



MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

NEWSLETTER

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2010

A S IF the calendar wasn't telling us it's winter, the weather certainly is - brrrr! From an M.V.C.G. point of view, this time of year means subscription renewal and notification of the A.G.M. Since we regard our A.G.M. as also our Birthday Party, I trust that doesn't sound too off-putting! I hope you think renewing your membership is worthwhile, but if you think we could do better - and we could! - please come to the A.G.M. with helpful criticism.

Two major planning issues are in a lull at the moment: the responses on the consultation on the Area Green Space Plans and the Site Allocations proposals are being considered as we go to press, though the AGSP will hit the headlines again very soon when the paper to the Council Cabinet is published which includes recommendations for selling off some parts of some parks. In our comments we have opposed all sell-offs in our area, because we don't believe the AGSP *process* has been good enough. Paul Mizen takes a view from the Council House public gallery on page 5. The other planning matter where we are currently watching and waiting is the proposed new Bristol City F.C. football stadium - outside our area, so we haven't taken a formal view, but of considerable interest and significance for all of us. The next stage of the legal process on the Village Green will probably be early in the new year.

You'll be aware of the 'Neighbourhood Partnerships' which cover the city - ours is called 'Dundry View' and includes Bishopsworth, Hartcliffe and Whitchurch Park wards. You may be less clear about what they do and how they do it. You wouldn't be alone! I've been going to the meetings and have serious *personal* misgivings about the system. But M.V.C.G. is taking a pragmatic view and using whatever emerges to press our concerns. This now includes an 'Environment Sub-Group' which has had its first meeting. We'll keep you posted!

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

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NEWS FROM MANOR WOODS VALLEY L.N.R.

LOOKING THROUGH past issues of the M.V.C.G. *Newsletter* and our diaries, I realise that the Manor Woods Valley Group has existed for six years. Four times a year we try to give our readers an update of events, problems and general news relevant to Manor Woods Valley. We have been supported by a number of M.V.C.G. members and we often have comments from regular users of the open space. But wouldn't it be nice and encouraging if more members contributed? So, if you have been to Manor Woods Valley or plan an outing there soon, please write a piece for us which we can use in the next *Newsletter* so that it reflects the views and experiences of more people.



After a busy spring and summer, autumn has been a quieter time. The highlight was the Fungi Foray lead by Justin Smith on 9 October. A dozen people including five children took part and spent two hours in the meadow looking at fungi of all colours and sizes. Time flew by as Justin is excellent at communicating his knowledge and passion (by the way, don't forget to come to listen to him on 18 January).

In the autumn *Newsletter* we mentioned our meeting with John Walters, the manager of Quadron Services. We are pleased to report this new link has been very fruitful and we have noticed an improvement on the ground; in particular,

litter on paths has been cleared more regularly. The recent gales brought a few branches down across the woodland path and we have reported them.

In October we were contacted by Justin Smith, our Woodland and Wildlife Officer (as well as our fungi expert!). He wanted to let us know that he and his team would be re-cutting the area of scrub in the quarry area (at the back of the industrial estate on Vale Lane). They did some clearing there in the spring. We are delighted with the work as it makes this different type of

habitat more accessible. Justin told us he found six varieties of apples and at least one pear tree and a number of species of lichens. Of course this area would need further management in order to remain open.

However its future is uncertain. The quarry area belongs to Council Property Services, not Parks. You may remember that we fought to have it included in the Local Nature Reserve three years ago. We had to give up as it would have jeopardised the rest of Manor Woods Valley becoming an LNR. You will also remember that Wrings got their planning permission two years ago to extend their yard into part of the quarry area. M.V.C.G. strongly opposed the planning application then. Now, we hear that the part which has just been cleared by the Parks Department has been designated as potential area to be developed. However, it has not been included in the Area Green Space Plan as it should have been in order to allow the public to give their views and include this green space into a general plan. Potentially this will make fighting the development of it for industrial use more difficult. We will have to remain vigilant.

MARIE JO COUTANCHE AND THE
MANOR WOODS VALLEY WORKING GROUP

LATEST UPDATES FROM MANOR WOODS VALLEY

- One of the useful things we learned when we met John Walters of Quadron (see opposite) is that the contract spec. they work to includes an annual clearance of rubbish in the Malago in Manor Woods Valley. M.V.C.G. has done this often in past years, calling it our 'Amphibious Garbage Raid'. Now we've been put out of a job (no complaints!), and John Walters has just confirmed that they will be doing the stream clean-up very shortly.
- Not quite Manor Woods Valley, but just next door: the Group did a lot of work to make the unused grassy space behind Bishopsworth Library more wildlife-friendly. Now we've received a most appreciative 'thank you' letter from the Head of the Library Service.
- Also near the Library garden: two trees were felled while we were working there as part of the work to build a pavement into MWV along where the old toilet block used to be. We have just confirmed with the Council that three trees will be planted, as promised, some time this winter.

LIGHT IS RIGHT? NOT NECESSARILY!

You may remember the excellent speaker we had in March 2009 - Georgie Bigg told us about the work of the Campaign to Protect Rural England. We joined CRPE, and their magazine is always interesting and useful. One of their campaigns is about light pollution, which we always keep in mind when we look at new planning applications. Here's an extract from their magazine ...

Summary results of CPRE's 'Lighting Nuisance Survey 2009/2010' - published in April - reveal deep frustration in communities that have been blighted by light pollution. Eight out of ten respondents said their home view of the night sky had been affected by light pollution, while half said excess light had disturbed their sleep. Many who'd complained to councils had been stonewalled, referred to the EU, or told only lights above a certain age would be replaced.

CPRE has recommended several strategies to improve the situation. Householders should only install minimum-wattage outdoor bulbs, and DIY retailers should withdraw powerful 300-500W security lights from sale. The Highways Agency should set a target date for replacing all existing road lighting with low-light pollution, full cut-off lighting, and local authorities should introduce measures to control light pollution in their local planning policies.

Now CPRE have organised a nationwide 'star count' in January and February to measure the extent of light pollution in the U.K. Anyone can take part - there's more information on their website at www.cpre.org.uk.

WILD BS13 - INDOORS!

WHILE lying in my bath the other day I noticed a dirty splodge in one corner of the room. How did it get there, I wondered. Further investigation revealed that it had flown there. A small colony of ladybirds, 14-spot, I think, are hibernating in this corner of my bathroom. I don't know if they have chosen a bad place or if it is natural wastage but I find a small corpse at intervals. It will be interesting to see if any survive the winter.

I tried to tempt them to a late nourishing meal by introducing my Christmas cactus which is heavily infested with greenfly, but so far there have been no takers.

MARY SYKES

THE AREA GREEN SPACE PLANS

I WAS fortunate to go to the Full Council Meeting where the Area Green Space Plans (AGSP) were being debated. I say fortunate because it was an entertaining afternoon! For those who don't know, the AGSP includes proposals to sell-off over 60 pieces of open space which are considered surplus to needs, with 70% of the money raised being spent on improving other open spaces, including parks. This includes disposing of a site adjoining Manor Woods Valley Local Nature Reserve and building new houses and an access road in Kings Head Lane Park.

I arrived early and took my seat, unwittingly by people who were there for the City of Sanctuary debate! The AGSP debate was moved to the front of the agenda because there was so much interest and the meeting commenced with many groups making statements, all of them condemning the plan. The Tories called for the plan to be scrapped and Labour put down an amendment to this and both these two joined to oppose the plan. There was a classical piece of 'politicking' from the Labour Leader who, in her speech, laid her trap and the bait was truly taken. She exposed that many of the Lib. Dem. councillors who supported the AGSP were, at the same time, supporting their local groups to prevent space in their own wards being sold-off. Classical Nimbyism. This brought shouts of abuse from the Public Gallery. Anyway, a vote was taken and, with every member voting on party lines, the Council prevailed and the AGSP continues.

In all fairness to the Council, the results of the consultation have not yet been considered so there is time for them to make changes, but this scheme was ill-conceived, with wasteland and parkland all lumped together, and was bound to bring massive opposition. They say every cloud has a silver lining and this is no exception. What the Council have achieved in raising awareness about our valuable open spaces has been quite remarkable!

PAUL MIZEN

- The last *Newsletter* announced a visit to the Lake Shore development - the former office of the Wills Tobacco Factory in Hartcliffe. Unfortunately, this was cancelled just two days before it was due. We notified everyone we could by e-mail or phone, but several people turned up (since there was no booking required) and learned the bad news at the last minute. We very much regret the inconvenience, which was because the Urban Splash representative pulled out because of a family commitment. The development is scheduled for completion in the spring.

MANOR WOODS VALLEY GROUP BEHIND THE SCENES

I RECENTLY JOINED the Manor Woods Valley Working Group. Although there are regular reports of activities in the *Newsletter* I have now seen how it works from the 'inside' and thought I would write a piece about this hard-working and rather modest group. I can do this as I have not actually contributed to their work (up to now!).

The members like to have informal meetings and consequently do not have a chairman or take minutes. I was informed of this fact straight away, but now that I have had chance to observe procedures I have formed some conclusions. Marie Jo tends to steer the group with a gentle hand, all the time asking for opinions and views. She is always armed with a sheaf of e-mails, the result of her continuous efforts to follow up with various authorities, jobs that have not been carried out despite promises, or new tasks which need attention.

Most of these new jobs come about as a result of Angela's diligence in monitoring the situation in the woods almost daily. Her eagle eyes spot many problems which need dealing with and it is so good to have reportage like this. Of course, as everyone knows from newsletters, she and Tony have organised several projects including painting railings and following up the erection of a signpost for the woodland path.

Marian is the technical expert with her knowledge of botany and this has proved invaluable in the running of the group. Mavis notes the proceedings of the meetings (not minutes!) and regularly reports back to the M.V.C.G. committee. She has also been a lifesaver, turning up with coffee and tea when M.V.C.G. have been carrying out stream clearing or other tasks.

The M.V.C.G. committee are very thankful for the work this group does, because without their efforts Manor Woods Valley would certainly not look as good as it does now.

BERYL HEATON

- CONGRATULATIONS to the two Malago Valley Conservation Group teams who took part in the annual Bishopsworth Quiz which was held on 16 November at the Bishopsworth Branch of the Royal British Legion. One of our teams came 5th, and the other didn't disgrace itself!

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

THE WINTER PROGRAMME continues, with meetings normally being held on the third Tuesday of the month and usually starting at 7.30pm (except for the Christmas Party - see below). We meet at St Peter's Rooms, by the side of St Peter's Church, Bishopsworth, and everyone is welcome, M.V.C.G. member or not. We are always happy to include information about other meetings which may interest our members.

Tuesday 14 December: M.V.C.G.'s daft and delightful *Christmas Party* will be under slightly new management this year. What will they come up with ... ? To allow some setting up time, the party will start at **7.45pm**. As usual, we'll have an American Supper, so, if you can, please bring a small contribution for the buffet. There will also be the traditional raffle, and a fun time is (virtually) guaranteed.

Tuesday 18 January: The City Council's (fairly) new Woodland and Wildlife Officer, JUSTIN SMITH, will talk to us about *Wildlife in Bristol*. Those of you who have been on Justin's Fungus Forays (see page 3) will know what a knowledgeable and entertaining communicator he is.

Tuesday 15 February: Our *Annual General Meeting and Birthday Party*, in our usual format. See the formal notice on the back page. We shall also have a speaker on a topical subject.

Tuesday 15 March: Our usual meeting at 7.30pm in St Peter's Rooms - details will be announced in the Spring *Newsletter*.

MEMBERSHIP of Malago Valley Conservation Group runs on a calendar year basis, so the approach of the New Year means that it's time to renew your subscription. If you joined in the last few months of 2010, then your membership runs through to the end of 2011; otherwise you should find enclosed a membership renewal form (unless you are receiving a complimentary copy of the *Newsletter* or have already renewed).

Please bring the completed form and your sub. to the Christmas Party, or to any other meeting, or send it to either Beryl Heaton (3 Kings Walk) or André Coutanche (14 Queens Road). *Thank you!*

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND BIRTHDAY PARTY

THE SIXTEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of Malago Valley Conservation Group will be held on Tuesday 15 February at St Peter's Rooms, Church Road, Bishopsworth, starting at 7.30pm. The Officers and Committee members retire each year but are eligible for re-election. The names of the current Officers and Committee members appear below.

Nominations for either Officers or Committee members are very welcome and should be supported by a seconder and the consent of the nominee must first have been obtained. Nominations can be made to the Hon. Secretary, André Coutanche, at 14 Queens Road, Bishopsworth, BS13 8LB (phone number and e-mail address below). Please feel free to contact me or any Committee member for an informal chat if you'd like more information about joining the Committee.

The formal A.G.M. business will include a report-back to members on the year's events. This will be followed by a short talk on a topical subject. As usual, we will finish with wine/orange juice and cheese/other nibbles to celebrate our birthday. All members and friends of M.V.C.G. are invited to come to our birthday party.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE
Hon. Secretary

Malago Valley Conservation Group

Chairman	Peter Crispin	907 0623
Vice-Chairman	Mavis Palmer	964 2344
Hon. Secretary	André Coutanche	964 3106
Hon. Treasurer	Beryl Heaton	964 5780

Committee Members

Anton Bantock, Heather Leeson, Paul Mizen, Lis Pibworth

Co-opted Committee Members

Mary Sykes, Valerie Gay, Diana Porter, Sue Walker, CSV Environment, Cllrs Mark Brain, Richard Eddy, Helen Holland, Tim Kent, Derek Pickup, Kevin Quartley (*All the City councillors for Bishopsworth, Hartcliffe and Whitchurch Park wards are invited to become co-opted Committee members.*)

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Letters, articles and suggestions from readers are welcome.

The opinions in this *Newsletter* do not necessarily represent those of M.V.C.G.