

**Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)
Minutes of Annual General Meeting held at the Southville Centre –
19th September 2012**

Present

Sara Worth (Vice-Chair), Liz Payze (Treasurer), Derek Hughes (Secretary), Roy Gallop, Kean Lamb, Martha van der Lem, Paul van der Lem, Richard Clutterbuck, Stephen Mason, Margaret Fay, Chris Hanmer, Ed Hall, Stephen Wickham, Pip Sheard.

Apologies

Anthony O'Neil, Ben Barker, Veronica Pollard, Nell Pursey, Lewis and Joan Semple, Barney Smith, Peter Royle, Adrian Mantle, Paul Bancroft, Phil Cass, Pat Fung, Anna Walton, Jacqui Furneaux, Alison Leaf, Tess Green, Rosie and Pete Tomlinson.

Welcome

Sara welcomed all meeting attendees but noted with some sadness the absence of the FrANC Chair, John Purkiss, who had passed away whilst on holiday in June of this year. Sara acknowledged the "big hole" that John had left behind, and thanked all those people who had stepped in to help since his untimely death. The Executive Committee were determined to keep FrANC going in John's memory.

Minutes of the AGM held on 13th October 2011

The minutes of last year's AGM were reviewed and were accepted as being correct (Proposed: Martha van der Lem; Seconded: Ed Hall).

Matters Arising

Most of the matters arising from last year's AGM concerned the various activities that FrANC is involved with regarding Bristol City Council's Wild City Project. Updates on progress on these activities were provided during the course of the meeting.

Report on the past year

- The Vice-Chair presented a report on activities in 2011-12. A copy of this report is attached to these minutes (see Attachment 1), and thanks were expressed to everyone who had helped during the year.
- The report was accepted by the meeting attendees, and the Secretary was actioned to ensure that a copy is circulated to the FrANC membership with the minutes of the AGM.

Finance report

- The Treasurer presented the financial report for 2011-12 (see Attachment 2), which covered all transactions from 1st June 2011 to 31st May 2012. Total income

amounted to £675.00, while expenditure totalled £1071.29. The biggest item of expenditure was the Boat trip organised by FrANC, though the cost of this had been covered by ticket sales. Other significant expenditure items were the cost of insurance cover for FrANC activities, maintenance of the FrANC website and “volunteer expenses” (i.e. for refreshments following riverbank clean-ups). The balance carried forward at the end of 2011/2012 was £834.25.

- The Finance report has been independently audited by Andrew Yearsley, ACA, of Bishop Fleming Chartered Accountants.
- The report was accepted (Proposed: Chris Hanmer; Seconded: Margaret Fay).
- As noted in the Vice-Chair’s report, the family of John Purkiss had requested that those wishing to remember John should make donations to FrANC. The Treasurer was pleased to report that, since 31st May, she had received donations totalling £850 as a result of this request, for which FrANC were extremely grateful. The current balance was therefore £1684.25.
- Additional financial support was also expected from the Greater Bedminster Community Partnership (GBCP) which would contribute to the cost of additional “extended reach” litter pickers, FrANC insurance and refreshments following riverbank clean-ups.
- The Treasurer also noted that the Executive Committee had agreed that Roy Gallop would replace John as one of the three authorised signatories for the FrANC bank account. The other two signatories are currently the Treasurer (Liz) and Secretary (Derek).

Election of Committee for 2012-13

The following nominations for election to the Executive Committee were received in writing by the Secretary prior to the AGM, with the required notice:

- Sara Worth (Chair)
- Roy Gallop (Vice Chair)
- Derek Hughes (Secretary)
- Liz Payze (Treasurer)
- Chris Hanmer (Committee Member)
- Margaret Fay (Committee Member)
- Ed Hall (Committee Member)

The above Executive Committee members were unanimously elected by those present.

(Proposed: Paul van der Lem; Seconded: Martha van der Lem)

Update on Wild City and the Avon New Cut Management Plan

- The Wild City Project, run by Bristol City Council, started in 2011 and its aim is to encourage more people to enjoy the outdoors, especially those who might not normally be inclined to do so. The officer working with FrANC on this project is Helen Adshead.
- From FrANC’s point of view, a key objective at the end of this 3-year project would be for the New Cut to be granted Local Nature Reserve (LNR) status. In order to achieve this, five project activities have been identified that must be completed by FrANC. These activities are listed in Attachment 3, copies of which were circulated to those present.

- No update on the current status of the Avon New Cut Management Plan was available at the meeting, so it was agreed that the Executive Committee will establish this subsequent to the AGM.
- As noted in the report on last year's activities, one of these project activities – the creation of two new Interpretation Boards sited at Bedminster Bridge and the Banana Bridge – has been completed. A start has also been made in training volunteers to provide Guided Walks along the New Cut.
- FrANC are also tasked with organising a Boat Trip, to be funded by the Wild City Project, with the aim of encouraging people who might not normally be inclined to participate in such an event to do so. To this end, Roy has contacted members of a local organisation called CLASS – Continued Learning At South Street – who are a group of mostly older people interested in the part of the New Cut between Bedminster Bridge and York Road. CLASS are in fact in the process of researching the history of this area, and their findings will be published by Roy as one of the Wild City Project reports submitted by FrANC. Roy has also contacted members of the University of the Third Age (U3A), and it is likely that they and CLASS will make up the majority of the Boat Trip passengers. The involvement of other local organisations, preferably from the St Mary Redcliffe area, will be discussed at the next Committee meeting.

Planning for the next year

The following activities were proposed for 2012/2013:

(a) Dates for riverbank clean-ups and Butterfly Junction maintenance

- Bramble Culling at Butterfly Junction on **Saturday 1st December**, starting at 10:00am. The Vice-Chair requested that some advice would be required from knowledgeable FrANC members regarding which plants should be culled.
- Two riverbank clean-ups to be held in 2013, provisionally scheduled for the last Saturday in **January (26th)** along Coronation Road, and for the last Saturday in **February (23rd)** along Cumberland Road, including the railway track and adjacent Chocolate Path. Both of these events will also start at 10:00am. It was suggested that, depending on numbers, the first clean-up could also tackle the area between Gaol Ferry Bridge and Bedminster Bridge, though a proper risk assessment would need to be made beforehand. Longer, "extended reach" litter pickers would be required if a clean-up is to be attempted in this area.

(b) Involvement in the Wild City Project

- Referring to the list of Wild City Project activities in Attachment 3, it was noted that the following activities remain to be progressed during 2012/2013:
 - (i) **Management Plan for the New Cut** – further liaison with Bristol City Council representatives will be required during the next year in order to complete this activity. Chris Hanmer has offered to replace John as one of the FrANC representatives involved in formulating the Plan.
 - (ii) **Guided Walk Training** – Chris has also offered to be the focal point within FrANC for responding to requests for Guided Walks. It has been suggested that such requests could be made via the FrANC website, and the Committee have agreed to assess the feasibility of doing this. It was also felt by those who had been involved to date that more volunteers would be required if this service is to be operated successfully by FrANC. .Derek

noted that one of the tasks to be completed was the preparation of a database of historical background information for volunteers to refer to when planning the Walks.

It was reported that M-Shed has started to organise walks on Wednesday evenings, starting from the museum. The cost is a £2 donation to museum funds. It was suggested that FrANC members should try them out, and provide feedback on these walks to the Executive Committee.

- (iii) **Boat Trips** – Roy reported that there had been some delays in organising a Boat Trip this year, mostly due to (a) identifying and contacting suitable “*local people from priority groups / communities around the Cut*” (see Attachment 3) who were eligible to take part, and (b) the availability of a suitable boat for hire from Bristol Ferry Boat Company. Consequently, it was agreed that the first Boat Trip to be run under the auspices of the Wild City Project will be deferred until next year.
- (iv) **Wild Waters Riverside Festival** – this is to be a community festival, planned for 2013, whose purpose is to celebrate the New Cut. The Executive Committee will meet with Helen Adshead later this year to start planning this event. It is not clear at the moment whether this is to be organised solely by the Wild City Project and FrANC, or whether other groups taking part in the Wild City Project will also be involved.

(c) Other ideas for activities in 2013

- Ed Hall suggested a mid-year riverbank clean-up, perhaps some time in July 2013, to supplement the two clean-ups that are held at the beginning of the year. There is a gradual accumulation of litter throughout the year, and it was felt that having another clean-up session in the summer would help keep this under control as well as improving the appearance of the Cut at the time of year when it is likely to be most visited by the general public.
- The last Bat-Detecting Walk led by Angus Tillotson had been well received by those who had taken part, and it was agreed that Angus should be contacted to find out if a similar event could be organised for next year.
- Similarly, Max Drake has led very interesting Herb Walks along the banks of the Cut in the past, and it was suggested that another could also be held next year.
- Another guided walk in the vicinity of the New Cut was also proposed, depending on Roy Gallop’s availability.
- It was suggested that any other ideas for activities for next year should be sent to the Secretary, for consideration by the Executive Committee.

(d) Ideas for a Memorial to John Purkiss

A number of FrANC members have suggested that we should commemorate the good work that John did on behalf of FrANC in some way. The Secretary reported that the following possibilities have been discussed to date by the Executive Committee:

- A bench on the Coronation Road side of the New Cut;
- An annual John Purkiss Memorial Lecture or Walk (as John was responsible for compiling the list of wild flowers along the Cut, maybe an annual Wild Flower Walk could be organised in his memory);
- A tree planted in John’s memory, with a suitably-inscribed plaque (John’s favourite tree was the hawthorne). Various possible locations have been considered to date, including (i) Greville Smith Park (also suggested by the

Patchwork Group, one of the many organisations that John was involved in), (ii) in a community location (e.g. Southville Centre) or (iii) along the banks of the Cut, near the water's edge;

- A notice or information board in memory of John - perhaps with a tree planted next to it. Suggested locations were on the Coronation Road side of Vauxhall Bridge, the area beyond Riverside Garden Centre or near Ashton Avenue Bridge.

It was agreed that the above suggestions would be explored further by the Executive Committee, and cost estimates obtained in each case before any decision is made. It was recognised that, although a considerable sum of money had been raised from the generous donations made to FrANC in John's memory, he would not have wanted all of this to be spent on himself! It was also agreed that John's family will be kept informed of developments and will be invited to attend the memorial ceremony, whenever this is held.

Any Other Business

The following additional matters were raised:

- Stephen Wickham and Ed Hall raised concerns about a number of tents that were currently encamped on the southern bank of the Cut, between nos. 170 – 250 Coronation Road, in what is supposed to be a public access area.

The occupants are thought to be the same people who inhabited the area behind the garage on Coronation Road some months ago. They appear to spend most of their time drinking, and it is believed that they use the tidal waters of the Cut as a means of disposing of their litter. They also have six dogs, which are encouraged to use the adjacent banks of the Cut as their toilet area.

As this is considered by the police to be an environmental matter, there is apparently little action that they can do at present with regard to moving these people on. The Environment Agency has been contacted, but little has been done at present. It was therefore suggested that as a first step we should complain to Bristol City Council. Ed Hall was in the process of finding out who in the Council such complaints should be directed to. It was suggested that the name of a suitable contact should be passed on the Secretary, who will then forward the details to those present so that individual letters of objection can be sent.¹

- Kath Farnaby, who works for the BBC Natural History Unit, is planning to make a programme about the New Cut as part of the *Inside/Out West* series. It is understood that this will mainly be focussed on the wildlife and ecology of the Cut, and not on issues such as the potential environmental impact of BRT2. Kath spoke to John about this before he died, has also met with Chris Hanmer and Ben Barker and, subsequent to this meeting, has interviewed Ben. Sara reported that the outgoing Executive Committee had had little direct involvement with Kath on this project to date, apart from turning down what were considered to be unreasonable requests, made at very short notice, to film a "mock" riverbank clean-up and also the FrANC AGM! Sara said that the Committee are quite

¹ **Note:** subsequent to the meeting, Ed Hall had some useful conversations with Bristol City Council staff. It transpired that pre-enforcement action had already commenced (there were signs about this on the fence near the encampment) and the legal process to evict these people would take its course. Nevertheless, Ed was told that any representation from the public could be put alongside the enforcement notice request to a judge (when that time came) as supporting evidence.

The person to e-mail with concerns was **STEVEN HEARSEY** (steven.hearsey@bristol.gov.uk) who was dealing with the legal process. Concerns should be raised sooner rather than later, in order for individuals' comments to be noted as part of the legal process.

prepared to help Kath with this project, once they have a better idea of exactly what she wants.

- Thanks were expressed to Paul and Martha van der Lem for cleaning up the FrANC bench next to the Chocolate Path, which had recently been vandalised with blue paint.
- Sara also thanked all those who had helped keep FrANC going in the aftermath of John's death, which had been a difficult time for those Committee members who were involved in the BRT2 Public Inquiry.
- M-Shed has also offered to promote FrANC if we provide them with suitable publicity material. Sara has confirmed with them that we would like to take them up on this offer, but will need some time to collate the necessary information.

Date of next meeting

No date was set at the AGM for the next FrANC Committee Meeting.

Derek Hughes
Secretary
Friends of the Avon New Cut

Attachment 1

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC) Report on activities in 2011/12

This report covers the period from our last AGM (13 October 2011) to the date of our 2012 AGM (19 September 2012). Our activities were as follows:

Themed walks and talks

We organised:

- A local history walk, led by Mark Steeds, through Redcliffe to the Cut to discover Bristol's link to Treasure Island and the legendary Long John Silver.

Maintenance and clean-ups

- A working party undertook maintenance work at Butterfly Junction.
- In excess of 30 volunteers assisted at 2 riverbank clean-up sessions, with a small group also cleaning the railway track on the day before the Inspector for the BRT2 Public Inquiry was due to take a trip on the steam train!
- The City Council have continued to respond to our notifications of Graffiti and also removal of shopping trolleys from the riverbed along the Temple Meads to Bedminster Bridge section of the Cut.
- The Council have thinned trees along the South bank of the river and also removed a dead beech tree which was too near to the road at the west end of Coronation Road. Both these activities were notified to FrANC in advance – showing a developing effective working relationship between the Council and FrANC.

Awareness raising

- We maintained and further developed our website (www.franc.org.uk).
- Publication of the FrANC Newsletter, which is circulated to members and can be accessed by people visiting the FrANC website, has continued.
- We sent regular e-mail bulletins to approximately 150 contacts.
- We distributed copies of our book, information leaflet and wildlife leaflets.
- Members assisted in the running of 4 walks for schools and community groups, exploring the Cut's history and wildlife. This is an area which we hope to expand on over the coming year.

Wild City Project

FrANC is one of seven organisations involved in this Bristol-wide project aiming to encourage more people to enjoy the outdoors, including those who have little or no contact with the

natural environment. We are pleased to have been selected for involvement in this project and continue to hope that this will lead to the New Cut being formally recognised as a Local Nature Reserve.

Helen Adshead is the project officer and will be continuing to work with us over the next 2 years. So far we have:

- Started work on the development of a 5-year management plan for the Cut – though it is fair to say that this has taken longer to get ‘off the ground’ than had first been anticipated.
- Designed two new Interpretation Boards, now located adjacent to the Banana Bridge and Bedminster Bridge
- Engaged a mentor (Ruth Worsley) to train a team of volunteers to guide and assist schools and other groups (see above).

Bus Rapid Transit System (BRT2)

- May saw the commencement of the BRT2 Public Inquiry and John Purkiss was able, before his death, to submit some compelling evidence regarding aspects of the proposed plan which needed attention – and indeed representing a majority view that the BRT2 route (in its present proposed form of guided buses) should not travel along the Cut or harbour side. Although he was unable to speak to his written submission, updated information was provided as a result of correspondence between John and another FrANC member the week before his death. The results of the Public Inquiry are due to be published in the autumn.
- Some FrANC members continue to be involved in the STOP BRT2 campaign and updates of this can be found by accessing STOPBRT2.org.uk.
- A small donation was made by FrANC as a contribution to the transport expert who was employed by the Greater Bristol Transport Alliance to represent the views of organisations who came together to oppose the scheme.

Thanks

The family of John Purkiss requested that, instead of formal flowers, those wishing to remember John should make donations to FrANC. We are honoured and humbled that they should think of FrANC at such a sad time; this will enable FrANC to continue to further the work that John was so passionate about. Our condolences and thanks go to Tom, Simon, Jane and Julia.

We are grateful to everyone who has supported FrANC during the year. We thank City Council officers – in particular Anne Newman, Eric Dougall, Neil Gazzard and Gail Boyle – and Councillors Beynon, Green, Woodman and Wright for their assistance.

We also thank the Greater Bedminster Community Partnership for its financial support from the Bristol Clean and Green Fund.

At a time when we are coming to terms with the ‘big hole’ that John has left behind we are also grateful to other local organisations who have so freely given their advice and knowledge, to help us to get up to speed.

Sara Worth
Vice Chair
14.09.12

Attachment 2

Friends of the Avon New Cut

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st May 2012

Income

Book sales	£120.00
Wildflower Walk	£15.00
Boat trip ticket sales	£540.00
Total Income	£675.00

Expenditure

Volunteer expenses	£143.80
Room & equipment hire	£32.40
Boat trip	£495.00
FrANC website	£124.55
BCTV (Insurance)	£196.76
Friends of the Earth donation	£50.00
Consumables	£28.78

Total Expenditure £1,071.29

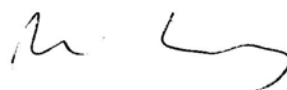
Balance brought forward £1,230.54

Balance carried forward £834.25

Independent Examiner's Report

I have examined the Group's accounts for the year ended 31st May 2012. In the course of my examination of the records provided, no matter came to my attention which gave me cause to believe that the Group has not kept proper and accurate accounting records.

Name: Andrew Yearsley, ACA



Address: 38 Park Road, Congresbury, Bristol BS49 5HN

Date: 17/9/2012

Attachment 3: Wild City – activities that will affect FrANC

Action	Timetable			Measure of success	Project budget £		
	2011	2012	2013		2011	2012	2013
1. Development of a Management Plan for the New Cut Consultant to be employed to develop plan in consultation with the local community. Consultant to lead a nature walk with local community and priority groups to consider sustainable management of the site. Plan to be based on CAGE guidance and linked to Green Flag criteria.	X			Delivery of a 5-year site management plan, with a target of 20 people to attend the nature walk and 5 people working with the consultant to develop the plan.	1500		
2. New Cut Interpretation Panel Project Officer to work with FrANC and priority groups to research, develop artwork and produce one new interpretation panel to be located at the Banana Bridge or Bedminster Bridge to address communities on this stretch of the river.	X			Delivery of one new interpretation panel with a target of working with 5 volunteers to produce the panel and 1500 people to read the panel by the end of 2013.	3750		
3. Walk / presentation training for FrANC volunteers Project Officer (or alternative trainer) to train a pool of FrANC volunteers to support school groups walking along the Cut – to instruct on wildlife and history including provision of information on FrANC web pages.	X	X	X	Target of 5 FrANC members to volunteer to receive training on leading walks / working with communities / working with school groups.	1000		
4. Boat trips Annual boat trip along the New Cut and River Avon to learn about the wildlife and history of the area for local people from priority groups / communities around the Cut.	X	X	X	Delivery of one boat trip per year with a target of 80 people attending each year, of which 25 people will be from priority groups.	700	700	700
5. Wild Waters Riverside Festival A high profile community festival to celebrate the New Cut. To be organised by FrANC with support from the Project Officer, and to reach out to disadvantaged and priority groups along the Bedminster Bridge to Temple Meads stretch of the river. The festival may be a larger one-day event or take the form of several smaller events over one month.			X	Delivery of an Avon New Cut Wild Waters event with a target of 800 people to attend the festival.			3500
6. Declaration of three new Local Nature Reserves Candidate sites are Lamplighters Marsh, Northern Slopes, Avon New Cut and Narrowways Millennium Green. Project Officer to assist.	X	X	X	Declaration of 3 new LNRs, working with friends groups. Target of 3 volunteers taking part per group.	600	600	600