

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
DOWNS COMMITTEE
HELD ON 5TH JULY 2010 AT 11.00 AM
AT THE MERCHANTS' HALL, THE PROMENADE, CLIFTON.**

- P Councillor Colin Smith
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor (in the Chair)
- P Councillor Simon Cook)
A Councillor John Goulandris)
P Councillor Brenda Hugill) 6 City Councillors
P Councillor Glenise Morgan)
P Councillor Sylvia Townsend)
P Councillor Ron Stone)
- P Colin Skellett (Master)
P Anthony Brown)
P Giles Clarke)
A Francis Greenacre) 6 Merchant Venturers
A Tony Kenny)
P Peter Rilett)
P Alan Tasker)

DWN

41.07/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND INTRODUCTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Goulandris, Tony Kenny and Francis Greenacre

DWN

42.07/10 MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

The committee considered a re port of the Strategic Director, Resources (agenda item no. 2) requesting the committee to note changes to the membership.

RESOLVED - (i) that it be noted that at Bristol City Council's Annual Meeting on Tuesday 18th May 2010, Councillor

Colin Smith was elected Lord Mayor and will therefore be the Chairman of the Downs Committee for the Municipal Year 2010/11;

- (ii) that at the Outside Bodies Commission meeting on 25th May 2010 they agreed the membership of the Downs Committee to be as follows:-**

**Simon Cook (LD)
Glenis Morgan (LD)
Sylvia Townsend (LD)
Brenda Hugill (L)
Ron Stone (L)
John Goulandris (Con); and**

- (iii) that the Democratic Services Officer be requested to send letters on behalf of the committee thanking outgoing members, Councillors Christopher Davies and Peter Abraham, for their contribution to the Downs Committee.**

DWN

43.07/10 MINUTES – DOWNS COMMITTEE – 29th MARCH 2010

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Downs Committee held on 29th March 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

It was noted that the proposal for Clifton Down Camp would be developed subject to a programme of public consultation and feedback would now be presented later in 2010.

Bus Stop/University

A new hardstanding bus stop had been proposed by the University to be sited at Saville Road. It had been due to be discussed by the Committee at the March meeting, however, it had been deduced that it would not be sited on Downs Land. Members believed it to be in the remit of the Downs Committee as it was indeed Downs Land and also impacting upon the Downs in terms of parking and

damage to trees. It was suggested that legally, it could not happen without the permission of the Downs Committee.

The Downs Committee requested a presentation from the University at their next meeting

DWN
44.07/10 PUBLIC FORUM

The Committee received the following items of public forum:

ITEM	NAME	NO
(i) Temporary Zoo Car Park	Jack Penrose	1
(ii) Two year report	Friends of the Downs	
(iii) Downs Act Celebration		

Within the public forum statement, the following points were raised:

- The Friends of the Downs had produced a study of the impact of zoo car parking and initial findings were available. They did not support any improvements to vehicular circulation (e.g. one way systems, road widening etc) at the expense of all pedestrians using a public space. The parking area itself was well maintained but the paths from the parking area to the zoo itself were no longer fit for purpose.
- The Friends of the Downs was a Bristol City Council initiative and had independently consulted on plans and policies, promoted educational events and practical activities. A report on their activities and contributions had been compiled.
- The Friends of the Downs had some suggestions for the 150 years of the Downs Act celebrations in 2011.

The Friends of the Downs were thanked for their hard work and contribution with very helpful information, support and welcome criticism.

The Democratic Services Officer would send all Members of the Committee the report of the FOD and it would be an item on the next agenda.

It was reported that a working group had been formed to discuss the anniversary of the Downs Act. Councillor Townsend volunteered to be a part of the group as a representative of the Downs Committee.

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director, Neighbourhoods (agenda item no. 5) which provided an update on works and developments carried out since the last meeting.

The following main issues were noted during the debate:-

Security Patrols

- Discussions had taken place between the Downs Team, Security Services and BGS (car clamping service) to improve communication and ensure the service was joined up and working effectively. One change was an added security presence between 1 and 7pm on Sundays and the initial feedback was positive.
- There had been a new trend for the use of metal detectors on the Downs. One incident of an altercation with security staff had been reported to the police.

Barbeques

- When asked to extinguish Barbeques, visitors were usually compliant. Officers were asked to investigate a specific spot on the pathway to the gorge that appeared to have been used for regular fires.
- The Downs Ranger and his team were within a twelve month trial period to concentrate on communication with and education of the public regarding the byelaws. A leaflet had been produced which would be circulated via foot patrols, through the café and at concession stands.
- The debate about barbeques within parks was citywide as well as national and had no simple solution. It was suggested that there could be a fixed site for barbeques to be used which would lessen their impact. It was also argued that there would be an affect on the natural environment and might encourage more barbeques and litter. Legally, the Downs Act would need to be altered in order to allow fires on the land.
- Officers were asked to compile research on other cities and their policies regarding barbeques into a report to the Committee.

Wheel Clamping

- The wheel clamping scheme had been working well and had been successful in protecting the grass from cars. One negative impact had been a reduction in the width of the road resulting in difficulty for buses.

- It was agreed that the trial period, due to end at the end of August 2010 would be extended for 6 months to ensure there was no gap in operation. A report on the findings of the 12 month trial would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee for discussion.

Projects Funded from Reserves.

- The proposed contingency fund to support the goat project had been increased as a higher specification of fencing and gates had been required.
- Advice and training had been taken on animal welfare to ensure the appropriate conditions for the goat enclosure. In response to concerns it was confirmed that goats avoid all contact with humans and pets and would not be a danger.
- The incident involving a fox in London was isolated and involved urban animals which was not an issue on the Downs.
- Members agreed to fund the projects as listed within the report.

RESOLVED - (1) that officers compile research on other cities and their policies regarding barbeques into a report to the Committee.

(2) that the wheel clamping trial period be extended to February 2011 and a report on the findings of the trial be presented to the next meeting of the Committee for discussion.

(3) That the projects be funded as listed within the report.

DWN

46.07/10

DELEGATED AND UPCOMING EVENTS PROPOSED ON THE DOWNS

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director, City Development (agenda item no. 6) which outlined the events and filming that have taken place between committee meetings under delegated powers and proposed future events between committee meetings.

The following main issues were noted during the debate:-

- No problems had been reported with regards to the Funderworld event in April 2010. A debrief meeting would take place in August/September 2010 between the organiser and key agencies. Officers agreed to consider a comment of excessive noise passed on by a Member. If there was an application for another Funderworld event it would be presented to the next Downs Committee.
- An application had been received from the Circus for the 19th September to the 10th October 2010.
- The test-run for The Big Leap Zip Wire Activity would not take place on 11th July but would be carried out prior to the event on the 8th August 2010. Members were reassured that the event was planned following extensive research and preparation. The wire would reach from the observatory area and across the gorge. Affected roads would be closed.
- Members raised concern about the road closure of Down Hill for the Race For Life. It was suggested that actions to leave Downleaze Road open and allow runners to use the grass could be replicated at Down Hill/Saville Row. Officers agreed to pass the comments on. There were also concerns that the speaker system for the event was unacceptably loud.
- Officers confirmed that fees for events on the Downs were applied via a schedule of charges for event types which reflected the impact on the Downs, the length of time of the event and an administrative fee. Members suggested a review of the fees for charities to see if they could be reduced for some types of event or certain types of charity. Officers agreed to report back to the Committee on the effect of the above proposal.
- In response to questions, officers confirmed that 'buggie buddies' were representative of a move of personal trainers out of gyms into parks. The group was quite substantial with 20 to 30 participants. Officers considered this a significant potential impact on the Downs.

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) that the events and filming activity that has taken place under delegated powers be noted; and**
 - (2) that the proposed future events between committee meetings be noted.**
 - (3) That a report be presented to the**

next meeting to explain the charging system for events and the effect of a lower charge for some charities.

INFORMATION ITEMS

DWN

47.07/10 PARKING ON THE DOWNS DURING BUSY DAYS

The Committee received an email communication from City Sightseeing Bristol (agenda item no. 7) requesting consideration of parking restrictions on the Downs during busy periods.

In addition to the discussion during the Downs Ranger Report, the Lord Mayor invited any other comments with regards to the request.

Officers suggested that the adoption of a one way system only for certain times of year would likely cause confusion. In any event it was confirmed that changes to the road would be a matter for the Highways Team. The Downs Committee would be consulted as an interested party.

It was highlighted bus lane improvements were in planning stage by the Greater Bristol Bus Network (GBBN) along Stoke Road and Blackboy Hill. The Committee requested an update and more information regarding the plans under consideration.

RESOLVED - that further information regarding the GBBN bus network proposals be presented to the Committee.

DWN

48.07/10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED - that the next meeting of the Downs Committee be held on 6th September 2010 at 4.30 pm in the Council House, College Green, Bristol.

(The meeting ended at 12.20pm)

CHAIR