

## **Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)**

### **Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2012**

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**Attended by:** Sara Worth (vice Chair), Derek Hughes (Secretary), Elizabeth Payze (Treasurer), Roy Gallop (Committee member) and Chris Hanmer.

- 1. Purpose of Meeting** – Sara welcomed the meeting attendees and noted with sadness that this was the first Committee Meeting since the death of John Purkiss, the FrANC Chair, who had died suddenly whilst on holiday in June. The purpose of the meeting was to
  - review the remaining FrANC activities planned for 2012
  - identify the various FrANC activities that John had been involved in, so that responsibility for them can be reassigned
  - make arrangements for the FrANC AGM, planned for September 2012
- 2. Apologies for Absence** – none as all Committee Members were present. Sara had asked Chris Hanmer to attend the meeting as following John's death she had been involved in submitting the Proof of Evidence that John had prepared to the BRT2 Public Inquiry.
- 3. Minutes of the last Meeting** – the minutes of the last FrANC Committee Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2012 were approved by the Committee members present.

#### **4. Matters Arising**

The following matters arising from the previous meeting were discussed:

##### **4.1 Wild City Project**

- **Guided Walks** – although Chris has agreed to act as a FrANC point of contact for all enquiries regarding Guided Walks, there was concern that any requests made via the FrANC Website would be unanswered as only John had been able to access website and answer e-mails sent to [contact@franc.org.uk](mailto:contact@franc.org.uk). Richard Clutterbuck was also supposed to have access to the Website after it was set up, but was unable to get his password to work and hence relied on John to provide access. Richard is also working away from Bristol at the moment, so is not really available to provide support. However, as local schools were closed for the summer holidays at present, it was considered unlikely that there would have been any requests for Guided walks recently. A check would be made as soon as access to the Website was achieved.
- **Interpretation Boards** – the new Interpretation Boards at Bedminster Bridge and at the Banana Bridge have now been installed.....and look good! Thanks were expressed to those FrANC members who had been involved with Helen Adshead in their design.

It was noted that the Interpretation Board at Butterfly Junction has been vandalised with graffiti. Liz offered to contact Helen to find out who to should be contacted in Bristol City Council to get the board cleaned.

The Interpretation Board at Vauxhall Bridge is also showing signs of disrepair and has a water mark on it.
- **Management Plan** - little is known about the current status of the New Cut Management Plan being formulated by Bristol City Council and FrANC members

(Martha and Paul van der Lem and Chris are members of the working group). Liz offered to contact Helen Adshead to find out what progress has been made.

- **Wild Waters Riverside Festival 2013** – as this will not be held until next year, it was agreed that further discussion would be deferred until after the AGM.
- **Redcliffe Connection** – one of the Wild City activities that FrANC is tasked with concerns organising an annual boat trip along the New Cut/River Avon targeting local people from priority groups / communities around the Cut. To this end, Roy and John had made contact with an organisation called CLAS (Continued Learning at South Street) whose members were interested in taking part. Roy had also been in contact with Betty Morris from St Mary Redcliffe Church to help find out what other local community groups might be interested.
- **Local Nature Reserve** – Liz reported that she and John had visited members of the Lamplighter's Marsh which, like the Avon New Cut, is a potential candidate for recognition via the Wild City project as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). Roy offered to find out the name of a contact via Helen Adshead.

#### 4.2 BRT2

- **Public Inquiry Status** – the Public Inquiry into the Ashton Vale to Temple Meads and Bristol City Centre Rapid Transit Order (BRT2) has now finished, and we await the publication of the Inspector's Report which is expected in October/November.
- **FrANC Proof of Evidence and Promoters' Rebuttal** – John had prepared a Proof of Evidence (PoE) on behalf of FrANC which he was scheduled to present at the Inquiry after returning from holiday. Chris had been in correspondence with John before he went on holiday concerning some of the issues raised in his PoE, which included the environmental impact of the construction and operation of BRT2 on the New Cut.

After John's death, it had not felt right to present these issues on his behalf, and so only the PoE documentation prepared by John had been submitted to the Inquiry by Chris. This meant that there had been no opportunity to respond to the rebuttal prepared by the Promoters (Bristol City Council) to John's PoE.

One of the contentious items in the Promoters' evidence was the suggestion that those who had represented FrANC at the Community Steering Group Meetings held prior to the start of the Inquiry (Derek, Chris and Margaret Fay) were also representing the Cumberland Road residents. This is simply not true, and despite being challenged was reiterated by the Promoters in their closing submissions at the end of the Inquiry.

The FrANC members who had been involved in the Inquiry had met a number of objectors who had a lot of time for FrANC, and who also felt that peace and tranquility of the New Cut environment would be desecrated should the BRT2 project go ahead.

During the Inquiry the Inspector had taken a trip on the Harbour Railway one Saturday morning. It was noted that Sara, Chris and Martha van der Lem had undertaken an impromptu clean-up of the railway track the afternoon before, so that the Inspector would see the New Cut at its best.

## 5. Review of activities that John Purkiss had been involved in

Prior to the meeting, Derek had compiled a list of the many, many activities that John had been involved in, on behalf of FrANC. Each of these was reviewed, so that their current status could be assessed and appropriate actions assigned where necessary.

- **FrANC Website** – as noted previously, we are unable to change the Website content at present or respond to e-mail enquiries. Sara offered to contact *ClearMedia*, who had developed the Website under John's guidance, with a view to getting two or three FrANC members trained on how to add information to it, or remove out of date information from it. We also need to know how to be able to access e-mails sent to FrANC at [contact@franc.org.uk](mailto:contact@franc.org.uk). It was suggested that in future maybe different e-mail addresses could be set up on the Website for access to different services offered by FrANC (e.g. Guided Walks enquiries could be addressed to [walks@franc.org.uk](mailto:walks@franc.org.uk)).
- **Wild City Management Plan** – as noted in para. 4.1, it was agreed that Liz would contact Helen Adshead to find out the current status. Chris will check the names of those involved from Bristol City Council.
- **Bristol City Council Contacts** – Derek provided a list of names of people from the Council, obtained from John's list of contacts, which is appended to these minutes (see Appendix A). Roy agreed to consult Tess Green to try to find out which Council functions, if any, each of these people is responsible for. It was noted that one omission from the list is **Steve Sparks**, who is our contact for organising river bank clean-ups. Also, it is understood that supermarket trolleys in the New Cut should be reported to the assistant Harbour Master.
- **Southville Centre Contacts** – Liz offered to visit the Southville Centre (as it is on her way home) to find out the names of contacts there, and to give Derek's name and home e-mail address ([derekwhughes@btinternet.com](mailto:derekwhughes@btinternet.com)) as a point of contact for any future enquiries concerning FrANC.
- **FrANC Newsletters** – we need examples of the MS Word files that John has used for the FrANC Newsletters so that we can publish future Newsletters in the same format. Derek said that he would ask Jane Pukiss if these (and other files) could be recovered from John's computer when convenient.
- **Litter Pickers and Bin for Clean-Ups** – these are currently at John's home address. As well as litter pickers, the bin also contains protective gloves and a number of refuse bags provided by the Council. It was understood that John also has a strimmer that belongs to FrANC and has been used during the annual Butterfly Junction clean-up. All items will be retrieved by Sara and Derek and given a new home at 88 Cumberland Road.
- **FrANC Insurance** – our insurance policy, which covers activities such as the clean-ups, is arranged via BCTV. Liz offered to check the invoice for last year's premium to confirm when it is due for renewal.
- **BBC Film about the New Cut** – before going on holiday, John had met with Kath Farnaby who works for the BBC Natural History Unit and wants to make

a film about the New Cut, focusing on its ecology. The film is likely to be transmitted on the BBC's *Inside/Out West* programme some time in the autumn, possibly about the same time as the results of the BRT2 Public Inquiry are released. Kath would like to interview knowledgeable members of FrANC about the New Cut, and has also asked whether she could film a riverbank clean-up (this would require some effort on our part to organise a sufficient number of volunteers). Chris has also met Kath, but her main FrANC contact at the moment is Ben Barker who will be a good source of ecological information. News of further developments is awaited from Ben.

- **Annual Report for the AGM** – this will be written by Sara and Derek.

## 6. Treasurer's Report

Liz reported that she had completed the final year accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> May 2012. The current balance is £834.25. The accounts will need to be audited, so Liz proposed to use the same accountant to do this (Keith Long) as John had used in previous years.

Prior to John's funeral, his family had requested that any donations in John's memory should be made to FrANC and it was reported that so far a total of £745 had been received. The undertaker had sent a letter of thanks to acknowledge all who had contributed, and a copy would be retained in the FrANC archives.

At the moment John is still a signatory for the FrANC bank account, which is held at the NatWest branch on North Street. As three signatories are required (though only two signatories are required to countersign cheques), it was agreed that Roy would replace John as the third signatory, in addition to Liz and Derek.

Liz also advised that she had received notification from Ben Barker that FrANC had been awarded a grant from the Bedminster Community Chest (BCC), but that some paperwork would need to be completed in order for us to claim it.

## 7. Status of FrANC Events 2012

- **Treasure Island Walk on 10<sup>th</sup> July** – thanks were expressed to Mark Steads for leading this very enjoyable walk, though disappointingly only 8 FrANC members had turned out to support it.
- **Wild City Boat Trip** – this is scheduled for some time in the autumn (see *Redcliffe Connection* in para. 4.1 above). Roy has paid £550 for a Bristol Ferry Boat booking for this trip that will be refunded by the Wild City Project.

## 8. Memorial for John Purkiss

Several FrANC members have suggested that we should commemorate the good work that John did on behalf of FrANC in some way. The following possibilities were discussed briefly at the meeting:

- A bench on the Coronation Road side of the New Cut
- An annual John Purkiss Memorial Lecture or Walk
- A tree planted in Greville Smith Park (suggested by the Patchwork Group, one of the many organisations that John was involved in)
- A tree planted in a community location (e.g. Southville Centre, or a corner of South Street)

It was noted that Jane Purkiss and John's sons had expressed a wish to be present at any tree planting ceremony, and that possibly this could be combined with a memorial walk and social gathering (tea/cakes).

## **9. Any Other Business**

- **Butterfly Junction** – a new electricity substation has been built at the edge of the CREATE Centre car park next to Butterfly Junction. Unfortunately, during its construction, tree, buddleia and bramble cuttings have been dumped against the wall at the end of the grassy area and the grasses have been trampled over in several places – not good for the local butterfly population. We need to confirm with the Council that these cuttings will be removed.
- **Planning for the AGM** – as Roy has a recurring commitment on Thursdays and Chris on Tuesdays, two possible dates were suggested – Monday 17<sup>th</sup> or Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> September. It was agreed that the AGM will be held in the Southville Centre and Liz offered to check the availability of a suitable room on either of these dates.

One of the Agenda items will be suggestions for a suitable memorial to John Purkiss.

**Derek Hughes**  
**Secretary, Friends of the Avon New Cut**

## APPENDIX A

### Potential List of FrANC “Council” Contacts

#### Members:

Alex Woodman	alex.woodman@bristol.gov.uk
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