

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)

Minutes of the Committee meeting Wednesday 13 September 2023 7pm

at Baltic Wharf

In attendance: James Savage (Chair), Guy Malkerson (taking minutes), Laura Demery, Ed Hall, Roy Gallop, Rob Fuller

Apologies for absence: Andrew Jenkins, Bridget Everett, Lizzi Testani, Tess Green

Minutes of the last meeting (7 June 2023) and actions arising:

The Butterfly Junction tool storage has been sorted. James has provided a cupboard at Baltic Wharf.

Getting Lizzi registered for H&S training still an ongoing issue. It may not be available online any more. Also unsure about whether the sharps bottle Lizzi was looking for has been found. **ACTION – Lizzi**

Laura: Regarding the bat walk, we have reached out but haven't received a reply back. Trained Guy on MailChimp. Circulated photos.

Guy: Equal Opportunities Policy is now on the AGM agenda so we can discuss with the Chair present. **ACTION – ALL**

Roy & Tess led the Butterfly Junction session when Guy was away.

James has suggested adding a links section on the website to like-minded groups such as City to Sea. Laura is happy to do this but needs more suggestions. **ACTION – ALL**

The minutes were agreed as accurate.

Treasurer's report: Laura informed us that the grant came in for £1,250. Circa £650 has been spent. £1,453.42 in bank in total including grant funds. Andrew has been added to the bank account and Lizzi is in the process of being added.

Signs project update: Rob ran through the direction of travel showing us the pdf presentation on his laptop. It still requires refinement. The concept is curvy lettering to get a sense of the river.

As a starting point there are six signs. Rob showed us ideas for colour pairings. Each sign will be different. Pink and blue & yellow and brown were the clearest.

The signs are trying to be fun but not intense fun. A QR code will be included, which is a link to a page on the website. There will be a brief story on each sign. More information will be on the website. A reminder that there are other signs out there on each individual sign.

The topics were agreed some time ago. Wording was generated at the last AGM and the bullet points turned into paragraphs by Lizzi so Rob could start working on it and Laura could draft the web pages.

Rob knows a copywriter he could re-approach with the final stage of the copy. We probably need to redefine the hooks.

The next step, since we are happy with how it's going, is to refine the colours and shapes of the letters. Rob will focus on this design side. **ACTION – Rob**

Laura thinks the website pages could be expanded with more detail than the signs.

We do need to map where the six signs will go as well by walking the site.

James suggested that a subcommittee is needed. Laura, Roy, Ed, and Tess will be on it and get started. **ACTION – Laura, Roy, Ed, and Tess**

Rebrand: The idea came to Rob as he was working on the signs. He felt like there is an opportunity for this because we are producing the signs. The existing font looks too small and could melt into the background. The logo is too delicate.

Rob has come up with a bolder, chunkier logo with the ivy broomrape plant leaf incorporated. It is punchier with franc.org.uk as the text.

Roy will put some words together about what ivy broomrape is for the website. **ACTION – Roy**

Inter is a good free font that works well on the internet and computers because of its readability. The signs subcommittee will include rebranding as part of their remit. Whoever leads the subcommittee will liaise with Rob. **ACTION – Laura, Roy, Ed, and Tess**

Butterfly Junction project update: Guy let us know that the herb planters are in. We had seventeen volunteers plus lots of other people showing up interested in FRANC and what we are doing at the junction.

A possible winter project will be planting a bay tree by the planter and two apple trees at the entrance to the cherry tree lane.

Guy is researching log benches. They could be expensive £1 to £2K. However, there may be the possibility of just dropping in a log for people to sit on. Perhaps it could be sourced from Ashton Court. **ACTION – Guy**

This year's sunflowers are being enjoyed by the slugs. Maybe we'll get one. Next year we intend to try and plant earlier. We'll start planting bulbs in the coming months.

Mo is willing to scythe as a volunteer. Guy has emailed him. The management brief suggestion was to mow two metre wide sinuous course through sparse grassland in order to create diversity of sward height. They recommended to mow every three years in September. Also we should gather and remove the arisings. Mo and I will co-ordinate

doing this before the end of the month. **ACTION – Guy**

November to February we can get back in and cut back brambles and ivy, etc. Guy emailed Jennifer Staton at Wessex Water, who was enquiring about sending a small team to help us.

Laura asked for two or three paragraphs and pics to be sent for the website. **ACTION – Guy**

Went through the positive variances and spend on the grant funds.

Litter picking update: Lizzi was wondering about an early litter pick perhaps October to concentrate on Gaol Ferry Bridge. Ed will check to see if the second Saturday 14 October will work. **ACTION – Ed**

Health and safety training: Guy is now certified. The course, provided by Bristol City Council Parks focussed mostly on risk assessments and tool use.

The last training date was 8 September. Guy keep an eye on future dates and forward the next training email to Laura. **ACTION – Guy**

Water testing: Due to the current state of pollution in the country's waterways, Guy has been researching the possibility of water testing for FrANC. Unfortunately, no one present had any direct experience with this.

Guy has looked at some water testing kits but the process does seem complicated. Some kits are available here: <https://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/projects/clean-water/kit/>
This is an example of a simple kit: <https://en.kyoritsu-lab.co.jp/packtest>

The Angling Trust are involved in water testing in a big way. It might make sense to join their efforts <https://anglingtrust.net/get-involved/anglers-against-pollution/wqmn/>
However, people don't seem to fish the New Cut.

Ed noted that the water is very transient. It would be good to test outside of tide times and publish it.

James queried if soil testing might be more revealing. Ed thought that perhaps might be a possibility.

Ed suggested that Guy to reach out to BART (Bristol and Avon Rivers Trust) and see if they have any ideas or if they might actually already be testing the Avon New Cut.

ACTION – Guy

Christmas party: Guy queried if someone would to ask the Nova Scotia if their upstairs room would be available sometime in December for this and if they could prepare snacks and how much that might cost? There is a £200 favourable variance for refreshments in the herb planter budget. This could go towards the Christmas Party.

People could buy their own drinks. The FrANC committee could mingle and make sure people know about the committee and that we need members from time to time so, hopefully, we don't fall short of numbers in the future.

We could also have a donation jar or can for FrANC to raise money for future endeavours.

ACTION – Ed will have a word with Mark at the Nova Scotia.

What's App Groups: Laura queried if we are using our social media enough? eg there aren't many members on FrANC photos.

Bridget is the admin so we should discuss this at the next meeting. We also have an Instagram and Facebook account. Will include this in the discussion. **ACTION – Bridget**

Any other business:

Ed was interviewed by BBC television this morning. They wanted his opinion about the state of the bridges on the New Cut. He showed them a sycamore and buddleia growing out of the banana bridge. Huge lumps of moss are growing there as well. It should be on Sunday as a part of Politics Today. Odd bits may be on the local news on Friday or Monday.

Our register of members is MailChimp.

Lizzi has been approached by member Steven Mason who suggested a celebration of the Chocolate Path. Perhaps a walk. It will be discussed at the signs/rebrand subcommittee meeting to see if Tess might take this on. **ACTION – Laura, Roy, Ed, and Tess**

James emailed the council about the Chocolate Path gate to Vauxhall Bridge being locked.

The Gaol Ferry Bridge opening was rammed. Laura was able to get a nice piece on the website.

Date/time/place of next committee meeting: the AGM in December. Andrew, Laura, Ed (if available) and Guy to meet and sort this out. Guy will look at the constitution to find out the notice period. Perhaps we should try the Underfall Yard again on a Saturday **ACTION – Andrew, Guy, and Laura**

The next committee meeting will take place 13 March 2024 at 7pm in the estate management office for Baltic Wharf.