

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC) Committee meeting Minutes

Wednesday 11 Mar 2026

Location: 17 Bathurst Basin

Present: Phil Cass, Sue Chubb, Matthew Feltham, Laura Demery (Treasurer), Ed Hall, Andrew Jenkins (Chair), Lizzi Testani (Vice Chair & Secretary)

1. Apologies for absence

No apologies. Thank you to Laura for hosting meeting and providing refreshments.

2. Minutes of last meeting and actions arising

See updated action list below.

Note added: FrANC is now an official part of Bristol Harbour Community Nature Reserve. Committee discussed and aware of exciting work underway to expand wildlife habitats in the Harbour.

3. Review of finances

Treasurer notes that we currently have £1,797.37 in the bank.

Upcoming expenses:

- £40-70 for drinks/coffee
- £14.39 for annual domain renewal
- £5 per month bank charges

Fundraising: Committee agreed that we do not need to conduct additional fundraising activities imminently due to sufficient funds in bank account, but should these get low, we will relaunch a crowdfunder and explore funding options, including potential to re-apply to John Lang Foundation (from 2028 onwards) after its kind 2025 grant to FrANC.

Banking: Laura confirmed that FrANC is not eligible for free banking option identified by a member. Committee agreed to stay with our existing banking option, noting the potential in future to move bank for ethical reasons but no urgent action required.

4. Butterfly Junction update

Volunteers: New volunteers have joined since the last AGM which has been really positive. Each month Brambles and Ivy are removed from the main site. We litter pick the main plot and cycle way and borders down to Underfall Yard. We also weed around all the trees, holly bushes and planters.

Bulb Planting: In December we planted the allium and fritillary bulbs that FrANC kindly funded. There are good signs that's the alliums have taken and are pushing up leaves. The bulbs we planted are Allium 'Purple Sensation'. It is a striking ornamental onion that attracts butterflies and other pollinators, as its florets are rich in nectar. The flowers are long lasting and appear in late spring to early summer. These flowerheads are packed with nectar, providing a food source for butterflies and other pollinators like bees and hoverflies. We also planted a number of Snakes Head Fritillary bulbs

These are great for pollinators – bulbs such as fritillaries, crocus and alliums provide vital early nectar for bees and butterflies when other flowers are scarce. However we did not see

any signs of these bulbs at the moment. It is possible they have not taken because we had so much rain from December onwards, but we will keep an eye out to see if we spot any signs of growth in April. We also saw in flower, recently planted Snowdrops and also Muscari and Daffodils.

Apple Tree: A new Apple tree has also been recently planted on the walk and cycle way to Underfall Yard.

Ashton Avenue Trees: Ten apple and pear trees were planted near the Pumping station by Ashton Avenue last Friday. The Council planted them with the help of volunteers. The Council will maintain them longer term, I hope this will include crucial watering in the Summer as the trees are quite small and will need additional care.

Seeds sown on the main site: In our March Saturday session we cleared some ground on the main patch and planted the following seeds:

- Devils Bit Scabious: its pincushion-like flower heads attract a wide variety of bees and insects. It is also the foodplant for the declining Marsh fritillary butterfly.
- Ragwort: It is a main food source for the Cinnabar moths and also for bees. Mixed Wildflower seed was also scattered.

Moth Trapping: Matthew has recently applied to be trained in moth trapping and recording so we will then hopefully have access to a moth trap and be able to do some recording surveys on the site, so we can monitor both the butterflies and moths.

Work over the Summer: March is the last month that we work on the main site so the butterflies are left in peace until October. We will be concentrating our efforts on the planters opposite and the cycle and walkway site where our fruit trees and holly bushes are planted. We will also do the butterfly surveys in July and August for Butterfly Conservation and submit our results online as part of the Big Butterfly Count. Guy may well apply to Bedminster Secret Gardens for a grant to buy some more plants for Butterfly Junction at the end of the year. Committee noted ASDA Community Engagement Officer and fund available to support local activities to support purchase of plants for butterfly junction. Guy noted interest in applying for Bedminster Secret Garden. Committee talked about potential to invite FrANC members to Saturday 4 July Community Gardening session which could include: a butterfly count and demonstration of the big butterfly count, tour of plant species and arts and crafts. Sue to check with Guy about this idea.

5. Litter pick update

2025/26 was a successful litter picking season with good engagement from members and lots of new volunteers getting involved. The committee noted an increase in diversity of age of volunteers and also an increase in people joining for coffee after sessions – both welcome developments!

We noted the challenge of getting group back together promptly at 11:45am to sign out and reassemble kit – so this will be emphasized in future welcome briefings.

Peroni palace is still an issue and occupies so much of our group's time. We agreed to take a photo of the problem area before picking and note of exact location (i.e. What Three Words) to contact the council and re-alert them to the ongoing issue.

March session to include vegetation clearance to support pedestrian access. This will especially focus on ivy and buddleia clearance due to the damage it does to walls. Conversation meandered onto the topic of cattle washing in Canada.

6. AOB

- **Boat trip:** Phil has checked in with Bristol Ferry Company (and will contact The Bristol Packet) about publicly advertised trips out to Sea Mills and is finding out more information about whether these are possible again.
- **FrANC flyers:** Members to distribute the flyers in Library (Andrew) and treasure hunt in Schools (Lizzi). Laura to explore option to produce a label to apply to 'Discovering Wildlife on the New Cut' updating the contact details.
- **Litter posters:** All to continue to share ideas about development of litter poster, potentially to include using AI to develop.
- **Health and safety:** Sue and Matthew registered to attend BCC's Health and Safety Training for Volunteers on 5 June 2026.
- **Date for next meeting:** 3 June 2026 at 7pm at Laura's house.

ACTIONS (refreshed list with completed actions removed, outstanding actions updated where necessary and new actions added)	STATUS
Andrew re-connecting with Stuart Hatton due to fact that FrANC members regularly report large volumes of litter at South Side of Gaol Ferry Bridge.	AJ to check in with SH, providing a brief update on 2025-26 season, encourage WW residents to get involved with FrANC and feedback on litter hotspots (south of Gaol Ferry) in event that SH has opportunity to influence during development / planning processes and liaison with BCC.
Sue to discuss with Guy appetite for July Community Garden to be promoted to wider FrANC membership and confirm	
Phil / Andrew to note exact location and current status of Peroni Palace and alert the council. (Post-meeting note – there was some litter but significantly lower levels than usual during March's pick).	
Phil to explore options for FrANC member ferry trip with Bristol Ferries / Bristol Packet	
Andrew and Lizzi to distribute flyers in library and schools/nursery	
Laura to explore option to print labels to update contact details for FrANC on 'Discovering Wildlife' flyer. Committee to support with label application and distribution.	

