

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)
Minutes of Annual General Meeting held at The Orchard Inn Public House –
1st November 2015

Present

Sara Worth (Chair), Roy Gallop (Vice-Chair), Derek Hughes (Secretary), Steve Fay (Treasurer), Chris Hanmer, Ed Hall, Margaret Fay, Richard Clutterbuck, Angie Tonge, Tess Green, David Batchelor, Ben Barker, Phil Cass, Jane Cooke, Jacqui Furneaux, Terry Hill, Robert Loring, Cynthia Palmer, Liz Payze, Anna Walton.

Apologies

Jeff Knaggs, Clare More, Hebe Welbourne, Lewis and Joan Semple, Pat Fung.

Welcome

Sara welcomed all meeting attendees.

Minutes of the AGM held on 16th November 2014

The minutes of last year's AGM were reviewed and were accepted as being correct.
(**Proposed:** Phil Cass; **Seconded:** Tess Green)

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous AGM.

Report on the past year

- The Chair presented a report on activities in 2014-15. 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.
- A vote of thanks was expressed from those present regarding the Committee's successful Heritage Lottery Fund bid.
- Ben Barker welcomed the recognition of the New Cut as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and mentioned a Bedminster project being run in collaboration with the Avon Wildlife Trust called "My Wild Bedminster". The project aims to show how local residents, schools, parks groups and businesses can make small changes to improve green spaces of all sizes to benefit both wildlife and people. Bedminster residents were being encouraged to make their gardens more attractive to wildlife (e.g. by planting pollinator-friendly plants or putting up bird or bat boxes) in order to create "wildlife corridors" that would link smaller green spaces with larger ones such as the New Cut.

Finance report

- The Treasurer presented the financial report for 2014-15 (see Attachment 2a), which covers all transactions from 1st June 2014 to 31st May 2015. Total income in 2014-15 amounted to £2209.50 (including a £2000 Bristol City Council (BCC) Green Capital grant for the new Interpretation Board), while expenditure totalled £429.21. The balance at the end of 31st May 2015 was £2745.98.
- The Finance report has been independently audited by I. Deegan, of 10A Avon Grove, Bristol BS9 1PS, and was accepted by those present.
(**Proposed:** Chris Hanmer; **Seconded:** Ed Hall)
- Attachment 2b shows the additional income and expenditure that has been incurred between 1st June 2015 and 31st October 2015. During this period we paid a total of £1996.20 for design and installation costs associated with the new Interpretation Board. This was partially offset by additional income from the Underfall Yard Walk held on 16th June (£92) and the Autumn Tree Walk on 27th September (£41), plus a profit on the Boat Trip on 24th October of £51. Including the sale of some FrANC books and a £20 donation from Bristol Metal Spraying & Protective Coatings Limited, Steve reported that the current balance stood at £933.78.
- In recent years the tendency has been to hold the AGM at a later date in the year than that specified in the FrANC Constitution for the auditing of the accounts (i.e. 31st May). It was agreed by those present that the FrANC Committee should propose changes to the Constitution to bring FrANC's financial year more in line with the end of year date of the AGM. These amendments to the Constitution will be presented to the membership for approval at the next AGM.
(**Proposed:** Tess Green; **Seconded:** Ed Hall)

Election of Committee for 2015-16

The existing members of the Executive Committee were prepared to stand for re-election, apart from Roy Gallop who was stepping down as Vice-Chair but was willing to stand as a Committee member as noted in the Chair's report. The Secretary reported that Tess Green had offered to stand as Vice-Chair. The final list of Committee members nominated 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) | • Richard Clutterbuck (Committee Member) |

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

(**Proposed:** Ben Barker; **Seconded:** Phil Cass)

Planning for the next year

The following activities were proposed for 2016:

(a) Dates for Riverbank Clean-ups

- The following dates were proposed for the three riverbank clean-ups currently planned for 2016:
 - **Saturday 9th January** along Coronation Road from Gaol Ferry Bridge to beyond Vauxhall Bridge;
 - **Saturday 20th February** along Cumberland Road (including the Gaol Ferry Bridge slipways), God's Garden and Clarence Road;
 - **Saturday 19th March** along the riverbank between Bedminster Bridge and the ASDA car park on Coronation Road.

All of these events will start at 10:00am, which should therefore avoid a high tide while the Clean-ups are in progress.

(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 5th December** and will only include the cutting back of brambles and other invasive plants. It is expected this will go ahead even though MetroBus construction works will be in progress.

(c) Other ideas for activities in 2016

- The following activities were suggested for next year:
 - A continuation of this year's Tree Walk, led by Richard Bland, this time along the York Road riverbank;
 - a presentation by John Penny (Bristol Records Office) of film clips of the New Cut from the BCC archives;
 - participation in the 2016 Big Butterfly Count at Butterfly Junction during July/August.

Any Other Business

- Jane Cooke suggested that a talk by Melvin Wood from the Environment Agency might be another possible future activity. Melvin is a technical specialist working on Flood and Coastal Risk Management, and it is understood that his responsibilities include the prevention of flooding in Bristol.
- The possible participation of FrANC in the annual "*treefest*" held at St. Mary Redcliffe Church was also suggested by Cynthia Palmer. This spectacular festive display features over 100 Christmas trees of all shapes and sizes, each decorated in a unique and innovative way by businesses, schools, community groups and charitable organisations to raise awareness of their work.
- Occasionally we receive requests to publicise events organised by external bodies (e.g. Spike Island Arts Centre). The Secretary noted that he was quite willing to forward details of such events to the FrANC membership, provided this task did not prove to be too onerous.
- Chris Hanmer has planted bulbs near the FrANC bench (located at the top of the Chocolate Path), and requested that FrANC members with any spare bulbs should do the same.

- Graffiti continues to be a problem along the New Cut riverbank. Steve Fay noted that he had successfully used green shed paint to cover graffiti on the stone wall above the two Malago river flood relief culverts located on the Coronation Road riverbank opposite the start of the Chocolate Path.
- Ben Barker asked if anyone had seen the BCC documentation that legally designates the Avon New Cut as an LNR. The only BCC documentation that FrANC has had visibility of is a leaflet entitled "*Visit Bristol's Local Nature Reserves*" which was published as part of Bristol European Green Capital 2015. It was noted, however, that whereas twelve LNRs are mentioned in the leaflet only eight LNRs are listed on the BCC website, which has not been updated to include the four most recently-designated LNRs (including the Avon New Cut).
- David Batchelor urged those present to consider joining the Bristol Civic Society, who apparently have a lack of active members. The Society publishes a quarterly magazine.

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 given by Roy Gallop based on his autobiography, entitled "*An Abundance of Uncles*", which describes his early life growing up in the shadow of the Mendip Hills. Roy read extracts from two chapters in his book, which were preceded and followed by two short "home movies" entitled "*Shoot-out at White Rock*" and "*Vampires at Noon*".

Attachment 1

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC) Report on activities in 2014/15

This report covers the period from our last AGM (16th November 2014) to the date of our 2015 AGM (1st November 2015). Our activities have been as follows:

Themed walks and talks

We have organised:

- A walk entitled 'The Bridges and Basins of the Avon New Cut' which was FrANC's contribution to this year's "Bristol Walk Fest". This was researched and led by our own Vice Chair, Roy Gallop;
- A 'behind the scenes' walk around the Underfall Yard run by Sarah Murray, the Community Engagement Officer of the Underfall Yard Trust;
- A butterfly survey of Butterfly Junction, as part of the nationwide "Big Butterfly Count";
- An "Autumn Tree Walk" along part of Coronation Road led by Richard Bland, a member of the Bristol Naturalists' Society;
- A Boat Trip up the Avon Gorge and the New Cut as far as Netham Weir, in which we were joined by members of the University of the Third Age (U3A), with expert commentary provided by Roy Gallop and Mark Steeds.

Maintenance and Clean-ups

- The timetable for the annual maintenance work carried out by FrANC at Butterfly Junction was amended in 2014 following a review of the recommendations made in the Butterfly Junction Management Brief. The cutting back of brambles and other invasive plants took place as planned at the beginning of December 2014. The next large-scale cutting back of grass is scheduled for September 2016.
- Once again, in excess of 50 volunteers assisted at three riverbank Clean-up sessions; one along the north riverbank (Cumberland Road and Commercial Road) and the other two along the south riverbank, to the east and west of Gaol Ferry Bridge. It was also possible to remove some bulky items of rubbish from the riverbank along York Road (more about this stretch of the riverbank later in this report). Although the Chocolate Path was closed during the north riverbank Clean-up, making the Harbour Railway inaccessible, a small group have since removed large amounts of rubbish from the rail track.
- Bristol City Council (BCC) continues to respond to our notifications of graffiti, although it appears that they are very stretched and unable to take action as quickly as both they and we would like. Currently we are in negotiations with BCC officers regarding the provision of a graffiti-cleaning kit specifically for FrANC, so that we can keep the Interpretation Boards clean ourselves. We were unable to remove graffiti that appeared on 'our' bench at the top of the Chocolate Path and this has been painted over by BCC's graffiti team. Unfortunately, the colour of the green paint that they used does not quite match that of the rest of the bench!

- We have now secured some finances, through BCC, for trolleys, scaffolding and other random items to be removed from the riverbeds and riverbanks of the New Cut – the challenge is now to find an organisation that is willing and qualified to undertake this work.

Awareness raising

- We have sent regular email bulletins about events organised by FrANC and other local organisations to approximately 150 contacts.
- We have maintained our website (www.franc.org.uk). Do take some time to enjoy pictures of events dating as far back as 2006. We recognise that the website is somewhat dated in presentation and is certainly not easy to update, so we are hoping to secure funding for a new website which will be better able to reflect the work that our volunteers undertake.
- We have published one issue of the FrANC Newsletter, which is circulated to members and can also be accessed by visiting the FrANC website. We intend producing another issue following the AGM which will contain key dates for the forthcoming year.
- We have distributed copies of our book, information leaflet and wildlife leaflets.
- Last year FrANC was invited to participate in a 3-year project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) called “*Towards Hydrocitizenship*”, also known as “*Water City Bristol*”. Although we have not been directly involved in this project so far, we have publicised and supported three events organised during the course of the year under the theme of “Bristol Loves Tides”.

Bristol 2015 European Green Capital / Local Nature Reserve Status

- After several years of working in partnership with various BCC officers, I am pleased to confirm that the Avon New Cut is now officially designated as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). Three other green spaces in Bristol were awarded LNR status at the same time in September as part of the Bristol 2015 European Green Capital celebrations, which brings the total number of LNRs in Bristol to twelve. This recognition will be beneficial in terms of maintaining the New Cut and hopefully also securing funding to enable both BCC and “Friends of...” groups to promote the area so that people and wildlife can continue to exist in harmony.
- Due to the generosity of two local Neighbourhood Partnerships (Greater Bedminster and Cabot, Clifton and Clifton East) awarding us a Green Capital grant, we now have a sixth Interpretation Board. The new board, designed by *Inkwood Design*, is located on the Chocolate Path by the sluices of the Underfall Yard and describes how the sluices – and the New Cut – are used to regulate the water level in the Floating Harbour. The board also features illustrations of three species of birds that have been observed in this part of the New Cut.

Update on Cycle City Ambition Fund Projects

- Throughout the year, FrANC representatives have attended several “Walking and Cycling Workshops” organised by BCC and Sustrans. Of particular interest has been progress on two new bridges that were proposed last year to be funded under the Cycle City Ambition Fund. The first of these bridges, to be sited next to

the Banana (Langton Street) Bridge, was rejected at an early stage by BCC planners and subsequently dropped. It has also been reported in the press recently that plans for the second “Camden Road Bridge”, linking Cumberland Road to Coronation Road at the junction with Camden Road, are also about to be scrapped because of projected cost overruns.

- Consequently, BCC is now looking for ideas as to how the reserved cash from the Cycle City Ambition Fund (£3.2 million) can be best spent on other cycling infrastructure projects. An obvious suggestion would be the refurbishment of those parts of the Chocolate Path that are in desperate need of repair! FrANC members are therefore urged to promote this via the *Better by Bike* website – visit <http://www.betterbybike.info/News/help-shape-brisstols-cycle-network/>.

MetroBus works at Butterfly Junction

- The confirmed MetroBus route crossing Ashton Avenue Bridge will pass next to the Butterfly Junction site. FrANC Committee members have liaised with the contractors, Balfour Beatty, and it has been agreed that, following the removal of the Harbour Railway platform, a solid boarded fence will be constructed to protect the part of Butterfly Junction which FrANC manages. Butterfly Junction will still be accessible while construction of the MetroBus stops and busway are in progress, and some sympathetic replanting of other areas of the MetroBus construction site is promised once these major works have been completed.
- As you travel around the city, whether on foot, bicycle or car you will see that many sites are being worked on as a result of MetroBus; there are other groups who have an interest in particular aspects of MetroBus and FrANC has, for the most part, confined its activities to promoting and preserving the wildlife of the New Cut.

Future Projects

- Several FrANC members have commented on the poor state of the riverbank along York Road. Through initial liaison with BCC officers, and a subsequent successful bid for a ‘Sharing Heritage’ grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), FrANC is now in a position to make a positive impact along this end of the New Cut during the coming year.
- The £9,900 HLF grant awarded to FrANC will provide monies for the clearance of litter, excess shrub and buddleia; provision of two benches and two further Interpretation Boards; designing and printing a leaflet to offer a self-guided walk along the New Cut; and finally to hold a Celebration Event. We will be holding a general meeting of FrANC members to discuss the detail of the way to put these plans into action and how to involve the wider community.
- FrANC has been advised that BCC plan to undertake similar ground clearance work along Coronation Road between the Harvest Energy Service Station and Bedminster Bridge, which will begin shortly. This is essentially to ensure clear pedestrian and cycle access on the pavements, and to remove the branches of any trees which overhang the road to the detriment of traffic.
- We have not abandoned the possibility of undertaking a Car Boot Sale in order to raise some additional funds – but at present our finances look fairly healthy and so there is no urgency for this.

- When finances permit we would still like to upgrade the FrANC website and discussions are taking place with BCC regarding this – with the possibility of using any monies remaining from the Green Capital LNR budget.
- We have learned that FrANC can now be covered, for insurance purposes, under BCC's insurance policy. Two Committee members have already completed BCC Health and Safety (H&S) training as a requirement for being covered by this insurance. We are looking for three more people to complete this one-day training course, as any FrANC event must be attended by at least one (preferably two) personnel who have completed the BCC H&S training in order for the BCC insurance to be valid for that event. Another BCC insurance requirement is for all FrANC volunteers to wear high-visibility jackets on litter-picking events when working adjacent to public highways. These jackets will be funded using monies saved by not having to renew our current insurance policy in the New Year.

Thanks

- We have made some positive links with BCC officers over the past twelve months and through this have become active members of the Bristol Parks Forum and have met with other "Friends of..." groups – thus giving us access to their combined knowledge and experience.
- I would particularly like to thank Becky Belfin, BCC's Nature Conservation Officer, for her help in progressing FrANC's application for LNR status, and Councillor Charlie Bolton (Southville Ward), Matthew Symonds (Greater Bedminster Community Partnership), Andy King (Bristol Museums Galleries and Archives) and Sarah Murray (Underfall Yard Trust) for providing letters of support for our HLF grant application. We are also indebted to Neil Burwell, a BCC local government officer from Cabot Ward, who not only booked additional BCC litter-pickers for us to use during our Clean-ups but also delivered and collected them!
- Once again, I would like to formally thank the Committee for their work over the past year. It has continued to be a team effort. A special thank-you to Roy for his huge contribution as Vice Chair and, whilst respecting that he has decided to vacate this position, we are delighted that he is prepared to remain as a Committee member.
- More thanks to Steve Fay who took on the role of Treasurer this year – making it a smooth transition from the previous post-holder – and to Chris Murray who continues to manage our existing website and to offer encouragement.
- Finally, my thanks to our Secretary, Derek, who tirelessly ensures that a proper record of meetings are made, that people are informed of events and who spent many hours preparing the supporting artwork for the HLF grant application – which was no doubt a key factor in our success.
- I hope from this report that you can see 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 individual members – and so my final thank-you goes to each member who gives freely of their own time and effort.

Sara Worth
 Chair of FrANC
 1st November 2015

Attachment 2a

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st May 2015

<u>Bank Ref</u>	<u>Income</u>	£
Credit 019	Guided Geological Walk (Net)	18.00
Credit 019	Money found on Cut	10.00
Credit 020	Sale of books	10.00
Statement #69	Sale of books	31.50
Statement # 71	BCC Grant	2,000.00
Credit 021	Sale of books	21.00
Credit 021	Donation	40.00
Credit 022	Sale of books	7.00
Credit 022	Walk 12 May	72.00
	Total Income	<u><u>2,209.50</u></u>
<u>Cheque No.</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	
124	Insurance	196.76
125	Clean-up Refreshments	176.05
126	Not used to date	
127	Website hosting	56.40
	Total Expenditure	<u><u>429.21</u></u>
	Balance Brought Forward	965.69
	Balance Carried Forward	2,745.98

Independent Examiner's Report

I have examined the above accounts for the year ended 31st May 2015 and nothing came to my attention which gave me cause to believe that the Group has not kept proper and accurate accounting records

Name:

I. Deegan

Date

18/9/2015.

I. DEEGAN

Address:

*10A AVON GROVE
BRISTOL
BS9 1PJ*

Attachment 2b

Additional Income and Expenditure from 1st June 2015 to 31st October 2015

<u>Bank Ref</u>	<u>Income</u>	£
BACS 17th June	Sale of books (£14-00)	
BACS 17th June	Donation (£20-00)	
BACS 17th June	Walk 16th June (£58-00)	92.00
Deposit 023	Boat trip receipts	555.00
BACS 28th Sept	Tree Walk 27th Sept	41.00
	Total Income	<u>688.00</u>
<u>Cheque No.</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	
126	Boat trip Payment	504.00
127	Used the Previous Year	0.00
128	Interpretation Board Design	960.00
129	Interpretation Board Installation	1,036.20
	Total Expenditure	<u>2,500.20</u>
	Balance Brought Forward	2,745.98
	Balance To Date	933.78