

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)

Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 30th November 2015

Attended by: Sara Worth (Chair), Tess Green (Vice-Chair), Derek Hughes (Secretary) and Roy Gallop, Chris Hanmer, Richard Clutterbuck, Ed Hall, Angie Tonge and Margaret Fay (Committee Members).

1. Welcome

Sara welcomed the meeting attendees, especially Tess as this was her first Committee Meeting following her election as Vice-Chair at the last Annual General Meeting held on 1st November.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Steve Fay (Treasurer).

3. Minutes of the last Meeting

The minutes of the last FrANC Committee Meeting held on 7th September 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 15-01-03: the Boat Trip up the Avon Gorge and New Cut organised on 24th October was successful, with all tickets sold.

Action 15-01-04: John Penny has agreed to present film clips and any other suitable material on the New Cut obtained from the Bristol Records Office on 21st April 2016.

Action 15-01-05: the new Interpretation Board located near the Underfall Yard sluices on the Chocolate Path was installed by Arien Designs Ltd. on 20th October.

Action 15-02-04: Mark Steeds was available for the Boat Trip on 24th October and assisted Roy with providing expert commentary. Although Peter Andressen was not available for the Boat Trip, he has offered to do another Geology Walk along the New Cut some time next year, if required.

Action 15-02-06: Keith Rodgeron has advised Chris that he is not really interested in being a point of contact for publicising future FrANC events in *The Quays* on Cumberland Road.

Action 15-03-01: the erection of a solid wooden fence at Butterfly Junction was completed by Balfour Beatty on 15th November. Derek has sent an email to Richard Sanderson to thank Balfour Beatty for their efforts to protect this butterfly habitat whilst the adjacent MetroBus construction works are in progress.

Action 15-03-02: Permission for FrANC to start working on the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) project to improve the New Cut (see item 6 below) was finally received on 18th November. This meant that the York Road riverbank vegetation clearance work to be undertaken by ParkWork as part of the HLF project could not be completed in November as originally planned. Sara reported that she had since

talked to Becky Belfin (Bristol City Council (BCC) Nature Conservation Officer) and written to Joe McKenna (ParkWork coordinator) concerning the expected start date, and was awaiting a reply.

Action 15-03-03: Derek presented details of three companies who could potentially supply the high-visibility vests to be worn by volunteers on future riverbank clean-ups. It was agreed that 30 vests (large size) should be purchased from *The Site Supply Company Limited* at a total cost of around £150. The vests will be fluorescent green in colour and will have “**FrANC**” printed in black lettering on their backs (the vests are more costly if they have printing on them and if they are any colour other than yellow!). Derek was actioned to go ahead and purchase the vests in time for the first riverbank clean-up planned for 9th January next year.

Action 15-03-04: Sara reported that she had written to Tom Penn (BCC Client and Operations Coordinator (South and East)) who suggested running a BCC Health & Safety Training Course at the end of January 2016. The FrANC Committee Members who had expressed an interest in attending this course were Chris, Tess, Ed, Angie and Richard, plus Phil Cass.

Action 15-03-05: Margaret reported that she had left a message on the answerphone number obtained from the University of the West of England (UWE) Student Union website concerning “Community Action Days”, but had not yet received a reply.

Action 15-03-06: the AGM had been held in the upstairs function room at “The Orchard Inn”, but unfortunately the room had turned out to be a little small for the number of attendees (19 in total) and consequently may not be suitable for future AGMs or meetings involving the FrANC membership.

5. Events Planning 2016

- **Riverbank Clean-ups** to be held on three Saturdays next year on 9th January, 20th February and 19th March, all starting at 10:00am. These dates were chosen because there will not be a high tide whilst the clean-ups are in progress (also, Sara and Derek will be on holiday abroad between 20th January and 10th February).
- **Illustrated Talk on the New Cut** by John Penny from the Bristol Records Office on Thursday 21st April in the Orchard Room at the Southville Centre, starting at 7:30pm. Richard was asked to investigate what movie material is available on the New Cut from the Records Office.
- **“Tree Walk along York Road Riverbank”** to be led by Richard Bland of the Bristol Naturalists’ Society. It was suggested that, if Richard is agreeable, this walk could be FrANC’s contribution to next year’s *Bristol Walk Fest*. If so, it would be preferable to hold the walk early one Sunday morning in May. Margaret was actioned to ask Richard if he is prepared to do this. It was noted that Chris has a deadline of 26th January by which she has to provide details of the walk to the *Walk Fest* organisers. It was also agreed that (i) participants will need to book places on the walk (via Chris) as we will need to limit the number of places available, and (ii) a £2 donation per person will be requested as a contribution to FrANC funds (as is the case now for all guided walks organised by FrANC).
- **Big Butterfly Count** will be held next year between 15th July to 7th August, organised by *Butterfly Conservation*. As part of this, Derek said that he would like to organise another survey at Butterfly Junction with the help of the

FrANC membership, as has been done for the past two years. Of interest will be to what extent the MetroBus construction works and its associated decimation of the wildlife habitat around “A” Bond warehouse has affected the butterfly population.

- **Underfall Yard Trust’s Visitor Centre** is due to open in April/May next year and could also be the focal point of a FrANC tour.
- **FrANC 10th Anniversary Celebration** to be held some time during the year to mark FrANC’s first decade of existence as a local volunteer group. It was suggested that the celebration event will be open to the public and could take the format of a “John Purkiss Memorial” event.
- **Butterfly Junction Maintenance** – this annual event will provisionally be held in late November/early December next year, but must be preceded by a major cutting-back of grass in September in accordance with the three-year cycle mandated within the Butterfly Junction Management Brief (2006).
- Roy also proposed a **Guided Walk around Bedminster/Southville** (also of interest to U3A) which would cover the heritage sites and buildings associated with the coal mining industry that once flourished in this part of Bristol. Roy suggested that this could be a daytime walk, starting in the morning with a break for coffee at around 10:30am and finishing with lunch at a local hostelry. Roy was asked to develop this proposal for further discussion at the next Committee Meeting.

6. Identification and Allocation of Tasks relating to HLF Grant

As noted in item 4 above, FrANC’s 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 successful (at the first attempt!) and permission to start work was finally received from the HLF on 18th November. The five main objectives of this HLF-funded project 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;
- (iv) produce a leaflet describing a self-directed walk around the New Cut, linked by the six existing and two 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.

Sara said that all of the above tasks must be completed **by the end of September 2016**. The allocation of responsibilities for completing these tasks was then discussed and the following points were noted:

- Sara proposed holding a FrANC General Meeting early next year to share the content of this HLF project with the FrANC membership (see item 7 below). The objective would be to recruit some volunteers from within the membership to help progress the above tasks (design of leaflets, etc.). The likely venue for this meeting would be either the Southville Centre or, if

available within the required timescale, the new Underfall Yard Trust Visitor Centre. Alternatively, Chris noted that a “community room” could be available in Waring House (one of the blocks of flats just beyond the former Bristol General Hospital on Commercial Road).

- The two new Interpretation Boards that are to be installed as part of this HLF project will be sited at Bathurst Basin and on the Bath Road Bridge. Roy, Tess, Ed and Richard offered to help Derek to draft preliminary designs for these boards, and it was agreed that Derek would host an Interpretation Board Workshop on 11th January starting at 2:00pm to kick-off the design process. Once the preliminary designs are complete, they will be passed on to Inkwood Design who will be responsible for preparing the final artwork and co-ordinating the manufacture of the board and support frame with Arien Designs Ltd. It was suggested that swans or otters could be included in the types of wildlife that might feature on either of these new boards. A Quick Response (QR) Code could be included on the Interpretation Boards to provide an electronic link to the FrANC website (and any other relevant social media sites).
- A letter should be drafted and sent to local businesses and schools/community groups to raise awareness of the work that FrANC will be doing along York Road and to request help where appropriate (e.g. in leaflet design or the subsequent maintenance of the riverbank once it has been cleared of litter and overgrown vegetation). Local businesses (e.g. Fowlers Motorcycles and Bart Ingredients Company Ltd on York Road, Robins & Day (Peugot Dealership) and the Raj Mahal City (Indian) Restaurant on Clarence Road, plus Thomas Ware & Sons (Tannery) and Bristol Metal Spraying & Protective Coatings Ltd on Coronation Road) could also be approached to sponsor community action days or the purchase of additional litter pickers. Chris, Margaret and Angie offered to draft a general letter to be sent to these various organisations and Chris agreed to host a meeting to progress this, also to be held on 11th January with a 2:00pm start time.
- Sara reported that she had already written to Becky Belfin regarding the provision of additional benches, and had queried whether BCC has any preferences regarding the type of bench and where it can/cannot be installed. Possible locations could be reviewed at the forthcoming General Meeting of the FrANC membership, or perhaps tabled as an item for discussion at a future Neighbourhood Partnership meeting.
- A discussion followed on the design of the leaflet that would describe a self-directed circular walk around the New Cut, using the eight Interpretation Boards as waypoints. Margaret suggested using the existing FrANC leaflets as a template for the new leaflet. The possibility of involving local schools and the FrANC membership in the design of the leaflet was discussed. Alternatively, the leaflet design could perhaps be undertaken as a project by UWE students at the Bower Ashton campus. Sara said that she would also like to use the HLF project as an opportunity to reissue all of the existing FrANC leaflets, as well as the “FrANC book” entitled “A Celebration of the Avon New Cut”. Roy offered to contact the printers, Doveton Press, to find out whether they still have the original proofs.
- In previous correspondence with Ben Barker, Derek had suggested that the circular walk could also be FrANC’s contribution to the *Walking in South Bristol* initiative proposed by the Greater Bedminster Community Partnership

(GBCP). In subsequent email correspondence with Ben and Matthew Symonds of GBCP, Sara Zaltash had offered her services to GBCP as an artist. Derek was asked to pass Sara Zaltash's contact details on to Tess, who would find out if she was also prepared to help design FrANC's circular walk leaflet.

- Sara also said that during the coming year she would like to send out a questionnaire to the FrANC membership in order to obtain their views on the way forward for FrANC.

7. Preparations for FrANC General Meeting

Unfortunately there was insufficient time at the meeting to discuss preparations for the proposed General Meeting to raise awareness of the HLF project within the FrANC membership. Further discussions on this agenda item were therefore deferred to the next Committee Meeting.

8. Any Other Business

- **FrANC support for "Alliance for a Pesticide-Safe Bristol"**: Derek reported that he had been contacted by a FrANC member, Jane Stevenson, who had asked if FrANC was prepared to join a number of local organisations who are campaigning for Bristol to become a pesticide-free city. The Committee agreed unanimously that FrANC should support this and Derek was actioned to inform Jane of this decision.
- **Water City Bristol Project**: Ed reported that he had represented FrANC at a recent advisory group meeting, but unfortunately the exact objectives of this project were proving to be difficult to understand.
- **Rubbish behind *Harvest Energy Garage on Coronation Road***: Ed advised that, unfortunately, once again "mountains" of rubbish, mattresses, etc. had accumulated on the area of the riverbank behind and adjacent to this garage, which he intended reporting to the Council as evidence of fly-tipping.
- **Maintenance of Vauxhall Bridge and Gaol Ferry Bridge**: Ed also noted that both of these bridges appeared to be badly maintained at present. The gutters along the sides of Vauxhall Bridge have not been cleaned and consequently are full of dandelions, invasive plants and buddleia, with buddleia also growing on the steps. The edges of Gaol Ferry Bridge have also not been swept, and buddleia and ash saplings are growing in the masonry at the top of the pillars. Ed said that he would report this to the City Engineers and the Bridges Maintenance Team. Sara suggested also copying in the city councillors for Southville (Charlie Bolton and Stephen Clarke) and Cabot (Mark Wright and Ani Stafford-Townsend).

9. Date of next meeting

- The next two Committee Meetings were scheduled for **Monday 15th February** and **Monday 11th April 2016**, both at 88 Cumberland Road with Committee Members asked to arrive at 7:15pm in time for a 7:30pm start.
- The General Meeting with the FrANC membership to raise awareness of the HLF project will be held some time in March 2016; the date will be set at the next Committee Meeting on 15th February.

- As noted in item 6 above, however, the next meetings involving Committee Members will be the two workshops to be held on **Monday 11th January**, both starting at 2:00pm, to progress the following HLF project activities:
 - *Preliminary Design of new Interpretation Boards* hosted by Derek at 88 Cumberland Road, to be attended by Roy, Tess, Ed and Richard;
 - *Drafting of letter to local businesses and schools/community groups* hosted by Chris at 82 Cumberland Road, to be attended by Margaret and Angie.
- Note that Table 1 includes any new actions raised at this 30th November 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>Completed</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>Completed</i>
15-01-05	Design new Interpretation Board for installation near Underfall Yard sluices on Chocolate Path (Green Capital project)	Derek, Richard	<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>Completed</i>
15-02-06	Contact Keith Rodgeron to find out if he is prepared to help publicise future FrANC events in The Quays (Cumberland Road)	Chris	<i>Completed</i>
15-03-01	Contact Richard Sanderson (Balfour Beatty) to find out when erection of hoarding at Butterfly Junction will be completed	Derek	<i>Completed</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>In Progress</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>Completed</i>
15-03-04	Find out dates of future BCC Health & Safety Training Courses and approach suitable FrANC candidates	Sara	<i>In Progress</i>
15-03-05	Investigate what student volunteer support can be offered by UWE for Community Action Day event supervised by FrANC	Margaret	<i>In Progress</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>Completed</i>
15-04-01	Purchase 30 large green fluorescent high-visibility vests from <i>The Site Supply Company Ltd.</i>	Derek	<i>New Action</i>
15-04-02	Investigate what movies, etc. are available on the New Cut from the Bristol Records Office archives	Richard	<i>New Action</i>
15-04-03	Confirm Richard Bland available for Tree Walk on York Road in May (Sunday morning) for <i>Bristol Walk Fest</i> (by 26 th January)	Margaret	<i>New Action</i>
15-04-04	Provide organisers of <i>Bristol Walk Fest</i> with details of proposed FrANC walk (by 26 th January)	Chris	<i>New Action</i>
15-04-05	Develop proposed Guided Walk around Bedminster/Southville (Coal Mining Industry Heritage)	Roy	<i>New Action</i>
15-04-06	Draft preliminary designs for new Interpretation Boards at Bathurst Basin and Bath Road Bridge	Derek, Roy, Tess, Ed, Richard	<i>New Action</i>
15-04-07	Draft letter to local businesses and schools/community groups to raise awareness of FrANC’s HLF project	Chris, Margaret, Angie	<i>New Action</i>
15-04-08	Contact Doveton Press to find out if the original proofs of the book “A Celebration of the Avon New Cut” are available	Roy	<i>New Action</i>
15-04-09	Contact Sara Zaltash (artist) re. input to design of the HLF leaflet describing a self-directed circular walk around the New Cut	Derek, Tess	<i>New Action</i>
15-04-10	Advise Jane Stevenson that FrANC are prepared to join the “Alliance for a Pesticide-Safe Bristol”	Derek	<i>New Action</i>

Table 1 **FrANC Committee Action List**