

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)
Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 15th February 2016

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

1. Welcome

Sara welcomed the meeting attendees.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Chris Hanmer, Angie Tonge and Roy Gallop (Committee Members) and Steve Fay (Treasurer).

3. Minutes of the last Meeting

The minutes of the last FrANC Committee Meeting held on 30th November 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. Progress on *Actions 15-04-02, 15-04-03 and 15-04-05* is reported in item 5 below, and on *Actions 15-03-02, 15-04-06 and 15-04-07* in item 7 below. Additional comments were provided concerning the remaining actions, which are summarised below:

Action 15-03-04: a Health & Safety (H&S) Training Course was organised by Bristol City Council (BCC) on 22nd January and was attended by Tess Green, Chris Hanmer, Ed Hall, Richard Clutterbuck and Phil Cass. All five FrANC attendees passed the course (and have certificates to prove it). Tess offered to write a short article on H&S Training for the next FrANC Newsletter.

Action 15-03-05: Margaret reported that she had made contact with the University of the West of England (UWE) Student Union and had discussed the possibility of student volunteers supporting future FrANC Clean-ups as part of their "Community Action Day" initiative. However, no UWE students would be available to support the last FrANC Clean-up along Coronation Road scheduled for 19th March as their spring term would have already finished. Also, as the next FrANC volunteering event – the annual "meadow management" at Butterfly Junction – would not take place until the end of the year, it was not possible for UWE to commit to supporting this at the present time. It was therefore agreed that it was not worth organising any "Community Action Days" with UWE students for the time being.

Action 15-04-01: Derek reported that he had purchased 30 green fluorescent high-visibility vests from *The Site Supply Company* at a total cost of £149. The vests had in fact been worn by FrANC members during the first Clean-up along Coronation Road on 9th January.

Action 15-04-04: it appears that unfortunately FrANC will not be able to contribute to this year's *Bristol Walk Fest* as the leaders for two proposed walks - a *Tree Walk* (Richard Bland) and a *Geological Walk* (Peter Andresen) – are not available during the month of May, which is when most of the *Walk Fest* activities will take place.

Action 15-04-08: Roy is in the process of contacting Doveton Press to find out if the proofs of the “FrANC book”, i.e. “A Celebration of the Avon New Cut”, still exist.

Action 15-04-09: following further correspondence with Sara Zaltash, it transpires that she is a *live performance* artist and, consequently, her artistic background would not enable her to contribute much to the design of a guided walk leaflet. Derek reported that he had offered to contact Sara if any future activities are planned by FrANC that would make use of her particular skills.

Action 15-04-10: Derek also reported that he had advised Jane Stevenson that FrANC are prepared to support the “Alliance for a Pesticide-Safe Bristol”, as was agreed at the last Committee Meeting.

5. Events Planning 2016

- **Illustrated Talk on the New Cut** by John Penny from the Bristol Records Office has been booked for Thursday 21st April in the Orchard Room at the Southville Centre, starting at 7:00pm. In response to *Action 15-04-02*, Richard reported that, according to John, there is no movie footage of the New Cut in the Records Office archives, so instead John’s talk will focus on the development of Bristol Docks and their link with the New Cut. In order to help publicise this event in the next FrANC Newsletter, Richard was asked to contact John again to obtain a brief synopsis of the content of his talk, as well as what the exact title of the talk would be! Ed offered to approach the publishers of *The Pigeon* to ask them if they could find out if any of their readers have movie footage of the New Cut.
- **“Tree Walk along York Road Riverbank”** to be led by Richard Bland of the Bristol Naturalists’ Society. In response to *Action 15-04-03*, after checking Richard’s availability, Margaret confirmed that this walk will be held on Sunday 5th June, starting at 10:00am. The walk will focus on the length of the riverbank between Bedminster Bridge and Bath Road Bridge.
- **“Geological Walk”** to be led by Peter Andresen. An action to confirm the date of this walk with Peter was placed on Roy, in his absence. It was reported that Peter has suggested doing a walk from the Cumberland Basin to underneath the Clifton Suspension Bridge, instead of repeating the walk that he had previously led along the New Cut itself on 9th July 2014.
- **“Coal Mining Industry Heritage Walk”**: in response to *Action 15-04-05*, and in Roy’s absence, Tess reported that the planning of his proposed walk to discover the heritage of the coal mining industry in the Bedminster/Southville area was in progress. It was suggested that this walk should be held during the latter half of the year, perhaps in September, as many of the FrANC activities planned for 2016 would be held during the first six months.

6. Preparations for FrANC General Meeting

It is planned to hold a General Meeting of the FrANC membership, the main objective of which will be to raise awareness of the various activities underway as a result of FrANC being awarded a £9,900 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) at the end of last year. The meeting will include a briefing on the status of the tasks that are currently in progress (see item 7 below), but will also seek the involvement of the membership in other activities that have not yet started. These

include (i) obtaining ideas for the design of a leaflet describing a guided walk around the New Cut and (ii) the planning of a Celebration Event at the conclusion of the HLF project, which it is hoped will involve as much of the local community as possible.

After some discussion, the following points were agreed regarding the time, date and venue for this meeting:

- the meeting should be held on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon in March, as it was felt that more of the FrANC membership were likely to be available than if it were to be held during a weekday evening;
- this effectively ruled out the Southville Centre as a potential venue, as it is only occasionally open for weekend events during the year and in such circumstances the cost of hiring rooms tends to be high;
- the preferred venue was the upstairs meeting room in the *Nova Scotia* pub which, although not that salubrious, can cater for the anticipated number of attendees and is free of charge.

A proposed date of Sunday 13th March was suggested, with a start time of 2:00pm. Sara and Derek were actioned to check the availability of the room and to book it [**POST-MEETING NOTE:** *as the room was unavailable on this date, an alternative booking was made for **SUNDAY 3RD APRIL**, from 1:30pm to 4:00pm].*

7. Progress on Tasks relating to HLF Project

- **York Road Riverbank Clean-up (ParkWork):** in response to *Action 15-03-02*, Sara reported that, after some delay, *Volunteering Matters* (formerly known as Community Service Volunteers (CSV)) had started cutting back the overgrown vegetation along York Road *today* (i.e. 15th February). The initial task will involve clearing a one metre-wide swathe between the fencing along the pavement and the adjacent trees/vegetation. *Volunteering Matters* are responsible for completing this phase of the work because they have been trained to use the various power tools (e.g. chainsaws) required. Once this initial task is complete, any further vegetation clearance that does not require the use of power tools will be carried out by ParkWork volunteers.
- **Interpretation Boards:** in response to *Action 15-04-06*, Derek reported that a successful workshop had been held on 11th January with Roy, Tess, Ed and Richard to kick-off the design process for the two new boards to be sited at Bathurst Basin and on the Bath Road Bridge. Suggestions for the content of the informative text that would appear on each board had been gathered which would subsequently be reduced to not more than 150 words for each board. The pictures and wildlife illustrations that will appear on each board had also been discussed and agreed, which would include (i) a swan and a mallard (on the Bathurst Basin board) and (ii) an otter, a fig tree and either sea aster or scurvy grass (on the Bath Road Bridge board). Richard was in the process of investigating whether we will have to pay licence fees in order to use a painting and a photograph of the Bathurst Basin lock gates, while Ed was trying to locate pictures of the slums that once existed in the Redcliffe area. Derek had also contacted Clare Challice of *Inkwood Design* to agree preliminary costs and timescales. A second (and final) workshop has been planned for 24th February.
- **Benches:** two new benches are to be installed, ideally one on the pavement along York Road and the other on the pavement on the opposite side of the

New Cut along Clarence Road. Sara and Derek reported that they had completed a survey of potential bench locations and had produced a map showing four possible options (i.e. two options each for York Road and Clarence Road). Sara had then written to the relevant BCC Neighbourhood Officers, seeking confirmation that each of these potential bench locations is acceptable before starting a wider consultation that would include the FrANC membership. However, this correspondence had been sent a month ago, and no replies had been received to date! Tess suggested that Sara should contact Di Robinson, who is the head of the BCC Neighbourhoods Team, if she does not get a timely response from a follow-up email.

- **Letters to Local Businesses:** in response to *Action 15-04-07*, Margaret reported that the general content of a letter to be sent to local businesses and schools/community groups to raise awareness of FrANC was drafted at a meeting involving herself, Chris and Angie on 11th January. An example of the content of the letter is shown in Attachment 1. Since then, Chris had sent the letter to four local businesses (Fowlers Motorcycles, Bart Ingredients Company Ltd., Robins & Day (Peugot Dealership) and City & Country (who are converting the General Hospital into apartments)). The letter had also been sent to St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School on Clarence Road. Chris has since received replies from Fowlers Motorcycles and Bart Ingredients Company Ltd., each requesting more information about FrANC. So far, only businesses at the eastern end of the New Cut have been contacted, but it is intended to write to other businesses at the western end in due course.
- Sara expressed her thanks to all those involved in progressing the above HLF Project activities.

8. Any Other Business

- **LNR Funding Application:** Derek reported that he had received a letter from Paula Spiers, the BCC Avon Frome Partnership Coordinator, which had been sent to representatives from Bristol's Local Nature Reserves (LNRs). The letter (see Attachment 2) contains an invitation to bid for part of a pot of BCC money to fund projects/activities that would *"...help promote greater enjoyment and understanding of your Local Nature Reserve by the general public and to communicate information about your group and its activities"*. The maximum amount of money that each LNR group can bid for is £1,000.

After discussing several possibilities, it was agreed that what would currently be of most benefit to FrANC would be a new website. The same suggestion had been made by Sara and Margaret whilst representing FrANC at a BCC meeting of LNR representatives held on 14th April last year (see Minutes of FrANC Committee Meeting held on 7th May 2015). Although the letter in Attachment 2 implies that the upgrading of volunteer groups' websites might not be considered favourably, our justification would be that we want to completely rebuild the website from scratch so that it is easier (i) to update and maintain, and (ii) to enable the FrANC membership to interact with it (e.g. by posting photos or downloading information leaflets).

Sara was therefore actioned to submit an application for £1,000 of LNR funding for building a new FrANC website (closing date 26th February). This would involve seeking the views of (i) Chris Murray, the FrANC member who has taken on the onerous task of updating our existing "clunky" website, and (ii) Sam Thomson, the Vice-Chair of the Bristol Parks Forum, who has

contacts with UWE students who may have the skills required to build the website for us using *WordPress* (a free and open-source content management system now widely used for website construction).

- **Bristol Festival of Nature 2016:** prior to the meeting, Margaret had forwarded details of this year's Festival of Nature, which she had received via the Bristol Naturalists' Society. The theme this year appears to be an "adventure along the River Avon", and the two-week programme begins on 11th/12th June with a celebratory event on the Bristol Harbourside.

After some discussion it was agreed that, given the scope of the festival, it would be too big an event for participation by a local volunteer organisation such as FrANC but might provide a suitable platform for publicising Bristol's LNRs. Derek was asked to write to Paula Spiers to seek her views as to whether setting up an LNR stall at the Harbourside event on 11th/12th June would be appropriate.

- **FrANC Newsletter:** it was agreed that a Newsletter should be issued within the next few weeks that would contain details of the forthcoming General Meeting (item 6 above) and other FrANC events planned for the remainder of this year. Sara offered to compile the Newsletter, with the help of Chris and Margaret. As noted under *Action 15-03-04* of item 4 above, the Newsletter will include an article by Tess on the H&S Training that she and other Committee members had completed recently (recorded as *Action 16-01-01* in Table 1).

9. Date of next meeting

- The next two Committee Meetings were scheduled for **Monday 11th April** and **Tuesday 7th June**, both at 88 Cumberland Road with Committee Members asked to arrive at 7:15pm in time for a 7:30pm start.
- As indicated in item 6 above, the General Meeting with the FrANC membership to raise awareness of the HLF Project will be held at the Nova Scotia pub on **Sunday 3rd April**, starting at 2:00pm (the upstairs meeting room will be available from 1:30pm onwards).
- The second workshop to discuss the design of the new Interpretation Boards will be held on **Wednesday 24th February**, starting at 2:00pm. The workshop will be hosted by Derek at 88 Cumberland Road, and will be attended by Roy, Tess, Ed and Richard.
- Note that Table 1 includes any new actions raised at this 15th February meeting.

Derek Hughes
Secretary, Friends of the Avon New Cut

Action No.	Description	Actioned by	Status
15-03-02	Contact Becky Belfin to ensure that clearance of York Road riverbank is included in ParkWork work plan for November	Sara	<i>Completed</i>
15-03-04	Find out dates of future BCC Health & Safety Training Courses and approach suitable FrANC candidates	Sara	<i>Completed</i>
15-03-05	Investigate what student volunteer support can be offered by UWE for Community Action Day event supervised by FrANC	Margaret	<i>Completed</i>
15-04-01	Purchase 30 large green fluorescent high-visibility vests from <i>The Site Supply Company Ltd.</i>	Derek	<i>Completed</i>
15-04-02	Investigate what movies, etc. are available on the New Cut from the Bristol Records Office archives	Richard	<i>Completed</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>Completed</i>
15-04-04	Provide organisers of <i>Bristol Walk Fest</i> with details of proposed FrANC walk (by 26 th January)	Chris	<i>Completed</i>
15-04-05	Develop proposed Guided Walk around Bedminster/Southville (Coal Mining Industry Heritage)	Roy	<i>In Progress</i>
15-04-06	Draft preliminary designs for new Interpretation Boards at Bathurst Basin and Bath Road Bridge	Derek, Roy, Tess, Ed, Richard	<i>In Progress</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>Completed</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>In Progress</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>Completed</i>
15-04-10	Advise Jane Stevenson that FrANC are prepared to join the "Alliance for a Pesticide-Safe Bristol"	Derek	<i>Completed</i>
16-01-01	Write article on BCC Health & Safety Training Course for next FrANC Newsletter	Tess	<i>New Action</i>
16-01-02	Contact John Penny to request further details concerning title and content of Illustrated Talk to be held on 21 st April	Richard	<i>New Action</i>
16-01-03	Contact <i>The Pigeon</i> to ask whether any of their readers have movie footage (e.g. home movies) that feature the New Cut	Ed	<i>New Action</i>
16-01-04	Confirm date of Geology Walk with Peter Andresen	Roy	<i>New Action</i>
16-01-05	Book upstairs meeting room in <i>Nova Scotia</i> for FrANC General Meeting (preferred date/time: Sunday 13 th March at 2:00pm)	Sara, Derek	<i>New Action</i>
16-01-06	Submit an application for £1,000 of LNR funding to be used to build a new FrANC website	Sara	<i>New Action</i>
16-01-07	Contact Paula Spiers to obtain her views on setting up an LNR stall at the Bristol Festival of Nature event on 11 th /12 th June	Derek	<i>New Action</i>
16-01-08	Compile FrANC Newsletter, to include details of General Meeting on 3 rd April and other events planned for 2016	Sara, Chris, Margaret	<i>New Action</i>

Table 1 **FrANC Committee Action List**

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)

Stephanie Fowler
Fowlers of Bristol Ltd
2-12 Bath Road
Bristol
BS4 3DR



7 February 2016

Dear Mrs Fowler

Improving the Avon New Cut

We are writing as members of a community group working along the Avon New Cut where Fowlers of Bristol is based.

Set up 10 years ago, Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC) aims to protect and encourage a greater understanding of the importance of this urban wildlife and industrial heritage corridor.

FrANC is entirely run by volunteers. The group's efforts have resulted in the following achievements:

- Local Nature Reserve status in 2015
- Installed six interpretations boards along the New Cut
- Community involvement in cleaning and maintaining the riverbanks
- Educational walks and talks for groups including school children and community groups
- Been awarded a substantial Sharing Heritage Lottery Grant to extend FrANC's work.

As a long established company in this area we hope you would like to support our activities. We are currently looking for increased community involvement and support to achieve our next objective; improving the stretch of the New Cut between Bathurst Basin and Bath Road bridge. This could range from staff volunteering, financial support for specific activities such as clean up days, running events, publicity costs, or some form of sponsorship in kind.

We would welcome the opportunity to talk to you further about our work and aspirations, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Angie Tonge 07748 001 420

Margaret Fay 07904 809 455

Chris Hanmer 07411 980 124

On behalf of the FrANC Chair and committee

Chris Hanmer
Friends of the Avon New Cut
82 Cumberland Road
BRISTOL
BS1 6U
franc.org.uk

Dear Local Nature Reserve group,

26th January 2016

I am writing to let you know about an opportunity to bid for a small pot of funding from Bristol City Council. The purpose of the funding is to help promote greater enjoyment and understanding of your Local Nature Reserve by the general public and to communicate information about your group and its activities.

This could include (but is not limited to) a contribution towards items such as a website for your group, interpretation panels, signage, trail marker posts or leaflets. The money could also be used to match fund a larger project that includes some of these elements. However, we regret that this funding cannot be used to support general site maintenance.

The total fund available is £5000, with a maximum of £1000 to be awarded per group. Bids will be accepted for any amount up to £1000.

Priority will be given to projects where:

- (1) there is already some match funding in place and/or
- (2) the group/site does not already possess the item to be funded (for example, priority would be given to groups that do not currently have a website, over those groups that already have a website but wish to improve it)

However, it is still worth submitting an application, even if your proposed project doesn't meet either of the above criteria, as the amount of money available will depend on the number and success of the bids submitted by other groups.

To apply for funding, please respond in writing (on no more than one side of A4) with details of the following:

- The name of your group.
- The name of your Local Nature Reserve.
- A clear description of the item/s to be funded and how they will be used to communicate information about your group and Local Nature Reserve to a wider audience.
- A breakdown of the cost of each item, the total amount of funding you are bidding for and how much match funding you already have in place (if applicable).
- Please attach any quotes or designs you may have already received for the work.

The deadline for applications is 5pm on Friday 26th February 2016. Please respond by email to paula.spiers@bristol.gov.uk

Decisions will be communicated to groups by Friday 4th March 2016. If you have any queries in the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact me (0117 922 4325).

Kind regards,

Paula Spiers

Avon Frome Partnership Coordinator