

**Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)**  
**Minutes of Annual General Meeting held in The Education & Meeting Room at**  
**The Underfall Yard, Cumberland Road – 25<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

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**Present**

Sara Worth (Chair), Tess Green (Vice Chair), Derek Hughes (Secretary), Steve Fay (Treasurer) and Margaret Fay, Roy Gallop, Angie Tonge and Tim Wickstead (Committee Members); David Batchelor, Elaine Beckett, Richard Clutterbuck, Cynthia Palmer, Neil Sellers, Lewis and Joan Semple and Anna Walton.

**Apologies**

Ed Hall and Chris Hanmer (Committee Members); Phil Cass, Pat Fung, Stephen Mason, Sarah Morris, Victoria Pollard, Christine Smart and John Smith.

**Welcome**

Sara welcomed all meeting attendees.

**Minutes of the AGM held on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

The minutes of last year's AGM were reviewed and were accepted as being correct. Margaret Fay gave a vote of thanks to the minute-taker!

**(Proposed:** Tess Green                      **Seconded:** Cynthia Palmer)

**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. Derek reported that there had been no progress to date, partly because the Chocolate Path has been closed by Bristol City Council (BCC) since December 2017 owing to subsidence along part of its length. It was agreed that this item would be put on the back burner for the moment and that the Executive Committee will set up a small project team to progress it once the current BCC access restrictions to the Chocolate Path are revoked (a possible marker post location is one of the piers of Vauxhall Bridge);
- (b) organising a guided walk/talk by Melvin Wood from the Environment Agency on the *Origin of the River Frome*. An illustrated talk on this subject was presented by Mr. Wood on 25<sup>th</sup> October this year and was well received.

**Report on the past year**

- The Chair (Sara) presented a report on activities in 2017-18. 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 2017-18. Attachment 2a summarises all transactions from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018. Attachment 2b contains a more detailed breakdown of the income and expenditure sub-totals that appear in Attachment 2a.
- Total income in 2017-18 amounted to £2946.00, while FrANC's total expenditure over the same period was £526.82. The balance carried forward at the beginning of November 2017 was £1161.65 which, taking into account the above income and expenditure totals, gave a balance at 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018 of £3580.83.
- Sara noted that a significant proportion of this income was due to the grants received from the various organisations mentioned in her report (Attachment 1) towards the cost of installing the perimeter fence around Butterfly Junction, which totalled £2500.00 and which would be spent next year.
- It was also noted that this year the cost of providing refreshments to volunteers after riverbank clean-ups (£313.95) was less than the nett income collected from Guided Walks/Talks. Although the income from these events totalled £338.00, the nett income received was only £186.00 after accounting for donations to charities supported by Walks/Talks providers which totalled £152.00. Derek added that the accounts do not include a further charge of £48.00 for the hire of the room at the Southville Centre for Melvin Wood's talk on the *Origin of the River Frome*, which will appear in next year's balance sheet. It was pointed out that any future events that we organise that involve the hire of a room are therefore likely to result in that event being a financial loss, especially when a request for a charitable donation must also be accounted for.
- Derek also advised that we are due to be charged a total of £177.67 by Wix to cover FrANC Website costs for 2018 before the end of this year. It was noted that the average annual cost of maintaining the FrANC Website is approximately £110.
- However, Sara pointed out that the accounts in Attachments 2a and 2b do not include two grants that she had received after the 31<sup>st</sup> October deadline – £500 from the John James Bristol Foundation and £100 from the Bristol Naturalists' Society – which will also appear in next year's balance sheet. Although most of the £500 grant would be spent on the purchase of additional litter-pickers, the remainder would be put towards FrANC's operating expenses next year. Taking this additional income into account, funding reserves were therefore considered to be adequate for the foreseeable future. Sara added that she intended purchasing 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 £3580.83 presented in Attachment 2a. Elaine Beckett volunteered to do this, and her signature as an independent examiner is appended to Attachment 2a as evidence of her satisfaction that the accounts are correct.
- The Finance report was accepted by those present.  
(**Proposed:** Roy Gallop                      **Secoded:** Lewis Semple)

## **Election of Committee for 2018-19**

As noted in Sara's report (Attachment 1), she and three members of the current Executive Committee (Chris, Margaret and Angie) did not wish to stand for re-election. Derek said that, as Secretary, he had received nominations in writing from Sara for Tim Wickstead to stand as Chair, Neil Sellers to stand as new Committee Member and for the remaining Committee Members to retain their current posts. The list of Committee nominees for the coming year was therefore as follows:

- Tim Wickstead (Chair)
- Tess Green (Vice Chair)
- Derek Hughes (Secretary)
- Steve Fay (Treasurer)
- Roy Gallop (Committee Member)
- Ed Hall (Committee Member)
- Neil Sellers (Committee Member)

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

**(Proposed:** Sara Worth

**Secoded:** Richard Clutterbuck)

As is intimated at the end of Sara's report (Attachment 1), she and Derek plan to move away from Bristol some time during the second quarter of next year. Although Derek has agreed to continue as Secretary for the time being, it will be necessary for the FrANC membership to elect a replacement once Sara and Derek's relocation plans have been finalised.

On behalf of those present, Tess thanked Sara for the support she has given FrANC over the past eleven years. After being elected as a Committee Member in 2007 and then Vice Chair in 2009, Sara took on the role of Chair in September 2012 when FrANC was at its "lowest ebb" following the sudden death of John Purkiss in June of that year. In particular, Tess praised the strong leadership and motivation that Sara has shown as Chair of FrANC – especially when dealing with BCC officers on matters relating to the New Cut! During Sara's tenure as Chair, FrANC's activities have expanded greatly with the result that it is now considered to be both a well-respected and thriving local community group. Tess said that she would be "sorry to see her go".

## **Planning for the next year**

The following activities were proposed for 2019:

### **(a) Dates for Riverbank Clean-ups**

- The following dates in 2019 were proposed for up to four riverbank clean-ups (to be held on the second Saturday of the first four months of the year):
  - **Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> January**
  - **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> February**
  - **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March**
  - **Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> April**

It was agreed that the stretches of riverbank to be tackled during each clean-up will be decided closer to each of the above dates.

### **(b) Guided Walks and Talks**

- The following activities were suggested for next year:

- a repeat of Roy Gallop's *Bedminster/Southville Colliery Site Walk*, which proved to be very popular when it was last run just over a year ago;
- Tess suggested organising a series of walks along the New Cut riverbank, the purpose of which would be to update FrANC's lists of the flora and fauna that can be found there (the lists of plants, flowering plants and trees that can be downloaded from the FrANC website were compiled many years ago). It was proposed that a series of walks be undertaken at different times during the year so that the seasonal variation of plant/tree life can be recorded. It was recognised that we will need the help of individuals with specialist knowledge of plants and trees in order to conduct such a survey, such as members of the Bristol Naturalists' Society;
- another Boat Trip up the New Cut next year is also a possibility, but as was the case this year we will encourage FrANC members to book individually onto one of the trips run by *Bristol Ferry Boats* on a specific date. Roy explained that this approach results in a cheaper ticket price than would be the case if we were to hire a boat specifically for FrANC members;
- Tim mentioned that the Bedminster Women's Institute (BWI) would be interested in participating in a guided walk in the last week of either July or August next year. Should this event go ahead, BWI will be asked to make a donation to FrANC by way of payment.

### **(c) Other ideas for activities in 2019**

- Derek reported that Ed Hall has suggested that we should invite the Bristol Avon Rivers Trust (BART) to give us a talk on their activities. BART is a community-led charity which aims to deliver education, land and river-based management advice and practical river restoration work across the Bristol Avon catchment (for more information, visit [www.bristolavonriverstrust.org](http://www.bristolavonriverstrust.org)).
- As the cost of hiring rooms for presentations/talks can be prohibitive, any information regarding suitable venues that do not charge high booking fees would be appreciated (Neil Sellers mentioned that the Golden Guinea pub in Guinea Street has a function room that is free to hire for events).
- Sara mentioned that during the year it had been decided to increase the levy charged for guided walks/talks from £2 to £3 per person, mainly to cover additional expenses resulting from the need to make donations to charities supported by walk leaders or presenters. The charge of £3 per person for participating in guided walks/talks organised by FrANC will be retained for the foreseeable future.

### **Any Other Business**

- Elaine Beckett gave an update on the status of the planned new scout hut for the 255<sup>th</sup> Bristol Channel Sea Scouts. The old hut has now been demolished by BCC and engineers have checked the side walls and concrete base of the site prior to the installation of a shipping container that will be used for equipment storage. The scout group now need to raise funds to cover the construction of a permanent two-storey Sea Scout Centre and details of fund-raising activities will appear on the scout group's website ([www.255th.org.uk](http://www.255th.org.uk)) in due course.
- David Batchelor suggested approaching the Quartet Community Foundation as a possible source of funding for future projects. This organisation is based in Queen Square and during 2017-18 donated over £3million to local charities in the Greater Bristol area.

- Steve gave notice of his intention, as FrANC Treasurer, to dispose of any financial records more than seven years old – in keeping with general accounting practices.
- Richard Clutterbuck said that he and his wife Jane would be moving from Bristol in March to live in Scotland. Sara thanked Richard for the support that he and Jane had given FrANC over the years, especially in his unofficial role of “Chief Photographer”.
- Before the meeting closed it was suggested that the new Chair, Tim, should have the last word! Tim began by noting that, with the departure of Sara, Chris, Margaret and Angie (and eventually Derek), control of the Committee would now revert back to the south bank of the New Cut where most of the remaining Committee Members lived! Tim offered his own “huge thanks” to Sara and the other departing Committee Members for the support they have given to FrANC in the past, but he also thanked Tess, Roy and Steve who had agreed to stay on the Committee for another year. In view of the reduced Committee membership next year, Tim proposed that we adopt more modest goals and should aim to organise four riverbank clean-ups and two guided walks or talks, after which we would “see how we go” with regard to the organisation of any further events.

### **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 2017/18**

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This report covers the period from our last AGM (5th November 2017) to the date of our 2018 AGM (25th November 2018). Our activities have been as follows:

#### **Themed walks and talks**

We have organised:

- A guided walk entitled “Exploring the Cumberland Basin”, led by Ed Hall; this walk was advertised as part of *Bristol Walk Fest 2018* in May;
- A “Botanical Walk” in the area of Create Centre and the railway sidings by the A and B Bond buildings; this was led by Dr. Clive Lovatt, a member of the Bristol Naturalists’ Society and was also advertised as part of *Bristol Walk Fest*.
- A “treasure hunt” walk for Beavers and Cubs around Bathurst Basin and beyond - led by Ed Hall and enjoyed by around 25 lively Sea Scouts!
- A repeat of the well-received “River Malago and its Culverts in Old Bedminster” Walk led by one of our own members, Stephen Mason;
- A repeat “Tannery Tour” led by Barry Knight, sales director of the Thomas Ware & Sons Tannery on Coronation Road;
- An illustrated talk entitled “The Origin of the River Frome”, which was presented by a member of the Environment Agency, Melvin Wood;
- A butterfly survey of Butterfly Junction, as part of the nationwide “Big Butterfly Count 2018”. The survey was undertaken by seven FrANC members who between them made a total of 14 visits to Butterfly Junction during July/August.

This represents an impressive variety of activities - some new and others repeat walks by popular demand!

#### **Maintenance and Clean-ups**

- We have undertaken four formal riverbank clean-up sessions with a total of 225 volunteer hours contributed by 59 FrANC members.
- We were contacted by *Bristol Goodgym* and helped them spend 45 minutes one August evening clearing litter from the Goal Ferry Bridge slipways, with litter-pickers and rubbish bags being supplied by FrANC.
- In addition, in September an Environment Agency team volunteered their time at Butterfly Junction as part of a team event - 19 people joined ourselves and members of *ParkWork* and put in over four hours each. We have not only tidied and improved the area for butterflies but are also now in the process of erecting a knee-high fence around the site to further protect it from people wandering onto

the area, to walk their dogs. The Interpretation Board has also been moved to be more visible and hopefully generate interest from passers-by and MetroBus users. I hope some of you will wander down after the AGM to take a look at the progress.

- Graffiti remains a challenge – on the bridge structures and on Interpretation Boards. Please remember that you can report graffiti on-line. The more requests the more likely Bristol City Council (BCC), with their stretched resources, will respond and remove it.
- Despite meeting with a representative from the Harbourmaster's Office last year 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. We have not given up and only recently I raised the issue with a representative of a firm who are in the preliminary stages of undertaking an in-depth survey of the walls and banks of the New Cut and Floating Harbour. Their work will entail using ropes and slings (to inspect the walls) and I have asked them to consider how they might assist with removal of the debris.
- 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. I am aware of two FrANC members who have a First Aid certificate or medical training. It would be helpful to know of any others who have useful skills that we could draw on in the event of an emergency!

### **Awareness raising**

- We have sent regular email bulletins about FrANC events to over 120 contacts. Our mailing list has gained over 30 new subscribers since the last AGM.
- The FrANC Website ([www.franc.org.uk](http://www.franc.org.uk)) is now well established and we get a lot of 'hits' – which has resulted in interest in our activities from a wider audience. 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 Newsletters can all be found on the Website and 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. If you would like to write your account of any of the activities you have taken part in we'd be pleased to publish it.
- Word of mouth continues to be a good way of people hearing about FrANC - so please keep telling people you meet about our work and direct them to the Website.
- We still have copies of the book "A Celebration of the New Cut". We are now selling these at £5 each and have some that we can sell today - they would make great Christmas presents!

### **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:

- John Walters and his team, who have been superb at collecting all the rubbish we have piled up for them;
  - Tom Penn, BCC Client & Operations Co-ordinator, who has provided excellent support in relation to the preparation of Risk Assessments for our riverbank clean-up activities;
  - Eric Dougall has been a useful link with the Harbour Estates Office and the Committee have been able to meet with him to look at ongoing challenges arising from homelessness and some of the resultant excess rubbish, including discarded tents and furniture.
- 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 of...” groups.
  - Thank-you to FrANC member John Smith who has been invaluable in helping us to transfer our email communications to *MailChimp* as well as linking our new mailing list with the FrANC Website.
  - 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 skills and generously give of their time and knowledge. Three are standing down as Committee Members this year - but I know that Angie, Margaret and Chris will continue to support FrANC.
  - As always Derek (our Secretary) has put in many hours of his time to ensure that everyone is kept well informed, thus helping to make FrANC the success it is. We do need to share out some of the tasks he has taken on - they are not necessarily part of the Secretary’s job description! Please have a conversation if you think you can take on some small task to ease his load.
  - We have been most fortunate to secure financial support from several organisations this year. We have managed to raise funds to progress the Butterfly Junction Project as well as monies to replace some of our litter-pickers. This has been due to the generosity of the John Laing Charitable Trust, the Hotwells & Cliftonwood Community Association, Hotwells Pantomime, the John James Bristol Foundation and the Bristol Naturalists’ Society.
  - I was catapulted into the role of Chair in June 2012 - following the untimely passing of John Purkiss. John was a founder member of FrANC, a man who quietly got things done and he was one of the key people in shaping this community group to which we all now belong. I like to think that he’d be proud of what we’ve achieved in the last six years. One thing I’m clear about is that for this to continue everyone has to play a part - so thank you for yours!
  - Whilst Derek and I continue to live in Bristol I’m sure we’ll remain active members of FrANC but it is now time for me to hand over the Chair’s role. In doing so I’d like to say what a privilege it has been to be part of such a welcoming and productive group. Now it is time to let others bring their ideas and enthusiasm and I wish the 2018/2019 Committee every success.

Sara Worth  
 Chair of FrANC  
 22nd November 2018



## Attachment 2a

### Income and Expenditure Account from 1st November 2017 to 31st October 2018

	£	£
<b><u>Income</u></b>		
Sale of books	48.00	
Walks & Events	338.00	
Donations	60.00	
Grants	2,500.00	
<b>Total Income</b>		<b><u><u>2,946.00</u></u></b>
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>		
Clean-ups	313.95	
Walks & Events	20.00	
Website	40.87	
Publicity		
Donations (Walks & Events Income)	152.00	
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b><u><u>526.82</u></u></b>
<b>Balance Brought Forward</b>		<b><u>1,161.65</u></b>
<b>Balance Carried Forward</b>		<b><u>3,580.83</u></b>

I have examined the Group's accounts for the period 1st November 2017 to 31st October 2018 and the supporting documentation including bank statements and I confirm these support the figures shown in the accounts.

Name: ELAINE BECKETT

Signature Elaine Beckett

Date: 25/11/18

## Attachment 2b

### Income and Expenditure from 1st November 2017 to 31st October 2018

£

<u>Income</u>	Sale of Books	Walks & Events	Donations	Grants	
<u>Bank Ref</u>	£	£	£	£	
BACS 6 Nov 2017	14.00	32.00			
Deposit 27	7.00				
BACS 13 Nov 2017		28.00			
BACS 2 Jan 2018	7.00				
BACS 13th May 2018		48.00			
BACS 25th May 2018		50.00			
BACS 2nd July 2018		28.00			
Deposit 28				1,000.00	
Credit 23 July				500.00	
BACS 11 September 2018	20.00				
On line Credit				1,000.00	
Deposit 29			60.00		Sea Scout Group
BACS 1 Oct 2018		90.00			
25 Oct 2018 (CONTRA)		62.00			See note*
<b>Totals</b>	<b>48.00</b>	<b>338.00</b>	<b>60.00</b>	<b>2,500.00</b>	

\*collected at Melvin Wood's *Origin of River Frome* Talk

2,946.00

### Expenditure

<u>Cheque No.</u>	Clean-ups	Walks & Events	Website	Publicity	Misc	
<u>Cheque No.</u>	£	£	£	£	£	
150		20.00				
151 (CANCELLED)						
152	313.95		40.87			
153					90.00	Donation
25 Oct 2018 (CONTRA)					62.00	See note**
<b>Totals</b>	<b>313.95</b>	<b>20.00</b>	<b>40.87</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>152.00</b>	

\*\*donated to Melvin Wood's charity (Water Aid)

526.82