

**Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)
Minutes of Annual General Meeting held at the Nova Scotia Public House –
16th November 2014**

Present

Sara Worth (Chair), Roy Gallop (Vice-Chair), Derek Hughes (Secretary), Liz Payze (Treasurer), Chris Hanmer, Ed Hall, Margaret Fay, Steve Fay, Kitty Ager, Phil Cass, Jane Cooke, Richard Clutterbuck, Pat Fung, Tess Green, Cynthia Palmer, Terry Hill, Jean Jelfs, Katherine Jones, Martin Jones, Stephen Mason, Barney Smith, Angie Tonge.

Apologies

Adrian Mantle, Kean Lamb, Anthony O’Neil, Lewis and Joan Semple, Sarah and Dave Mitchell, Jacqui Furneaux, Ruth Sidery, Anthony Lyons, Cynthia and John Witton.

Welcome

Sara welcomed all meeting attendees.

Minutes of the AGM held on 8th December 2013

The minutes of last year’s AGM were reviewed and were accepted as being correct (**Proposed:** Tess Green; **Seconded:** Roy Gallop)

Matters Arising

- Graffiti is a recurring problem at specific locations along the riverbank. Although reported to Bristol City Council (BCC), it was noted that removal of the graffiti is not done as expediently as it has been in the past, which is believed to be a result of budget and manpower cuts within the Council.

Report on the past year

- The Chair presented a report on activities in 2013-14. 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 2013-14 (see Attachment 2), which covers all transactions from 1st June 2013 to 31st May 2014. Total income in 2013-14 amounted to £293.44, while expenditure totalled £805.69. The balance at the end of 31st May 2014 was £965.69. With additional income from the Geological Walk held on 9th July 2014 (£18), plus the sale of several FrANC books, Liz reported that the current balance stood at around £1000.

- 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:** Phil Cass).

Election of Committee for 2014-15

The existing members of the Executive Committee were prepared to stand for re-election, apart from Liz Payze who was stepping down as Treasurer as noted in the Chair's report. The Secretary reported that Steve Fay had offered to stand as Treasurer. In response to a request from the Chair for more representatives from the south bank of the Cut, Angie Tonge and Richard Clutterbuck also offered their services as Committee members. The final list of Committee nominees for the coming year was therefore as follows:

- Sara Worth (Chair)
- Roy Gallop (Vice Chair)
- Derek Hughes (Secretary)
- Steve Fay (Treasurer)
- Chris Hanmer (Committee Member)
- Margaret Fay (Committee Member)
- Ed Hall (Committee Member)
- Angie Tonge (Committee Member)
- Richard Clutterbuck (Committee Member)

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

(**Proposed:** Tess Green; **Seconded:** Liz Payze)

Planning for the next year

The following activities were proposed for 2015:

(a) Dates for Riverbank Clean-ups

- The dates for the three riverbank clean-ups currently planned for 2015 may be found on the FrANC website. These are provisionally scheduled for
 - **Saturday January 24th** along Coronation Road from Gaol Ferry Bridge to beyond Vauxhall Bridge;
 - **Saturday February 28th** along Cumberland Road (including the railway track and adjacent Chocolate Path);
 - **Saturday March 21st** along the riverbank between Bedminster Bridge and the ASDA car park on Coronation Road.

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

(b) Date for Butterfly Junction Maintenance

- As noted in the Chair's report, this year's annual meadow management activity at Butterfly Junction is scheduled for **Saturday 6th December** and will only include the cutting back of brambles and other invasive plants. The grass cutting planned for this year was carried out at the end of September.

(c) Other ideas for activities in 2015

- The following activities were suggested for next year:
 - as part of the Bristol 2015 European Green Capital celebrations, it was proposed that FrANC should again organise a walk for next year's Bristol Walking Festival. A walk around the bridges of Bristol was suggested by Roy Gallop;

- a walk around the Underfall Yard;
- participation in the Southville Arts Trail;
- a boat trip up the New Cut as far as Netham Weir, which could include a cruise up the Avon Gorge beyond the Clifton Suspension Bridge, to be organised with the Bristol Ferryboat Company.

Any Other Business

- *Water City Bristol*: Katherine Jones gave a brief summary of this 3-year project, which is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and is part of a Connected Communities project called *Towards Hydrocitizenship*. *Water City Bristol* is intended to be a collection of creative conversations about water and communities – people and their diverse relationships with water and environment in Bristol. The project is being co-ordinated by the University of the West of England and further participation by FrANC is expected in the coming year.
- Jane Cooke noted that much of the “wildlife corridor” along the stretch of rail track between the Cumberland Road rail bridge and the Harbourside had been decimated recently. The perpetrators were believed to be Harbour Railway personnel, who now have a policy of clearing any vegetation that could cause damage to the rail track or pose a hazard when the trains are operating.
- Tess Green drew attention to the ongoing conversion of the old Bristol General Hospital to apartment accommodation that would overlook both Bathurst Basin and the New Cut. It was felt that the new residents could be a source of new future members for FrANC with an interest in this particular part of the New Cut.
- Barney Smith said that he was involved in setting up a BS3 Wildlife Group.
- Richard Clutterbuck mentioned that a book has been published concerning the story of the “White City”, built for Bristol’s International Exhibition to celebrate the British Empire. Occupying 30 acres at Ashton Meadows, the Exhibition opened in the summer of 1914 but closed as soon as the First World War broke out, after which the site became a barracks for Bristol’s own and other regiments.
- Roy Gallop said that he had co-authored a book called “Any Muddy Bottom”. Over 2,000 years of Somerset’s maritime history is explored in this illustrated volume, from the earliest waterborne activity right up to the present day. The book will be available from The History Press in early 2015 and costs £12.99, and Roy has arranged that every sale to FrANC members will attract a £3 donation to FrANC.

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

Note: the AGM was followed by an illustrated talk presented by Roy Gallop, entitled “The Lost Harbours of the Bristol Channel” – this year’s *John Purkiss Memorial Lecture*.

Attachment 1

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC) Report on activities in 2013/14

This report covers the period from our last AGM (8th December 2013) to the date of our 2014 AGM (16th November 2014). Our activities were as follows:

Themed walks and talks

We have organised:

- A Medicinal Herb Walk to rediscover the potential herb remedies available along the Cut, led by Iain Stewart. This event was organised by FrANC as part of this year's Bristol Walking Festival.
- A walk entitled "Geology of the New Cut", led by professional geologist Pete Andresson and Roy Gallop.
- A butterfly survey of Butterfly Junction, as part of the nationwide "Big Butterfly Count".

Maintenance and clean-ups

- Following a review of the recommendations made in the Butterfly Junction Management Brief (2006), the timetable for the annual maintenance work carried out by FrANC at this site has been amended. In future, grass cutting will take place in September, and the remaining maintenance work will be completed at the end of the year. Also, the large-scale cutting back of the grass will now be scheduled every three years, not annually. The more limited grass cutting required by the Management Brief for this year was completed at the end of September, while the cutting back of brambles and other invasive plants will take place early next month on 6th December.
- Once again, in excess of 50 volunteers assisted at 3 riverbank clean-up sessions; one along the north riverbank (Cumberland Road/Harbour Railway) and the other two along the south riverbank, to the east and west of Gaol Ferry Bridge. During our last session we repeated last year's clean-up of the area along the riverbank opposite ASDA – and benefitted from ASDA's hospitality afterwards.
- The City Council have continued to respond to our notifications of graffiti. We have recently advised them about rubbish in the area of Vauxhall Bridge – thanks to a FrANC member who noticed that a particular bin is not being regularly emptied.
- We have continued in our negotiations with the City Council regarding a much-needed deep clean of the area along the riverbank (and riverbed) between Bedminster and Bath Road Bridges, as well as the riverbank behind the garage on Coronation Road. These areas were deemed too dangerous for FrANC members to tackle. Unfortunately, to date this has not been achieved as the original City Council contractors pulled out in the spring, with any rubbish lying on the riverbank quickly being hidden by new growth. This task is therefore currently

in limbo until the City Council can find a suitable contractor who is prepared to take on this work.

Awareness raising

- We have sent regular e-mail bulletins about FrANC events to approximately 150 contacts.
- We have maintained and further developed our Website (www.franc.org.uk). Do take some time to enjoy pictures of events dating as far back as 2006, which can be accessed by clicking 'Pictures' on the Home page.
- Publication of the FrANC Newsletter, which is circulated to members and can also be accessed by visiting the FrANC Website, has continued with two editions being published in Spring and Autumn 2014.
- We have distributed copies of our book, information leaflet and wildlife leaflets.
- We set up a stall in City Hall at the launch of Bristol Walking Festival to publicise the Medicinal Herb Walk, as well as FrANC itself.
- We have been invited to participate in a 3-year project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) called "*Towards Hydrocitizenship*". The objectives of this project are to "*.....investigate and make creative contributions to the ways in which citizens and communities live with each other and their environment in relation to water*". Some members of the Bristol project team are here today, and will be telling us more about the project towards the end of this meeting.
- Members assisted in the running of 2 walks for 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.

Application for Local Nature Reserve (LNR) status

- After some delays earlier in the year, it is understood that the application for the Avon New Cut to be formally recognised as a LNR is now being progressed by the City Council. It is now expected that this will be granted within the next few months, to coincide with Bristol's year as European Green Capital in 2015.
- One of the requirements for an area to be recognised as a LNR is the existence of a Management Plan. The Avon New Cut Management Plan, which was started at the beginning of the Wild City Project in 2011, has now been completed (with assistance from members of the FrANC Committee) and published by the City Council. Two bound copies of the Management Plan are available here today for people to browse through, and we also intend to make it more widely available to the membership via the FrANC Website.

Cycle City Ambition Grant

- Throughout the year, two Committee members have represented FrANC at monthly “workshops” organised by the City Council and Sustrans concerning various projects that have been proposed for funding under the Cycle City Ambition Grant.
- Two of these projects involve the construction of new bridges across the New Cut. It is planned to site one new “Junction Lock-type” bridge immediately next to the Banana Bridge, which is intended primarily for use by cyclists as it has proved difficult to modify the Banana Bridge to make it more “cycle-friendly”. The other new bridge being proposed is more ambitious, and will connect the junction at Camden Road/Coronation Road on the south bank of the New Cut with the Chocolate Path on the north bank, at the location of the Cumberland Road rail bridge.
- The current plans require the Chocolate Path to be raised by about 2metres at the landing point of the new Camden Road Bridge on the north bank, and the construction of new ramps to connect with the existing Chocolate Path and cycleways. It is also planned to landscape the area around the FrANC bench and John Purkiss memorial tree, with the possibility that both of these may need to be relocated.
- Our concerns about the Camden Road Bridge proposals, mainly with regard to their effect on the Chocolate Path and the potential loss of the views downstream that are currently enjoyed from the FrANC bench, have been registered on the City Council’s Planning Application website.

Metrobus (*née* Bus Rapid Transit System)

- The confirmed Metrobus route near Ashton Avenue Bridge will pass close to the Butterfly Junction site. The FrANC Committee have recently written to the City Council requesting that FrANC are consulted to ensure that this important wildlife habitat is protected during the construction and subsequent operation of the scheme. We would also like to know if we will be allowed access to the Butterfly Junction site during the 2-year construction period. Our letter has been forwarded to the Metrobus project team and a response is awaited from them.

Future Projects

- For an organisation to thrive it is important to continue to consider new areas to develop. We have plans to progress our early attempts at engagement with local people and hope to provide material for schools and other community groups, add to the existing number of interpretation boards and upgrade/replace the Website; achieving the latter will enable us to make it more accessible and provide materials on-line. To this end we are in the process of making applications to fund these projects via the various Bristol 2015 European Green Capital grants that are being made available to local community groups. We have already applied to the relevant Neighbourhood Partnership for funding to cover the design

and installation of another interpretation board, to be sited on the Chocolate Path near the Underfall Yard sluices.

- We are exploring the possibility of undertaking a Car Boot Sale in order to raise some additional funds – when the weather improves in the spring. We will be glad of any unwanted bric-a-brac etc. donated by FrANC members for us to sell.

Thanks

- Once again, I would like to formally thank the Committee for their work over the past year. It continues to be a team effort; the Vice Chair sharing his extensive knowledge and contacts within the area, our Secretary ensuring that everyone gets to hear about events, and other Committee Members researching and planning activities.
- I would also like to extend special thanks to Liz Payze, who is stepping down as Treasurer after having held this office for the past 4 years. We are pleased that she will still continue to be a member of FrANC.
- Also, thanks again to Chris Murray who continues to manage our existing Website and to offer encouragement.
- I hope that from this report you can see that there are many useful and exciting things happening in the name of FrANC. The sum total of FrANC relies solely on the commitment and hard work of its members – and so my final thank-you goes to each individual member who gives freely of their own time and effort.

Sara Worth
Chair of FrANC
16th November 2014

Attachment 2

Friends of the Avon New Cut

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st May 2014

2013-2014

Income

Guided Literary Walk	£45.00
Bat Detecting Walk	£15.00
Bristol 99 donation	£30.00
Sale of books	£35.00
Bristol City donation	£110.44
Medicinal Walk (Iain Stewart)	£58.00

Total Income

£293.44

Expenditure

Payment for Literary Walk	£30.00
Payment for Bat Detecting Walk	£30.00
Volunteer Expenses x 4	£156.92
BTCV (Insurance)	£196.76
Brunel Engraving (John's plaque)	£125.64
Chew Valley Trees (John's tree + delivery/stake/ties)	£79.38
Portable Speakers	£80.44
Clear Media	£62.04
Clear Media (Domain Reg)	£14.51
Iain Stewart (Medicinal Walk)	£30.00

Total Expenditure

£805.69

Balance Brought Forward

£1,477.94

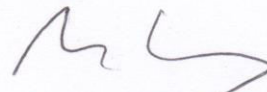
Balance Carried Forward

£965.69

Independent Examiner's Report

I have examined the Group's accounts for the year ended 31st May 2014. 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: 18 St Stephens Court, Undy, Caldicot NP26 3PR

Date: 02/09/2014