

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
DOWNS COMMITTEE
HELD ON 4TH JULY 2011 AT 11.00 AM
AT THE MERCHANTS HALL, THE PROMENADE, CLIFTON
BRISTOL BS8 3NH**

- P The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor Geoff Gollop
- P Councillor Cook)
P Councillor Goulandris)
P Councillor Hugill) City Councillors
P Councillor Morgan)
P Councillor Stone)
P Councillor Davies)
- 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

38.7/11

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions were made and apologies were received from Pete Watts (Events Officer).

DWN

39.7/11

MEMBERSHIP

The following membership changes were noted arising out of the recent Council elections:

Councillor Geoff Gollop – elected as Lord Mayor and, therefore, replaces Councillor Colin Smith as Chairman of the Committee for the 2011/12 Municipal Year.

Councillor Sylvia Townsend is replaced by Councillor Christopher Davies.

It was noted that, as a result of Councillor Townsend no longer being on the Committee, there were now 2 vacancies for Councillor members of the Downs Committee on the following Steering Groups:

Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project Steering Group – 1 Vacancy

Avon Gorge Management Plan Steering Group – 1 Vacancy

Following an e-mail by the Clerk to all Councillor Committee members, the following expressions of interest had been received:

Councillor Glenise Morgan and Councillor Brenda Hugill – Wildlife Project Steering Group

Councillor Davies – Management Plan Steering Group

RESOLVED –

- (1) that Councillor Davies be appointed as a Councillor representative of the Avon Gorge Management Plan steering Group – ACTION: Helen Hall**
- (2) that the Lord Mayor and Master be delegated responsibility to address the issue of the Councillor appointment to the Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project Steering Group – ACTION: Lord Mayor and Master – Tessa Orford, Helen Hall to note**
- (3) that Councillor Colin Smith and Sylvia Townsend be sent letters on behalf of the Committee thanking them for their contribution to the Downs – ACTION: Ruth Kenrick**

**DWN
40.7/11**

MINUTES - DOWNS COMMITTEE – 11TH APRIL 2011

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Downs Committee held on 11th April 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Lord Mayor. ACTION: Ruth Kenrick

**DWN
41.7/11**

PUBLIC FORUM

The Committee received the following items of public forum:

AGENDA ITEM	ITEM	NAME	STATEMENT NO
N/A	GBBN Proposals	Jack Penrose, Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge – Statements 1, 2 and 3)	1
“	“	“	2
“	“	“	3
5	Bristol Water Proposed New Water Main Affecting The Downs	Martin Collins, Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge	4

Statements 1, 2 and 3 were read out by Jack Penrose, Roger Garrett and Brian Sprosen (FODAG). Statement 4 was read out by Jack Penrose.

FODAG representatives stated that they would be carrying out their own survey of the land in question to establish if a Downs-friendly option for widening the road was a possibility.

RESOLVED – that the Downs Ranger and any other appropriate officers contact representatives of FODAG to respond to their concerns and bring forward any proposals arising out of their analysis to the Lord Mayor and Master.

ACTION: Robert Westlake/Alun Owen

DWN

42.7/11

BRISTOL WATER PROPOSED NEW WATER MAIN AFFECTING THE DOWNS

The Committee considered a report of the Service Director, Environment and Leisure (agenda item no. 5) on proposals to install a new 9.5 km water main connecting north and central Bristol.

The following main issues were noted during the discussion that took place:-

- (1) Bristol Water’s proposal was for approximately 9.5 km of new Water Main in the area, with an estimated 1.4 km across the Downs

- (2) There was a requirement under the relevant section of the 2006 Commons Act for appropriate consent to be provided based on an assessment of the impact of the works on the Downs
- (3) Whilst Bristol Water had demonstrated some sensitivity to concerns raised on the impact of the proposals, there remained the likelihood of significant harm to Nature Conservation and to topography. Furthermore, the previous record of Bristol Water was poor in similar situations (ie 2003 work which has never properly reinstated and had caused severe disruption to Downs users)
- (4) The principal areas of concern were the Granny Downs and Upper Belgrave Road
- (5) The Green Route on Appendix 1B had recently been put forward by Bristol Water as a less damaging alternative since it would disturb areas that had previously been disturbed. This was an improvement on the previous route but still had the potential to harm wildlife and archaeology.
- (6) Officers were continuing to negotiate with Bristol Water. Bristol Water will in time submit a formal Section 23 Regulation under the Commons Act 2006 to the Planning Inspectorate which will trigger a formal 28 day consultation process on the proposal
- (7) Officers were congratulated for the thorough and efficient job they had carried out on this issue. However, it was noted that there had been no formal discussions by Bristol Water with the Merchant Venturers on this issue
- (8) One possible option could be for appropriate financial provision to offset the damage that would be caused by the works
- (9) The impact on traffic flows in Upper Belgrave Road would be increasingly severe depending on the degree to which the pipeline was routed down this road; the anticipated re-opening of Bridge Valley Road would significantly heighten this impact;
- (10) Officers should examine possible options if in the worst case scenario the works went ahead ie certain necessary works being carried out at the same time
- (11) Officers should investigate if a clause could be inserted so that, in the event of project overrun affecting the highway, a financial penalty would apply.

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) that the Committee objects to the proposal by Bristol Water to route a section of new water mains through the Downs parallel to Upper Belgrave Road;**
 - (2) that negotiations continue with Bristol water to agree the least harmful route for the new water main where this crosses other sections of the Downs;**
 - (3) that controls to minimise disturbance during construction be identified and agreed;**
 - (4) that the methods of restoration be identified and agreed;**
 - (5) that options to locate a site compound on the Downs are subject to detailed proposals;**
 - (5) that the offer by Bristol Water for enhanced compensation be reviewed.**
 - (6) that the Committee be kept informed of developments until the next meeting**

ACTION: Richard Ennion

DWN

43.7/11

PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO DOWNS PLAY AREA

The committee considered a report of the Service Director, Environment and Leisure (agenda item no. 6) seeking ways to procure its children's playground through the most appropriate means.

The following points were made:

- (1) It was proposed to engage a children's playground designer to develop a bespoke playground design at a cost of £6,000. Further Health and Safety work was required on this design
- (2) It was important to avoid a "static" playground similar to many other designs. The design should be as natural as possible

- (3) Whilst some sources of funding such as Pathfinder Funding may no longer be available, others still remained open – such as Section 106 funding, either through S106 Neighbourhood Partnerships or through the S106 central funding provision
- (4) It was pleasing to see that the importance of provision for children with disabilities was set out in the report
- (5) Whilst there were restrictions on enclosures on the Downs (through local byelaws). It was important for Health and Safety reasons that an area like this was properly enclosed. Consideration would be given as to whether enclosure would be appropriate.

RESOLVED - that the committee engage a children's playground designer to develop a bespoke playground design, in consultation with local children, residents, the Downs Committee and Ranger at a cost of £6,000.

ACTION: John Knowlson

DWN

44.7/11

REPORT OF THE DOWNS RANGER

The Committee considered a report of the Downs Ranger (agenda item no. 7) that provided an update on works and developments carried out since the last meeting.

The following main issues were noted during the discussion:-

- (1) The Victorian Picnic had proved very successful;
- (2) The Director of Student Residences had agreed to meet the costs of reinstatement of damage by students to grass areas at the Saville Road bus stop;
- (3) A TRO would be prepared for £5,000 for parking bays for the disabled. The use of Neighbourhood Partnerships should be considered for dealing with TROs;
- (4) Six feral goats had been successfully released in the Gully area of the Avon Gorge to control scrub. They had been transported from North Wales and were given a veterinary inspection prior to release. Since they are feral, it was not anticipated that they would approach the public. Fencing to keep the goats enclosed was very robust and access for the public was controlled with

kissing gates. The Committee recorded its congratulations to Helen Hall for the work she had carried out on this project;

- (5) There had been a brief spike in barbecue use during the warm weather period. However, overall barbecue use had dropped. A report on the possible future use of Barbecue points would be submitted to a future briefing
- (6) There had been a Crime Reduction Road Show on the Downs on 18th June 2011 at which the local Beat Manager had been in attendance – part of this event had been promoting awareness of byelaws
- (7) Notices for clamping were being updated to reflect the fact that a new contractor was now in operation. Investigations were being carried out to assess whether modifications could be made without replacing them (ie through an adhesive overlay)

RESOLVED – that the Downs Ranger investigate the possibility of a regular annual Downs Day along the lines of the recent 150th celebrations. ACTION: Robert Westlake

**DWN
45.7/11**

DELEGATED AND UPCOMING EVENTS PROPOSED ON THE DOWNS

The committee considered a report of the Service Director Communication and Marketing (agenda item no. 8);

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

The following points were made:

- (1) The information now recorded whether or not the event would require a road closure.
- (2) 2 Companies had expressed an interest in tendering for the circus. Subject to a submission from one of these, a circus would be held later this year
- (3) Race for Life – There had been great concern about the number of roads closed for this event in 2010. As a result, many were unable to attend the Destination Park. There had also been

unreasonable noise. It was disappointing that this event had been approved without coming to the Committee for a decision (as with Funderworld). It was noted that there had been full scrutiny by all the relevant bodies for 2011 event, including Emergency Control and Noise Pollution. Officers agreed to bring a separate report to Committee in future. Officers also agreed to consider a requirement that the route is moved to grass for Saville Road (as with Downleaze) for 18th September 2011 Run for the Future. Committee Members stated that they believed the site fee was modest for the Race for Life event.

RESOLVED –

(1) that officers bring a separate report to Committee in future on the Race to Life Event – ACTION: Louise Baker

(2) that officers investigate the possibility of the route being moved onto the grass for the Saville Road area as well as Downleaze – ACTION: Louise Baker

**DWN
46.7/11**

FUNDERWORLD DEBRIEF 2011

The Committee considered a report of the Director of City Development (agenda item no. 9).

The following points were made:

- (1) The first weekend had been very successful as it had been very hot weather
- (2) In future, the charity event will be split into two to avoid the serious traffic problems that occurred - £4,530 had been raised for the Lord Mayor's Appeals
- (3) Details of three complaints received about the event were set out – it had not proved possible to respond to the third complainant who had indicated they would be taking the matter to the European Union since they were anonymous
- (4) A number of residents who had received letters advising them of the event had expressed their support for it
- (5) Officers would examine the possibility of stricter enforcement of the set up and take down times for the equipment at the

beginning and end of the event. Due to Health and safety Inspection requirements and efforts to protect the ground, there might be limited scope to achieve this

- (6) The current fee for Funderworld was £25,575. It was noted that the event made substantially more than this and a much higher fee would be appropriate.

RESOLVED -

- (1) that officers examine the possibility of stricter enforcement set up and take down times for the event**

ACTION: Louise Baker

- (2) that officers carry out a benchmarking exercise to establish if the fee for Funderworld could be increased**

ACTION: Louise Baker

**DWN
47.7/11**

FINANCE UPDATE

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Services (Agenda item no.10).

The following points were made:

- (1) Reserves had reduced to £157,000 following last year's outturn;
- (2) It was noted that it had been an exceptional year, resulting in a much higher use of reserves than was usually the case. Members approved all expenditure charged to the reserve during the year.
- (3) A request for funding to be set aside for a seasonal Education Officer post was noted. However, officers advised that in the past such funding had always been met from reserves – otherwise, in this case, the expenditure budget would need to be increased by £8,000, matched by a corresponding increase in income
- (4) Funding for football posts had previously been funded centrally but was now funded directly from the Downs budget.

RESOLVED –

(1)that officers investigate the possibility of funding a Seasonal Education Officer through the Downs budget

ACTION: Tony Whitlock

(2)that a report be submitted to a future meeting setting out which projects remained to be funded through the approved budget

ACTION: Tony Whitlock

INFORMATION ITEMS

DWN

48.7/11

COMMUNICATIONS TO AND FROM WARWICK HULME, CITY SIGHTSEEING

The Committee received a copy of email communications and responses from Warwick Hulme of Rubicon Classic Enterprises Ltd concerning traffic congestion which had resulted in City Sightseeing Bristol being unable to use part of their registered route over the Downs. (agenda item nos. 11 and 12) .

With the agreement of the Committee, Warwick Hulme was permitted to speak on this issue.

He explained that Rubicon Classic Enterprises Limited were increasingly using the Downs but were concerned at increasing traffic problems, in some cases resulting in tours being unable to go everywhere they wished and also creating problems adhering to a timetable. He thanked the Committee for allowing him to address them.

RESOLVED - that the email communication and response to Warwick Hulme City Sightseeing be noted.

DWN

49.7/11

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED - that the next meeting of the Downs Committee be held on 12th September 2011 at 4.30 pm. at The Council House, College Green, Bristol BS1 5TR.

(The meeting ended at 12.50pm)

CHAIR