



Meeting held at Angies on 1st October 2026

Those attending were: Mary, Angie, Pete, Denis, Andrew, Pip, Sally, Ian, Mike, Lynn and Owen.

Apologies sent were from: Aaron, Liz, Natalie and Sam Burch.

The meeting started with a round of introductions.

Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

BART (Bristol Avon Rivers Trust) and the Wetland Project

Mary informed the group of the current position of the BART Stage 0 River Restoration project. This is a nature-based restoration technique that reconnects a river with its historic, low-lying floodplain rather than confining it to a single modified channel. This is a collaborative project between South Glos Council and BART supported by the River Frome Resilient Fund to alleviate flooding.

Mary showed a HYDRO-MORPH map (which shows depths) provided by BART, of the proposed use of the lower part of the wet meadow area to allow the stream to egress here and flow onward, under a raised boardwalk into the existing Wetland. There will be small shallow scrapes along the way with surplus soil creating hibernacula (which plants and animals can use to pass the winter months).

There are still some permissions needed before the project moves forward and the assigned BART officer is keeping us well informed. We are told there will be a Public Consultation too, so the users of the Valley will be able to see what is proposed and give their views.

Mary and Angie have agreed to be part of the River Detective Project, sampling the water once a month at each end of the Valley.

The consensus of the 'Friends' overall was positive about the project.

We don't know yet whether the Wetland will have its annual one third cut this year and we will ask SGC.

AWT Pollinator Pathways Project

On September 8th, two Avon Wildlife Trust Officers, harrowed and with the help of The Friends, sowed Wildflower Seed on the lower half of the Orchard. This is a regional initiative designed to restore, create, and connect pollen-rich habitats across Bristol, Bath, and the wider Avon area. Patches of the main part of the valley couldn't be used as intended due to the annual cut by SGC not being low enough.

Work update from January 26 from Pete our Monday Workday Manager

226 hours worked

16 sessions averaging 5 volunteers per session

1 session per month Jan and Feb

2 sessions per month March to December

Urgent issues have been addressed outside of routine workdays.

Might have to ration numbers at workdays to a maximum of 6 people per session. Tool carrying is the issue here.

Lynn joined the group and so did Jamie.

Activities:

Orchard: Annual prune, weed and mulch

Litter picking especially from Berms and the stream

Church path tidied to keep clear

Hedge cutter and brush cutter activity

Weeding and splitting snowdrops and planting species daffodils and moving primroses

Coppicing and hedge laying

Bramble & nettle management

Removal of fallen timber and remove/relocate dumped items

Sedge removal and some Pennywort whilst pond was dry

Work from now to Jan 2027 AGM:

Keep paths clear

Bramble & Blackthorn management

Hedge work

Plant and broadcast seed

Reduce Sedge

Tidy pond

Coppicing

Birdbox survey

Brush cutter work to rectify poor grass cutting

Involvement with BART activities

Finances and Grants

Our treasurer informed the group of the current state of our finances. We have this year received grants from Downend Round Table and Heathfest for which we are very grateful.

Other things arising since our January meeting

Young people in the Valley

There were residents and the Friends group concerned about the large numbers of young people using the valley during the year without due care. An area along the stream was used for congregations and large amounts of litter and damage to the stream bank occurred. A tree in the orchard was broken off and twice the fire service was called to the grass in the Orchard aflame.

Whilst we are very aware there are very few places open for activities for the young in the area, we do need to protect the valley for all.

We will try to engage with the young people if the big BART project is approved, to enlist their help and consequently their 'ownership' of the improvements.

Fences /Handrail on the slope/Noticeboards

The fence at the bridle path end of the valley has been lost and it was discussed as to the way forward here. Whilst we want pushchairs and buggy entrance, we don't want horses or motorbikes. We will discuss this with Gary SGC Officer. Mary will put up notices again in relation to horses not using the valley.

Whilst the handrail on the slope into the southern end of the valley was replaced it was not as per request. It needs to be longer. It is apparently on the list of jobs to be done by SGC.

The Perspex on the noticeboard at the bridle path end of the valley is cloudy and one in store from a broken support will be used as a replacement. Denis has been tasked with this.

Trees/Fallen branches /Mulch

There have been large branches falling mainly from Willow during the year. Friends have dealt with these when size allows and SGC have dealt with others.

We do not need any more Mulch at the present time.

Ash trees around the car park at the Bridle path end of the valley were cut down by SGC.

Website

Ian gave us an overview of the use of the Friends Website. It is well used with an average of 250 hits per month. Interestingly some were from the USA, China and even Singapore.

SG Friends Forum Meeting.

We do not have any proposed meetings currently. We are concerned that the Chair of the group has stood down and there is uncertainty as to the continuation of the group.

SGC Thank you evening.

Three of us from the Friends attended a very nice evening at the Hanham Community Centre. There were presentation boards from many groups and very good talks to inform people about different projects undertaken by several groups.

Parish Council Local Nature Action Plan

Sam Burch, one of the Downend and Bromley Heaths Parish Councilors, was unable to join us at our meeting, but we hope she can in the future. She has been very proactive in her role and has been busy with the Hill House Park Nature Reserve, where DBHPC are arranging to lease it from SGC.

Wildlife News

One of the Friends reported seeing 5 Egrets in the trees in the Spring. A Tawny Owl was heard, and the Sparrowhawks have bred here again. Buzzards were reported over the valley.

It was proposed that a Butterfly Survey would be carried out by the Friends next year.

Any other business

The Parish Council was contacted to find out what they used to remove Graffiti. The product was purchased and used on all the benches with some degree of success.

The broken stone wall at the middle entrance to the valley that was broken last year really needs some attention. SGC were asked if they could help but were unable.

Friends plan to meet and do their best to put the stones and the concrete top back in place as it is being used as a route into the valley rather than using the path.

As previously mentioned, young people have left behind a huge amount of litter, plastic boards, wooden crates etc. Most of it is in the stream. It was proposed that one Sunday morning as many Friends as possible could provide a 'chain' to egress this rubbish out of the stream, up the bank, up the lower Orchard and leave at the top of the Orchard. The council will then be asked to remove it for us.

It was suggested that perhaps a connection could be made between our website and a nature reporting link iNaturalist to enable people to submit nature-related news and photos of the area. Ian will investigate this for us.

The dog bin at the middle entrance is causing concern to residents unable to use their gardens when the smell has been so strong. The parish council has been approached and we are awaiting their thoughts on moving it.

Date of the next meeting

There may be an impromptu meeting held on site if the BART project needs further consultation.

The AGM meeting is proposed for **Tuesday 12th of January 2027** to be held at Mary's 22 Beverley Avenue BS16 6SX