

## Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)

### Minutes of Committee meeting held on 17 March 2023

What was discussed, agreed and any actions	Action by
<p><b>1. Attendance</b></p> <p><u>Present:</u> Ed Hall, Laura Demery, Lizzi Testani, Roy Gallop, Tess Green</p> <p><u>Apologies for absence:</u> Bridget Everett, Stephen Mason and guest invitees Andrew Jenkins, James Savage, Rob Fuller</p>	
<p><b>2. Minutes of the last meeting and actions arising</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023 were approved.</p> <p><u>Actions arising</u></p> <p>Item 5 Butterfly Junction: Tess confirmed that hormone rooting powder had been provided and that FrANC had only been charged once for compost. <i>Action complete.</i></p> <p>Item 5 (cont): Ed has not yet had a reply to his query to the Council about tools storage and Lizzi will contact a friend who works on the bonded warehouses redevelopment. <i>Action in progress.</i></p> <p>Item 6 Signs project: Lizzi drafted wording suitable for the website and a link to it was circulated with the agenda for this meeting. <i>Action complete.</i></p> <p>Item 8 Litter Picks: Ed would prefer not to renew his Health &amp; Safety training unless we're really short. Lizzi will complete hers when the online system is working again. <i>Action in progress</i></p> <p>Item 9 Wildlife: Laura checked dates of FrANC surveys on website. They range from 2001-2005. Tess suggested we email members about helping refresh them. <i>Action in progress – will be included to a wildlife email to members</i></p> <p>Item 10 Website: Laura has created test website and started some improvements. <i>Action in progress</i></p> <p>Item 11: Lizzi contacted John Holland. He has handed over all FrANC documents and is not available to re-join committee. <i>Action complete.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>EH &amp; LT</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>LT</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>tbc</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>LD</b></p>
<p><b>3. Treasurer's report</b></p> <p>Laura reported that on the third attempt, the old Nat West account was finally closed and the balance transferred to the new Lloyds account. Thanks to Steve Fay, John Holland and Christine Cox for their help.</p> <p>The Tree Council grant of £496.42 has been received. This grant, the second Secret Gardens grant (£300.06) and donations towards the cherry trees (£78.78) were used to refund Guy Malkerson for the outstanding tree planting and Butterfly Junction expenses.</p> <p>FrANC has £860.84 remaining in general funds and currently no grant funds.</p>	

<p><b>4. Short Cuts (Signs) project update</b></p> <p>Lizzi reported the full wording about each topic is now ready for the website. Laura will add new pages to the development website in readiness for when the signs are erected. Images for the website pages will be needed and it was decided to ask members for photos when we issue a 'wildlife email'.</p> <p>Lizzi showed the committee Rob Fuller's two suggestions for sign shape and fixings. It was agreed that the rectangular layout would be more robust. She will contact Rob and let him know and to thank him.</p> <p>Ed will ask the likely funder if he wants his name on the signs or on the website.</p> <p>Laura will check through past emails and minutes for any mention of approaching the council for permission. Post-meeting update: <i>Laura couldn't find any mention so emailed Tim Wickstead to double-check. Tim forwarded relevant emails, including one to Steve Clampin who asks for further details. Laura has forwarded this email to our contact @ email address so we can refer to it later.</i></p>	<p><b>LD &amp; tbc</b></p> <p><b>LT</b></p> <p><b>EH</b></p>
<p><b>5. Butterfly Junction project update</b></p> <p>Tess reported that they are beginning to win the battle with the brambles at last. Monthly sessions will continue over the summer but taking care not to interfere with butterfly eggs. There have been regular volunteers and new ones, including families.</p> <p>The Tree Council have encouraged us to apply again next year and to involve children if possible. Local schools were discussed. Lizzi has contacts at Hotwells Primary and Ashton Gate Primary. Ed has a contact at Southville Primary.</p> <p>Lizzi mentioned Change X have funding for community orchards. Tess thought this would be more suitable for the Patchwork Group. Lizzi will send her details</p> <p>Guy kindly submitted a written report which is appended to these minutes.</p>	<p><b>LT</b></p>
<p><b>6. Chocolate Path and/or Gaol Ferry Bridge re-opening celebrations</b></p> <p>With the dates for the re-opening of either unknown, it was decided to put this topic on hold for now.</p>	
<p><b>7. Litter Picking – review and what next</b></p> <p>Two more successful litter picks were held in February and March. It has been a successful season all round with 19-23 volunteers each time and several enjoyable social sessions afterwards over well-earned hot drinks. Ed reported on the state of the equipment (thanks to him for storing it) and queried the disposal of sharps. Lizzi will add the need for plastic bottles with lids to safely store the sharps to the litter pick notes.</p> <p>Non-intrusive litter picks may be arranged over the summer. Laura will add this to the next agenda</p> <p>The dates for the Winter 2023/24 litter picks were set as the second Saturday of the month from November to March. <i>Post meeting note: Laura has added these to the website.</i></p>	<p><b>LT</b></p> <p><b>LD</b></p>

<p><b>8. Any other business</b></p> <p><u>BS3 Wildlife Group</u></p> <p>Lizzi spoke to Ben Barker at the Green Mingle. He suggested wildlife surveys and creating a wildlife development plan. Tess reminded us that FrANC has two plans – one for the New Cut in conjunction with the Council and one for Butterfly Junction. The New Cut plan is now out of date but the Council have told her they don't have capacity at present to review it.</p> <p>We could encourage FrANC members to join BS3 Wildlife Group by including it in our proposed wildlife email to members.</p> <p><u>Proposed felling of trees</u></p> <p>Through our What's App group and Friends of Bathurst Basin, we became aware of a planning application to fell five ash trees on the banks of the New Cut opposite Lower Guinea Street with no reason stated. It was decided that FrANC should log a strong objection. <i>Post meeting note: Lizzi submitted our objection and her text is shown in Appendix 2.</i></p> <p><u>Bat Walk</u></p> <p>We have been approached by Lawrence Armstrong, an ecologist with a bat detector, offering to do a survey to two during the bat active season (May – Sept). He also offered to hold a bat walk. Given our current lack of permanent Chair and Secretary, it was agreed to thank him but put his kind offer on hold for now. <i>Post meeting note: Laura emailed Lawrence who then offered to help out on the committee. Laura will contact him to discuss.</i></p>	<p>tbc</p> <p>LD</p>
<p><b>9. Next Committee meeting</b></p> <p>It was agreed to try an evening session to see if more people could attend. Two possible May dates were set – Tues 15<sup>th</sup> or Wed 24<sup>th</sup>. Laura agreed to contact Andrew Jenkins and James Savage to see if they can attend on either date. <i>Post meeting note: both can attend on the later date.</i></p> <p><b>Wednesday 24th May at 7pm at Tess and Roy's house</b></p>	

## **Appendix 1: Butterfly Junction March 2023 summary** by Guy Malkerson

We continue to have a very strong volunteer crew attending the first Saturday of the month sessions. Also, other volunteers do tend to put in hours outside of our regularly scheduled sessions at Butterfly Junction.

It seems that most of the brambles have been cleared away and a substantial amount of ivy has been pushed back. We have been seeding the bare ground with butterfly friendly plants. It will be interesting to see what grows during the spring and summer months and how much of the brambles we have been able to eradicate. The mattock has been especially helpful in the endeavour.

Some daffodils have begun popping up out of the earth. They are a bit late due to the sustained winter. We do expect to see more as the temperature warms up.

The newly planted native British cherry trees expected to blossom at the end of March or early April. We can hardly wait to see if they do! Secret Gardens and the Tree Council were kind enough to give us grants to undertake these projects. The Tree Council would like us to think where we might be able to plant more trees next year. They will almost certainly have money available. We have now used up all of our grant money.

The Tree Council are keen to involve young people in their funded projects. If we do decide to undertake another Tree Council funded planting it would probably help to approach a school like Ashton Gate primary and get them involved in the tree planting. The Tree Council also like photographs of the day so it would be important that we receive permission to use photographs of the school children.

Another lesson that we learned from the tree planting is that it is best practice not to approach a business for tree donations but to secure a grant and pay for the trees. This brings benefit to local businesses and helps sustain the local economy. Tree planting season is from November to March.

Dedicated Butterfly Junction volunteer Mel Ruth lead on the February session when Liz and Guy were away. We are very grateful to her for stepping in and running the show. Liz and Guy will also be away for the 6 May and July 1<sup>st</sup> session. We will need folks to lead those future sessions.

A UWE film crew were shepherded by Lizzi and Zadie at the last community gardening session. Hopefully some of the clips they shot will make it into their project. It was too windy for the microphones to do any interviews.

The next bit of fundraising will be for an herb planter project. The It's Your Neighbourhood people who gave us the top Outstanding award last year suggested that we should plant some herbs. So, we're going to take action. Mo Mulligan is putting together some costs for planters to go in on the opposite side of the Metrobus Road from Butterfly Junction. These won't have bottoms so the herbs can grow into the soil underneath. This will make them less susceptible to drought. For this fundraising, we thought we would do a Go Fund Me page. Hopefully, once this is done, the link can be circulated to FrANC members and on the newsletter. In addition to the planters, we will cost some more tools and seeds.

In February Liz and Guy attended a volunteer conference at the Shed by Temple Meads put on by Your Park. They along with Secret Gardens gave us grants to start the Butterfly Junction community gardening project. We learned about different fundraising ideas, planting schemes, and what other groups were doing with their large gardening tools in between sessions. We also met other volunteers from around Bristol, Bath, and Keynsham.

The next session is on April 1<sup>st</sup>. No foolin'! Really, this is not a joke. From 11am for a couple of hours as usual.

## **Appendix 2: Objection to Planning Application 23/00619/VC**

### **Felling of Five Ash Trees – banks of the New Cut opposite Lower Guinea Street car park**

Submitted on behalf of FrANC by Lizzi Testani 19 March 2023

I submit this objection to the planning application on behalf of Friends of the Avon New Cut and its over 200 members.

In our most recent management plan we deemed the lack of street trees as a current issue and loss of species and biodiversity as a threat to the riverbanks of the New Cut.

Bristol has declared an Ecological Emergency and published the One City Ecological Emergency strategy outlining the critical role of trees, shrubs and plants to absorb carbon dioxide, provide oxygen and water, regulate flooding, prevent soil erosion and much more. The One City Plan outlines an aim and a need to double tree canopy cover by 2050.

These trees provide a huge benefit to humans in the area as well as the biodiversity they support, providing essential shade during warmer months - and according to the Keep Bristol Cool mapping tool this area is considered 'high risk for Bristol' for heat vulnerability during extreme temperatures.

The OCEES describes the need for "developments that retain and integrate habitats and green space and incorporate new green roofs, living walls and amenity spaces"... as well as "greener streets connecting the city with street trees, pollinator corridors in central reserves and wildlife habitats in roundabouts, verges and public squares".

Ash trees are home to almost 1000 other species including birds, insects, mosses, fungi and lichen.

This application would remove 5 irreplaceable mature ash trees, with no rationale provided for the move, and we believe the removal of these trees will be hugely detrimental to the human life and biodiversity of the local area.

#### References:

- One City Ecological Emergency Strategy <https://www.bristolonecity.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/One-City-Ecological-Emergency-Strategy.pdf>

- One City Plan [https://www.bristolonecity.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/One-City-Plan-2021-Timeline\\_accessible.pdf](https://www.bristolonecity.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/One-City-Plan-2021-Timeline_accessible.pdf)

- Keep Bristol

Cool <https://bcc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/portfolio/index.html?appid=986e3531099f48d393052fab91ceff51>