

## **13 December 2022 Meeting Minutes**

### **Attendance**

**Alex Dunn** (SusWoT), **Liz Viggars** (SusWoT), **Roger Moses** (Friends of Badock's Wood), **Peter Coleman Smith** (SusWoT), **Mark Thompson** (Henleaze Lake), **Nikki Jones** (Friends of Sea Mills Meadow)

### **Apologies**

**Alastair Blackwell** (Friends of Blaise), **Di Bunniss** (Friends of Blaise), **Bryony Cole** (Sea Mills and Coombe Dingle Climate Action Group), **Zac Jones** (SMCDCAG)

### **Water Voles and Otters in the River Trym**

SusWoT has received a £900 grant from the Bristol and Avon Catchment Partnership. Peter Coleman Smith is leading the project and will be having quarterly updates with BACP. The project scope is to survey the area for signs of small mammals, to assess and enhance their environment and to train observers. Both Roger and Sian are experienced in small mammal surveys and Sian has identified otter spraint near the Trym.

It is not worth carrying out the survey work before mid-April when voles and otters are more active than they are in winter.

Peter has prepared an article for the Henleaze and Westbury Voice. Peter has had contact with Westbury Park Primary schools in respect of nature walks along the Trym. It was agreed that it would be good to offer to all primary schools. Badocks Wood have contacts with all of them – Peter to obtain details from Frances.

### **Bird Song Training**

Agreed we would look to have 3 sessions around the end of March – actions carried forward from last meeting:

Identify and obtain availability of suitable venues (not far from the river, seating for up to 20, internet access and screen/wall for projection):

- Southmead – Greenway Centre – (Roger)
- Westbury – Wildlife Park? (Liz)
- Sea Mills – Methodist Church (Bryony)

### **Council Cuts to Parks**

25% of the Parks budget is due to be cut and BCC has issued a consultation. In reality there is little that can be done to prevent these cuts – as there is little money that can be diverted from other council services.

It was noted that we have received a lot of support from the Council Parks department over the last year. They have not had resource to help with everything though (eg removing the arisings from mowing Sea Mills Meadow). We will continue to need support from the Council and technical expertise – which could not be expected to be transferred to volunteers.

The most important thing is to respond to the consultation and lobby local councillors. Bristol Park Forums have discussed and suggested possible responses, Badocks Wood have produced posters.

#### Actions

- Liz to circulate Park Forum output from Ella Hogg,
- Roger to circulate Badock's Wood's poster
- Alex to ask Caroline what the cuts might look like.
- All – to raise awareness of the consultation with their organisations' members.

#### **River Cleaning [See map for current situation](#)**

SusWoT continues to run twice-weekly river-cleaning sessions. Parks are sending a truck to the end of the Friday sessions and they collect Sunday's haul on Mondays. Parks weigh the rubbish – and we are currently clearing over 1 tonne per week. A lot of this is historic and includes bricks and rubble. While the bricks do not cause the same level of environmental damage as, for example, plastics or motorbikes, their presence seems to encourage further flytipping.

The main exercises have been focussed on Crow Lane, The Dingle (from the Blaise lower car park to Shirehampton Road) and Southmead Trym Valley. Roger reported that on his last visit to Southmead, the area had looked fairly clean.

The nature of the work means that kit is becoming damaged or worn out. Some of the kit should be repairable (eg rips in waders, re-setting of Ranger Maxes). A Repair Cafe mender suggested we need to look for big patches to repair the waders and look at inner tube kits.

Lots of Voi scooters are being thrown into the river – these can be reported via the Voi app or their website. Voi are fairly quick to pick them up.

Dan reported that the river had been quite deep at the latest clean making access tricky. A ladder might be helpful.

#### **Himalayan Balsam – no update**

#### **Blaise Ponds and Silt Traps**

Alastair reported that there has been little progress recently, but he has been assured that the issue will be dealt with. In the meantime, Friends of Blaise are working on a dead hedge project at the ponds. The aim is to reduce the extent of bank erosion created by dogs.

Caroline is waiting for a structural engineer to assess the extent of the issue with the crumbling bridge and weir identified by Peter. This might be an opportunity to create a more fish-friendly passage there.

### **Funding**

We are currently making use of 2 grants awarded to SusWoT on behalf of Trout in the Trym

£1000 from the Bristol Climate and Ecological Emergency Fund administered via the Quartet Foundation. The money is being used to purchase extra equipment to continue the cleaning work and encourage new groups to get started. The equipment is available to all groups across Trout in the Trym.

£900 from the Bristol and Avon Catchment Partnership for the Voles and Otters Project – see above

### **Pollution Incidents – reporting – no update**

Attendees remain keen to encourage people across the community to report pollution incidents. Wessex Water have been very responsive.

Please continue to notify Peter and Liz of pollution incidents to help with long-term monitoring.

### **Yellow fish and rain in drain awareness – no update**

We will do this, however at the moment schools are overloaded. Peter has emailed the BART project office to find out what happened with the last Yellow Fish Campaign

**Action Peter:** to chase for response

### **Reporting Tools**

SusWoT is working on 2 reporting tools – WoTPlot and a flytipping app. The WoTPlot prototype is available at <https://wotplot.herokuapp.com> Via this page, people can take photos on their mobile phone and upload to a central map. SusWoT used the app to coordinate the Big Tidy around Clover Ground at the end of October. The flytipping app is being developed by 2nd year students from the University of Bristol.

Peter and Dan are developing Google Maps showing the weirs in Blaise.

### **Links to Other Groups/ Projects – no update**

**AOB**

None