority groups” factored accordingly (i.e. from 25 to 17).

The annual project budget allocated per Boat Trip in Table 1 is £700. The possibility of using this to subsidise people from “priority” groups so that they can go free was discussed, but was not unanimously supported by the Committee. It was noted that some FrANC members who are 60 years old or over already meet the “elderly people” criteria to be classified as a priority group, in which case finding sufficient numbers may not be that difficult.

For the Boat Trip in the third year (2013), it was thought that maybe this could be organised to involve schools or families, in which case it may be necessary to schedule the trip for the daytime, rather than the evening.

Action 5 – Wild Waters Riverside Festival

This won't take place until 2013, so we don't need to think about it until 2012. It was suggested that the Festival could be used to celebrate the selection of the Cut as a LNR

Action 6 – Declaration of three new Local Nature Reserves

The choice of three Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) from four candidates appears to be a City Council decision based on finance available to produce evidence to fit LNR criteria. John said that he had asked Helen why they could not aim to declare all 4 sites as LNRs, and had suggested that FrANC could undertake much of the preparatory work themselves and/or try to find more money if necessary. Helen is very keen for the Cut to be declared a LNR and will do everything she can to make sure this happens.

John offered to circulate an e-mail to the FrANC membership requesting volunteers to get involved in progressing Actions 1, 2 and 3 (*post-meeting note*: a copy of John's e-mail is appended to these minutes in Appendix A).

3. Update on FrANC Activities planned for 2011

The current status of the activities planned for 2011 is summarised below:

Activity	When	What needs doing	Who
Walk around Redcliff	Thur. 12 th May	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan the walk• Risk assessment• Promote in Redcliff	Roy Roy / Adrian ?
Wildflower Walk	Thur. 9 th June	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Liaise with Pam Millman• Risk assessment	Adrian ?
Boat Trip up the Feeder	Thur. 21 st July	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Book the boat• Design and print tickets• Sell tickets	Roy Roy Derek & Liz
Bat Detecting Walk	Thur. 15 th Sept. (or 22 nd Sept.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contact Angus Tillotson• Risk assessment	Adrian ?
Butterfly Junction maintenance	Sat. 3 rd Dec.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Risk assessment• Bring gloves and tools	John All

The following points arose during discussion of the above by the Committee:

- **Walk around Redcliff** – the proposed route was outlined by Roy. As part of the risk assessment, four volunteers will be required to act as marshals, to ensure that the group stays together. John, Adrian, Derek and Sara offered to act as marshals, and Derek and Sara were actioned to purchase six high visibility jackets, to be worn by FrANC-appointed marshals during this and any future activities. It was confirmed that those attending this event will be charged £1.50 per person, as agreed at the last FrANC AGM.
- **Wildflower Walk** – a charge of £1.50 per person will also be levied on those attending this event.
- **Boat Trip up the Feeder** – the ticket price for this event was agreed as £12 per person. Roy offered to design and print the tickets, which will be on sale from June 18th onwards. Derek offered to be a focal point for north bank ticket sales, and Liz for the sale of tickets on the south bank.

Derek Hughes
Secretary, Friends of the Avon New Cut

Action	Timetable			Measure of success	Project budget £		
	2011	2012	2013		2011	2012	2013
1. Development of a Management Plan for the New Cut Consultant to be employed to develop plan in consultation with the local community. Consultant to lead a nature walk with local community and priority groups to consider sustainable management of the site. Plan to be based on CABE guidance and linked to Green Flag criteria.	X			Delivery of a 5-year site management plan, with a target of 20 people to attend the nature walk and 5 people working with the consultant to develop the plan.	1500		
2. New Cut Interpretation Panel Project Officer to work with FrANC and priority groups to research, develop artwork and produce one new interpretation panel to be located at the Banana Bridge or Bedminster Bridge to address communities on this stretch of the river.	X			Delivery of one new interpretation panel with a target of working with 5 volunteers to produce the panel and 1500 people to read the panel by the end of 2013.	3750		
3. Walk / presentation training for FrANC volunteers Project Officer (or alternative trainer) to train a pool of FrANC volunteers to support school groups walking along the Cut – to instruct on wildlife and history including provision of information on FrANC web pages.	X	X	X	Target of 5 FrANC members to volunteer to receive training on leading walks / working with communities / working with school groups.	1000		
4. Boat trips Annual boat trip along the New Cut and River Avon to learn about the wildlife and history of the area for local people from priority groups / communities around the Cut.	X	X	X	Delivery of one boat trip per year with a target of 80 people attending each year, of which 25 people will be from priority groups.	700	700	700
5. Wild Waters Riverside Festival A high profile community festival to celebrate the New Cut. To be organised by FrANC with support from the Project Officer, and to reach out to disadvantaged and priority groups along the Bedminster Bridge to Temple Meads stretch of the river. The festival may be a larger one-day event or take the form of several smaller events over one month.			X	Delivery of an Avon New Cut Wild Waters event with a target of 800 people to attend the festival.			3500
6. Declaration of three new Local Nature Reserves Candidate sites are Lamplighters Marsh, Northern Slopes, Avon New Cut and Narroways Millennium Green. Project Officer to assist.	X	X	X	Declaration of 3 new LNRs, working with friends groups. Target of 3 volunteers taking part per group.	600	600	600

Table 1 Wild City – activities that will affect FrANC

APPENDIX A – Email from John Purkiss to FrANC membership

Wild City - a chance for FrANC to get involved

Friday, 22 April, 2011 13:16

From:

"John Purkiss" <contact@franc.org.uk>

To:

"John Purkiss" <contact@franc.org.uk>

FrANC is one of seven organisations involved in Wild City – a Bristol-wide project aiming to encourage more people to enjoy the outdoors. We are pleased to have been selected for inclusion in this project and hope that it will lead to the New Cut being formally recognised as a Local Nature Reserve. There are several ways that you can get involved.

New Cut Interpretation Panels

We plan to add to the 3 panels we have already put up alongside the Cut and install new ones at Bedminster Bridge and the Banana Bridge. The panels will contain information on the Cut's history and wildlife.

We need 5 people to work alongside a designer to prepare wording and photographs for the panels. Meetings will be held during the summer and can be arranged for midweek evenings.

Development of a Management Plan for the Cut

An ecological consultant is to be employed to develop a 5-year plan in consultation with the local community. The plan will be a key element in our campaign for the Cut to be declared a Local Nature Reserve. It will identify the important features of the Cut, how the Cut should be maintained (and by whom) and actions to be carried out over the next 5 years.

We need 5 people to work alongside the consultant over the summer. It will involve one or two meetings and/or walks around the Cut, which will be held on midweek evenings and/or at weekends depending on the availability of the people who wish to participate.

Walks training

We plan to set up a pool of volunteers willing to support school groups on walks around the Cut. This will involve helping teachers and providing basic information about the Cut's history and wildlife (all available in our book "A Celebration of the Avon New Cut").

We need 5 or 6 people interested in being trained as guides for school parties. Training will involve a session with the trainer, shadowing a school group, then one final session to follow up. The school group session will be during school hours but the other two sessions could be held on midweek evenings.

Please let me know if you would like to help with any of these activities.

Many thanks

John

John Purkiss
Chair, Friends of the Avon New Cut
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Visit our website at www.franc.org.uk