

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)
Minutes of General Meeting held at the Nova Scotia Public House on
3rd April 2016

Attended by: Sara Worth (Chair), Tess Green (Vice-Chair), Derek Hughes (Secretary), Richard Clutterbuck, Margaret Fay, Roy Gallop and Angie Tonge (Committee Members) and Chantal Chamberlain, Jane Cooke, Cynthia Palmer and Terry Hill.

1. Welcome

Sara welcomed those present to the meeting¹.

2. Purpose of Meeting and Agenda

The purpose of the meeting was primarily to update the FrANC membership on the progress of the various tasks being undertaken under the terms of the “Sharing Heritage” Grant received in October 2015 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The meeting was also intended to provide an opportunity for the membership to make suggestions regarding the content and functionality of the proposed new FrANC Website.

The Agenda for the meeting may be found in page 1 of the presentation contained in Appendix 1, which also contains a summary of the Agenda items that were presented during the meeting.

3. “Sharing Heritage” Grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund

3.1 Background

- FrANC was awarded a “Sharing Heritage” Grant of £9,900 from the HLF October 2015.
- The Grant covers the following five main objectives to be completed by the end of September 2016:
 - clear the York Road Riverbank between Bedminster Bridge and Bath Road Bridge of rubbish and overgrown vegetation (budget: £2,500);
 - install two new benches along the same stretch of riverbank (budget: £2,300);
 - design and install two new Interpretation Boards at separate locations on the New Cut (budget: £4,400);
 - design and produce a leaflet describing a self-directed walk around the New Cut, linked by the six existing and two new Interpretation Boards (budget: £200);
 - run a “Celebration Event” to encourage people to become more involved in the heritage of their local area, and to help maintain it. This would be particularly aimed at the residents who live on either side of the New Cut along York Road and Clarence Road (budget: £500).

¹ Note: although this was publicised as a General Meeting, apart from Committee Members only four of the FrANC membership were present.

3.2 Progress to date

- **York Road Riverbank Clean-up**

- Overgrown vegetation/brambles and trees have been cut back 1 metre from the pavement fencing by *Volunteering Matters* (formerly Community Service Volunteers (CSV)), assisted by *ParkWork* (Bristol Parks Forum initiative for people returning to work).
- Clearance of exposed litter is currently in progress by FrANC volunteers:
 - Four two-hour Clean-up sessions have been completed to date (on February 29th and March 7th, 14th and 31st ;
 - Visible litter and rubbish has been cleared along the riverbank between Bedminster Bridge and the junction between York Road and Spring Street. Examples of rubbish collected are shown on page 3 of Appendix 1;
 - Two more Clean-up sessions are planned for April 7th and 14th – the objective is to reach Langton Street (Banana) Bridge.
- The feasibility of clearing the remaining stretch of riverbank between Langton Street Bridge and Bath Road Bridge by the end of April/beginning of May will depend on vegetation growth and the availability of volunteers (informative leaflets have been posted to York Road residents).

- **Installation of two new benches**

- Two new benches are to be installed along York Road and/or Clarence Road; four preferred locations have been suggested by FrANC for consultation, as shown on page 4 of Appendix 1.
- There has been extensive correspondence (from Sara) with numerous Bristol City Council officers regarding the type of bench to be installed and the suitability of preferred locations (e.g. adequate pavement width).
- A FrANC news bulletin was issued for circulation amongst local Neighbourhood Partnerships asking recipients to choose which two of the four possible bench locations they would prefer (attendees at this General Meeting were also invited to indicate their preferences using the voting slip shown in Attachment 1).

- **Interpretation Boards**

- Two new Interpretation Boards, of a similar layout to that of the six existing boards, are to be installed at Bathurst Basin and on Bath Road Bridge.
- Workshops have been held with FrANC Committee Members to agree the informative text to be incorporated on each board and mock-ups of the proposed board layouts have been produced, as shown on pages 5 and 6 of Appendix 1.
- The mock-ups will be passed to *Inkwood Design* who will produce the final artwork. The printing of each Interpretation Board and manufacture and installation of the support frames will be carried out by *Arien Designs Ltd.* (installation planned by early summer).

3.3 Remaining Activities

- **Design of New Cut Leaflet**

- FrANC has already published three leaflets which contain (i) an introduction to the group, (ii) information about the New Cut wildlife and

(iii) a leaflet about the butterflies that have been found, especially at Butterfly Junction.

- Work is yet to start on the design of a new leaflet that will describe a self-directed walk around the New Cut, linking the historical and natural heritage of the area. This new FrANC leaflet will describe a circular walk around the full length of the New Cut incorporating the Interpretation Boards - including the two new boards described previously.
- The Committee believes that the design of the leaflet text and artwork is within the capability of FrANC members, and therefore only basic printing costs (£200) have been budgeted for in the HLF grant. *We therefore wish to recruit a small team of volunteers from the FrANC membership to help us progress this.*
- It was suggested that printed copies of the leaflet should be deposited in the Tourist Information Centre (in E-Shed on Narrow Quay), Bristol Central Library and Bristol Zoo Gardens, as well as in The Southville Centre.

- **Celebration Event in September 2016**

- It is planned to hold a "Celebration Event" to mark the end of the HLF project, probably some time in September. The most promising local venue is St. Mary Redcliffe & Temple School on Clarence Road, who have been approached and are prepared to make the school premises available at this time.
- It is envisaged that the event will include activities and talks to promote the work done during the project and will seek to encourage a wider demographic of local residents to become more aware of the heritage and wildlife of the New Cut.
- We are therefore asking for volunteers to come forward from the FrANC membership so that we can set up another team who will be responsible for
 - o Organising and planning the event (including hire of suitable premises (if applicable), provision of light refreshments and producing materials for displays, etc);
 - o Advertising the event through local schools, businesses, other community groups and the Neighbourhood Partnerships.
- The event will also provide an opportunity to celebrate FrANC's 10th birthday.
- It was suggested that perhaps a Wildlife Photography Competition could be run in order to engage the students of St. Mary Redcliffe & Temple School.

4. Design of New FrANC Website

- FrANC has recently been successful in obtaining £1,000 from a pot of money allocated to Bristol City Council's Local Nature Reserves which will be used to produce a new FrANC Website.
- The current FrANC Website is considered to be out-dated and because of its design it is difficult to change its content – the Committee has to rely on the services of a FrANC member who is a computing specialist! This means that at present it cannot be updated in a timely manner.

- The Committee therefore wants to build a completely new Website from scratch, using state-of-the-art software tools (e.g. WordPress).
- Before starting on the Website design, the Committee would like the FrANC membership's ideas regarding what they would like to see on it (Website content) and what functionality they would like to see incorporated into it. Possibilities could include:
 - Details of future FrANC events (Clean-ups, Walks, Talks, Meetings, etc.);
 - Archive for FrANC photos/videos, AGM Reports, Minutes of Committee Meetings;
 - Repository for downloadable leaflets and other documents;
 - Ability to load photographs or videos onto the Website (subject to Committee approval!).

5. Any Other Business

- We currently do not have enough litter pickers to support the number of volunteers who regularly turn up to help with FrANC riverbank clean-ups. Margaret Fay suggested that we should investigate what types are commercially available, and mentioned a “high-tech” spring-loaded design which should be easier to use.
- The amount of rubbish deposited in the New Cut riverbed continues to be an eyesore and it is proving very difficult to find an organisation that is prepared to take on the task of removing it. It was noted that some years ago a local Caving Club had volunteered to carry out this task, with some success, and Chris Whale (husband of Tracy Whale, a former FrANC Treasurer) was suggested as a possible contact.

Derek Hughes
Secretary, Friends of the Avon New Cut

FrANC Voting Slip – New Bench Location

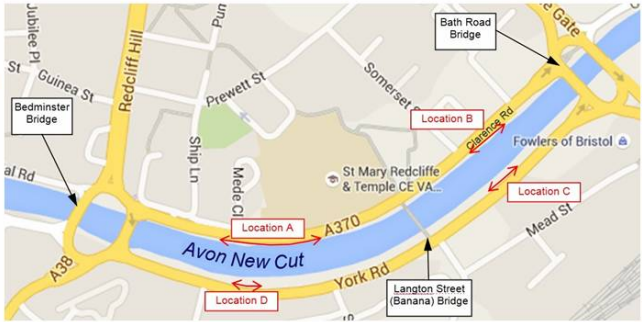
(1) Which **two** of the four possible bench locations shown right do you prefer (circle preferences below)?

A B C D

(2) Any reasons for these preferences?

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Attachment 1

Voting Slip for New Bench Location

APPENDIX 1

**PRESENTATION DELIVERED AT
FrANC GENERAL MEETING
ON 3RD APRIL 2016**

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)

General Meeting on 3rd April 2016



Agenda

- “Sharing Heritage” Grant from Heritage Lottery Fund
 - Background
 - Progress to date
 - York Road Riverbank Clean-up (Vegetation and Rubbish)
 - Benches
 - Interpretation Boards
 - Remaining Activities
 - Design of New Cut Leaflet
 - Celebration Event in September 2016
- Design of new FrANC Website
 - Suggestions for website content and required functionality

“Sharing Heritage” Grant from Heritage Lottery Fund Background

- FrANC awarded “Sharing Heritage” Grant of £9,900 from Heritage Lottery Fund in October 2015

- Five main objectives (completed by end of September 2016) :
 - York Road Riverbank Clean-up
 - Two new benches
 - Two new Interpretation Boards
 - Leaflet describing a self-directed walk around the New Cut
 - “Celebration Event”

“Sharing Heritage” Grant from Heritage Lottery Fund

Progress to date (1 of 4)

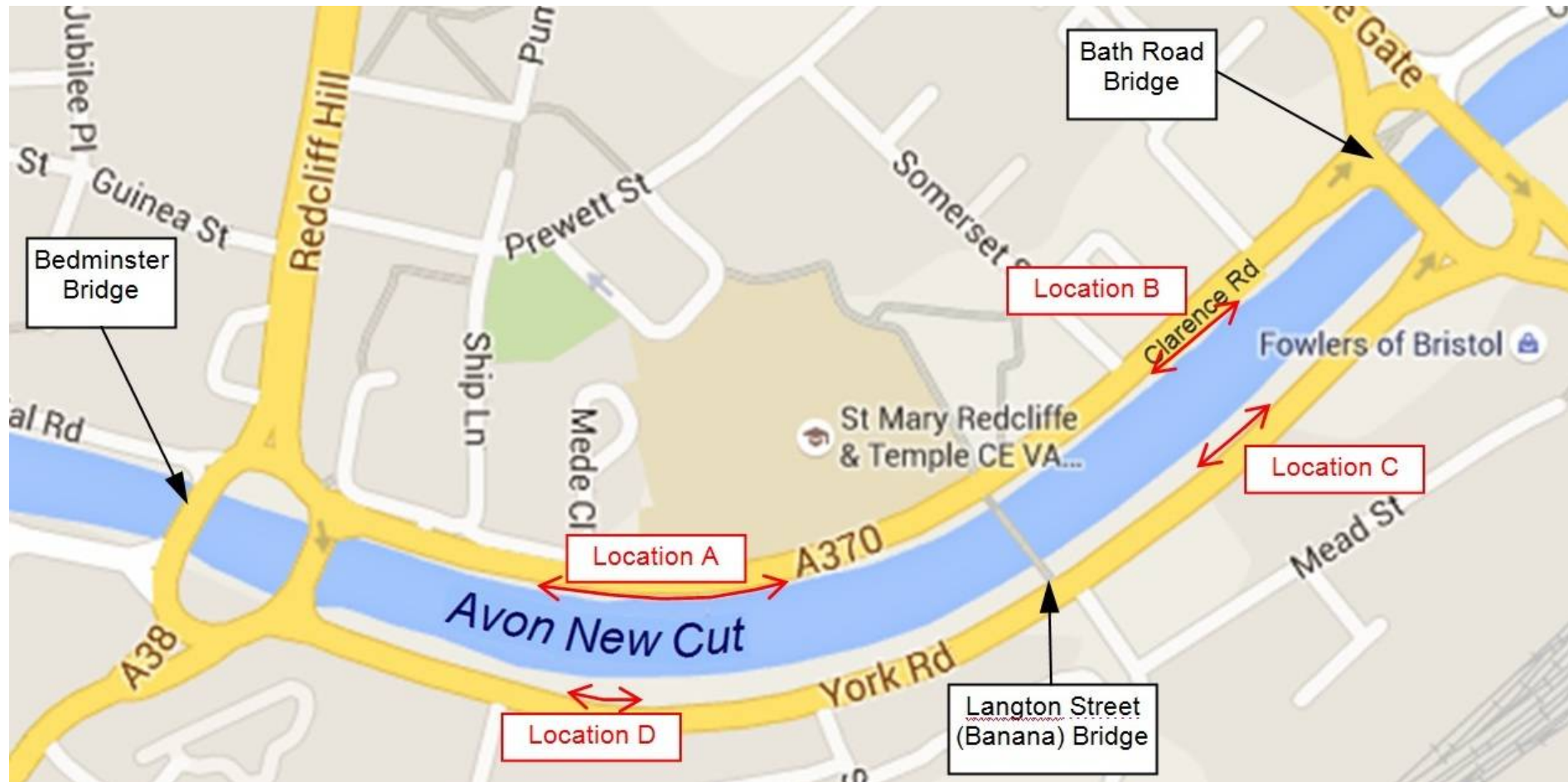
York Road Riverbank Clean-up



“Sharing Heritage” Grant from Heritage Lottery Fund

Progress to date (2 of 4)

Installation of two new benches



- Two out of four possible locations to be selected

“Sharing Heritage” Grant from Heritage Lottery Fund Progress to date (3 of 4)


New Interpretation Board Mock-up: Bathurst Basin



LOTTERY FUNDED


Bathurst Basin

Avon New Cut




Mallard

Painting of Bathurst Basin Lock (circa 1825) by Samuel Jackson



Bristol Museum and Art Gallery / Bridgeman Images copyright

Photograph of Bathurst Basin (circa late 1860s) with a steam coaster about to enter the lock. A tug - the "Dolphin" - is moored nearby in the Avon New Cut. Further up river, a steam packet awaits passengers at the jetty by the new Bristol General Hospital.



Rose Winifred Archive copyright

Welcome to Avon New Cut

The New Cut was dug between 1804 and 1809 to create a tidal-free "Floating Harbour" in Bristol to enable ships to berth safely. Bathurst Basin was formerly known as Treen Mill Pond, a favourite haunt of duck shooters.



River Avon in 1700



Floating Harbour and New Cut in 2016

Bathurst Basin

William Jessop, the engineer of the New Cut, used the Malago stream that flowed into the River Avon through Treen Mill Pond to enter the new Floating Harbour. Jessop excavated the pond and fitted lock gates that facilitated ships locking in and out to await favourable tides. It was the first entrance to be used when the New Cut was opened in 1809, predating the larger locks subsequently built at the Cumberland Basin.

The Bathurst Hotel, now the Louisiana, is contemporary with the basin, both being named after a Bristol member of parliament. The General Hospital (now converted to modern apartments) opened in 1858 and was built on the site of John Acraman's Ironworks, one of the largest in Great Britain. Very early packet steamers sailed from the piers just outside the basin to South Wales, Devon and southern Ireland. The basin was closed and a concrete dam erected at the beginning of the Second World War to prevent the Floating Harbour from draining in the event of the lock gates being hit by bombing.

Wildlife


Mute swans have been seen in Bristol's docks for the past 300 years, before the New Cut was constructed. Mallard ducks are also frequent visitors to Bathurst Basin.


Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC) is working to improve the Cut and its wildlife. If you would like to find out more, or to get involved, please visit our website at www.franc.org.uk, or contact us via email at contact@franc.org.uk

© Design: Inkwood Design | Illustrations: Abi Stubbs

Wildlife Fact:

You can tell male mute swans from female mute swans by their bill - they are brighter orange and have a larger black knob at the base.






Mute Swan

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“Sharing Heritage” Grant from Heritage Lottery Fund

Progress to date (4 of 4)

New Interpretation Board Mock-up: Bath Road Bridge



LOTTERY FUNDED

Bath Road Bridge

Avon New Cut


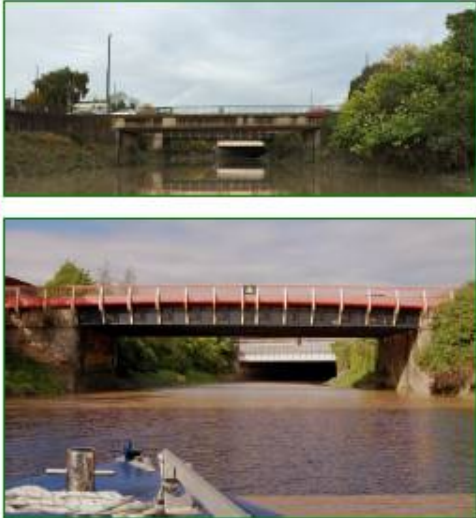




Fig tree

The two present-day bridges as seen from the Avon New Cut



Welcome to Avon New Cut

The New Cut was dug in the early 19th Century to create a tidal-free "Floating Harbour" so ships could berth safely. When the New Cut was constructed a cast iron bridge was built here, known as Hills Bridge, which was supplied by the Coalbrookdale Company, Ironbridge.

Hills Bridge

Hills Bridge was an important part of the stage coach route to Bath, Wells and London. In March 1855 a steam barge delivering coke to the railway works collided with the ribs of the bridge, causing it to collapse completely. A temporary footbridge was erected by June and a road bridge before the end of 1855, which was eventually replaced by a wider one in 1909. Another bridge was built alongside to double the capacity in the 1960s.

By late Victorian times the area's intense industrial growth led to the development of packed slums around the New Cut, resulting in numerous cholera epidemics. A cholera burial ground was located just beyond the railway bridge. Vast parts of the surrounding area were destroyed in the Second World War blitz and subsequently rebuilt, including council tower blocks in the 1960s.


Wildlife


Otters have been seen along this part of the New Cut. Vegetation indigenous to the riverbank includes sea aster, our only native michaelmas daisy, and fig trees.

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC) is working to improve the Cut and its wildlife. If you would like to find out more, or to get involved, please visit our website at www.franc.org.uk, or contact us via email at contact@franc.org.uk

© Design: Inkwood Design | Illustrations: Abi Stubbs
Photography kindly provided by Bob Pitchford and Stephen Mason

Sea aster






Otter

Wildlife Fact:

Otter tracks are webbed and large (hind foot up to 60mm wide and 90mm long) with five toes and a large rear pad. Some toes and the webs may not be visible in mud.



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“Sharing Heritage” Grant from Heritage Lottery Fund

Remaining Activities (1 of 2)

Design of New Cut Leaflet

- 3 FrANC leaflets published to date (plus “Treasure Hunt”)
- **New leaflet** will describe circular, self-directed walk around the New Cut
 - Walk will link 8 Interpretation Boards (including 2 new boards)
 - Describe historical and natural heritage of the area
- Design of leaflet text and artwork to be undertaken by FrANC
- **Recruit small team of volunteers from FrANC membership to help progress this**

“Sharing Heritage” Grant from Heritage Lottery Fund

Remaining Activities (2 of 2)

Celebration Event

- “Celebration Event” planned for September that will
 - include activities and talks to promote the work done during HLF project
 - encourage local residents to become more aware of the heritage and wildlife of the New Cut
- **Volunteers needed from FrANC membership** to help with
 - Organisation and planning (hire of premises / light refreshments / produce material for displays, etc)
 - Advertising (local schools, businesses, other community groups and Neighbourhood Partnerships)
- Event will also provide an opportunity to celebrate FrANC’s 10th birthday!

Design of New FrANC Website

- £1,000 obtained from Local Nature Reserve funds for new FrANC Website
- Problems with current FrANC Website
 - Out-of-date
 - Difficult to edit/change content
- Want to build completely new website, using state-of-the-art software tools (e.g. WordPress)
- Want ideas from FrANC membership for content of new Website and functionality required