



## **Friends of Horfield Common – Background Info**

As our name suggests, our role is a supportive and protective one. Friends of Horfield Common (FoHC) has a commitment to bring benefits to the park, for the benefit of all local residents and wider park users.

Our committee is elected by our members to carry out work on their behalf, between normal meetings. The committee is responsible for the actions of the group, so members should not act without the committee's authorisation. The committee is necessary for our group's work to continue beyond just a short one-off task.

All committee members are volunteers; our volunteers cannot obtain personal financial benefit through being elected.

Our committee can have as many members as the group wants, but there are three essential positions we must have: chairperson, secretary, and treasurer.

### The chairperson

The chairperson helps the group to achieve its aims, sets agendas, conducts meetings and acts as the leader of the group, ensuring its smooth operation. A good chairperson will act as a facilitator, ensuring positive discussions and involving all the group.

### The secretary

The secretary ensures that all members of the group are kept fully informed and that they feel involved and included. The secretary looks after the group's paperwork and records, prepares papers and agendas for meetings, takes minutes of meetings, books meeting rooms, and supports the chairperson.

### The treasurer

The treasurer looks after the financial affairs of the group by keeping accounts and accurate, up-to-date records. The treasurer is responsible for managing our bank account and paying in money, paying bills and managing petty cash and expenses payments and for making financial reports to the committee. The treasurer should be an honest, conscientious and responsible person, preferably with some experience of book-keeping and preparing basic financial statements.

### Other positions

The marketing and social media (press) officer communicates the aims and objectives of the group to the membership and the wider community, including the local press and other media. For FoHC, this includes updates for hyper-local media publications, communications through social media channels including Facebook & the group's website, and member's updates via our mailing list. This position greatly improves the success of the group & ensures that all local residents and members are kept informed about the work we are doing.

Our publicity officer needs to have basic desk top publishing skills and access to a computer. They need to be confident communicating clearly with a wide range of audiences. Copywriting and editing skills are also desirable, as is experience of managing and maintaining websites and/or social media channels.

Other important positions include a fundraiser/bid writer, vice-secretary and vice-chairperson, who assist these two busy positions and provide cover when the secretary and chairperson cannot be available.

We work collectively and seek agreement from all committee members when making any decisions. The group finds its own balance in terms of numbers; too few people on the committee will result in some members being asked to do too much work and be unsustainable but too many can mean it becomes slow and cumbersome to make decisions. To date, we have worked with 6-10 regular volunteer committee members, and a wider pool of 'helping hands' who have been prepared to come along & support events and activities including, for example the annual summer picnic event, and practical work parties (e.g tree planting).

## **Types of work**

### **Practical work includes:**

- Improving footpaths, cycle routes and bridges.
- Cleaning and painting buildings, gates, fences.
- Litter picking.
- Removing graffiti.
- Clearing fly tipping.
- Tree planting.
- Gardening.
- Clearing ditches, ponds and streams.
- Wildlife, flora and fauna surveys.
- Habitat creation.
- Creating wild flower meadows.

### **Developmental work includes:**

- Engaging with local and citywide networks (e.g Neighbourhood Partnerships, Bristol Parks Forum).
- Organising and leading volunteers to undertake practical work parties.
- Organising community events.
- Organising guided walks and talks.
- Applying for grants.
- Fund-raising.
- Carrying out park user surveys.
- Developing education packs and building links to local groups/schools.

## **How we work with the local authority, and other groups**

The parks department's strategy for managing its parks and green spaces is based on the budgets and resources available. Community group involvement adds to these resources by bringing in the energy, knowledge and enthusiasm of the local population. This additional resource can be significant and encourage the local authority to be far more positive about a site than it was before. This has been the case for Horfield Common, which was facing a range of development proposals and the loss of green space under the local authority's proposals 'Area Green Space Plan' published in 2010.

### Bristol Parks Forum

Friends of Horfield Common is a member of Bristol Parks Forum – the umbrella group representing volunteer-led parks groups citywide. The forum meets 4 times annually on a Saturday morning. One of the committee attends each meeting, feeding back to other members.

FoHC is recognised by Bristol City Council, the local authority and landowner, as the community parks group representing the interests of park users for Horfield Common.

### Insurance for our work

### Funding for our work

### Events in the park