

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)

Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 23rd January 2017

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 those present to the meeting. Tess joined us during the meeting as she had a prior engagement.

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 14th November 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. Progress on *Actions 16-03-09, 16-04-02, 16-04-03, 16-04-04* and *16-04-05* is reported in item 6 below, and on *Action 16-04-06* in item 8 below. Additional comments were provided concerning the remaining actions, which are summarised below:

Action 16-03-11: it was reported that Patchwork have opted to repair the faded lettering on their plaque by themselves. With regard to the similar problem encountered by FrANC with John Purkiss' plaque, it was agreed that we will write to the supplier, Brunel Engraving Company, to see if they can renew the lettering on it.

Action 16-04-01: Sara reported that *ParkWork* had agreed to carry out last year's "meadow management" at Butterfly Junction, which was completed in two stages before Christmas. This included grass cutting as well as the cutting back of brambles and other overgrown vegetation along the fence and wall bordering the Butterfly Junction area. *ParkWork* costs had been covered by funding remaining from last year's Heritage Lottery Fund grant.

Action 16-04-07: FrANC Newsletter No. 27 (Winter 2016-17 edition) was published on New Year's Day, slightly later than planned. The Newsletter contains the dates of the first three riverbank clean-ups for 2017, and includes news of the launch of the new FrANC website plus a round-up of our achievements during the past year. This Newsletter edition also marks the transition from the old to the new FrANC logo.

5. Feedback on New Website

Sara reported that the new FrANC Website went live on 14th December 2016. The response of those Committee members who had since visited the Website was generally very favourable (quote from Richard: "Jolly good, team!").

Sara noted that the photos on the new Website were currently essentially those that had been displayed on the old Website. Sara felt that these should be brought up to date – for example, by replacing some of the old litter-picking photos with more recent ones showing volunteers wearing the new FrANC high-visibility (hi-viz) vests. Derek added that one feature of the new Website is that more photos can be stored in it than are actually displayed on it, so that the Website could become an archive of FrANC photographic material. The photos that are currently displayed in sequence in the banner header on the Website home page can be changed or increased in number, if necessary.

The old and new Websites do not contain any photos of the “Boat Race” that took place on the anniversary of the start of the digging of the New Cut, and Roy and Tess were actioned to find out if these still exist. It is understood that a poster was made by the Southville Centre to mark this event, and Ben Barker, Sheila Hannon and Katie White were named as people who may have been involved in helping to organise it.

Sara has also set up a Facebook page for the *Friends of the Avon New Cut*, which is also accessible from the new Website. The Website can also be viewed on an iPad or smartphone, as well as on a conventional PC or laptop.

6. Events Planning for 2017

6.1 Riverbank Clean-ups

- **Feedback from first Riverbank Clean-up on York Road** – Sara reported that our first Clean-up on 14th January had been well-attended by 25 volunteers, of which 10 volunteers were new people attending their first Clean-up.

However, the high proportion of newcomers, combined with a large number of volunteers turning up at the same time, had resulted in Sara, as Group Leader, becoming overwhelmed with the tasks of simultaneously signing people in and issuing litter-pickers, gloves and hi-viz vests, as well as ensuring that volunteers had received a proper Health & Safety (H&S) briefing before starting work.

As the Clean-up progressed along York Road, the volunteers also became very spread out, and consequently Sara found it difficult to keep track of everyone. This meant that, at the end of the Clean-up, it was not possible to be absolutely sure that everyone had been accounted for – especially as some volunteers had left the working party early.

In view of the above, it was acknowledged that we need to be better organised when running our Clean-ups, with the current responsibilities of the Group Leader being redistributed amongst several Committee Members. It was noted that, during the last Clean-up involving the Environment Agency at the end of November last year, four Committee Members had been appointed as Group Leaders at the start to lead four separate teams of volunteers, and this had worked well. It was therefore proposed that we manage all future Clean-ups in a similar manner.

From the ensuing discussion, a number of points were raised concerning the responsibilities of Committee Members and Group Leaders during future Clean-ups and these have been summarised in Attachment 1. It was agreed that this new approach will be tried out at the next Clean-up scheduled for 11th February.

- **Preparations for remaining Clean-ups** – Sara reminded those present at the meeting of the arrangements for the next two Clean-ups:

- (i) on Saturday 11th February, when we will tackle the Coronation Road riverbank between Bedminster Bridge and Gaol Ferry Bridge. We will also aim to clear the slipways underneath Goal Ferry Bridge on both the Coronation Road and Cumberland Road sides of the New Cut. Committee Members were asked to meet at Bedminster Bridge at 9:50am. Refreshments will be organised afterwards at Spike Island Café.
- (ii) on Saturday 11th March, when we will cover the remaining Coronation Road riverbank between Gaol Ferry Bridge, Vauxhall Bridge and the Harvest Energy garage - same meeting time, but at Gaol Ferry Bridge, and same place for refreshments afterwards.

It was agreed that we will not clear the Cumberland Road riverbank near God's Garden this year because this is currently largely inaccessible as a result of MetroBus construction works concerning the installation of a second road bridge at the entrance to Bathurst Basin.

Sara also suggested that we organise a couple of additional Clean-ups along the York Road riverbank between the Banana Bridge and Bath Bridge some time in mid-April, as this area has not been cleared for some time. It will also be necessary to cut back overgrown ivy along the pavement edges.

6.2 Walks/Talks

- **Contribution to Bristol Walk Fest 2017** – in response to *Action 16-04-03*, Ed has offered to lead a walk entitled “*Exploring the Cumberland Basin*” as FrANC’s contribution to this year’s Bristol Walk Fest. The walk will start at The Cottage Inn on Baltic Wharf and will encompass a “*tour of the Cumberland Basin showing how the development of the lock system and the Floating Harbour enabled Bristol to manage the high tidal range so that trade could flourish*”. The initial date of the walk will be **Thursday 4th May**, starting at 10:15am. Ed has also agreed to repeat the walk on three other dates during the Walk Fest calendar – on Wednesday 10th May (1:30pm start), Wednesday 17th May (6:15pm start) and Thursday 25th May (1:30pm start). These timings have been chosen by Ed because the river will be at low tide, which will illustrate what the Bristol docks would have looked like before the New Cut was constructed. Ed agreed to carry out a risk assessment of the proposed walk route himself.

Each walk will be limited to a maximum number of 20 people, and it will be necessary to book places beforehand by contacting Ed on his mobile phone number (07805 007304). Attendees will be charged a fee of £2 per head as a contribution to FrANC funds. It will be necessary for two FrANC Committee Members to accompany Ed on each walk, to act as stewards.

Derek was actioned to publish details of the walk, including the four walk dates, in the next FrANC Newsletter and also in the “Upcoming events” section of the new FrANC Website. If possible, a link to an electronic copy of the Bristol Walk Fest brochure will also be set up on the Website.

- **Tour of Thomas Ware & Sons Tannery** – in response to *Action 16-04-04*, Chris reported that she had been touch with the tannery’s Sales Manager, who is the person who will lead the tour. The tour will include a history of the tannery, as well as an explanation of the tanning process. It was agreed that Chris will try to book the tour for one evening during the first week of July (excluding Friday).

- **Wildflower Walk with Bristol Naturalists' Society** (Action 16-04-05) – as Margaret was not present to report on this, Sara agreed to follow this up with her. (*Post-Meeting Note: subsequent to the meeting, Margaret has been in touch with Richard Bland who has agreed to lead a walk on **Sunday 25th June**, starting at 10:00am. Richard also noted that, in view of all the works going on around the New Cut at present, it is difficult to predict what areas containing plant life will be fully accessible by that date. Richard has therefore suggested that we should initially advertise the date and subject (i.e. plants and trees), with a view to circulating the actual details of the walk later.*)
- **Bedminster/Southville Colliery Site Walk** – in response to Action 16-04-02, Roy reported that *acta Community Theatre* are planning to put on a show entitled “*Blood on the Coal*” some time in October. Roy therefore proposed to hold the Colliery Site Walk during the same month, to tie in with the stage production. Roy said that he would like to invite members U3A (University of the Third Age) and CLASS (Continued Learning at South Street) to attend this daytime walk, as well as the FrANC membership.
- **Tributaries of the New Cut Walk** – in response to Action 16-03-09, Sara reported that she had written to Stephen Mason and was waiting to hear from him. (*Post-Meeting Note: subsequent to the meeting, Sara and Derek met with Stephen on 6th February to discuss a possible route for such a walk. It was agreed with Stephen that the walk, primarily following the course of the Malago river, will provisionally be held some time in October, and that FrANC will provide assistance in publishing any written material (i.e. text and/or photos) that he prepares to support it.*)
- **Origin of River Frome Walk** – this walk had been suggested by Jane Cooke at last November’s AGM (for the second year running!). Derek agreed to contact the Environment Agency’s Melvin Wood, the walk leader, to find out more about the walk content, the route that it follows and any associated costs. It was agreed that, once we have this information, we will decide whether or not to book Melvin to lead it. If we do go ahead, it was suggested that the walk should be held in August or September.

7. Funding Sources for new Interpretation Boards

Sara said that she would like FrANC to add two new Interpretation Boards to the eight already installed around the New Cut. These would be located (i) near the site of the now disused Totterdown Lock, i.e. at the “start” of the New Cut and (ii) on Coronation Road, opposite the site of the New Gaol (now part of the Wapping Wharf development). However, as the development of the area close to the Totterdown Lock site has now stalled because of delays in the construction of the new Bristol Arena, it was suggested that for the time being the proposed “New Goal” Interpretation Board on Coronation Road should take precedence. As well as containing historical information about the New Gaol, it was envisaged that this new Interpretation Board could also mention the local geology of the New Cut.

Sara said that she would like to apply to the Greater Bedminster Neighbourhood Partnership for Section 106 funding to cover the cost of designing, manufacturing and installing the new Interpretation Board on Coronation Road, which was expected to total around £2,500. Section 106 funding is usually provided by developers to fund local community projects as a contractual obligation. Tess offered to investigate how to apply for this funding, and to find out how much of the Greater Bedminster Section 106 budget was left.

We may have already missed the deadline for applying for Section 106 funding this year, but the application process may change next year if Bristol City Council decide to disband Neighbourhood Partnerships altogether to save money. If that is the case, the Greater Bedminster Community Partnership (GBCP) may then take on the role of administering Section 106 funds for the Bedminster area.

8. **Links with 255th Bristol Channel Sea Scouts**

Sara reported that six people associated with the above local Sea Scout group had attended the York Road Riverbank Clean-up on 14th January including Roger Whiter, who is the Group Scout Leader. The 255th Bristol Channel Sea Scouts have had a headquarters of some description on the New Cut since 1937, though sadly during most of the past twenty years it has been neglected and in poor condition. However, the Sea Scout group are now working towards rebuilding the old scout hut, which runs underneath Coronation Road and comes out in between St. Paul's Church and Gaol Ferry Bridge. Eventually the Sea Scouts would like to clear the mud and silt built up on the slipway there so that they can tow their boats onto the New Cut, from which they would gain access to the Floating Harbour.

Although FrANC are unlikely to be able to help financially with the refurbishment of the scout hut, we may be interested should it subsequently become available for hire to local community groups. Establishing links with the Sea Scout group could also, of course, be of mutual benefit as a source of additional volunteers for FrANC clean-ups, whilst the scouts may be interested in attending our walks and talks. With regard to the completion of *Action 16-04-06* in Table 1, Sara offered to introduce Roy to Roger Whiter at the next riverbank Clean-up on 11th February or, alternatively, to arrange a meeting at a future date.

9. **Any Other Business**

- **Riverbank subsidence opposite Beaulley Road** – Richard noted that more of the south riverbank near Beaulley Road has collapsed, resulting in the fenced-off area along Coronation Road being extended.
- Roy and Tess reported that they had attended an “Open House” event on Sunday 15th January at **Avon Quay House**, which is located on the island between the Nova Scotia Pub and the Pump House Pub. The Hotwells Community Centre is working to secure the use of this building for local people and organisations. The building could be a suitable venue for future meetings involving FrANC members and perhaps also a place for storing our clean-up equipment and publications (books, leaflets, etc.). Sara offered to contact Bob Walton (email: waltoncobra@aol.com) to discuss possibilities.

10. **Date of the next Committee Meeting**

- As agreed at the previous Committee Meeting, the date of the next FrANC Committee Meeting is **Monday 10th April 2017**, to be held at 88 Cumberland Road starting at 7:30pm.
- Note that Table 1 includes any new actions raised at this 23rd January meeting.

Derek Hughes
Secretary, Friends of the Avon New Cut

Responsibilities of Committee Members/Group Leaders for Clean-ups

(1) One Week before Clean-up

- All Committee Members to advise Sara of their availability at least one week before date of Clean-up.
- Based on availability, up to four Committee Members to be appointed by Sara as Group Leaders to lead Clean-up teams. Eligible Committee Members are those who have completed Bristol City Council's "Health & Safety Training for BCC Community Groups" course (i.e. currently Sara, Derek, Chris, Ed, Richard and Tess). Phil Cass, a member of FrANC, has also completed this course.

(2) On day of Clean-up

- As well as Sara and Derek, at least one Committee Member to volunteer to help transport Clean-up equipment (wheelie bin, litter-pickers, hoops, gloves, hi-viz vests, rubbish bags and recycling bags, sharps bottles) to work site (minimum of 3 people needed).
- Four Committee Members to be present at work site 10 minutes before start of Clean-up, with responsibility for the following tasks to be split amongst them:
 - Making sure volunteers SIGN IN properly on Attendance Sheet and receive health & safety briefing. Volunteers also to be made aware that they must SIGN OUT at the end of the Clean-up, or if they leave the work site before the Clean-up finishes. Two copies of the Attendance Sheet to be circulated amongst volunteers to expedite this.
 - Issue hi-viz FrANC vest to each volunteer, with reminder to return it when Clean-up finishes.
 - Issue litter-picker and protective gloves (if needed) to each volunteer, with reminder to return them when Clean-up finishes.
 - Issue rubbish or recycling bag to each volunteer.
- Each volunteer to be assigned to one Group Leader.
- Each Group Leader to be provided with a "Sharps" container.

(3) During Clean-up

- Group Leaders to monitor the whereabouts of the volunteers that they are responsible for during Clean-up, and to keep their working group together.
- Group Leaders to ensure that any volunteer who decides to leave early is instructed to return their hi-viz FrANC vest to Sara and to SIGN OUT on the relevant Attendance Sheet.

(4) At end of Clean-up

- Group Leaders to ensure that all Clean-up work finishes promptly at designated time (usually 12 noon).
- Group Leaders to ensure that remaining volunteers return their hi-viz FrANC vest to Sara and SIGN OUT on the relevant Attendance Sheet.
- Group Leaders to advise volunteers of arrangements for refreshments and invite them to join in.

Attachment 1

Action No.	Description	Actioned by	Status
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>In Progress</i>
16-03-11	Clear overgrown vegetation around John Purkiss' Memorial Tree and investigate how to repair faded lettering on Plaque	Derek, Sara, Roy	<i>In Progress</i>
16-04-01	Contact <i>ParkWork</i> to find out if they will undertake this year's "meadow management" at Butterfly Junction (plus grass cutting)	Sara	<i>Completed</i>
16-04-02	Contact <i>acta Community Theatre</i> to discuss involvement in proposed Bedminster/Southville Colliery Site Walk	Roy	<i>In Progress</i>
16-04-03	Develop ideas for FrANC Guided Walk around the New Cut for <i>Bristol Walk Fest 2017</i>	Ed	<i>Completed</i>
16-04-04	Contact Thomas Ware and Sons Ltd. to arrange evening talks/tours around tannery for FrANC Committee and members	Chris	<i>In Progress</i>
16-04-05	Contact Bristol Naturalists' Society to find out if they can provide leader for Wild Flower Walk around the New Cut	Margaret	<i>Completed</i>
16-04-06	Contact 255 th Bristol Channel Sea Scouts to establish links and find out how FrANC can best support them in future	Roy	<i>In Progress</i>
16-04-07	Provide contributions to next festive FrANC Newsletter and publish next edition before the end of this year	Committee & Derek	<i>Completed</i>
17-01-01	Find out if any photos exist of the "Boat Race" that was held to mark the anniversary of the start of the digging of the New Cut	Roy, Tess	<i>New Action</i>
17-01-02	Publish details of "Exploring the Cumberland Basin" Walk in next FrANC Newsletter and on FrANC Website	Derek	<i>New Action</i>
17-01-03	Contact Melvin Wood (Environment Agency) to find out more about his "Origin of the River Frome" Walk	Derek	<i>New Action</i>
17-01-04	Investigate application process for Greater Bedminster Section 106 funding and find out how much of 2017 budget remains	Tess	<i>New Action</i>
17-01-05	Contact Bob Walton from Hotwells Community Centre to discuss possible use of Avon Quay House by FrANC	Sara	<i>New Action</i>

Table 1 FrANC Committee Action List