**FOD+AG Annual General Meeting**

Wednesday 16 November 2017 at 19:00

Redland Green Bowling Club • Redland Road • Redland • Bristol BS6 7HE

1. **Robert Westlake** - Welcome.

 **Jack Penrose** – Since FOD+AG was established in February 2008, it has gained a reputation as an effective team.

**2. Apologies**: Susan Carter, Janet Dixon, Joan Gubbin, Jonathan Baker, Jenny Ellis, Christine Menzies, Janice marsh, Ann and Rob Lawrence, Rachel Hemming-Bray, Yvonne Barratt, Stephanie Wooster, Kean Lamb, Terry Hannan, Geoff and Bernice Gollop.

3. **Minutes** of 2016 AGM were approved and signed off by **Jack Penrose**.

4. **Treasurers Report:** Bob Bell gave a summary of income and expenditure, and explained there was a cushion of unrestricted funds on deposit. He also explained that there seemed to be a need to ask for grants or donations for many of the projects that are undertaken by the Association, and suggested that there was a need to consider increasing the income.

 The Accounts had been previously examined and signed off by the chairman, there were no issues raised from the floor.

5. **Minor Changes to Constitution:**

 5.1 Bob Bell said that the existing text gave little structure to sub-committees or their governance. There was also the implied requirement that the Chair had to attend every sub-committee meeting. The proposed motion was to improve this section of the constitution. Motion proposed by Bob Bell.

 In favour 47, Abstentions = 1, Against = 0. The motion was carried.

5.2 Bob Bell introduced the subject of subscriptions: It was proposed that the start of the Subscription year should be changed from 10th January to the 1st November, to bring it in line with the financial year. The motion was proposed by Bob Bell.

 In favour 47, Abstentions 1, Against = 0. The motion was carried.

6. **Subscriptions – Rationalisation:** Currently Individual subscriptions are £10 and the Family subscription is also £10. It was proposed by Bob Bell that the Family subscription should be increased to £20, and he pointed out that a Family subscription could be converted into 2 Individual memberships. An amendment was proposed from the floor that the figure for Family Subscription should be £19. This amendment was carried with 26 voted in favour, and 8 against. The amended motion was then put. In favour 26, 5 against, and 3 abstentions. The motion was carried.

7. **Honorary Life Memberships:** It was approved that Gayle Tate for her splendid work at Café Retreat, and Mandy Levers for her constant support and enthusiasm be awarded Honorary Life Membership. Proposed by Jack Penrose, Seconded by Colin Butcher.

8. **Election of Committee:** The following twelve people had been nominated and were therefore elected Caroline Baker, Bob Bell, Richard Bland, Derek Catterall, Martin Collins, Karen Findlay, Joan Gubbin, Terry Hannan, Robin Haward, Jack Penrose, Jac Solomons, and Robert Westlake.

**9. Report of Activities during the last 12 months:**

 9.1 Botanical Garden Monitoring , Scrub clearance operation and Tulip Trees.

 **Richard Bland:** Bristol City Council has published their Parks Consultation document on the BCC website, a saving of £2.5m is required, and an increase of events held on the Downs will be the outcome. It was suggested that members visit the website to influence the decision. The Botanic Garden has been closely monitored since 2012, as have the scrub removal sites. A request was made for volunteers to assist in these activities. After very successful ivy and bramble removal, sessions will in future take place on the first Sunday of the month during the winter.

 9.2 Plants within the Goat enclosure, Deep litter and Butterflies.

 **Martin Collins:** The Goats have achieved their objective; the Gully is a rich area, with a total of 151 species. There is a question over the future of meadow restoration as it has grazing implications, and soil erosion could be a problem. Goat monitoring takes place on Saturday and Sunday, new team members are required.

There were well over 100 volunteers for deep litter clearance during the year, this represents about 1600 person hours, and 2400 black sacks of rubbish cleared. It has saved the Council approximately £16,000.

The Butterfly surveys show a slight improvement on the 2016 results but do not measure up to previous years’ numbers. By introducing the goats, the community of plants is now less varied, there are more limestone meadow species. The difference between the Gully and the Downs is not so marked, Nearly 60% of UK Butterfly species are now evident. But we must remain vigilant.

9.3 Canopy Gardening, Alexanders and Dead Hedging

**Robin Haward:** The dominance of Alexanders has been reduced and it is now possible to walk on the Portway without going on the road. Dead Hedging on Circular Road, has nudged the runners away from the flower meadow.

9.4 Completion of the Haven

**Robert Westlake:** In 2016 The Haven became Grade ll Listed. Skilled repairs were carried out and it is restored to its former glory by dedicated volunteers, it is maintained by FODAG.

FODAG funded an information panel in conjunction with the Redland and Cotham Amenities Society.

**10. Chairman’s Report**

 **Jack Penrose** He stated that car parking facilities on the Downs are poor and in general there is poor governance. There should be absolute transparency in accounting where Downs users generate income for the Downs. He also raised the possibility that wind powered turbines could be used to generate power for street lighting, as in Avignon. He also suggested that FODAG might contribute to improvements in the management of the Downs via the Downs Committee.

 **11. Refreshments were taken.**

**12. Guest Speaker**

 The guest speaker for the evening was Dr Adrienne Tomor. Dr. Tomor is a renowned engineer and is the designer and proposer of a masonry arch bridge for the top of Bridge Valley Road.

 Dr. Tomor extolled the virtues of building a stone bridge and the advantages of masonry over steel or concrete. Maintenance costs for such a structure were small compared to a metal Bridge. The original proposal had been accepted by BCC and then rejected due to dispute over tree replacements; this was subsequently overturned by HM Planning Inspectorate. Funding for the project will now be sought and must be started within five years.

A lively question and answer session brought the formal part of the AGM to a conclusion.