

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)
Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 8th September 2014

Attended by: Sara Worth (Chair), Roy Gallop (Vice-Chair), Derek Hughes (Secretary), Elizabeth Payze (Treasurer) and Chris Hanmer (Committee Member).

1. Welcome

Sara welcomed the meeting attendees.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Ed Hall and Margaret Fay (Committee Members). Margaret was unable to attend the meeting owing to illness, and the Committee members present wished her a speedy recovery.

3. Minutes of the last Meeting

The minutes of the last FrANC Committee Meeting held on 11th March 2014 were approved by those present.

4. Matters Arising

The matters arising from the previous meeting may be found in the list of Actions contained in the minutes of that meeting, the current status of which is summarised in Table 1.

Additional comments were provided concerning the following actions:

Action 13-03-03: After having been informed by Eric Dougall (Estate Services Officer) that the start of the proposed Bedminster Bridge – Bath Road Bridge riverbank clean-up will be delayed owing to the non-availability of a subcontractor who is prepared to take on this work, Sara has since written to Eric to ask how best to progress this and is awaiting a reply. Angus Tillotson has volunteered his services to help provide rope access, but this offer has not yet been taken up by Eric – though it is unlikely that Angus alone will be able to complete the job. It has been suggested that FrANC could perform a litter survey prior to the start of any riverbank clearance activities to help identify where the worst areas are.

Action 13-03-12: Chris Murray has already given one tutorial to Sara, Chris (Hanmer) and Derek on how to modify the FrANC website, but another will be necessary! Chris is also looking at options/costs for upgrading the website, but this may not be worth doing if the website is not visited frequently, or if the cost of an upgrade is prohibitive.

Action 14-01-01: this action has not been pursued as, following the conclusion of the Wild City project, Derek is of the opinion that in the current financial climate Bristol City Council are unlikely to fund the cost of any (rather expensive) Bat Detectors.

Action 14-01-04: Sara intends writing to Eric Dougall (and to Noel McDonnell of John Sisk & Sons) to find out if funds are available for the purchase of additional litter-pickers.

Action 14-01-05: Sara has written to John Sisk & Sons to discuss the funding of FrANC projects under the Considerate Constructors Scheme, but was advised that Sisk are not prepared to provide any funding at present until the contributions of the other subcontractors who are involved in the scheme are known. There has been no further contact from Sisk to date, so Sara will chase them up.

5. Status of Local Nature Reserve (LNR) Application

5.1 Management Plan for the Avon New Cut

- The Management Plan for the Avon New Cut – the existence of which is a requirement for the New Cut to be granted Local Nature Reserve (LNR) status - has finally been completed by Oli Roberts from Bristol City Council (BCC). Two bound copies have since been forwarded to Sara by Paula Spiers, the former Wild City Project Officer. Since starting work on the Management Plan at the start of the Wild City Project in 2011, it has taken BCC over 3 years to complete it!
- Derek also has an electronic copy of the Management Plan in PDF format. It was suggested that this could be published on the FrANC Website so that it can be accessed by all FrANC members.

5.2 Timetable for granting of LNR Status

- Following recent e-mail correspondence with Becky Coffin (BCC Nature Conservation Officer) concerning the status of the application for the Avon New Cut to be recognised as a LNR, which was expected to have been completed by June of this year, Sara learned that this is now unlikely to happen until the end of this year (or beyond) owing to the lack of available resources at BCC following financial cutbacks and staff redeployments.
- Chris offered to write to Councillors Mark Wright and Charlie Bolden to ask them to investigate the reasons for the apparently interminable delay in getting this LNR application progressed, and whether anything can be done to move this forward.
- Becky Coffin has recently got married and is now known as Becky Belfin.

6. Operational Matters

6.1 Autumn Newsletter 2014

- It was agreed that an Autumn Newsletter should be published to update the FrANC membership on forthcoming events, including planned dates for next year's riverbank clean-ups. Sara and Chris offered to compile this.

6.2 Review of Butterfly Junction Management Brief

- Derek reported that a review of the Butterfly Junction Management Brief had been held with Ben Barker and Barney Smith on 28th August (Angus Tillotson had also been invited to attend this meeting, but did not respond to the invitation). The purpose of the review was to discuss whether the current practice of scheduling FrANC's annual maintenance activity on this site for the last month of the year, as well as the activities themselves, complied with the recommendations in the Management Brief.
- The following recommendations were made by Ben, Barney and Derek regarding future Butterfly Junction maintenance activities:
 - (i) no change to the area of Butterfly Junction currently maintained by FrANC (i.e. the area currently bounded by the CREATE Centre car park and the Harbour Railway platform);
 - (ii) the cutting back of brambles and other invasive plants, which is the primary maintenance activity undertaken by FrANC volunteers, should continue to be scheduled for the end of the year (early December).

- (iii) the main change to our current maintenance practices concerns the timing and frequency of grass cutting. In keeping with the recommendations in the Management Brief, this should be undertaken in September. Also, the practice of cutting a long sinusoidal swathe through the short and tall grass should only occur once every three years, with a random 2m x 2m “block” of tall grass adjacent to the Harbour Railway platform being cut in intervening years.
- As a “long, sinusoidal swathe” of grass had been cut during the last FrANC meadow management activity in November 2013, it was agreed during the review that the next significant grass cutting at Butterfly Junction would not be necessary until the end of 2016. For the maintenance activity scheduled for later this year, a 2m x 2m area of tall grass next to the railway platform was identified for cutting, which had not been touched last year.
- Derek also reported that Ben Barker had forwarded drawings sent by Neil Piper from BCC showing the location of two planned Metrobus construction compounds on either side of the area of Butterfly Junction maintained by FrANC (one of these is in the CREATE Centre car park!). Derek was actioned to contact Neil Piper to establish (a) the planned date for the start of construction of the Metrobus route near Ashton Avenue Bridge (to confirm whether this was likely to clash with the next FrANC Butterfly Junction maintenance activity planned for early December 2014), and (b) to request FrANC involvement/consultation in the plans for the protection of the Butterfly Junction site, and establish whether access will in fact be available for future meadow management activities while construction of the Metrobus route is in progress.

7. Treasurer’s Report

- Liz presented an audited copy of the annual FrANC accounts from 1st June 2013 to 31st May 2014, which is shown in Table 2. The nett balance shown in the accounts up to the end of May is £965.69 in credit, but with additional income subsequently received from several miscellaneous items the balance currently stands at around £1000.
- Sara suggested that a way of raising money would be by taking part in a car boot sale. To this end we would be looking to sell unwanted items donated by FrANC members to raise funds for FrANC. These items could be dropped off by FrANC members either at 88 Cumberland Road, or possibly at the Southville Centre for collection.
- Chris offered to do a recce of the locations of suitable local car boot sales by the end of this year.

8. Events Planning 2014-2015

- **Butterfly Junction Maintenance:** this was provisionally set for Saturday 6th December 2014, which is the same date as the CREATE Centre Christmas Fayre. This date is subject to confirmation by BCC officers that access to the Butterfly Junction site will not be affected by the Metrobus construction timetable (see para. 6.2 above).
- **Riverbank Clean-ups:** the following dates were set for 2015:
 - Coronation Road (North Bank) on 24th January

- Cumberland Road/Harbour Railway track (South Bank) on 28th February
- Bedminster Bridge to ASDA car park (North Bank) on 21st March
- **Themed Walks:** Roy suggested two possible themed walks for next year:
 - a walk around the Underfall Yard, to be discussed with the manager, Alf Perry;
 - a circular walk crossing as many bridges in Bristol as possible.

Roy was requested to progress the planning of these walks if they are considered to be feasible.

- **Butterfly (and other Wildlife) Surveys:** an impromptu butterfly survey at Butterfly Junction had been organised by Derek in July/August of this year as part of the nationwide “Big Butterfly Count”, run by a charity called *Butterfly Conservation*. Unfortunately, apart from Derek, only one FrANC member (Jane Clutterbuck) had contributed to the survey. Derek was keen to repeat the survey next year, with the intention of it becoming an annual event in the FrANC calendar. It was suggested that, with more notice being given beforehand, it may be possible to recruit a band of volunteers from within the FrANC membership and set up a rota for surveying the Butterfly Junction site. Accessibility to the site may be limited next year, however, if the construction of the Metrobus route near Ashton Avenue Bridge goes ahead.

9. Any Other Business

- **“Towards Hydrocitizenship” Project:** last year, at the request of Helen Adshead, Derek had written a letter on behalf of FrANC in support of a funding application for the “Towards Hydrocitizenship” Project. This project is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and its objectives are to “.....investigate, and make creative contributions to, the ways in which citizens and communities live with each other and their environment in relation to water in a range of UK neighbourhoods”. Derek reported that he had since been contacted by Lindsey McEwen of the University of the West of England (UWE) and had been advised that their funding bid on behalf of Bristol had been successful! Lindsey and the other project team members are keen to get FrANC involved in this 3-year project, though it is still unclear (at least to Derek) exactly what FrANC’s involvement will be! Following a meeting attended by Derek at UWE on 31st July, Lindsey had suggested that a walk around the New Cut would be a useful familiarisation exercise for those involved in the project. Roy said that he would be available to provide the necessary expert knowledge on such a walk, though no firm date has yet been fixed – either a Saturday or Sunday in September or October was preferred by Lindsey.
- **New Bridges across the New Cut:** since the last Committee meeting, Chris and Derek reported that they had attended monthly “workshops” organised by John Usher from Sustrans and Nick Pates from BCC concerning various cycling projects that have been proposed for funding under the Cycle City Ambition Grant. Two of these projects concern the construction of new bridges across the New Cut. It is planned to site one new “Junction Lock-type” bridge immediately next to the Banana Bridge, which is intended primarily for use by cyclists as it has proved difficult to modify the Banana Bridge to make it more “cycle-friendly”. The other new bridge being proposed is more ambitious, and will connect the junction at Camden Road/Coronation

Road on the south bank of the New Cut with the Chocolate Path on the north bank, at the location of the Cumberland Road rail bridge. Derek and Chris are both concerned that the current plans require the Chocolate Path to be raised by about 2m at the landing point of the bridge on the north bank, and that new ramps will be constructed to connect with the existing Chocolate Path and cycleways. It is also planned to landscape the area around the FrANC bench and John Purkiss memorial tree, with the possibility that both of these may need to be relocated. Derek and Chris have raised their concerns about this, plus that fact that if the new bridge is built it appears likely that the current views from the FrANC bench looking eastwards along the New Cut towards Vauxhall Bridge will be lost.

- **Bristol 2015 European Green Capital Neighbourhood Partnerships Fund:** this £250,000 fund has been set up to provide a grant of £10,000 to each Neighbourhood Partnership (NP) in Bristol. The aim of the fund is to enable every neighbourhood in the city to play an active part in identifying and delivering projects for Bristol's European Green Capital year in 2015. Liz reported that she had received an application form, which had to be submitted by 30th September. Sara and Chris offered to fill in the form, with the intention of applying for funding to cover the commissioning of guided walk information packs for use by adult groups or schools.
- **Copies of FrANC Booklet held by Southville Centre:** Liz offered to enquire whether any copies of the FrANC booklet entitled "A Celebration of the Avon New Cut" are held by the Southville Centre, and to retrieve them if necessary.
- **Tobacco Factory Market:** it was reported that the 10th anniversary of this weekly market will be held on Sunday 5th October. The possibilities of sharing a promotional table for the distribution of FrANC leaflets or the sale of FrANC booklets were discussed.
- **Status of book entitled "The Upper Cut":** Roy reported that Fiducia Press had applied to the Greater Bedminster Community Partnership for a funding contribution to get this book published, as it had not been possible to do so during the Wild City Project owing to the ill-health of the author, Ken Griffiths. The book is primarily aimed at upper juniors/first year seniors who attend schools in the Redcliffe area.

10. Date of next meeting

- The next meeting was likely to be the AGM, possible dates being either 16th or 23rd November. As it was proposed to hold this on a Sunday afternoon, it was suggested that the upstairs meeting room at the Nova Scotia pub might be a suitable venue and Derek and Sara were actioned to confirm if this was available on either of the above dates. Roy offered to give an illustrated talk after the AGM on the "Lost Harbours of the Bristol Channel".
- Note that Table 1 includes any new actions raised at this meeting.

Derek Hughes
Secretary, Friends of the Avon New Cut

Action No.	Description	Actioned by	Status
13-03-03	Contact Eric Dougall to confirm when May Gurney Bedminster Bridge – Bath Road Bridge riverbank clean-up will occur, and co-ordinate any possible involvement by FrANC. Also discuss removal of buddleia from Harbour Railway stone walls.	Sara	<i>In Progress</i>
13-03-11	Contact ASDA for assistance with Riverbank Clean-up opposite ASDA car park on 22 nd March 2014	Sara	<i>Completed</i>
13-03-12	Contact Chris Murray to arrange FrANC Website maintenance tutorial	Sara	<i>In Progress</i>
14-01-01	Contact Paula Spiers to find out if alternative funds are available to cover the purchase of two bat detectors	Derek	<i>Superseded</i>
14-01-02	Write and publish Spring 2014 FrANC Newsletter	Sara, Chris, Margaret	<i>Completed</i>
14-01-03	Organise meeting with Ben Barker, Angus Tillotson and Barney Smith to discuss Butterfly Junction Management Brief, possible Butterfly/Bird Survey in Summer 2014 and suggestion for “landscaping” Butterfly Junction (Wellbeing Fund proposal)	Derek	<i>Completed</i>
14-01-04	Contact Eric Dougall to find out if surplus Estate Services funding is available to cover the purchase of additional litter pickers	Sara	<i>In Progress</i>
14-01-05	Organise meeting with Noel McDonnell to discuss FrANC proposals for projects funded by Considerate Constructors Scheme	Sara	<i>In Progress</i>
14-01-06	Confirm availability of Pete Andresson for New Cut Geological Walk on 9 th July 2014	Roy	<i>Completed</i>
14-02-01	Draft/send letter to Mark Wright/Charlie Bolden asking them to look into delays in granting of LNR status for Avon New Cut	Chris	<i>New Action</i>
14-02-02	Contact Neil Piper re. Metrobus route construction timescales in vicinity of Butterfly Junction, FrANC involvement/consultation in protecting site and provision of site access for FrANC maintenance activities while construction of Metrobus route in progress	Derek	<i>New Action</i>
14-02-03	Write and publish Autumn 2014 FrANC Newsletter	Sara, Chris	<i>New Action</i>
14-02-04	Fundraising – do recce. of locations of local car boot sales, before Christmas 2014	Chris	<i>New Action</i>
14-02-05	Contact Alf Perry (Manager of Underfall Yard) to see if themed walk around boatyard possible as FrANC event in 2015	Roy	<i>New Action</i>
14-02-06	Investigate/formulate walking route for Circular Walk around Bristol Bridges – another possible FrANC walking event for 2015	Roy	<i>New Action</i>
14-02-07	Complete/submit application form for Bristol 2015 European Green Capital Neighbourhood Partnership funding (by 30 th September)	Sara / Chris	<i>New Action</i>
14-02-08	Contact Southville Centre and retrieve any copies of FrANC booklets held by them	Liz	<i>New Action</i>
14-02-09	Contact Chris Murray to update FrANC website with details of AGM and dates for Riverbank Clean-ups in 2015	Sara	<i>New Action</i>

Table 1 **FrANC Committee Action List**

Friends of the Avon New Cut

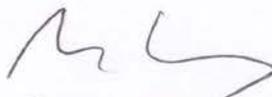
Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st May 2014

	2013-2014
Income	
Guided Literary Walk	£45.00
Bat Detecting Walk	£15.00
Bristol 99 donation	£30.00
Sale of books	£35.00
Bristol City donation	£110.44
Medicinal Walk (Iain Stewart)	£58.00
Total Income	£293.44
Expenditure	
Payment for Literary Walk	£30.00
Payment for Bat Detecting Walk	£30.00
Volunteer Expenses x 4	£156.92
BTCV (Insurance)	£196.76
Brunel Engraving (John's plaque)	£125.64
Chew Valley Trees (John's tree + delivery/stake/ties)	£79.38
Portable Speakers	£80.44
Clear Media	£62.04
Clear Media (Domain Reg)	£14.51
Iain Stewart (Medicinal Walk)	£30.00
Total Expenditure	£805.69
Balance Brought Forward	£1,477.94
Balance Carried Forward	£965.69

Independent Examiner's Report

I have examined the Group's accounts for the year ended 31st May 2014. In the course of my examination of the records provided, no matter came to my attention which gave me cause to believe that the Group has not kept proper and accurate accounting records.

Name: Andrew Yearsley, ACA



Address: 18 St Stephens Court, Undy, Caldicot NP26 3PR

Date: 02/09/2014