

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)
Minutes of Annual General Meeting held in The Education & Meeting Room at
The Underfall Yard, Cumberland Road – 5th November 2017

Present

Sara Worth (Chair), Tess Green (Vice Chair), Derek Hughes (Secretary), Steve Fay (Treasurer) and Richard Clutterbuck, Margaret Fay, Roy Gallop, Ed Hall, Chris Hanmer and Angie Tonge (Committee Members); Elaine Beckett, Janet Beckett, Phil Cass, Jane Cooke, Pat Fung, John Griffiths, E. Griffiths, Rosalind Hart, Elizabeth Jackson, Jeff Knaggs, Stephen Mason, Cynthia Palmer, Nicola Pearce, Belinda Price, John Smith and Anna Walton.

Apologies

Judith Barnhurst, David Batchelor, Martin Eagles, Jacqui Furneaux, Sarah Morris, Anthony O'Neil, Veronica Pollard, Lewis and Joan Semple, Amanda Sinclair, Amanda Sutton, Stephen and Ann Wickham and Tim Wickstead.

Welcome

Sara welcomed all meeting attendees.

Minutes of the AGM held on 27th November 2016

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

Matters Arising

There were two matters arising from last year's AGM:

- (a) an action on the Executive Committee to look into the possibility of having a marker post erected somewhere on the New Cut to show the tidal range between high tide and low tide. It was agreed that the Executive Committee will investigate this further during the forthcoming year. One of the piers of Vauxhall Bridge was suggested as a possible location;
- (b) a guided walk/talk by Melvin Wood from the Environment Agency on the origin of the River Frome (which flows underneath Bristol City Centre) had been suggested as a possible future activity. Derek reported that he had recently made contact with Mr. Wood and was awaiting further details, together with an indication of Mr. Wood's availability to run such an event next year.

Report on the past year

- The Chair (Sara) presented a report on activities in 2016-17. A copy of this report is attached to these minutes (see Attachment 1), and contains a list of people and organisations to which thanks are due for their help during the year. The report was accepted by the meeting attendees.

Finance report

- The Treasurer (Steve) presented the financial report for 2016-17. Attachment 2a summarises all transactions from 28th November 2016 to 31st October 2017. Attachment 2b contains a more detailed breakdown of the income and expenditure sub-totals that appear in Attachment 2a.
- Total income in 2016-17 amounted to £446.70, of which £210.20 was raised from fees charged for attending Guided Walks and Talks.
- Conversely, FrANC's total expenditure over the same period was £709.16, and Steve noted that the cost of providing refreshments to volunteers after riverbank clean-ups (£291.51) was almost balanced by the above Guided Walks/Talks income. It was also pointed out that the £160 cost of reprinting the FrANC leaflet (Publicity) was a one-off item, and that the Website expenditure of £157.65 included a WiX Website Hosting Fee of £136.80 which covers a two-year period (from December 2016-18), so we will not be charged a similar fee this year.
- The balance carried forward at the end of November 2016 was £1424.11 which, taking into account the above income and expenditure totals, gave a balance at 31st October 2017 of £1161.65. Funding reserves were therefore considered to be adequate for the foreseeable future, provided future annual income and expenditure levels are similar. Sara noted that she would like to purchase one or more large A1-size zipper bags in which to store the various display boards that FrANC have produced in recent years.
- As was the case last year, instead of submitting the Finance report to an independent auditor external to FrANC, Steve suggested that one of the meeting attendees who was not a member of the Executive Committee should instead review the bank statements and paperwork that constituted the accounts to confirm the current balance of £1161.65 presented in Attachment 2a. Stephen Mason volunteered to do this, and his signature as an independent examiner is appended to Attachment 2a as evidence of his satisfaction that the accounts are correct.
- The Finance report was accepted by those present.
(**Proposed:** Tess Green; **Seconded:** Angie Tonge)

Election of Committee for 2017-18

The existing members of the Executive Committee were prepared to stand for re-election, apart from Richard Clutterbuck who did not wish to be re-elected because of increasing family commitments. However, Sara had approached Tim Wickstead, who had expressed an interest in serving on the Committee. The list of Committee nominees for the coming year was therefore as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Sara Worth (Chair) | • Chris Hanmer (Committee Member) |
| • Tess Green (Vice Chair) | • Margaret Fay (Committee Member) |
| • Derek Hughes (Secretary) | • Ed Hall (Committee Member) |
| • Steve Fay (Treasurer) | • Angie Tonge (Committee Member) |
| • Roy Gallop (Committee Member) | • Tim Wickstead (Committee Member) |

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

(**Proposed:** Stephen Mason; **Seconded:** Elaine Beckett)

Sara thanked Richard for the support that he had given to various FrANC activities over the past three years, and hoped that he would continue in the role of FrANC's unofficial "Chief Photographer".

Sara also noted that this would be her last year serving as Chair of FrANC, and that she intended resigning from the Executive Committee at the end of 2018. Tess said that she was willing to continue as Vice Chair for the time being, but was prepared to relinquish this role if a new Vice Chair could be found who would succeed Sara as Chair in due course. It was suggested that any potential candidates could be invited to attend future Committee Meetings to give them the opportunity of seeing how FrANC is run.

Planning for the next year

The following activities were proposed for 2018:

(a) Dates for Riverbank Clean-ups

- The following provisional dates in 2018 were proposed for up to four riverbank clean-ups:
 - **Saturday 13th January**
 - **Saturday 17th February**
 - **Saturday 10th March**
 - **Saturday 14th April**

As was the case last year, the stretches of riverbank to be tackled during each clean-up will be decided closer to each of the above dates. It was suggested that we should start with the York Road riverbank, however, as this part of the New Cut was last cleared of litter by FrANC nearly a year ago.

(b) Date for Butterfly Junction Maintenance

- As noted in the Chair's report (Attachment 1), this year's annual meadow management activity at Butterfly Junction is planned for Saturday 18th November starting at 10:00am.

(c) Guided Walks and Talks

- The following activities were suggested for next year:
 - the Bristol Naturalists' Society have accepted in principle to run a "botanical walk" for us in May, which will be FrANC's contribution to *Bristol Walk Fest 2018*;
 - a repeat of Stephen Mason's "*The River Malago and its Culverts in Old Bedminster*" Walk, which was well received by those who took part in it this year;
 - this year's tour of Britain's largest traditional tannery, Thomas Ware and Sons Ltd., had also proved to be very popular and it was suggested that we should also repeat it next year;
 - a Boat Trip up the New Cut, as we have not had one since October 2015 because of the closure of Ashton Avenue Bridge whilst the MetroBus works were in progress. Although it is possible on such trips to go as far as Netham Weir, this very much depends on the timing and height of the tides and the physical limitations (e.g. length and draught) of the available boat.

However, the possibility of combining a Boat Trip with a Geological Trip along the Avon Gorge was suggested, and Roy Gallop offered to investigate whether or not this would be feasible;

- a guided walk or illustrated talk (preferably the latter) by the Environment Agency's Melvin Wood on the origin of the River Frome, most likely to be held some time in the latter half of next year;

(d) Other ideas for activities in 2018

- It was suggested that, should the Executive Committee (or a delegated group of FrANC members) be successful in having a marker post erected to show the tidal range on the New Cut, then an official "unveiling ceremony" should be held, to perhaps be followed by an event with a tidal theme.
- Stephen Mason noted that he was planning to hold an exhibition of his photographs some time next year, and that if a suitable venue could be found then one of the themes could be photographs of the New Cut.

Any Other Business

- Elaine Beckett, from the 255th Bristol Channel Sea Scouts, presented plans for the installation of a new scout hut, which will take the form of a shipping container that will be located behind the entrance to the old hut off Southville Road. The existing scout hut runs underneath Coronation Road between St. Paul's Church and the Gaol Ferry Bridge slipways. The Executive Committee are keen for both FrANC and this local scout group to become more involved in each other's activities.
- Derek noted that the Executive Committee had recently become aware of a "pre-application submission" prepared on behalf of Crest Nicholson to develop *Payne's Shipyard*, i.e. the stretch of the New Cut riverbank to the east of Vauxhall Bridge that is currently mostly occupied by Bristol Metal Spraying & Protective Coatings Limited (BMS). A brochure had been obtained which proposed that residential properties should be built there, some of which would be up to nine storeys high! The Executive Committee had not yet formulated their views on these proposals, but would do so in due course and would be monitoring developments over the coming year.
- Margaret Fay proposed a vote of thanks to Sara and Derek for their hard work in progressing the various FrANC activities that had been undertaken during the past year.

Date of next meeting

No date was set for the next FrANC Committee Meeting (to be decided following consultation with members of new Executive Committee).

Derek Hughes
Secretary
Friends of the Avon New Cut

Attachment 1

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC) Report on activities in 2016/17

This report covers the period from our last AGM (27th November 2016) to the date of our 2017 AGM (5th November 2017). Our activities have been as follows:

Themed walks and talks

We have organised:

- Four guided walks entitled “Exploring the Cumberland Basin”, led by Ed Hall; these walks were advertised as part of *Bristol Walk Fest 2017* in May;
- A “Botanical Walk” along the Coronation Road riverbank and taking in the Chocolate Path and Harbour Railway on the return; this was led by Richard Bland, a member of the Bristol Naturalists’ Society;
- A “Tannery Tour” led by Barry Knight, sales director of the Thomas Ware & Sons Tannery on Coronation Road;
- A “Bedminster/Southville Colliery Site Walk”, led by Roy Gallop;
- A walk entitled “The River Malago and its Culverts in Old Bedminster”, led by Stephen Mason;
- A butterfly survey of Butterfly Junction, as part of the nationwide “Big Butterfly Count 2017”.

This represents an impressive variety of activities on offer and I was particularly delighted that three of these walks were led by members of FrANC and two of these were newly-designed walks. The Tannery Tour was also something that was new on our agenda. All walks were well received and my thanks go to all walk leaders who have given their time voluntarily.

The butterfly survey was undertaken by 5 FrANC members who between them made a total of 16 visits to Butterfly Junction during July/August – and it may be that, with Butterfly Junction more accessible for next year, more members will show an interest.

Maintenance and Clean-ups

- Last year the ‘back to work’ project *ParkWork* undertook the maintenance of Butterfly Junction on our behalf. This year’s annual “meadow management” is planned for Saturday 18th November (from 10:00am until noon, followed by coffee and cake) and we will be delighted if you can join us as there are plenty of brambles to dig out! The wooden hoarding that was erected by the contractors, Balfour Beatty, during the MetroBus works has now been removed, making the site more accessible. There were plans (agreed during earlier negotiations involving FrANC) for some sympathetic replanting once the MetroBus construction work in this area was complete and it appears that this has now

- taken place, though we await confirmation that the recommended butterfly-friendly plant species have been used.
- Although it was a slightly quieter year on the clean-up front, we have undertaken four formal riverbank sessions with a total of 186 volunteer hours contributed by 53 FrANC members. In addition, an Environment Agency team volunteered their time as part of a team event just after our last AGM - 21 people joined us and put in over four hours each. Following the success of this event we have another Environment Agency team joining us for a riverbank clean-up on Wednesday 8th November (having originally booked a date in September when 'rain stopped play').
- Graffiti remains a challenge – on the bridge structures and on Interpretation Boards. Bristol City Council (BCC) seems increasingly less able to respond to our notifications of graffiti; if enough FrANC members showed an interest there may be a way of negotiating with the Council to consider taking on some of this work ourselves periodically. Let us know what you think.
- Despite meeting with a representative from the Harbourmaster's Office to discuss ways of getting trolleys, scaffolding and other random items removed from the riverbeds and steep riverbanks, we have not yet found a solution. There are concerns that attempting to remove these items of rubbish at low tide would risk damaging the keels of the Harbourmaster's vessels on the exposed rocky riverbed. There remains a possibility of the local Caving Club assisting us.....all ideas welcome!
- Currently, seven FrANC members have completed the Health & Safety Training Course run by BCC and one member has also attended the BCC Power Tool Training Course for volunteers. If any FrANC members have a First Aid certificate or medical training it would be helpful if you could let us know – so that we can quickly identify you if there were to be an emergency during any of our events.

Awareness raising

- We have sent our usual regular email bulletins about FrANC events to over 200 contacts.
- Our new Website (www.franc.org.uk) is now up and running and we get a lot of 'hits' – which has resulted in interest in our activities from a wider audience and over 30 people asking to join our mailing list. The Website also notifies of upcoming events and has a great gallery of photos as well as some video footage; if you haven't already done so, do take a look. AGM reports, Committee Meeting minutes and a list of Committee Members can all be found on the Website. Our increasing number of leaflets can also be downloaded.
- We have published two editions of the FrANC Newsletter, which is circulated to members and can also be accessed by visiting the FrANC Website. This is an area that we'd be pleased to have some input from FrANC members.
- We have updated and reprinted our general information FrANC leaflet and we have copies of this here today if you'd like to take any for people who you think might be interested in our activities.

- We have distributed copies of our book, information leaflet and wildlife leaflets to the local library, Create Centre, Tourist Information Bureau and the Southville Centre.
- I have set up a Facebook Page called 'Friends of the Avon New Cut – please 'like' it and follow if you are on Facebook. This will help to spread the word.

Thanks

- A number of BCC Officers have been extremely encouraging, appreciative and helpful in a variety of ways. I would particularly like to mention the following:
 - Becky Belfin, BCC's Parks Development Officer, who is always so helpful in keeping us up to date with council business that might affect us.
 - Richard Hawkrige, BCC's Streetwise Co-ordinator, has been responsive when we have reported rough sleepers needing help;
 - John Walters and his team have been superb at collecting all the rubbish we have piled up for them;
 - Tom Penn, BCC Client & Operations Co-ordinator, has provided excellent support in relation to the preparation of Risk Assessments for our riverbank clean-up activities;
- Bristol Parks Forum have also been generous in sharing their knowledge as well as offering support. We have really valued being linked to a wider body incorporating other "Friends" groups.
- Once again, I would like to formally thank each member of the Committee for their hard work during the year. They each bring their particular knowledge and give of their time with a very generous spirit.
- I would particularly like to thank Derek (our Secretary) who puts in many hours of his time to ensure that everyone – whether that be members, BCC officers or other voluntary groups – is kept well informed, thus helping to make FrANC the success it is.
- It has been another productive year, with several new members as well as people who have been with us since the beginning in 2006 - your contributions are all most appreciated. The challenge for any Community Group is to keep developing new ideas and using improved technology to assist us. I'm sure that my fellow Committee Members won't mind me mentioning our increasing ages! For FrANC to continue we need some younger members to step forward and help in the running of the Group; please give this some thought and share your ideas.

Sara Worth
 Chair of FrANC
 2nd November 2017

Attachment 2a

Income and Expenditure Account from 28th November 2016 to 31st October 2017

	£	£
<u>Income</u>		
Sale of books	31.50	
Walks & Events	210.20	
Donations	105.00	
Grants	100.00	
Total Income		<u><u>446.70</u></u>
 <u>Expenditure</u>		
Clean-ups	291.51	
Walks & Events	0.00	
Website	157.65	
Publicity	160.00	
Litterpick Grant Spend	100.00	
Total Expenditure		<u><u>709.16</u></u>
Balance Brought Forward		<u>1,424.11</u>
Balance Carried Forward		<u>1,161.65</u>

Independent Examiner's Report

I have examined the Group's accounts for the period 28th November 2016 to 31st October 2017 and the supporting documentation including bank statements and I confirm these support the figures shown in the accounts.

Name: S. MASON

Signature: 

Date: 5/11/17

Attachment 2b

Income and Expenditure from 28th November 2016 to 31st October 2017

£

<u>Income</u>	Sale of Books	Walks & Events	Donations	Grants
<u>Bank Ref</u>	£	£	£	£
BACS 9 Dec			105.00	
Deposit 026	31.50			
BACS 28th May		76.20		
Litterpick Grant 2016				100.00
BACS 28th May		10.00		
BACS 27th June		30.00		
BACS 20th Sept		56.00		
BACS 22nd Oct		38.00		

Totals	31.50	210.20	105.00	100.00	<u>446.70</u>
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Expenditure

<u>Cheque No.</u>	Clean-ups	Walks & Events	Website	Publicity	Misc
	£	£	£	£	£
148	89.55		157.65		
149	201.96			160.00	
Litterpick Grant spend					100.00

Totals	291.51	0.00	157.65	160.00	100.00	<u>709.16</u>
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