

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
DOWNS COMMITTEE
HELD ON 31ST JANUARY 2011 AT 4.30 P.M.**

P The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor Colin Smith (in the Chair)

A Councillor Cook)
P Councillor Goulandris)
A Councillor Hugill) 6 City Councillors
P Councillor Morgan)
P Councillor Stone)
P Councillor Townsend)

P Giles Clarke - Master

P Anthony Brown)
P Francis Greenacre)
P Tom Hood) 6 Merchant Venturers
A David Marsh)
P Peter Rilett)
P Alan Tasker)

DWN

16.1/11

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions were made and apologies were received from Councillors Cook, Hugill and David Marsh.

DWN

17.1/11

MINUTES - DOWNS COMMITTEE - 22ND NOVEMBER 2010

- Page 13 final bullet point. It was pointed out that the famous cricketer was W.G Grace and not W.C Fields as stated.

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Downs Committee held on 22nd November 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Lord Mayor, subject to the amendment above.

DWN
18.1/11 PUBLIC FORUM

The Committee received the following items of public forum:

AGENDA ITEM	ITEM	NAME	STATEMENT NO
7	Greater Bristol Bus Network (GBBN) Proposals For Blackboy Hill	David & Gwenda Wedge	1
7	GBBN Proposals For Blackboy Hill	Cllr Peter Abraham	2
7	GBBN Proposals For Blackboy Hill	Ian Beattie	3
7	GBBN Proposals For Blackboy Hill	Anne and Robert Huddleston	4
7	GBBN Proposals For Blackboy Hill	Mrs G R Huggins	5
7	GBBN Proposals For Blackboy Hill	Judith Sheather	6
7	GBBN Proposals For Blackboy Hill	David Mayer	7
7	GBBN Proposals For Blackboy Hill	Alan Aburrow	8
7	GBBN Proposals For Blackboy Hill	Jack Penrose	9
7	GBBN Proposals For Blackboy Hill	Derek and Cheryl Hawkins	10
7	GBBN Proposals For Blackboy Hill	Pat Arnold	11

Ian Beattie, David Mayer and Jack Penrose spoke to their statements which had been circulated previously. A late statement received from Robin Leach was also circulated. The Committee noted the statements and agreed to have regard to them when making its decision in respect of GBBN proposals.

GREATER BRISTOL BUS NETWORK (GBBN) PROPOSALS FOR BLACKBOY HILL

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director for City Development (agenda item no. 7) requesting approval of the submission of the proposed exchange of common land paperwork for Secretary of State approval (net gain of 620m² Downs/common land)

The following main issues were noted during the discussion:-

- It was explained that the council has no budget available to meet the request for the widening of Stoke Road. Whilst it was acknowledged that significant funding had been received for the GBBN proposals, the widening of Stoke Road could not be included in the proposals because it did not meet the grant criteria.
- The Downs Ranger indicated that the land identified to be given over to the Downs in the proposed transfer was not of great value.
- The Downs Committee felt that in view of the public concern and their on-going request for a commitment from the GBBN team to fund the widening of Stoke Road, the offer that had been made was not particularly attractive or beneficial to the Downs. The Committee felt that as with any commercial decision they were in a position to use their bargaining power and not accept the first offer.
- It was confirmed by the GBBN Project Manager that the timescale for the project would not allow a further offer to be brought back to the Committee

RESOLVED - that the proposal that the GBBN Project Team submit the proposed exchange of common land paperwork for Secretary of State approval (net gain of 620m² Downs/common land) be rejected.

DWN
20.1/11

REPORT OF THE DOWNS RANGER

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Neighbourhoods (agenda item no. 4) updating on works and developments carried out since the last meeting.

The following main issues were noted during the discussion:-

Observatory Tower. Concerns raised previously by the Committee were re-iterated including the quality of some of the restoration work, complaints about the duration of the project and vehicles parking on site. The Downs Ranger indicated that as the owner had not yet signed the new agreement, technically he should not be taking any vehicles on to the site. The Downs Ranger suggested that he write to the owner requesting he sign the agreement within one month or he will be trespassing and enforcement action will be taken by the council.

Water Main Installation. A number of high profile meetings had taken place with Bristol Water and The Downs had been well represented.

RESOLVED - that the Downs Ranger write to the owner of the Observatory Tower giving him one month to sign and return the agreement.

21.1/11 AVON GORGE AND DOWNS WILDLIFE PROJECT (AGDWP) - FUNDING OF EDUCATION PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director, Neighbourhoods (agenda item no. 5) requesting funding of £15,000 per year for the financial years 2011/12 and 2012/13 towards the AGDWP Education Officer and £5,924 for the employment of a part-time seasonal education officer for the summer 2011.

The following main issues were noted during the discussion:-

- The Committee praised the work and dedication of the Nature Conservation Officer and AGDWP Education Officer. The investment in the appointment of an Education Officer had provided excellent value in the delivery of a popular and successful education programme. The Committee were very

supportive of the continuation and expansion of this programme.

- In view of the upcoming Downs 150th celebrations, the Committee recognised the importance of ensuring that a seasonal education officer was in place for 2011. It was requested that a letter be written to the Zoo on behalf of the Committee asking them to re-consider match funding the seasonal post so that the hours could be increased to a full time post for 6 months.

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) that funding of £15,000 per year for the financial years 2011/12 and 2012/13 towards the AGDWP Education Officer and £5,924 for the employment of a part-time Seasonal Education Officer for the summer 2011 be approved.**
 - (2) that a letter be written to the Zoo on behalf of the Committee asking them to re-consider match funding the seasonal post.**

**DWN
22.1/11**

DELEGATED AND UPCOMING EVENTS PROPOSED ON THE DOWNS

The committee considered a report of the Director of City Development (agenda item no. 6);

- 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 clarified by officers that the council's current policy was to allow lantern launching providing they were biodegradable.

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) that events and filming that have taken place under Delegated Powers be noted; and**
 - (2) that the proposed future events between committee meetings be noted.**

DWN
23.1/11

FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2010/11

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director of Resources (agenda item no. 8) noting the likely financial position for 2010/11.

The following main issues were noted during the discussion:-

- Based on current expenditure trends there was likely to be a deficit on the account of £39,657, which will be met the Downs Reserve at the end of the financial year.
- The current balance of the Reserve excluded previously approved on-going maintenance costs and other commitments (£100K).
- It was pointed out by officers that there were wider financial implications to be considered if a permanent full-time Seasonal Education Officer was to be funded from the Reserve ie on-costs (pension etc). It was agreed that in view of the current climate it was prudent to maintain a healthy reserve.

RESOLVED - that the likely financial position for 2010/11 be noted.

DWN
24.1/11

PROPOSED GIFTING OF ASSETS OF CLIFTON DOWN CHARITABLE TRUST (CDCT)

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Neighbourhoods (agenda item no. 9) noting the current position with regards to the proposal by Clifton Down Charitable Trust to gift two areas of land on the edge of Clifton Down bordering the Portway to Bristol City Council. An addendum to the report was also circulated.

The Committee requested a copy of the report which had been produced for the council by specialist contractors who had carried out an inspection of some of the rock faces currently owned by CDCT.

The Lord Mayor indicated that prior to the Downs Committee, a meeting had taken place between himself, officers of BCC and the solicitors and representatives of CDCT to discuss the way forward, particularly as CDCT and Downs Committee were keen to complete the transaction in time for the 150th anniversary of the

Downs Act to be celebrated in May 2011. The meeting had concluded in a recommendation which was read out by the Lord Mayor and agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED - that having reviewed the terms of the offer by Clifton Down Charitable Trust to transfer to the City Council the land within its ownership, the Committee wished to recommend to the relevant Director of the council and the relevant Executive Member of the Cabinet tasked with determining the Council's response to the offer, that the offer be investigated and that the transfer of the land, along with a commuted sum to cover agreed future maintenance costs, be concluded as soon as practicable in order to coincide with and mark the 150th anniversary of the granting of the Downs Act, and that the Chief Executive be authorised to conclude negotiations on behalf of the City Council.

DWN

25.1/11

DOWNS 150 YEAR CELEBRATIONS

The committee considered a report of the Director of Neighbourhoods (agenda item no. 10) updating on plans for celebrating 150 years of the Downs Act.

RESOLVED - that the report be noted.

DWN

26.1/11

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED - that the next meeting of the Downs Committee be held on 11th April 2011 at 4.30 p.m. at the Council House.

(The meeting ended at 5.25 pm)

LORD MAYOR