

**Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)
Minutes of Annual General Meeting held at the Spike Island Café –
8th December 2013**

Present

Sara Worth (Chair), Roy Gallop (Vice-Chair), Derek Hughes (Secretary), Liz Payze (Treasurer), Chris Hanmer, Ed Hall, Margaret Fay, Tess Green, Ben Barker, Kean Lamb, Jane Cooke, Stephen Mason, Lewis and Joan Semple, Barney Smith, Laura Murgatroyd, Stephen Wickham, Pip Sheard.

Apologies

Martha van der Lem, Paul van der Lem, Pat Fung, Anne Greenhalgh, Jacqui Furneaux.

Welcome

Sara welcomed all meeting attendees.

Minutes of the AGM held on 19th September 2012

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

Matters Arising

- The only matter arising from last year's AGM concerned the illegal encampment on the southern bank of the New Cut and the considerable amounts of litter and rubbish deposited by the occupants on the riverbank. After some delay, and the involvement of several individuals and departments from Bristol City Council, ASBOs had been served on the occupants who had since moved on. The current status was that the encampment, located behind the stone wall next to the *Harvest Energy Service Station* on Coronation Road, was now vacant and the remnants of the encampment were in the process of being dismantled. Thanks were expressed to Ed Hall for his efforts in liaising with the Council on this matter, notably with Richard Hawkrige from the Council's Neighbourhood Anti-Social Behaviour Team.

Report on the past year

- The Chair presented a report on activities in 2012-13. 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.

Finance report

- The Treasurer presented the financial report for 2012-13 (see Attachment 2), which covers all transactions from 1st June 2012 to 31st May 2013. The income and expenditure for the same period in the previous year (2011-12) is also included in Attachment 2 for comparison. Total income in 2012-13 amounted to £1335.00, while expenditure totalled £691.31.
- The increase in income compared to the previous year was largely due to donations made to FrANC in memory of John Purkiss, which amounted to £850.00. The Committee were also grateful to the Greater Bedminster Community Partnership (GBCP), who had contributed £461.00 towards the cost of additional “extended reach” litter pickers, FrANC insurance and refreshments following riverbank clean-ups. In fact, the biggest item of expenditure was attributed to “volunteer expenses” (£205.75), which had increased this year following the introduction of a third annual clean-up along the riverbank between Bedminster Bridge and the ASDA car park on Coronation Road. Other significant expenditure items were the cost of insurance cover for FrANC activities (£196.76), room hire charges (£84.00) and maintenance of the FrANC website (£62.04). The balance carried forward at the end of 2012/2013 was £1477.94.
- The Finance report has been independently audited by Andrew Yearsley, ACA, of Bishop Fleming Chartered Accountants, and was accepted by those present. (Proposed: Chris Hanmer; Seconded: Margaret Fay).
- The Treasurer also presented a statement of the accounts for the interim period from 1st June to 1st December 2013, which may be found in Attachment 3. During this period there has been an increase in expenditure over income, as a result of a further insurance payment for the current financial year (£196.76) and the purchase of one-off items which comprised a memorial tree and engraved plaque for John Purkiss (£205.02). This has resulted in a nett expenditure of £372.08, so that the balance carried forward as of 1st December has been reduced to £1109.86.
- The accounts in Attachments 2 and 3 show that, excluding the income from the John Purkiss donations and the cost of the two memorial items purchased, the current balance would be reduced by a further £644.98 to a total of £464.88. This figure is just over half of the balance of £834.25 for the previous 2011/12 period, and indicates that we need to find other sources of income in order to cover the expenditure that is typically incurred by FrANC annually. It was felt that the granting of Local Nature Reserve status to the Avon New Cut, which was one of the objectives of the Wild City Project, would be of considerable help when applying for funds from external sources.

Election of Committee for 2013-14

The existing members of the Executive Committee were prepared to stand for re-election:

- 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 re-elected by those present.
(Proposed: Ben Barker; Seconded: Lewis Semple)

Planning for the next year

The following activities were proposed for 2014:

(a) Dates for Riverbank Clean-ups

- The dates for the three riverbank clean-ups currently planned for 2014 may be found on the FrANC website. These are provisionally scheduled for
 - **Saturday January 25th** along Coronation Road from Gaol Ferry Bridge to beyond Vauxhall Bridge;
 - **Saturday February 22nd** along Cumberland Road (including the railway track and adjacent Chocolate Path);
 - **Saturday March 22nd** along the riverbank between Bedminster Bridge and the ASDA car park on Coronation Road.

All of these events will start at 10:00am.

- The Chair also suggested that, during the course of the year, FrANC should organise occasional walks around the New Cut – perhaps one every two months – during which the state of the riverbanks would be assessed and any small items of litter collected along the way. Care would have to be taken to ensure that birds are not disturbed during the nesting season.

(b) Date for Butterfly Junction Maintenance

- This year's annual meadow management activity at Butterfly Junction had been held a week earlier than originally intended (on Saturday November 30th) because of the date scheduled for the AGM. Although in the past this event has always been planned for early December, concerns had been raised by some FrANC members as to whether timing of this event was correct. The Butterfly Junction Management Brief, published in 2006, suggests that grass cutting should be performed earlier in the year in September.
- The Secretary proposed that a meeting should be held early in 2014 between himself and other knowledgeable FrANC members (e.g. Ben Barker, Barney Smith and Angus Tillotson) to review the above Management Brief and establish the best time of year at which activities such as grass cutting and the cutting back of brambles and other invasive plants should be undertaken. The extent of the grass cutting to be performed each year would also be assessed.

(c) Other ideas for activities in 2014

- The Butterfly Junction Management Brief calls for Butterfly Surveys to be performed regularly during the year to establish the numbers and types of species inhabiting this part of the New Cut. As it was apparent that these surveys had not been held for some time, Angus Tillotson had suggested that this was something that could be undertaken informally by the FrANC membership, especially during the summer months. To this end, a briefing by a local expert on Butterflies and how to conduct such a Butterfly Survey was suggested as an activity for early next year.

- Similarly, surveys of Flowers, Birds and other Wildlife along the New Cut had been conducted in previous years by FrANC, and it was suggested that these could be repeated next year to see whether the same species were still present.
- The Chair noted that a meeting had been held earlier in the year with Chris Ecclestone, who is responsible for running the Harbour Railway. It had been suggested that those FrANC members who were so interested could become involved in track maintenance activities, which are largely undertaken by Harbour Railway volunteers. The management of plant growth along the rail track is one of the activities that was discussed at the meeting with Chris, as if not controlled this can be potentially hazardous to Harbour Railway operations.
- Following on from the successful “Literary Lives” Walk held earlier this year, Roy Gallop had suggested a similar event next year but which might include a boat trip around the Floating Harbour on board *The Matthew*.
- It was suggested that any other ideas for activities for next year should be sent to the Secretary, for consideration by the Executive Committee. The Treasurer also requested that any activities planned for the summer months should avoid the dates of major sporting events (especially the Wimbledon Mens Final!).

Any Other Business

The following additional matters were raised:

- Jane Cooke drew attention to the large and rather aggressive red and white signs that had appeared recently on the Cumberland Road side of Vauxhall Bridge. These signs appear to redirect the users of wheelchairs and other mobility aids (such as mobility scooters) to Gaol Ferry Bridge if they want to cross the New Cut. As Gaol Ferry Bridge is some considerable distance from Vauxhall Bridge, it was felt that this was not particularly helpful to those requiring mobility aids, and implied that no modifications to Vauxhall Bridge are currently planned by Bristol City Council to redress this deficiency. There is little that FrANC can do at present, except to suggest that any proposed future changes to the design of Vauxhall Bridge should ensure that all users have equal access.
- On a related subject, however, Stephen Wickham added that the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership, which includes Bristol City Council, had recently submitted a “Cycle City Ambition Grant Bid” for funding to develop improved cycle routes throughout the region. Part of these proposals involved the creation of a cycling “promenade” between Bristol Temple Meads station and the CREATE Centre (see Attachment 4), which would apparently include the provision of ramped cycle access on the Cumberland Road (north) side of Vauxhall Bridge. The Executive Committee were aware of this funding submission, but were more concerned about proposed “upgrades” to the surface of the Chocolate Path to make it more cycle-friendly which could entail the replacement or realignment of the Chocolate Path paving blocks. To date, FrANC has not been formally consulted on any aspects of these proposals. It was therefore suggested that the Executive Committee should contact John Usher of Sustrans, who is one of the project managers, with a view to getting FrANC more involved in future planning meetings.

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

Post-Meeting Note – following the AGM, most of the attendees witnessed the planting of a Red Hawthorn tree (*Crataegus 'Paul's Scarlet'*), in memory of John Purkiss, behind the FrANC bench on the Chocolate Path. The tree was planted by Tess Green, with assistance from Ed Hall. These photographs were taken during and after the tree-planting ceremony.



Attachment 1

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC) Report on activities in 2012/13

This report covers the period from our last AGM (19th September 2012) to the date of our 2013 AGM (8th December 2013). Our activities were as follows:

Themed walks and talks

We have organised:

- A Medicinal Herb Walk to discover the potential herbal remedies available along the Cut, led by Iain Stewart. This event was also FrANC's contribution to this year's "*Bristol99*" Project.
- A "Literary Lives – Real and Fictional" Walk around the Redcliffe area, including historical re-enactments and songs, led by Roy Gallop.
- A Bat Detection Walk, led by Angus Tillotson of the Greater Bedminster Wildlife Group.

Maintenance and clean-ups

- The annual maintenance work at Butterfly Junction was undertaken in December 2012 and again in November 2013.
- In excess of 40 volunteers assisted at 3 riverbank clean-up sessions; the additional session this year concentrating on the area along the bank opposite ASDA – a 'first' for FrANC with dramatic improvement noticed after many layers of rubbish were removed.
- Bristol 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 also agreed to undertake a deep clean of the area along the bank between Bedminster and Bath Road Bridges, as well as the area behind the garage on Coronation Road. These areas were deemed too dangerous for FrANC members to tackle. It is intended that in future years we will be able to include this area in our litter picking schedules.

Awareness raising

- We have maintained and further developed our website (www.franc.org.uk). Pictures of events dating as far back as 2006 can now be accessed by clicking 'Pictures' on the Home page. We hope you'll find time to take a look.
- Publication of the FrANC Newsletter, which is circulated to members and can be accessed by people visiting the FrANC website, has continued.

- We have sent regular e-mail bulletins to approximately 150 contacts.
- We have distributed copies of our book, information leaflet and wildlife leaflets.
- Members assisted in the running of three guided walks for schools and community groups, exploring the Cut's history and wildlife. This is an area which we hope to continue to expand and have already received requests for next year.
- Roy Gallop has been working with members of CLASS (Continued Learning at South Street) to produce a booklet on the different trades and industries that grew up in the Redcliffe and Bedminster areas after the Cut was built. The booklet is intended for use by local schools as well as the wider community.

Wild City Project

FrANC is one of seven organisations who have been involved in this Bristol-wide project aiming to encourage more people to enjoy the outdoors.

Helen Adshead, as the project officer, has been liaising with members of the Committee and, in this final year of the project, Wild City has contributed to upgrading the original Information Boards (at Butterfly Junction, Vauxhall Bridge and Gaol Ferry Bridge), agreed the purchase of two personal voice amplifiers and possibly also some bat detectors for use on walks. Finances have also been made available for:-

- Boat trips along the Cut for members of CLASS and the University of the 3rd Age (U3A), and for the children of St. Mary Redcliffe Primary School.
- Material for pupil work sheets to assist in the guided walks for the children.
- Costs incurred for two of the guided walks organised by FrANC (the Medicinal Herb Walk and "Literary Lives – Real and Fictional" Walk).

From FrANC's point of view, one of the key objectives of Wild City is for the New Cut to be officially recognised as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). To this end, the Committee have assisted an officer from the Council in the preparation of a 5-year Management Plan for the New Cut, which is expected to be published shortly. There has been some delay in the decision as to whether or not FrANC will be granted LNR status, which is now scheduled for some time during March 2014.

Bus Rapid Transit System (BRT2)

- During the past year, Mayor George Ferguson has rejected the proposed BRT2 (now renamed *Metrobus*) route along the Harbourside and Prince Street Bridge, with the result that the proposed modifications to the harbour railway next to the Chocolate Path to accommodate a guided busway will no longer be implemented. This is good news for the flora, fauna and wildlife that inhabit this part of the New Cut.
- The long-awaited report on the outcome of the Public Inquiry into BRT2 was finally released on 6th November 2013, which recommended that the project should go ahead subject to certain conditions being met. One of the recommendations made by the Inspector was that: "*In consultation with the Friends of the Avon New Cut, the design of the scheme at Butterfly Junction be reviewed to ensure, in addition to protection during construction, the permanent protection of this area during the operation of the scheme.*" This recommendation is a result of the evidence

submitted to the Public Inquiry by the late John Purkiss, and it is gratifying that the Inspector, through his report, has mandated that the effect of BRT2 on Butterfly Junction should be properly addressed by the Council. We will need to ensure during the coming year that FrANC are properly consulted with by the Council in order to secure the future of this important wildlife habitat.

Thanks

I would like to formally thank the Committee for their work over the past year. It has very much been a team effort - the Vice Chair imparting his extensive knowledge and organising a boat trip event and a guided walk, our Secretary ensuring that everyone gets to hear about events, our Treasurer keeping accurate financial records and organising the finances ready for our coffee and cake after group working parties, and other Committee members researching and planning activities, checking material for the Management Plan and purchasing trees, plaques, etc. for today.

Thanks also to Richard Clutterbuck, who quietly goes about capturing our activities on film and providing the picture library now available through the website, and to Chris Murray whose patience has enabled us to keep the website up to date as well as now hosting our photos.

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

Finally, thank-you to each FrANC member who puts in time and effort into keeping the Avon New Cut as a haven for wild life, a tranquil and attractive place to walk and cycle, sharing their knowledge to enable others to benefit.

Sara Worth
Chair of FrANC
6th December 2013

Attachment 2

FrANC Accounts Summary 2011/2012/2013

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st May 2013

	2011/2012	2012/2013
Income		
John Purkiss donations		£850.00
Quartet Community Foundation		
Boat Trip Ticket Sales	£540.00	
GBCP		£461.00
Book Sales	£120.00	
Clean and Green Fund	£15.00	
Guided Walk		24.00
Total Income	£675.00	£1,335.00
Expenditure		
Volunteer Expenses	£143.80	£205.75
Room & Equipment Hire	£32.40	£84.00
Boat Trip	£495.00	
FrANC Website	£124.55	£62.04
BTCV (Insurance)	£196.76	£196.76
Volunteer equipment (Litter Pickers)		£112.76
Donations (Friends of the Earth)	£50.00	
Consumables	£28.78	
Guided Walk (Mark Steeds)		£30.00
Total Expenditure	£1,071.29	£691.31
Balance Brought Forward	£1,230.54	£834.25
Balance Carried Forward	£834.25	£1,477.94

Attachment 3

FrANC Accounts Summary 2013

Income and Expenditure Account between 1 June 13 to 1st December 13

2013

Income

Guided Walk Literary Walk	£45.00
Bat Detecting Walk	£16.00
Bristol 99 donation	£30.00
Sale of books	£35.00

Total Income £126.00

Expenditure

Payment for Literary Walk	£30.00
Payment for Bat Detecting Walk	£30.00
Volunteer Expenses (Butterfly Junction)	£32.30
BTCV (Insurance)	£196.76
Brunel Engraving (John's plaque)	£125.64
Chew Valley Trees (John's tree + delivery/stake/ties)	£79.38

Total Expenditure £494.08

Balance Brought Forward £1,477.94

Balance Carried Forward £1,109.86

Attachment 4: Cycle City Ambition Grant Bid – proposed improvements between Bristol Temple Meads Station and the CREATE Centre

