

**BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL**

**DOWNS COMMITTEE**

*31<sup>st</sup> January 2011*

**Report of:** *Director of Neighbourhoods*

**Title:** *Downs Rangers Report*

**Ward:** N/A

**Officer Presenting Report:** *Robert Westlake, Downs Ranger.*

**Contact Telephone Number:** (0117) 9736210

**RECOMMENDATION**

*That the Report be noted*

**Summary**

**The significant issues in the report are:  
The report reflects the objectives of the Downs Management Plan  
which is a five year work plan and has six key themes.**

- Enjoyment.
- Access
- Landscape
- Wildlife
- Anti Social Behaviour
- Management and Resources.

## 1. Policy

*Not Applicable*

## 2. Consultation

Internal:

Matt Bennett Arboricultural Officer.  
Peter Parkinson, Security Services  
Barry Wiles, Licensing Team.  
Sheelagh Dawson, Contract Solicitor.  
Helen Hall, Conservation Officer.  
Phil Lloyd, Structures Engineer.  
Frances Horner, Senior Solicitor.  
Joanna Mellors CSS Valuation

External:

*Ian Douglas, BSG*  
*Chris Westcott Natural England*  
*Tim Wilson (Estates) Bristol Zoo*

## 3. Context.

### **Enjoyment:**

A site meeting with the organisers of the temporary Aeolus art installation has taken place and a location agreed. Unfortunately due to operational difficulties the organisers are unable to install the sculpture in the Spring, but still hope to do so at a later date this year.

Following agreement at the last meeting to purchase two visitor telescopes an order will be placed.

### **Access:**

Observatory tower. The ongoing works at the Tower have generated a complaint from a representative of the Clifton and Hotwells Improvement Society. This was complaint that came via the Leader. The comments range from the quality of some the restoration works, complaints about the duration of the project and vehicles parking on site. This refers to the owners vehicle and two additional vehicles associated with the contractors carrying out the restoration works. The owner has asked permission for these vehicles to be permitted on site so that the work may proceed.

To date the owner of the tower has not signed the new agreement and I am advised by Licensing that technically he cannot take **any** vehicles on to the site.

The owner has been advised that to access the site without any rights being granted to do so, then he is committing trespass and we have the right to stop

him.

The owners legal representatives responded on the 7<sup>th</sup> January, informing that they were seeking their clients instructions and would come back to us as quickly as possible.

The Estates Manager for Bristol Zoo Tim Wilson has confirmed that works to the footpath from the car park will be completed in good time for the new season.

Water main across the Downs:

Consultation meetings continue with colleagues and Bristol Water. Our position on minimising disruption and concerns regarding previous works have been brought to the attention of Bristol Water. Further meetings and recommendations on alternative routes are planned.

### **Landscape:**

Bi-annual tree safety inspection carried out with Tree Officer.

Additional vegetation clearance works agreed at Bridge Valley with Parsons Brinkerhoff have been completed. This was to facilitate further rock face inspections.

Additional tree works have been identified to facilitate work to stabilise the rock face and to deal with overhanging trees that may be a problem in the future. Orders for this work have been raised.

The 'dead fences' designed to deter joggers from area's of sensitive grassland have been repaired and extended.

### **Wildlife:**

Monthly reports received from the Education Officer.

Further scrub clearance underway at Zoo bank.

Staff will receive training in animal husbandry at Windmill Hill City Farm on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February. This is in preparation for the arrival of the goats which are now expected in the Spring.

### **Anti Social Behaviour:**

Security patrols: Security staff continue with their reduced winter patrols.

Wheel Clamping: At the conclusion of the twelve month trial period a report to continue, discontinue, or extend the scheme will be brought to Committee.

Barbecues: A recommendation will be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

Litter bins:

A recommendation will be brought to the next Committee meeting.

## **Management and Resources:**

The Downs team continue with the Winter programme of works carrying out day to day response maintenance and projects in line with the Downs Management Plan and the Avon Gorge Management Plan.

Works include:

Sports pitch maintenance, treating icy paths, leaf clearance, scrub management, tree lifting and tidying, inspection and maintenance of play equipment, clearing litter and emptying bins, seat cleaning and repair, and installing memorial benches.

Following an agreement at the last meeting work is planned to start shortly to repair a section of masonry at the Seawalls,

Improvements to the Downs depot are now complete. This included, improved lighting, new toilet block, upgrade to the alarm system and replacing some roller shutter security doors. This was work funded from the reserve.

FODAG carried out a deep litter/rubbish clear of the goat enclosure and further forays are programmed.

The probation Service continue with works to the dressing rooms.

Downs staff and vehicles have been assisting with emergency cover during the recent cold spell.

## **4. Risk Assessment**

A risk assessment has not been carried out.

## **5. Equalities Impact Assessment**

Not applicable

## **6. Legal and Resource Implications**

**Legal:**

***The Clifton and Durdham Downs Act (Bristol) Act 1861 provides that the Downs should remain as a place for the resort and recreation of the citizens of Bristol, and that a committee should be appointed to manage them. The recommendations of this report are within the powers of conferred by this statute.***

**Legal advice given by: Frances Horner, Senior Solicitor**

**Financial:**

**(a) Revenue:**

**Purchase of two visitor telescopes.      £9000**

**Works to repair masonry at Seawalls.    £4000**

**(b) Capital**

*Not Applicable*

**Land**

The land is under the control of the Downs Committee.

**Personnel**

*“not applicable”*

Appendices: None

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**Background Papers:**       None