

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
DOWNS COMMITTEE
HELD ON 22ND NOVEMBER 2010 AT 4.00 P.M.**

- P The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor
Councillor Colin Smith (in the Chair)
- P Councillor Cook)
A Councillor Goulandris)
P Councillor Hugill) City Councillors
P Councillor Morgan)
P Councillor Stone)
P Councillor Townsend)
- P Giles Clarke (Master)
- P Anthony Brown)
P Francis Greenacre)
P Tom Hood) Merchant Venturers
P David Marsh)
A Peter Rilett)
P Alan Tasker)

DWN

1.11/10

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND INTRODUCTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Goulandris and Peter Rilett.

DWN

2.11/10

MEMBERSHIP OF THE DOWNS COMMITTEE

**RESOLVED - that membership of the Downs
Committee for 2010/11 be as follows:-**

**The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor
Councillor Colin Smith**

**Councillor Cook
Councillor Goulandris
Councillor Hugill
Councillor Morgan**

**Councillor Stone
Councillor Townsend**

Giles Clarke (Master)

**Anthony Brown
Francis Greenacre
Tom Hood
David Marsh
Peter Rilett
Alan Tasker**

**DWN
3.11/10**

CONFIRMATION OF CHAIRMAN

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) that Councillor Colin Smith be confirmed Chairman of the Downs Committee for 2010/11 in accordance with Section 10 of the Clifton and Durdham Downs (Bristol) Act 1861; and**
 - (2) that the appointment of Giles Clarke as Master for 2010/11 be noted.**

**DWN
4.11/10**

RETIRING MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) that the committee note the members of the committee who have retired; and**
 - (2) that a letter of thanks for past services be sent to those members.**

**DWN
5.11/10**

DATES AND TIMES OF MEETINGS

- RESOLVED - that the following dates and times for meetings of the Downs Committee be noted:-**

Monday 31st January 2011

Monday 11th April 2011
Monday 4th July 2011 (visiting meeting held at Merchant Venturers Hall)
Monday 12th September 2011
Monday 21st November 2011 (Annual Meeting)

All meetings to be held at 4.30 p.m. other than 4th July 2010 visiting meeting at 11.00 a.m. and the Annual Meeting at 4.00 p.m..

DWN
6.11/10

DELEGATIONS

In response to a question, the Lord Mayor confirmed that only minor decisions would be delegated and if a significant or contentious application was received in the period between meetings of the Downs Committee, the Lord Mayor and Master would call a special meeting of the Downs Committee in order to make the decision.

RESOLVED - that the delegations to the Strategic Director, City Development, Strategic Director, Business Transformation and Strategic Director, Neighbourhoods, as set out in the report, be approved for 2010/11.

DWN
7.11/10

MINUTES – DOWNS COMMITTEE – 6TH SEPTEMBER 2010

Councillor Hugill referred to minute 55.9/10 and pointed out that it had not been minuted that she had once again raised her concerns about the congestion caused by cars parking along Stoke Road which was also a serious safety issue as emergency vehicles were unable to get through. She suggested that a road widening scheme be considered for Stoke Road or a car park at the side of the water tower.

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Downs Committee held on 6th September 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Lord

Mayor, subject to the above amendment.

Matters Arising

- Councillor Hugill informed the Committee of a proposal in its very early stages to plant snowdrops in an area on the Downs, in support of St Peter's Hospice. The Committee supported the idea in principle but requested that the full details be brought back to the next meeting in January 2011.
- The Master referred to minute 61.9/10 and expressed his concerns that the transfer of the assets of the Clifton Down Charitable Trust to Bristol City Council had not been progressed by the City Council lawyers. He emphasised that completion of the transaction was central to the 150th anniversary of the Downs Act to be celebrated in May 2011. The Lord Mayor commented that he had also received a letter from Colin Skellett, the former Master requesting that the issue be progressed as quickly as possible. The Lord Mayor asked that the letter be passed on to Stephen McNamara, Head of Legal Service for a response at the next meeting.

**DWN
8.11/10**

PUBLIC FORUM

The Committee received the following items of public forum:

Item No.	Item	Name	Number
14	GBBN Proposals	Jack Penrose Chairman of FOD&AG	1

Jack Penrose spoke to his statement which had been circulated previously.

It was confirmed that a copy of the statement had been forwarded to Steve Riley to be considered as part of the consultation process.

The Committee noted the public forum statement.

**DWN
9.11/10**

REPORT OF THE DOWNS RANGER

The committee considered a report of the Downs Ranger (agenda item no. 9) updating on works and developments carried out since the last meeting:-

The following main issues were noted during the discussion:-

- The refurbishment of the Sea Wall railings had been to a high standard and it would be a great shame if the stone walling at the northern extent which was in a very poor condition was not re-pointed and brought up to the same standard.
- The re-opening of Bridge Valley Road has been delayed due to further problems being discovered during repair works. It was anticipated that it would be re-opened at the end of February 2011.
- Power supply had been installed at Seawalls for the ice cream vendor and a second unit was to be completed. A new contract will be operational from 1st April 2011 so there will be no more diesel fumes from ice cream vans on the Downs.
- The proposed visitor telescopes were well tried and tested and virtually damage proof. The Rangers would empty them as part of their daily duties as the boxes can contain up to £2000. The Committee agreed to delegate the content of the commentary to the Downs Ranger.
- Bristol Water's plans for a new water main installation will significantly affect the Downs. The Downs Ranger indicated that he was aware of difficulties in the past when this type of work has been undertaken and assurances would be sought from Bristol Water that they are mindful of the sensitivity of the landscape. He confirmed that he had already attended an initial meeting with Bristol Water and colleagues from Conservation Archaeology will be involved in future discussions. Unfortunately, the work had to be done but the Downs Ranger hoped to be able to influence the route and the timing of the work to avoid key events.
- When considering the application to install an Aeolus Sculpture, officers were asked to note that the location on the Downs was very important, particularly for residents as the

structure will 'sing with the wind' all through the night as well as during the day.

- With regard to the proposed cricket match on the Downs as part of 150 years of the Downs Act it was suggested that more needed to be done to promote the fact that W.G Grace who is widely acknowledged as the greatest player of all time, was born in Bristol.

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) that an additional £4,000 be committed to carry out repairs to stone walling at Seawalls;**
 - (2) that two permanent Talking Telescopes be purchased and the Downs Ranger be delegated to provide the commentary text;**
 - (3) that a report be presented on a licence application for the installation of a temporary sculpture; and**
 - (4) that £26,750 towards the cost of funding the 150 year celebrations be approved.**

DWN

10.11/10 REPLACEMENT TREE PLANTING ON THE DOWNS

The committee considered a report of the Director of Neighbourhoods (agenda item no. 10) considering an outline scheme for replacement tree planting on the Downs for wider public consultation.

The following main issues were noted during the discussion:-

- The plans to be used for the public consultation exercise would be far more detailed and visual than the ones circulated to the Committee.
- The injection process referred to by Councillor Stone for the prevention/management of Horse chestnut bleeding canker would cost approximately £120 per tree per year and was not tried and tested. The Senior Arboricultural Officer advised

that it would be far better to diversify the future replacement of the trees on the Downs avenues, whilst keeping the existing character. Much was being done to keep blight to existing trees to a minimum eg mulch circles around the base of the trees

- It was felt that replacement tree planting on the avenues should be considered more widely to include the whole of the Downs and possibly city-wide. It was clarified that a city wide approach would require input/resource from the City Development Directorate but would be explored and reported back to the Committee.

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) that the principle to replace trees within the existing avenues as and when trees die or become dangerous and need to be removed be agreed;**
 - (2) that a plan is consulted on which looks to agree the future tree planting species composition for the Downs avenues;**
 - (3) that a range of tree species in keeping with the character of the Downs are adopted for future avenue plantings to diversify the current species mix of trees; and**
 - (4) that the public be offered the opportunity to sponsor new trees through TreeBristol.**
 - (5) that a city-wide strategy for replacement tree planting be explored by the Senior Arboricultural Officer in consultation with officers from City Development and a report be brought back to the Committee**

DWN

11.11/10

DELEGATED AND UPCOMING EVENTS PROPOSED ON THE DOWNS

The committee considered a report of the Director of City Development (agenda item no. 11);

- noting the events and filming that have taken place between committee meetings under delegated powers; and
- noting proposed future events between committee meetings.

It was noted that filming activity needed to be encouraged as it not only provided an income stream for the Downs Committee but it was important for Bristol to retain film making as part of its industry.

- 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.**

DWN

12.11/10 FUNDERWORLD

The committee considered a report of the Director of City Development (agenda item no. 12) considering the issues surrounding the previous Funderworld applications and deciding whether James Mellors Amusements Limited should be permitted to host a Funderworld event on the Downs from Friday 8th April – Monday 25th April 2011, subject to the full approval of the Bristol Safety Advisory Group for Events.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that advise would be sought from the Downs Ranger and the noise pollution team as to the number of residents who would need to receive a letter at least 14 days prior to the event.

- RESOLVED -**
- that the application from James Mellors Amusements Limited to host a Funderworld event on the Downs in 2011, subject to the full approval of the Bristol Safety Advisory Group for Events, be approved.**

DWN

**13.11/10 BRIEFING NOTE REGARDING LEGAL POSITION
CONCERNING THE HIGHWAY STATUS OF SAVILLE ROAD**

The committee considered a briefing note (agenda item no. 13) concerning the highway status of Saville Road.

Anthony Brown welcomed the document which sought to explain the Highways position which had been queried on a number of previous occasions because the land in question represented many acres of Downs grassland which it is the duty of the Downs Committee to protect and maintain for the benefit of the people of Bristol.

Anthony Brown referred to the conclusion of the document which stated that there was potential for uncertainty and partiality over the legal position and that the Committee may wish to take independent legal advice. He explained that with his legal background he had considered this suggestion and prepared a response, which he read out to the Committee. He suggested that to avoid unnecessary expense and since Highways have accepted that there appears to be no good reason as to why they should have authority over the area, the Downs Committee work with Highways to produce a Memorandum of Agreement. This was supported by the Committee.

RESOLVED - that the Downs Committee work with Highways to produce a Memorandum of Agreement that grassed areas vested under the Downs Act 1861, that are adjacent to roads, fall under the authority of the Downs Committee.

INFORMATION ITEMS

DWN

14.11/10 GREATER BRISTOL BUS NETWORK (GBBN) PROPOSALS

The committee considered a report (agenda item no. 14) on the Greater Bristol Bus Network (GBBN) proposals.

RESOLVED - that a further report be brought back to the Committee in January 2012 to discuss the completed consultation responses before the ministerial application is made.

DWN

15.11/10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

**RESOLVED - that the next meeting of the Downs
Committee be held on 31st January 2011
at 4.30 p.m. at the Council House.**

(The meeting ended at 5.45 pm)

CHAIR