

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)

Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 3rd December 2012

Attended by: Sara Worth (Chair), Roy Gallop (Vice-Chair), Derek Hughes (Secretary), Elizabeth Payze (Treasurer), Margaret Fay, Ed Hall and Chris Hanmer (Committee Members), Helen Adshead and Richard Clutterbuck.

1. Welcome

Sara welcomed the meeting attendees, especially the new Committee Members who had been appointed following the FrANC AGM held on 19th September. A warm welcome was also extended to Helen Adshead, who had been invited to provide an update on the Wild City Project.

2. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence, as all Committee Members were present.

3. Minutes of the last Meeting

The minutes of the last FrANC Committee Meeting held on 23rd July 2012 were approved, with one minor correction – Chris Hanmer would prefer future Committee Meetings not to be held on *Thursday* evenings, instead of *Tuesday* evenings as is incorrectly stated in the minutes.

4. Matters Arising

Any matters arising from the previous meeting are covered under items 5 (Wild City Project) and 6 (Update on BRT2) of these minutes.

5. Wild City Project

5.1 New Cut Management Plan – Helen reported that the Management Plan is more or less finished, thanks to much detailed work by John Purkiss. The person from Bristol City Council (BCC) who is leading this activity is **Ollie Roberts**. A small amount of work remains to be done by BCC and it is expected that a review of the final draft with Helen and the FrANC representatives will be held early next year, possibly in January. The Plan will cover a 5-year period and will define the activities to be completed each year, as well as who is responsible for them and where the required funding will come from.

Chris agreed to be the link between BCC and the FrANC representatives, who would be herself, Richard and Derek. The draft Management Plan will be distributed by Derek to all Committee Members for comment. It was agreed that the best time for the FrANC representatives to meet with BCC would be a Friday afternoon in January or February (but not January 18th).

5.2 Guided Walks – the current status of this Wild City activity was briefly reviewed. Helen said that the intention had been to work with FrANC to have a more organised scheme for providing Guided Walks, with the training of FrANC volunteers to be provided by Ruth Worsley. Those volunteers who were present (Chris, Richard, Sara and Derek) commented that the training that they had received had amounted to shadowing Ruth on one or two walks, after which it had been expected that FrANC volunteers would be solely responsible for leading any future walks.

The FrANC volunteers were not happy with this arrangement (and neither was John Purkiss when subsequently contacted by various parties asking him to arrange Guided Walks for them!). Their concerns were:

- the number of FrANC members who had initially volunteered to support the provision of a Guided Walk service was limited;
- because some of the FrANC volunteers work full-time or part-time, it would be difficult for them to take time off to participate in these Guided Walks, especially if the demand is high;
- a single volunteer would not feel confident in leading a Guided Walk, especially if there was a large number of people in the group. Consequently, it was felt that a minimum of two volunteers should be involved in any future Guided Walks organised by FrANC;
- the current Guided Walk offered by FrANC is based on the Treasure Hunt leaflet. This needs to be supported by making suitable background information available to Guided Walk leaders concerning the various buildings and bridges around the Cut that are featured in the leaflet, so that they can talk knowledgeably about them.

It was noted that M-Shed have also started to run guided tours of the Floating Harbour, led by “museum volunteers”, one of which is Ed Hall! Ed said that M-Shed were currently running two tours each month, alternating on Tuesday mornings and afternoons, with each tour lasting about two hours. Training for leading these tours had been provided by the Walking for Health Group. Because of the timing of these tours, they are mostly intended for adults, and not school parties.

After further discussion, the following way forward was suggested:

- the Guided Walks initiative should be re-launched, recognising that because of work commitments the support available from some FrANC volunteers may be limited, perhaps to only one day per year;
- FrANC should liaise with M-Shed, and suggest that M-Shed continue to provide guided tours for adults, whereas FrANC will offer a complementary Guided Walks service primarily for school parties. Margaret offered to talk to Jackie Wiltshire, who is co-ordinating the M-Shed guided tours, about this;
- the FrANC volunteers will decide when they are available to run a Guided Walk, and these dates will be offered to three local schools who may be interested. Helen will provide the names of school contacts;
- it was agreed at the last Committee Meeting that Chris will be the FrANC point of contact for any future enquiries regarding Guided Walks. A facility for booking such walks may be added to the FrANC website in due course, though with the limited number of volunteers currently available there are concerns that this could be over-subscribed.

Margaret also mentioned that, at the end of each guided tour, M-Shed ask participants to complete a feedback form, and that she has been involved in collating the information received. Margaret offered to provide a copy of the feedback form, subject to M-Shed’s agreement, which could be adapted for use by FrANC.

5.3 New Interpretation Boards – as reported at the last meeting, these have now been installed at Bedminster Bridge and at the Banana Bridge. The possibility of installing an additional Interpretation Board at Bath Bridge was also briefly

discussed, as by doing this there would be an Interpretation Board at all the bridges along the New Cut between Temple Meads and the Create Centre. It was suggested that, if funding is an issue, then maybe Fowlers Motorcycles or Bart Spices could be approached to see if they would be willing to sponsor the cost of designing, manufacturing and installing the new board. Some research would also be required by FrANC to find suitable historical material about Bath Bridge, plus supporting artwork/photographs.

5.4 Redcliffe Connection / Boat Trip along New Cut – 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 date, Roy (and John Purkiss) had made contact with two local organisations who were interested in taking part:

- Continued Learning at South Street (CLASS)
- University of the Third Age (U3A)

It was originally intended to run the first boat trip in the latter half of 2012, but owing to ill health Roy had decided to postpone this until 2013. However, although Roy paid the Bristol Ferry Boat Company in full for the cost of the boat trip, the company subsequently went out of business! As the future of the Bristol Ferry Boat Company was presently unclear, it was agreed that Roy would be reimbursed by the Wild City Project if it was not possible for the company, or its successor (assuming there is one), to honour the boat trip booking he had already paid for. Helen reported that currently there is £2,100 of funding allocated from the Wild City budget for this activity, but that if necessary additional funding could be made available by reallocating some of the funding for other activities (such as the £3,600 currently budgeted for the Wild Waters Riverside Festival).

For the Boat Trip, it had been originally planned to go up the New Cut to Temple Meads and then on to Netham Weir – a trip which has been completed successfully in the past, with favourable tides. However, if the Bristol Ferry Boat Company is not resurrected then it was suggested that an alternative might be a trip along the riverside in an open top bus – perhaps combined with a walk along the river bank, where this is possible.

Roy also reported that members of CLASS are also involved in researching the history of Redcliffe and Bedminster, the result of which will be a 28-page booklet published by Fiducia and funded through the Wild City Project. This booklet will complement the book entitled “*A Celebration of the Avon New Cut*” that was published previously by Fiducia in 2006.

5.5 Wild Waters Riverside Festival 2013 – it is intended that this will be a “high priority community festival to celebrate the New Cut”. It was reported that the Lamplighters Marsh group – also funded by the Wild City Project – were intending to organise a similar festival in July 2013, which would coincide with the Pill Regatta.

John Purkiss had met with representatives of the Lamplighters Marsh group earlier this year, and had been keen to link their festival with the one to be organised by FrANC. It had been suggested that one way of doing this would be to run a boat trip from the New Cut to Lamplighters Marsh.

Another objective of the Wild Waters Riverside Festival to be organised by FrANC is that it should “reach out to disadvantaged and priority groups along the Bedminster Bridge to Temple Meads stretch of the river”. It was felt that the above boat trip should therefore involve St Mary Redcliffe School, as there was no other

natural community meeting/gathering place at this end of the Cut. Some funding for this event should therefore be spent on establishing links with the St Mary Redcliffe Primary and Secondary Schools, and also CLASS – though the logistics of starting the boat trip to Lamplighters Marsh from a part of the New Cut close to the school would need to be carefully assessed. However, by holding at least one festival event at the school the profile of this end of the Cut would be raised.

Another possibility would be to involve the Harbour Railway in the festival in some way, recognising that this would shift the focus away from the Bedminster end of the New Cut and more towards the location of Butterfly Junction and the CREATE Centre.

With regard to future planning, the following actions were placed on those present:

- Chris to establish a link with St. Mary Redcliffe School (she knows one of the physics teachers there);
- Roy to provide an update on the CLASS booklet on Redcliffe/Bedminster;
- Margaret to find out the dates when the Harbour Railway will be running next year.

It was also agreed that if St. Mary Redcliffe or any other local school were to be involved in any FrANC Wild Waters Riverside Festival events, such as the boat trip, then they should be held after any GCSE/A level exams had finished, but before schools broke up for the summer holidays. Regarding the boat trip, the proposed date was one week after the date of the Lamplighters Marsh festival.

6.0 Update on BRT2

It was reported that the Inspector's Report on the Public Inquiry into the Ashton Vale to Temple Meads and Bristol City Centre Rapid Transit Order (BRT2) has not yet been published. There has been no official communication regarding its status, but it was thought that it could be several weeks before the outcome of the Inquiry is known, and possibly even longer before it is known whether BRT2 will go ahead as this decision will be made by the Secretary of State.

In the interim period, BCC have nevertheless continued to progress various BRT2 activities, such as taking soil samples along the Harbour Railway track. It is understood that to date £4.6 million has been spent on project-related work, even though no decision has been made as to whether or not the project will definitely go ahead.

The newly-appointed Mayor of Bristol, George Ferguson, has stated that he is against the current BRT2 proposals, and some of those who were involved in the *Stop BRT2* campaign have been consulted by him. It is understood that Mr. Ferguson has requested further studies on the possible re-routing of BRT2, which would involve scrapping the proposed route along the Harbour Railway next to the New Cut – a move which would be supported by FrANC.

BCC have started to publish a regular internal newsletter called "Rapid Transit News", and a copy of the first edition was provided by Margaret.

7.0 Operational Matters

7.1 Updating and Management of FrANC Website – the following progress has been made since the last meeting:

- Sara has contacted *ClearMedia*, the Website developers, who subsequently updated the News and Events section with details of the Butterfly Junction

maintenance activity and also instructed Sara on how to access and reply to correspondence sent to FrANC via contact@franc.org.uk.

- Although some notes have been found in John Purkiss' files on how to change the Website, we are currently unable to do so and *ClearMedia* will charge us £60 per hour (plus VAT) for providing instruction/training. However, following an appeal to the FrANC membership, Sara has since received two offers of assistance for supporting the Website, and will be pursuing these in the New Year.
- Our priority at the moment is to learn how update the Website so that its content can be kept up to date. In the longer term, it was felt that a more "dynamic" Website format should be developed, with perhaps links to social networking sites such as Facebook to attract younger people.

7.2 BCC Contacts – the person to contact to organise the collection of waste from Riverbank Cleanups is now **Anne Newman**, who has replaced Steve Sparks who has since retired. Sara reported that she had already contacted Anne concerning the disposal of the waste material from the Butterfly Junction maintenance activity held on December 1st.

Regarding the removal of graffiti along the New Cut, Chris reported that there is a facility for reporting this on the BCC website, and that any graffiti should be removed within a week of it being reporting.

At the AGM, concerns had been raised regarding the existence of a small gypsy travellers camp on the banks of the New Cut next to Coronation Road, specifically relating to its environmental impact (dogs fouling riverbank footpaths, empty drink cans and bottles, and litter disposed of in the river). Ed had contacted **Steven Hersey** at BCC about this, and although the travellers had been moved on they were now encamped a short distance downstream on land owned by Cornwall Garages (behind the *Harvest Energy* Service Station), and not BCC. It was suggested that the garage owners should be contacted to see if the travellers can be encouraged to vacate this area of the New Cut altogether.

7.3 Southville Centre Contacts – Derek reported that he has asked **Jane Guscott** at the Southville Centre to re-direct any mail received for FrANC to his home address. FrANC are still linked to the Southville Centre website.

7.4 Winter Newsletter 2013 – it is intended to publish this early in the New Year, with the Newsletter contents to be compiled by Derek, Sara and Margaret. Suggested items for inclusion were the dates of the Riverbank Cleanups, a BRT2 update, news of the proposed Wild Waters Riverside Festival, the names of the new Committee members and a short article on John Purkiss. It was suggested that details of the BCC website link for graffiti removal could also be included.

7.5 FrANC Insurance – Liz reported that this public liability insurance policy with BCTV was due for renewal in December, and would cost £196.76. The information requested included an estimate of the number of times per year that volunteering activities are carried out by the FrANC membership.

Liz also said that she had been sent an application form for the "Chestnut Fund", which is a small grant scheme to enable volunteer groups to purchase tools for practical tasks. The available funding is around £350, and it was suggested that if successful this could be used to purchase extended-reach litter pickers, loppers or

secateurs for Riverbank Cleanups, or even a portable microphone and amplifier for use in Guided Walks. Liz offered to investigate this further.

8.0 Treasurer's Report

Liz reported that there had been no changes to the FrANC balance sheet since the AGM. Prior to John Purkiss' funeral, his family had requested that any donations in John's memory should be made to FrANC and Liz said that so far a total of £850 had been received. Including this, there was about £1600 in FrANC's bank account at present.

9.0 Events Planning 2013

The following events are currently planned for next year:

- 9.1 Riverbank Cleanups** – to be held on 26th January along the Coronation Road side of the New Cut, and on 23rd February along Cumberland Road and the Harbour Railway. It was agreed that, based on past experience, it would be helpful if some extended-reach litter pickers could be purchased to support these activities. Derek offered to progress this.

The possibility of organising a mid-year Riverbank Cleanup was also discussed. It was agreed that a date at the end of October/beginning of November would be more preferable, as if this was held in the summer then this would coincide with the time of year when the growth of vegetation was at its highest, which could make hidden litter difficult to detect.

- 9.2 Herb Walk** – this has been a successful event in previous years and it was proposed that Max Drake or Pam Millman should be asked to lead a similar event next year. This should ideally take place prior to the cutting of grass and shrubs along the proposed route, so some liaison with BCC would be required when scheduling a date for the walk.

- 9.3 Guided Walks in vicinity of New Cut** – Roy offered to lead a guided walk next year as part of the Wild Waters Riverside Festival. He suggested that this could be a literary walk, and would include re-enactments of events that had happened during the history of the Cut, perhaps involving Marie Clifford, Mark Steads and Pete Tomlinson who had taken part in similar events in the past. It was noted that those involved in writing and performing such an event would require payment for their services, which would be met by the funding available for the Wild Waters Festival.

- 9.4 Bat-Detecting Walk** – a suggested date was some time in September, to be confirmed with Angus Tillotson.

- 9.5 Walk along the Cut** – Ed suggested that the Committee should walk the length of the Cut some time early next year, in order to obtain an appreciation of its current status and possibly generate new ideas for activities during 2013. Possible dates will be discussed at the next Committee meeting.

10. Memorial for John Purkiss

There was insufficient time to discuss this at the meeting, so this Agenda item was deferred until the next Committee Meeting when it will be given high priority.

11. Any Other Business

11.1 Review of Butterfly Junction Maintenance Activity – it was reported that this activity had been completed as planned on 1st December. Around 50% of the grassy area at Butterfly Junction had been cut, as recommended by the 2006 *Butterfly Junction Management Brief* which had been consulted beforehand. The grass had been cut by Angus Tillotson using the STIHL FS50 strimmer previously owned by John Purkiss (the strimmer now has a new permanent home with Sara and Derek). Thanks were expressed to the 13 volunteers who had taken part. The grass and bramble cuttings had been dumped in two locations; (i) behind the Butterfly Junction Information Board, and (ii) on top of the pile of buddleia and bramble cuttings left by BCC earlier in the year against the wall at the end of the grassy area. Sara offered to contact BCC to find out who was responsible for disposing of this “garden waste” material.

11.2 Greater Bedminster Community Partnership (GBCP) Forms – Derek reported that he had received two forms from GBCP, courtesy of Ben Barker, concerning (i) FrANC progress on the Area Green Space Strategy and (ii) FrANC’s membership of GBCP. Both forms would be completed and returned to Ben.

12. Date of next meeting

The next Committee Meeting will be held on **Monday 28th January 2013** at 88 Cumberland Road, starting at 7:15pm.

A list of the actions placed at this meeting may be found in Table 1.

Derek Hughes
Secretary, Friends of the Avon New Cut

Action No.	Description	Actioned by
12-03-01	Distribute New Cut Management Plan, when available, to Committee Members.	Derek
12-03-02	Talk to Jackie Wiltshire of M-Shed about possibility of future liaison with FrANC for provision of Guided Walks for adults and school parties.	Margaret
12-03-03	Provide names of school contacts for organising Guided Walks.	Helen
12-03-04	Obtain copy of Guided Walk Feedback Form used by M-Shed (subject to their agreement).	Margaret
12-03-05	Wild City Project to reimburse Roy for cost of boat trip if booking already paid for is not honoured by Bristol Ferry Boat Company's successor.	Helen
12-03-06	Establish a link with St. Mary Redcliffe School for Wild Waters Riverside Festival.	Chris
12-03-07	Provide an update on the CLASS booklet on Redcliffe/Bedminster.	Roy
12-03-08	Find out the dates when the Harbour Railway will be running in 2013.	Margaret
12-03-09	Contact FrANC member(s) to obtain help offered to manage and update FrANC Website.	Sara
12-03-10	Contact owners of Cornwall Garage to see if gypsy travellers can be encouraged to vacate New Cut.	Ed
12-03-11	Compile and publish FrANC Winter Newsletter 2013.	Derek Margaret Sara
12-03-12	Investigate Chestnut Fund and submit application for grant towards cost of items for Riverbank Clean-ups/Guided Walks.	Liz
12-03-13	Purchase suitable extended-reach litter-pickers in time for first Riverbank Clean-up on January 26 th .	Derek
12-03-14	Contact BCC to find out who is responsible for disposing of Butterfly Junction "garden waste".	Sara
12-03-15	Complete GBCP forms and return to Ben Barker.	Derek

Table 1 FrANC Committee Action List