

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)
Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 6th July 2015

Attended by: Sara Worth (Chair), Roy Gallop (Vice-Chair), Derek Hughes (Secretary) and Ed Hall and Chris Hanmer (Committee Members).

1. Welcome

Sara welcomed the meeting attendees.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Richard Clutterbuck, Margaret Fay and Angie Tonge (Committee Member) and Steve Fay (Treasurer).

3. Minutes of the last Meeting

The minutes of the last FrANC Committee Meeting held on 7th May 2015 were approved by those present, apart from one correction to the status of Action 14-02-04 which had, in fact, been completed (see item 4 below).

4. Matters Arising

The matters arising from the previous meeting may be found in the list of Actions contained in the minutes of that meeting, the current status of which is summarised in Table 1. Additional comments were provided concerning the following actions:

Action 14-02-04: the results of Chris' investigation into local Car Boot Sales were not reported at the last Committee Meeting. The most suitable appears to be the Bristol (or Clifton?) Car Boot Sale which is held at Bower Ashton on the cricket ground at Clanage Road, opposite the road leading to the University of the West of England (UWE) Bower Ashton site. It runs from March to November each Sunday and on Bank Holiday Mondays. Sellers can arrive between 7:30am and 8:30am and are charged a £10 fee. The event is open to Buyers from 9:00am, who are charged a £1 entry fee. No food can be sold.

Action 15-01-01: FrANC Newsletter 23 (Summer 2015) has been completed and was distributed electronically to the membership on 11th June. The Newsletter included details of the forthcoming Boat Trip up the New Cut (see item 7 below).

Action 15-01-02: Margaret has kindly provided six laminated butterfly identification charts which were obtained from the Southville Centre, for use during this year's *Big Butterfly Count* (see item 7 below).

Action 15-01-06: this action is partially completed in that Sara has asked Becky Belfin (the Nature Conservation Officer for Bristol City Council (BCC)) to contact Eric Dougall on her behalf to find out if BCC Marketing & Estates Services funding is available to pay for the clearance of vegetation and rubbish along the York Road riverbank by ParkWork (see items 6 and 8.2 below). Regrettably, no response has been received from Eric to any e-mail correspondence sent by Sara.

5. Status of LNR Application / Green Capital Celebration Event

Sara reported that she had also asked Becky Belfin to ask Richard Ennion (the Environmental Improvements Manager, Environment and Leisure for BCC – Neighbourhoods) to provide an accurate update on the status of the BCC application for the New Cut to be officially recognised as a Local Nature Reserve

(LNR) – now believed to be with the Council’s “Strategic Planning Group”. Chris mentioned that she had also raised this subject with Richard at a recent Cabot, Clifton & Clifton East Neighbourhood Partnership meeting, and that he also appeared to be frustrated at the apparent lack of progress.

There has been no further news of a LNR Green Capital Celebration Event since the meeting attended by Sara and Margaret on 14th April, which was also organised by Richard Ennion. This event was provisionally planned for the autumn.

6. Progress of Heritage Lottery Fund Application

Since the last meeting, Sara and other Committee Members (Roy, Ed, Margaret, Chris and Angie) have been involved in preparing an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund. This new venture was partly instigated by a UWE intern, Alex Gregory, who contacted Sara and offered to investigate possible future funding opportunities for FrANC.

The content of the FrANC project for which HLF funding is being applied for has evolved during the course of two meetings with Alex, and a first draft of a summary of the project objectives has been prepared by Chris for comment. The five main objectives of the HLF application are to:

- (i) clear the York Road riverbank between Bedminster Bridge and Bath Road Bridge of rubbish and overgrown vegetation;
- (ii) install two new benches along the same stretch of riverbank;
- (iii) install two new Interpretation Boards at separate locations on the New Cut;
- (iv) produce leaflets describing a self-directed walk around the New Cut, linked by the existing and new Interpretation Boards;
- (v) run a Celebration Event to encourage people to become more involved in the heritage of their local area, and to help maintain it. This would be particularly aimed at the residents who live on either side of the New Cut along York Road and Clarence Road.

It is recognised that the summary will need some revision as it is currently too lengthy – word count limits are applied to this and other parts of the HLF electronic document, which must be completed and submitted via the HLF website.

The first objective, involving the clearance of rubbish and overgrown vegetation along the York Road riverbank, is effectively the same task that it is proposed will be undertaken by ParkWork later this year (see item 8.2 below). If the HLF application is successful then any BCC funding that would have been used to cover this activity could be re-directed to other tasks, such as the removal of items from the riverbed itself (shopping trolleys, bollards, metal fencing, etc.).

Sara noted that the bulk of the HLF application remains to be completed, and that additional source material/information would have to be found for (a) a description of the heritage of the New Cut, (b) the type and cost of suitable benches, (c) the cost of designing and installing two Interpretation Boards and (d) leaflet design and printing costs. Roy was actioned to get a quotation for the printing cost of up to 1000 leaflets. Further ideas were also needed regarding the content of the proposed Celebration Event. People or organisations prepared to write letters in support of the HLF application would also have to be found.

Derek said that he had been contacted by Ben Barker concerning the development of a circular walk around the New Cut which would be part of the *Walking in South Bedminster* initiative proposed by the Greater Bedminster Community Partnership. Derek had suggested that the self-directed walk which is included as part of the HLF application could also fulfil this role, and Sara Zaltash, a local artist, has offered to contribute to the leaflet design for such a walk.

It was agreed that, to expedite matters, the contact address to be used in the FrANC HLF application would be Sara's/Derek's home address of 88 Cumberland Road, rather than the Southville Centre.

7. Events Planning 2015

- **“Big Butterfly Count” at Butterfly Junction from 17th July to 9th August.** This nationwide event is run by a charity called *Butterfly Conservation*. Derek said that he intended sending out survey details to the FrANC membership within the next week, in order to encourage as many people as possible to take part. This would comprise butterfly identification charts and other guidance information taken from the *Butterfly Conservation* website, plus a pro-forma sheet to be used to record sightings. The butterfly identification charts supplied by Margaret (see Action 15-01-02 and item 4 above) would also be available for anyone wishing to take part in the survey who does not have access to a computer or printer.
- **Boat Trip up the New Cut to Netham Weir** to be held on Saturday 24th October. This 3½-hour trip will depart at 2:15pm from Wapping Wharf, near the ss Great Britain. Tickets have been priced at £15 each (with no concessions), and will be offered to members of both FrANC and U3A (to ensure that we fill the boat!). Roy has agreed that a total of 16 tickets will be reserved for U3A members, and the U3A contact is Helen Thomas. It was suggested that on-board commentary during the trip – which will include part of the Avon Gorge – will be provided by Roy, Mark Steeds and Peter Andressen (Roy to check that Mark and Peter are available), who will all be given a free ticket in recognition of their services. Roy was asked to clarify the following information with the Bristol Ferryboat Company:
 - the total cost of the trip;
 - the maximum number of passengers that the boat can accommodate (the number of *paying* passengers will be the maximum number less the number of “expert” commentators on board).

It was noted that Chris and Ed will not be available for the trip, and that to date no requests for tickets had been received from Margaret, Steve or Angie. All tickets sales will be non-refundable, but any unwanted tickets could be re-sold by the original purchasers to someone else.

- **Riverbank Tree Survey** – this was also suggested as an additional FrANC event for the autumn, though no planning has been done at present. The last comprehensive survey of trees was done by BCC in 2001¹, which is the source used for the different species listed on the FrANC website. An article written by Richard Bland of the Bristol Naturalists' Society, entitled “*The Wildlife of the New Cut*”, also includes a more recent list of the trees along the riverbanks. A tree expert would be needed to run such an event and the

¹ **Arboricultural Survey** (Bristol City Council, September 2001). Survey of trees between Cumberland Basin and Temple Meads, plus recommendations.

name of Guy Malkerson (Liz Payze's partner), who is BS3 Tree Champion for Patchwork, was mentioned. Chris noted that, from two of the Neighbourhood Partnership meetings she had attended, it appeared that a lot of BCC money is available for tree planting and replacement ².

8. Other activities involving FrANC

8.1 New Interpretation Board (Green Capital funding): a first draft of the layout of the new Interpretation Board was presented by Derek, which is complete apart from the inclusion of a photo taken from the south riverbank showing the sluices in operation. Richard has talked to Vicky Colbourne-Brown from Bristol Metal Spraying & Protective Coatings Ltd., which is the company located immediately opposite the sluices, and has obtained her permission to take such a photo on-site. The only problem is that the exact timings of when the sluices operate are not known, as the whole process is now computer-controlled. Derek will find out from Sarah Murray of the Underfall Yard Trust whether any information regarding the sluice gate operating times can be made available, and if not it was agreed that a photo without the sluices operating will be taken by Richard. Sarah has already provided such a photo from the Underfall Yard Trust archives, but the photo resolution may not be adequate when enlarged to fit the space allocated on the A1-size Interpretation Board. Derek will send the first draft of the Information Board layout to Sarah and to officers from the two Neighbourhood Partnerships who are funding the board to get their comments/acceptance, before approaching Inkwood Design who will prepare the official artwork from this first draft layout.

8.2 Bristol Parks Forum: Sara and Derek attended their second Bristol Parks Forum (BPF) meeting on 27th June, which was again held at Windmill Hill City Farm. Developments on the following two BPF projects which are of interest to FrANC are reported below:

- **ParkWork Project:** this is a three-year scheme which involves getting people who have not worked for a period of time, for whatever reason, back into employment by offering them on-the-job training in the maintenance and management of the Bristol's green spaces. Sara and Derek had conducted a survey of the York Road riverbank with the ParkWork coordinator, Joe McKenna, on 15th May, from which it had been agreed in principle that ParkWork would take on the clearance of the York Road riverbank of overgrown vegetation and rubbish as one of their projects this year. As the amount of vegetation to be cut back could be considerable, Joe had suggested that initially a 1 to 2 metre-wide swathe of vegetation should be cut back from the edge of the pavement/fencing. ParkWork would also attempt to cut back the vegetation further in six areas along the riverbank, so as to create "vistas" from which the opposite riverbank on Clarence Road could be viewed. Joe reports to Becky Belfin, the BCC Nature Conservation Officer. Joe was not present at the BPF meeting, but Sara spoke with Becky and it was agreed that (i) ParkWork will carry out the York Road clearance work in the autumn (probably October) and (ii) Becky will chase Eric Dougall (from BCC Marketing & Estates Services) for funding. It was also agreed to include this activity as part of FrANC's HLF application, which could be

² BCC employs a team of Arboricultural Officers who carry out tree inspections, tree maintenance and felling and tree planting. BCC would like to see more trees planted in the city (increase tree cover from 14% to 30%) and an initiative called *TreeBristol* has been set up whereby residents can sponsor a tree or get involved in tree planting events.

another possible funding source (see item 6 above). The work will go ahead, however, irrespective of whether alternative funding sources to the ParkWork budget are available.

- **Bristol ParkHive Project:** it was reported that a first release of the *ParkHive App*, which can be downloaded onto mobile phones and tablets and used to help find the nearest Bristol park or green space, is now available for testing. It was not clear, however, whether the Avon New Cut has been included as one of the green spaces that can be accessed via this new App, as the information on the New Cut contained in the App database is limited.

8.3 “Towards Hydrocitizenship” / Water City Bristol Project: Derek reported that he had circulated details of the next “Bristol Loves Tides” event on Saturday 20th June, entitled “*Tidal Turnings: The Continued Adventures of Peri and Proxy*”, to the FrANC membership. He had also received a request from Katherine Jenkins for a representative from FrANC to be part of the advisory group for the Water City Bristol Project. The group meets twice a year to share ideas and feedback (but is already nearly halfway through its four-year programme), and the next meeting is likely to be in October or November. Derek was not keen to take on this additional role, owing to his other FrANC commitments, and asked for volunteers from those present. Copies of the minutes of the last two Water City Bristol meetings and a draft strategy document were given to Ed, for consideration.

9. Any Other Business

- **FrANC representative at Neighbourhood Partnership Meetings:** Chris’ offer to represent FrANC at future Cabot, Clifton & Clifton East Neighbourhood Partnership Meetings was accepted. This was seen as being particularly important because the composition of these meetings will change when new ward boundaries are introduced next year. Having a member of FrANC present at meetings of the proposed new Hotwells & Harbourside Neighbourhood Partnership would enable us to maintain awareness of potential sources of funding to support our activities. Currently, Neighbourhood Partnerships tend to meet five times each year.
- **Avon Gardens Trust:** at the end of the last BPF meeting, Sara had spoken with Wendy Pollard from the Avon Gardens Trust (AGT) who had suggested that FrANC should apply to the trust for funding for tools such as secateurs and loppers. The AGT website is www.avongardenstrust.org.uk, and contact can be made via news@avongardenstrust.org.uk.
- **FrANC Contact in The Quays:** Chris offered to contact Jeff Knaggs to find out if he is prepared to help publicise future FrANC events in The Quays.

10. Date of next meeting

- The next Committee Meeting was scheduled for **Monday 7th September** at 88 Cumberland Road. Committee Members were asked to arrive at 7:15pm in time for a 7:30pm start.
- Note that Table 1 includes any new actions raised at this 6th July meeting.

Derek Hughes
Secretary, Friends of the Avon New Cut

Action No.	Description	Actioned by	Status
14-02-04	Fundraising – do recce. of locations of local car boot sales, before Christmas 2014	Chris	<i>Completed</i>
15-01-01	Write and publish Summer 2015 FrANC Newsletter	Sara + others	<i>Completed</i>
15-01-02	Investigate what butterfly identification sources are available for use during the <i>Big Butterfly Count</i>	Margaret	<i>Completed</i>
15-01-03	Co-ordinate the sale and distribution of Boat Trip tickets to FrANC members	Derek	<i>In Progress</i>
15-01-04	Contact John Penny (Bristol Records Office) to find out (i) if any digitised film clips are available of the New Cut and (ii) if so, would John be willing to present these to the FrANC membership (either following an AGM or an “open” meeting)	Richard	<i>In Progress</i>
15-01-05	Design new Interpretation Board for installation near Underfall Yard sluices on Chocolate Path (Green Capital project)	Derek, Richard	<i>In Progress</i>
15-01-06	In collaboration with Joe McKenna, assess feasibility of using ParkWork to undertake clearance of rubbish and vegetation along York Road riverbank, and if practicable explore funding opportunities with Eric Dougall (Estate Services Manager)	Sara	<i>In Progress</i>
15-02-01	Complete and submit Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) application	Sara + others	<i>New Action</i>
15-02-02	Obtain estimate of printing cost for up to 1000 leaflets for input to HLF application	Roy	<i>New Action</i>
15-02-03	Distribute “ <i>Big Butterfly Count 2015</i> ” survey material to FrANC membership and collate results received at end of survey	Derek	<i>New Action</i>
15-02-04	Check that Mark Steeds and Peter Andressen are available for the Boat Trip on 24 th October	Roy	<i>New Action</i>
15-02-05	Decide if prepared to be FrANC representative at future meetings of Water City Bristol Project	Ed	<i>New Action</i>
15-02-06	Contact Jeff Knaggs to find out if he is prepared to help publicise future FrANC events in The Quays on Cumberland Road	Chris	<i>New Action</i>

Table 1 FrANC Committee Action List