

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)
Minutes of Annual General Meeting held at the Southville Centre - 2 July 2009

Present

Tess Green (chair), Tracy Whale (treasurer), John Purkiss (secretary), Ben Barker, John Brown, Richard Clutterbuck, Pat Fung, Roy Gallop, Royston Griffey, Ed Hall, Jo Hargreaves, Adrian Mantle, Liz Payze, Angie Tonge, Martha van der Lem, Paul van der Lem.

Apologies

Margaret Fay, Chris Hanmer, Derek Hughes, Valerie Kingman, Sara Worth.

Minutes of the AGM held on 10 July 2008

The minutes were accepted as being correct.

Report on the past year

- The Secretary presented a report on activities in 2008-09 (attached).
- Thanks were expressed to everyone who had helped during the year.
- The report was accepted.

Finance report

- The Treasurer presented the financial report for 2008-09. Income amounted to £9,906.00 and expenditure totalled £6,135.96. Much of the income and expenditure related to the New Cut 200 celebrations. Funds in hand totalled £4,845.19, some of which was earmarked for further New Cut 200 activities.
- The report was accepted.

Election of Committee for 2009-10

The following people were unanimously elected:

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| • John Purkiss (Chair) | • Tess Green |
| • Sara Worth (Vice Chair) | • Adrian Mantle |
| • Derek Hughes (Secretary) | • Angie Tonge |
| • Tracy Whale (Treasurer) | • Martha van der Lem |

Any other business

- Forthcoming events were highlighted: our New Cut Trek on 26 July (starting at the Create Centre at 10.30am) and a boat trip up the Avon Gorge and New Cut on 6 August (tickets to be purchased in advance). Ben, Ed, Tess and Paul offered their services as marshals during the New Cut Trek.
- Thanks were expressed to Tess for all her hard work during her time as Chair of FrANC over the past 3 years. The meeting concluded with a round of applause.

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)

Report on activities in 2008/09

The preparation and running of events to mark the 200th anniversary of the opening of the New Cut provided our main focus of attention over the past year, but we still found time for many other activities.

200th Anniversary

Our major 200th anniversary celebration started out as an idea for a small party on Vauxhall Bridge and ended up with a highly successful theatre, music and dancing event on the Floating Harbour dockside, attended by over 3,000 people on the afternoon of 4 May 2009. The event included features of the original party in 1809 – a hog roast (laid on by the ss Great Britain) and a special beer (produced by the Bristol Beer Factory and marketed as “Cut Blaster”). The celebration continued with an evening party on the Grain Barge. A DVD of the event is being produced.

We organised two exhibitions of local people’s photographs of their favourite views and features of the Cut - including the water, riverbanks, bridges, buildings and wildlife. Held at the Southville Centre for 4 weeks in April and at the Create Centre for 4 weeks in May, the photographs were much admired and appreciated. A special boat trip up the Cut has been arranged for 6 August, and we are developing plans to install a commemorative bench adjacent to the Chocolate Path.

Wildlife projects

- We submitted to the City Council our case for the New Cut to be classified as a Local Nature Reserve. A decision is dependent on the Council securing funding to employ a Local Nature Reserves Officer.
- 7 sessions were held to discover bug life on the riverbank near Vauxhall Bridge. With help from the Bristol Naturalists’ Society, a range of spiders, beetles, moths, butterflies, woodlice, bugs and snails were identified - including one snail not previously known to exist in the Bristol Region!
- A working party undertook maintenance work at Butterfly Junction in November.
- We provided information on the Cut’s bird life to staff at Riverside Garden Centre, who plan to set up a viewing platform and binoculars for their visitors to use.

Riverscapes project

We maintained our involvement in this project to improve waterways in the south of Bristol and involve more people in river support groups such as FrANC by:

- Producing an educational Treasure Hunt, which has been used successfully and beneficially by local families and local primary schools.
- Running an information stall at a “Wild Waters Fun Day” event in October.
- Offering to help stimulate the creation of a river support group on the St Anne’s stretch of the River Avon.
- Two of our members attending an Oral History training day and one of our members assisting with the development of a Riverscapes website.

Themed walks

- We organised a Herb Walk.
- We promoted the New Cut Trek, Malago Trek and Colliter's Brook Trek.

Bus Rapid Transit System

- Members submitted their comments during the initial consultation period for this proposed project.
- A statement outlining our concerns on the project's effect on the Cut was drawn up at a FrANC meeting in May, and will be presented to the West of England Partnership.

Clean-ups

- 36 volunteers assisted at 3 clean-up sessions, removing over 1 tonne of rubbish from the riverbanks
- We wrote and distributed a letter to householders adjacent to the Cut asking them not to dump garden waste on the banks, and we requested the City Council to stop dumping leaves and cut-down weeds and tree branches on the banks.
- We continued to urge the City Council to clear debris from the riverbed – particularly on the Temple Meads to Bedminster Bridge stretch of the Cut - and to clear litter from the steep riverbanks along York Road, in front of ASDA and to the rear of the garage at the Ashton end of Coronation Road. We await action.
- We alerted the City Council to a lack of maintenance on the Gaol Ferry Bridge footway and an increase in dog mess on the Chocolate Path. Action was taken.

Awareness raising

- Publication of 4 newsletters
- Regular e-mail bulletins sent to 136 contacts
- FrANC pages on the Southville Centre website kept up-to-date
- Distribution of our book, information leaflet and wildlife leaflets
- Press, radio and TV coverage of our 200th Anniversary event
- Widespread promotion of our 200th Anniversary event including delivery of posters and flyers to residents along the Redcliffe / York Road stretch of the Cut.

We are grateful to everyone who has supported FrANC during the year, and we thank City Council officers Kathy Derrick, Stacey Hobbs, Denise James and Steve Sparks and Councillors Beynon, Bolton, Woodman and Wright for their assistance. We also thank "Awards for All" and the Quartet Community Foundation for their financial support of our 200th anniversary activities.