

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)

Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 7th June 2016

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

1. Welcome

Sara welcomed the meeting attendees.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Margaret Fay (Committee Member) and Steve Fay (Treasurer).

3. Minutes of the last Meeting

The minutes of the last FrANC Committee Meeting held on 11th April 2016 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 concerning some of the actions are given below:

Action 15-04-05: Roy reported that the date of his new walk - to be called the "Bedminster/Southville Colliery Site Walk" - will be Monday 26th September, starting at 11:00am. The maximum number of people on the Walk will be limited to around 25, with 10 places reserved for members of the University of the Third Age (U3A). (*Post-meeting note: at Roy's request, it has been agreed to postpone this Walk until some time next year.*)

Action 16-01-04: the date of Peter Andresen's Geology Walk has been set for Thursday 16th June.

Action 16-01-07: Derek reported that he had received no reply from Paula Spiers regarding the feasibility of setting up a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) Stall at the Bristol Festival of Nature event to be held on 11th/12th June. However, Sara and Derek have offered to help the Bristol Parks Forum run a stall at this event on Saturday 11th June and will display LNR Leaflets if Paula is able to provide them.

Action 16-02-01: Sara reported that a total of 14 Clean-up sessions along the York Road riverbank had been organised, with the last one involving the FrANC membership being held on 14th May. A total of 200 volunteer hours had been spent clearing this part of the New Cut riverbank of litter, and Sara expressed her thanks to all those who had taken part. Sara suggested that an award should be presented at the next AGM to the FrANC male and female volunteer (excluding the Committee) who had contributed the most to litter clearance during the past year. It was also suggested that the completion of the York Road riverbank Clean-up should be publicised in the local press and brought to the attention of local Councillors.

Action 16-02-02: acknowledgement of the contribution by Fowlers Motorcycles to the refreshments provided after some of the York Road riverbank Clean-ups will be made in the next Newsletter.

Action 16-02-03: Sara reported that she had written to Councillors Charlie Bolton and Stephen Pearce to find out if they were each entitled to request two litter bins to be installed in Southville Ward each year, but had yet to receive replies from them. However, as an indirect result of Sara's efforts, Lorena Alvarez (Neighbourhood Officer (Greater Bedminster)) had forwarded an email to her from Anne Newman (formerly our contact with Bristol City Council (BCC) for organising the collection of rubbish accrued during FrANC Clean-ups) who was now looking into the possibility of having two additional litter bins installed at the Banana Bridge and one at Bedminster Bridge. Sara said that she would chase this up in due course, but noted that historically the issue would likely be whether BCC finances were available to cover the collection of litter from any additional bins installed.

Action 16-02-04: Sara reported that she had contacted Helen Adshead, as a result of which a meeting had been arranged for this coming Thursday (9th June) with Helen and other Water City Bristol colleagues (Owain Jones, Nick Hand and Katherine Jones) to discuss how this project could contribute to the FrANC Celebration Event planned for the autumn as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Grant.

Action 16-02-05: the content, features and functionality to be incorporated into the design of a new FrANC Website were discussed fully later in the meeting (see item 6 below).

Additionally, Ed confirmed that he had received no comeback from his letter to the readership of *The Pigeon* requesting old "home movies" of the New Cut. Also, Derek was actioned to add Councillor Mark Wright (now representing the new Hotwells and Harbourside Ward) to the FrANC Email Distribution List.

5. Progress on Tasks relating to HLF Project

- **York Road Riverbank Clean-up:** as noted in item 4 above under Action 16-02-01, FrANC volunteers have now completed the initial clearance of litter from the York Road riverbank between Bedminster Bridge and Bath Bridge. This has required a total of 11 Clean-up sessions involving the FrANC membership, plus three "solo" efforts undertaken by Sara and Derek to finish off isolated pockets of litter on the riverbank opposite the Shell Garage, opposite Whitehouse Street and next to the steps leading down to the Banana Bridge. In summary, 37 FrANC volunteers have contributed 200 hours of their time to this exercise, which has taken just over 3 months to complete.
- **Interpretation Boards:** Derek reported that the mock-ups of the new Interpretation Boards to be installed at Bathurst Basin and Bath Bridge had been circulated to Eric Dougall and Stacy Bartlett, from the BCC Markets and Estate Office, and that he had (after further prompting) just received approval from Eric for the boards to be installed at the suggested locations. The only caveat to this approval, however, appeared to be a comment received from the BCC Urban Design Team that the maximum height of each board should be between 1.3 to 1.6m so that the text can be read by wheelchair users. After some discussion, the Committee felt that it was unreasonable for FrANC to have to comply with this height restriction, as this would mean that the new

boards would be of a different height to the six Interpretation Boards already in place around the New Cut. Also, it was pointed out that most of the informative text on each Interpretation Board actually fell within the new height restriction limitations. Derek was actioned to write again to Eric to explain why FrANC do not wish to change the height of the new boards.

Derek also reported that the final artwork for each board was in the process of being completed by Clare Challice of Inkwood Design, and when ready would be circulated to those Committee members who had been involved in the initial design workshops for comment. Tess suggested that we should hold an official unveiling ceremony with "loads of booze".

- **Benches:** Sara reported that some progress had at last been made as Becky Belfin, the BCC Nature Conservation Officer, had agreed to help with the apparently numerous BCC Officers and departments that are involved in negotiating the installation of new benches on the public highway. Feedback from the voting slips distributed to the FrANC membership and other interested parties had contributed to the decision that the two benches will be sited on Clarence Road between the cycleway and riverbank, on either side of the Banana Bridge (exact locations have also been provisionally agreed). The main reasons for choosing these locations in preference to a site on York Road were (i) the benches will be in sunshine, (ii) there will be a better view (the trees and bushes populating the opposite York Road riverbank will be more interesting to look at) and (iii) Clarence Road is considered to be quieter than York Road. BCC Officers have suggested that the bench feet should be mounted on a raised concrete base so that their installation will not compromise any ancillary services running beneath the pavement. However, BCC have still not given us a fixed price for the cost of the benches. BCC will also take on responsibility for the upkeep of the benches five years after they have been installed, as was agreed when the initial HLF grant proposal was submitted.
- **Letters to Local Businesses:** Chris reported that she had drafted a letter to two of the local businesses (Bart Ingredients Company Ltd. and Robins & Day (Peugot Dealership)) who had not responded to our initial letter to raise awareness of FrANC and the local improvements we are making through the HLF grant. She had also been contacted by a lady from City & Country (the company currently redeveloping Bristol General Hospital).
- **Leaflet Design:** as there had been little progress to date it was decided to hold a dedicated "Leaflet Design Workshop", to be attended by the Committee, on Tuesday 12th July (see item 9 for further details). It was suggested that the Leaflet could perhaps describe four short walks around the New Cut which could then be combined into longer walks, so that people could choose whether to do all or part of the complete route depending on their individual capabilities. The Leaflet could also contain additional information that is not included on the Interpretation Boards, or questions (mainly aimed at children) whose answers would be found on specific Interpretation Boards.
- **Celebration Event:** as mentioned in item 4 above under Action 16-02-04, a meeting will be held this coming Thursday (9th June) to discuss the involvement of the Water City Bristol Project in the Celebration Event to mark the completion of the various activities funded by the HLF grant. It is also planned to set a date for this event at this meeting, as this must then be

booked with the proposed venue, St. Mary Redcliffe & Temple School. (Post-meeting note: the date of the Celebration Event has been set for Sunday 2nd October).

6. New Website – suggestions for Content/Features/Functionality

Sara reported that she and Derek had had an initial meeting with Sam Thomson on 21st April to discuss the development of a new FrANC Website. As well as being Vice-Chair of the Bristol Parks Forum (BPF), Sam also holds the post of Director of Civic and Cultural Engagement in the Faculty of Arts, Creative Industries and Education (ACE) at the University of the West of England (UWE) and as such has contact with several employees/interns who have the relevant expertise. She has already spoken to Marton Gosztonyi, a software development engineer who worked on the successful Bristol Parkhive application, and who is interested in helping develop our new Website. It is expected that Marton will work full-time on this for a period of two months. The work will be funded by the £1000 LNR grant awarded to FrANC, plus match funding that will be provided by UWE. A second meeting with Marton will be arranged shortly to plan the work to be undertaken.

A proposed specification for the content, features and functionality of the new Website was then circulated by Derek, which is reproduced in Attachment 1. After some discussion, the Committee agreed that all of the items listed in Attachment 1 were relevant, together with the following additional points:

- the possibility of including additional email addresses for selected FrANC Committee members (e.g. chair@franc.org.uk, secretary@franc.org.uk) in addition to the general contact address (contact@franc.org.uk);
- as FrANC is not a registered charity and now operates independently from the Southville Centre, the choice of a suitable postal address for inclusion on the Website will need to be made. Although a postal address affiliated to a Neighbourhood Partnership might be preferable, it was pointed out that this could be complicated by the fact that the New Cut borders several Neighbourhood Partnerships;
- a Website with a single "Home" page containing links to other specific pages ("Documents", "Leaflets", etc) was considered to be the preferred layout.

Advice on the feasibility of incorporating the above into the new Website will be sought from the Website designer(s).

Sara also noted that she intended having the redesign of the existing leaflet entitled "The Friends of the Avon New Cut" included as one of the Website redesign activities so that it would be compatible with the new Website, both visually and artistically.

7. Water City Bristol - "Tidal Twinning" with Friends of Lamplighter's Marsh

Derek and Ed had received an email from Helen Adshead, dated 28th April, in which she had proposed a "Tidal Twinning" between FrANC and the Friends of Lamplighter's Marsh (FrOLM). This proposal had been made as part of the "Tides Strand" of the Water City Bristol (WCB) project, and was a follow-on to joint WCB/FrANC/FrOLM event held in March this year that had been attended by Ed (which included a train ride from Temple Meads station to Severn Beach, followed by refreshments at "The Lamplighter's" pub).

Derek had replied to Helen, saying that the views of the FrANC Committee regarding this "Tidal Twinning" initiative would be sought at the next Committee meeting, but that it was unlikely that FrANC would be able to get further involved in this until after the conclusion of all activities relating to the HLF grant which would not be until early October this year. The Committee were broadly in favour of supporting this proposed "Tidal Twinning" with FrOLM and establishing further contact with FrOLM representatives. Derek added that, in anticipation of this, he had sent an invitation via the FrOLM Website for FrOLM members to attend Richard Bland's Tree Walk and Peter Andresen's Geology Walk, but had not received a reply.

8. Any Other Business

- **Power Tool Training Course** - Derek reported that he had signed up to attend this one-day course, organised by Tom Penn of BCC, which will be held on 20th June. This one-day course will provide practical training on the use of petrol engine-powered tools such as strimmers, blowers and hedge trimmers, with those completing the course receiving a certificate of accreditation by BCC that will entitle them to book out and use any such tools owned by BCC. Derek noted that the grass at Butterfly Junction will need to be cut in September this year, in order to comply with the three-year cycle mandated by the Butterfly Junction Management Plan.

The Committee also approved a request from Derek for the Stihl FS40 Strimmer currently in FrANC's possession (which was formerly owned by John Purkiss) to be donated to the repository of BCC power tools for loan to local volunteer groups.

- **FrANC Newsletter** - the next issue will be published in August (after Sara and Derek return from holiday). Suggestions for content included articles on the new Interpretation Boards and Benches, plus raising awareness of other "Friends of" groups such as Lamplighter's Marsh or Trooper's Hill. The Newsletter will also acknowledge the contribution made by Fowlers Motorcycles towards the cost of refreshments following litter clearance activities along York Road (i.e. completion of Action 16-02-02).
- **Big Butterfly Count 2016** - this will be held between 15th July and 7th August and as in previous years it is proposed to ask the FrANC membership to help conduct a survey of the butterfly/moth population at Butterfly Junction. Derek will circulate the relevant survey material to the FrANC membership beforehand, but it was noted that he will be on holiday during the first two weeks of the survey.
- **Names on BCC Health & Safety (H&S) Forms** - in order to be covered by BCC Personal Liability Insurance, it is necessary for FrANC to provide the names of those responsible for organising their Clean-up activities on the H&S documentation submitted to Tom Penn for approval. To date, only Sara and Derek have been named as the organisers of these events. It was suggested that other FrANC members who had completed the BCC H&S training should be named on these forms in future, so that future Clean-ups are not dependant upon Sara and Derek being available. BCC H&S Plan and Risk Assessment pro-forma sheets have already been prepared by Derek to cover all of the Clean-up activities currently undertaken by FrANC, and should either be directly applicable or adaptable to future Clean-ups.

- **FrANC Marshals at Guided Walks** - Sara requested that in future it would be helpful if any Committee members planning on attending Guided Walks could let the organisers know in advance, so that marshalling responsibilities can be allocated beforehand.
- **Future Guided Walks** - it was suggested that we should approach Stephen Mason to see if he is prepared to lead a walk looking at the tributaries of the New Cut. During the recent Tree Walk, Stephen had provided an impromptu description of the Malago outlet near Bedminster Bridge.
- **Clean-ups with other volunteer groups** - Sara said that she had been contacted by the Bristol office of the Environment Agency who had offered to do a day's litter picking along the New Cut riverbank in July. In reply, Sara had explained that, because of amount of vegetation growing along the riverbank which tends to hide the rubbish deposited there, it is not worth organising large-scale Clean-ups during the summer. Consequently, an alternative date some time in the autumn had been suggested, to be agreed in due course with the Environment Agency representative, Kay Finn. The organisation of such events is also to some extent dependent upon the availability of Sara and Derek to provide the volunteers taking part with litter pickers, rubbish bags and hi-visibility jackets.

Sara noted that it would be helpful to get other volunteering groups (e.g. UWE students) involved in additional Clean-ups at other times during the year as, with the addition of the York Road riverbank, FrANC now has more of the New Cut to cover. Sara also felt that, with some help and encouragement from FrANC, the residents of York Road could be persuaded to take more interest in looking after this part of the riverbank.

- **Tree in memory of John Purkiss** - Ed noted that some vegetation clearance is needed around the hawthorn tree planted in memory of John Purkiss above the FrANC bench on the Chocolate Path. There is also rubbish around the bench which needs to be removed. *(Post-meeting note: the black lettering on John's plaque shows signs of weathering, and is in fact non-existent in places (though the engraved letters are still there)).*
- **Removal of debris from New Cut riverbed** – Sara reported that she was still waiting to hear from Sarah Allen from Avon Fire and Rescue, who was looking into the feasibility of using the removal debris from the New Cut riverbed as a training exercise for firefighters.
- **Underfall Yard Volunteers** - Chris currently spends some of her time volunteering at the Underfall Yard Visitor Centre, and said that anyone wishing to do the same should contact Sarah Murray to offer their services.

9. Date of next meeting

- The next FrANC meeting will be held with **Water City Bristol on Thursday 9th June** (2:00pm start), followed by the **Guided Walk Leaflet Design Workshop on Tuesday 12th July** (7:30pm start), both at 88 Cumberland Road. No future Committee Meeting dates were scheduled at the meeting.
- Note that Table 1 includes any new actions raised at this 7th June meeting.

Derek Hughes
Secretary, Friends of the Avon New Cut

Action No.	Description	Actioned by	Status
15-04-05	Develop proposed Guided Walk around Bedminster/Southville (Coal Mining Industry Heritage)	Roy	<i>Completed</i>
16-01-04	Confirm date of Geology Walk with Peter Andresen	Roy	<i>Completed</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>Completed</i>
16-02-01	Organise additional Clean-up sessions to clear entire length of York Road Riverbank of rubbish	Sara, Derek	<i>Completed</i>
16-02-02	Acknowledge York Road Riverbank Clean-up refreshment contributions by Fowlers Motorcycles in next Newsletter	Sara, Derek	<i>In Progress</i>
16-02-03	Contact local Councillors to find out if they are entitled to request the installation of two litter bins in their wards each year	Sara	<i>In Progress</i>
16-02-04	Contact Helen Adshead / Ruth Worsley to find out if they are involved with any schools projects that could be linked with planned HLF Celebration Event in September	Sara	<i>Completed</i>
16-02-05	Consider content, features and functionality to be incorporated into design of new FrANC Website	Committee	<i>In Progress</i>
16-03-01	Progress "FrANC Volunteer of the Year" Awards for presentation at next AGM, propose names of male and female recipients	Sara, Derek	<i>New Action</i>
16-03-02	Publicise completion of York Road Riverbank Clean-up in local press and notify local Councillors	Derek	<i>New Action</i>
16-03-03	Add Councillor Mark Wright (Hotwells and Harbourside Ward) to the FrANC Email Distribution List	Derek	<i>New Action</i>
16-03-04	Write to Eric Dougall to explain why FrANC do not wish to shorten the height of the two new Interpretation Boards to comply with BCC Urban Design Team recommendations	Derek	<i>New Action</i>
16-03-05	Circulate final artwork for new Interpretation Boards to Design Workshop Committee Members for comment/approval	Derek	<i>New Action</i>
16-03-06	Design Guided Walk Leaflet incorporating recommendations from Leaflet Design Workshop on 12 th July	Derek	<i>New Action</i>
16-03-07	Attend Power Tool Training Course and deliver Stihl FS40 Strimmer into custody of BCC	Derek	<i>New Action</i>
16-03-08	Circulate details of Big Butterfly Count 2016 to FrANC membership and collate/publish results from Butterfly Junction Survey	Derek	<i>New Action</i>
16-03-09	Ask Stephen Mason if he is prepared to lead a walk next year looking at the tributaries of the New Cut	Sara	<i>New Action</i>
16-03-10	Fix date and organise New Cut Riverbank Clean-up with volunteers from Environment Agency	Sara	<i>New Action</i>
16-03-11	Clear overgrown vegetation around John Purkiss' Memorial Tree and investigate how to repair faded lettering on Plaque	Derek, Sara	<i>New Action</i>

Table 1 **FrANC Committee Action List**

Content/Features

- an Archive of Photos and Videos (e.g. video of 2009 New Cut Celebration). The photos that are currently accessible on the existing website need to be sorted and we will need to decide which ones to keep
- a repository of FrANC documentation (e.g. Constitution; Minutes of AGMs, General Meetings and Committee Meetings; Newsletters; Management Plan) that is accessible by all FrANC members
- educational documents that can be downloaded and printed by the FrANC membership (e.g. FrANC Treasure Hunt, Information Leaflets)
- FrANC News and dates of Forthcoming Events (Clean-ups, Walks, Talks, Meetings)
- the Website should contain a section describing the history of the New Cut

Functionality

- Photos stored within Website itself instead of being accessible via a *Flickr* account
- all FrANC documentation accessible and downloadable
- the Website design should enable details of forthcoming events (e.g. Walks, Talks, meeting dates) to be easily created, edited and loaded onto it by designated Committee Members
- the Website should contain a facility to enable users to communicate with FrANC (e.g. user will type their name, email address and message content into a panel which will be converted to an email and automatically sent to contact@franc.org.uk).