

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)
Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 7th September 2015

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

1. Welcome

Sara welcomed the meeting attendees.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Richard Clutterbuck, Ed Hall and Angie Tonge (Committee Members) and Steve Fay (Treasurer).

3. Minutes of the last Meeting

The minutes of the last FrANC Committee Meeting held on 6th July 2015 were approved by those present.

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 15-01-06: discussions have been held with Joe McKenna, as a result of which it has been agreed in principle that ParkWork will undertake the clearance of rubbish and vegetation along the York Road riverbank. This work will be either funded via the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant (see item 6 below), or by Bristol City Council (BCC) Marketing & Estates Services (Eric Dougall) if FrANC's HLF grant application is unsuccessful.

Action 15-02-01: the HLF grant application has been completed and submitted (see item 6 below).

Action 15-02-02: estimates for leaflet printing costs were provided by Roy and were included as part of the HLF grant application.

Action 15-02-03: the results of this year's Big Butterfly Count survey have been collated and were distributed via email to the FrANC membership on 6th September.

Action 15-02-04: Roy reported that Peter Andressen will not be available for the Boat Trip on 24th October, and that Mark Steeds' availability will not be known until nearer the above date.

Action 15-02-05: Ed Hall has agreed to represent FrANC at future meetings of the Water City Bristol Project, and Derek has advised one of the project members (Katherine Jones) of this.

Action 15-02-06: Chris advised that the potential contact for publicising future FrANC events in *The Quays* on Cumberland Road is not Jeff Knaggs, but is instead another resident, Keith Rodgerson, who she met at a Neighbourhood Partnership meeting. The action list in Table 1 has been amended accordingly.

5. Status of Local Nature Reserve (LNR) Application

Sara reported that there had been no further news from Richard Ennion (the Environmental Improvements Manager, Environment and Leisure for BCC – Neighbourhoods) concerning the status of the BCC application for the New Cut to be officially recognised as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR)

However, Derek reported that he had been contacted by Ruth Coleman, an “Environmental Education specialist currently project managing a Bristol Green Capital project to Celebrate and Promote Bristol’s LNRs”. As a result of these discussions, it had been agreed that FrANC would participate in the following LNR celebratory events:

- the distribution of a leaflet describing 17 “Autumn Walks on Bristol’s Local Nature Reserves”, to be held from September to December;
- organising an Autumn Tree Walk along the Coronation Road riverbank of the New Cut (see item 7 below). The fact that this walk was included in the above leaflet is an indirect recognition of the New Cut as an LNR.
- a Boat Trip around the Floating Harbour during the afternoon of 10th October. It was agreed with Ruth that the invitation to participate in this event would be extended to up to six FrANC Committee Members in the first instance.

6. Progress of application to Heritage Lottery Fund

As noted in item 4 above, the application to the HLF for a grant for “*Improving and Sharing the Rich Heritage of the Avon New Cut with the Local Community*” (HLF ref. SH-15-02536) was submitted on 20th August. The five main objectives of this HLF application are to:

- (i) clear the York Road riverbank between Bedminster Bridge and Bath Road Bridge of rubbish and overgrown vegetation (to be carried out by ParkWork);
- (ii) install two new benches along the same stretch of riverbank;
- (iii) install two new Interpretation Boards at separate locations on the New Cut (to be designed by Inkwood Design);
- (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.

A total of £9,900 of HLF funding has been applied for to cover the cost of the above tasks, with a provisional start date of November 2015 for the 12-month project. Sara reported that she had received notification from the HLF that the grant application had been received together with the name of the HLF case officer who would be overseeing the application. The application is scheduled to be reviewed by the HLF committee in October.

Sara thanked all those Committee Members who had helped to prepare this HLF grant application, and also the four people/organisations who had provided letters of support – Councillor Charlie Bolton (Southville Ward), Matthew Symonds (Greater Bedminster Community Partnership (GBCP)), Andy King (Senior Curator, Bristol Museums Galleries and Archives) and Sarah Murray (Underfall Yard Trust).

7. Events Planning 2015

- **“Autumn Tree Walk”** to be held on Sunday 27th September. This event, now part of the series of autumn walks to celebrate Bristol’s LNRs (see item 5 above) will start from the Coronation Road side of Vauxhall Bridge at 10:00am, and will be led by Richard Bland of the Bristol Naturalists’ Society (a tree expert suggested by Ruth Coleman). The walk is expected to last around 2 hours and, as it will mostly be routed along the Coronation Road, it was requested that any Committee Members taking part would also act as marshals by wearing the yellow high-visibility jackets owned by FrANC. A £2 donation will be requested from participating FrANC members as a contribution to FrANC funds.
- **Boat Trip up the Avon Gorge and 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. Derek reported that most of the tickets had been sold to members of FrANC and U3A, priced at £15 each (with no concessions). It was agreed that the maximum number of paying passengers would be set at 38 which, with the addition of two “guest” speakers - Roy and Mark Steeds – would make a total complement of 40. Roy confirmed that the total cost of the trip charged by the Bristol Ferry Boat Company would be £504. All tickets sales will be non-refundable, but assistance will be provided to re-sell any unwanted tickets provided adequate notice is given.
- **Butterfly Junction Maintenance** – it was agreed that this annual event will be held on Saturday 5th December, starting at 10:00am. Derek reported that he and Ben Barker (Greater Bedminster Community Partnership) had met with Richard Sanderson from Balfour Beatty on 3rd August to discuss the protection of the Butterfly Junction site whilst the construction of the MetroBus route from Ashton Avenue Bridge to Cumberland Road is in progress. Richard had agreed that, once the Harbour Railway platform is removed, the Butterfly Junction site will be fenced off with hoarding panels connected by posts set into concrete footings. The use of solid hoarding was requested by Derek and Ben as it is less permeable to the ingress of dust and debris from the adjacent MetroBus construction site than the open-meshed “heras” fence panels that would otherwise be used. The part of the Butterfly Junction site that is maintained by FrANC will be accessible after the hoarding has been erected. Derek was asked to contact Richard to find out whether the erection of the hoarding will be completed before 5th December; if not, it may be necessary to postpone the proposed maintenance activity.

8. Other activities involving FrANC

- 8.1 **“Big Butterfly Count” at Butterfly Junction: Survey Results.** Derek reported that a total of eight FrANC members had participated in this year’s survey, held between 17th July and 9th August. Particular thanks were due to Jane Clutterbuck, who had been responsible for the bulk of the data gathered during the course of 14 visits to the site! The individual survey results had been loaded onto the *Butterfly Conservation* website, and had also been collated and distributed to the FrANC membership via email on 6th September. A total of 13 different species of butterfly were observed during the survey, the most numerous being the Common

Blue, Large White and Small White. In contrast, only single observations were made of the Gatekeeper, Painted Lady, Speckle Wood and Small Tortoiseshell.

8.2 New Interpretation Board (Green Capital funding): Derek presented the latest draft of the artwork for the new Interpretation Board, which had been prepared by Clare Challice of *Inkwood Design*. The artwork was complete apart from the inclusion of an illustration of a house martin, but the artist, Abbi Stubbs, had provided the pencil sketch that would form the basis of the final coloured rendition. The artwork and design of the board was approved by those Committee members present. It was noted that Richard Clutterbuck had been able to obtain a photograph of one of the sluices in operation, which had been included on the new board. Richard had been rather lucky in the timing of his visit to Bristol Metal Spraying & Protective Coatings Ltd to take this photo, as the sluice just happened to be operating when he arrived! It appears that the exact timings of the operation of the sluices cannot be predicted in advance, as the process is now computer-controlled. Derek reported that it was expected that the final artwork would be completed shortly and that the installation of the new board on the Chocolate Path was provisionally scheduled for the end of September. The final cost of the design, manufacture and installation of the board was also expected to be within the total budget of £2000 that had been allocated to this Green Capital project.

8.3 Bristol Parks Forum – ParkWork Project: as reported previously in item 6 above, one of the proposed activities in FrANC’s HLF grant application involves clearing the York Road riverbank between Bedminster Bridge and Bath Road Bridge of rubbish and overgrown vegetation, to be carried out by ParkWork. Sara reported that she had contacted Eric Dougall from BCC Marketing & Estates Services, and that the following agreement had been reached:

- (i) BCC have funding available that will cover the cost of this riverbank clearance activity in the event that FrANC are unsuccessful in their HLF grant application;
- (ii) if FrANC’s HLF grant application is successful, the BCC funding will be put towards the cost of clearing debris from the riverbed – providing a suitable contractor can be found who is prepared to take on this task.

ParkWork cannot start the riverbank clearance work, however, until it is known whether or not the HLF grant has been awarded. Sara said that she would contact Becky Belfin, the BCC Nature Conservation Officer, to request that this activity is provisionally included in the ParkWork work plan for November. Sara also noted that the Bristol Parks Forum had been useful for making contacts in other areas, and that through it we had learned about Health & Safety Training Courses being offered by BCC (see item 9 below).

8.4 “Towards Hydrocitizenship” / Water City Bristol Project: Derek reported that he had circulated details of the next “Bristol Loves Tides” event on Monday 28th September, entitled “*Blood Moon*”, to the FrANC membership (three Committee members had since bought tickets). Also, thanks were due to Ed Hall, who has agreed to be FrANC’s representative on the advisory group for the Water City Bristol Project.

9. Health & Safety Training for FrANC Volunteers

Sara reported that, at the last BPF meeting, she had learned that BCC provide Health & Safety (H&S) Training Courses for those who are involved in supervising volunteer groups in Bristol's Parks and Estates. Those who receive H&S accreditation after attending these courses are also entitled to BCC public liability insurance cover for any events that they subsequently organise. In FrANC's case, not having to pay for a separate insurance policy, which is currently arranged via VOSCUR, would save us approximately £200 each year.

Sara and Derek completed the BCC H&S Training at a course organised on 15th August, which was a one-day event run at Ashton Court Estate. Consequently, FrANC are now entitled to be covered by BCC's H&S public liability insurance for any events that are supervised by Sara or Derek. Other prerequisites for the BCC insurance to be valid are that

- a H&S risk assessment must be completed before each event and submitted to the relevant BCC Parks and Caretaking Client and Operations Coordinator for approval at least three weeks before the event takes place. However, to make this task less onerous, standard risk assessment pro-forma sheets are available from BCC for different types of events, so it is only necessary to identify risks (and mitigations) that are particular to the event being organised. The format of the risk assessment pro-forma sheets used is also very similar to those that are currently used by FrANC;
- although the H&S risk assessment paperwork must be completed and submitted some weeks beforehand, a recce of the proposed location or route must be conducted shortly before the event to check that no additional risks have become evident during the intervening period;
- for any events that occur adjacent to roads where the speed limit is 30mph or above, it is a BCC requirement that **all** volunteers taking part should wear high-visibility jackets. Currently, FrANC only have six yellow jackets available that are usually worn by the Committee members involved in running a particular event. It was suggested that about 30 additional jackets were required, and that if possible they should (i) be of a different colour to the existing jackets (e.g. green) and (ii) have "Friends of the Avon New Cut" or "FrANC" printed on them. Derek and Sara offered to investigate the possibility of purchasing these jackets on-line, which would be funded by the money saved by not having to renew next year's VOSCUR insurance. These additional high-visibility jackets will need to be delivered in time for the first riverbank clean-up in January next year;
- the format of the volunteers' attendance sheets used by FrANC will need to be modified as only the name, signature and emergency telephone number of each volunteer are required on the pro-formas used by BCC (i.e. volunteers' email addresses are not required and so can be deleted).

Sara also noted that it is possible to order protective gloves via BCC, at reduced cost, that are significantly better than the rather cumbersome red rubber gloves that are currently used (or not used!) by FrANC volunteers. Sara has asked Sarah Tyler, the BCC Client and Operations Coordinator (North and West), to provide a cost estimate for replacing these gloves.

If we are to take full advantage of being covered by BCC's public liability insurance then we should encourage other FrANC members to attend the BCC H&S Training

Course. Sara offered to find out details about future courses and to approach suitable candidates from within the FrANC Committee and wider membership.

10. Any Other Business

- **UWE Community Action Days:** Margaret reported that she had found a link in a Bristol Green Capital Partnership September 2015 Newsletter to “Community Action Days”, which offer University of the West of England (UWE) students the opportunity to get out into the local community and do a task that is useful to a local group or organisation. The task must be one that can be accomplished in a single day by a small team. UWE provide the students with transport to and from the work site, but after they arrive they are supervised by the local community group whose task they are working on, and provided with the necessary tools. It was suggested that a suitable one-day task could involve litter-picking or vegetation clearance along part of the New Cut riverbank, supervised by FrANC. Margaret offered to contact the Community Team at the UWE Students Union to find out what volunteering can be offered (contact address is SUVolunteering@uwe.ac.uk).
- Derek noted two additional local events planned later this month – a GBCP Nature Event at Dame Emily Park on Saturday 19th September, and the *Street Games UK* Duck Race on the New Cut on Sunday 20th September. Details of both of these events had been circulated via email to the FrANC membership.

11. Date of next meeting

- The next meeting was scheduled to be the **Annual General Meeting on Sunday 1st November**. The venue suggested was “The Orchard Inn” at Hanover Place, which has a free function room available on the first floor for events. Sara offered to confirm the availability of the venue and a suitable start time.
- Roy offered to read extracts from his autobiography, entitled “*An Abundance of Uncles*”, which was due to be published shortly. The book contains stories from Roy’s childhood whilst growing up in the Mendip hills. Roy said he would also like to show two short “home movies”, to further illustrate the contents of two of the chapters in his book.
- Note that Table 1 includes any new actions raised at this 7th September meeting.

Derek Hughes
Secretary, Friends of the Avon New Cut

Action No.	Description	Actioned by	Status
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>Completed</i>
15-02-01	Complete and submit Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) application	Sara + others	<i>Completed</i>
15-02-02	Obtain estimate of printing cost for up to 1000 leaflets for input to HLF application	Roy	<i>Completed</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>Completed</i>
15-02-04	Check that Mark Steeds and Peter Andressen are available for the Boat Trip on 24 th October	Roy	<i>In Progress</i>
15-02-05	Decide if prepared to be FrANC representative at future meetings of Water City Bristol Project	Ed	<i>Completed</i>
15-02-06	Contact Keith Rodgerson to find out if he is prepared to help publicise future FrANC events in The Quays (Cumberland Road)	Chris	<i>In Progress</i>
15-03-01	Contact Richard Sanderson (Balfour Beatty) to find out when erection of hoarding at Butterfly Junction will be completed	Derek	<i>New Action</i>
15-03-02	Contact Becky Belfin to ensure that clearance of York Road riverbank is included in ParkWork work plan for November	Sara	<i>New Action</i>
15-03-03	Investigate cost of purchasing up to 30 additional high-visibility jackets on-line (required by beginning of January 2016)	Derek, Sara	<i>New Action</i>
15-03-04	Find out dates of future BCC Health & Safety Training Courses and approach suitable FrANC candidates	Sara	<i>New Action</i>
15-03-05	Investigate what student volunteer support can be offered by UWE for Community Action Day event supervised by FrANC	Margaret	<i>New Action</i>
15-03-06	Confirm availability of function room in “The Orchard Inn” for AGM on 1 st November and decide on suitable start time	Sara	<i>New Action</i>

Table 1 **FrANC Committee Action List**