

## Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge REPORT March 2013

- 1.0 Action taken and statements issued ( papers/statements enclosed )
  - a Zoo Temporary Parking  
Zoo temporary parking no 2
  - b Clifton play area
- 2.0 Other FOD+AG initiatives ( progress report enclosed )
  - a Bridge over Bridge Valley Road
  - b Discussion evening 20<sup>th</sup> March
- 3.0 FOD+AG initiatives – Sub groups ( reported elsewhere )
  - Anti social behaviour Downs Ranger report
  - Traffic and Parking Downs Ranger report
  - Your Downs – Your day Downs Ranger report
- 4.0 continuing activities
  - a Litter collection
  - Goat monitoring
  - Butterflies
  - Hawthorn trees 24<sup>th</sup> April meeting Friends Meeting House
- 4.0 Events involving FOD+AG  
Bristol99 June 2013

### 1.0a



Statement from Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge

## TEMPORARY PARKING ON THE DOWNS

Bristol Zoo

### Background

FOD+AG fully recognises the significant role the Zoo makes to the social and economic well being of Bristol and the region. The Zoo is a major tourist attraction with visitors coming from far and wide. The dilemma for FOD+AG is that parking on the grass does not meet any of the FOD+AG criteria for uses they would support. The Zoo authority already uses an area of the Downs which has been hard surfaced for their own parking.

### Previous FOD+AG statements

Previous planning and licence applications have been supported by FOD+AG only with conditions. previously

- 1a). That the Zoo authority submits an exit strategy as part of the application

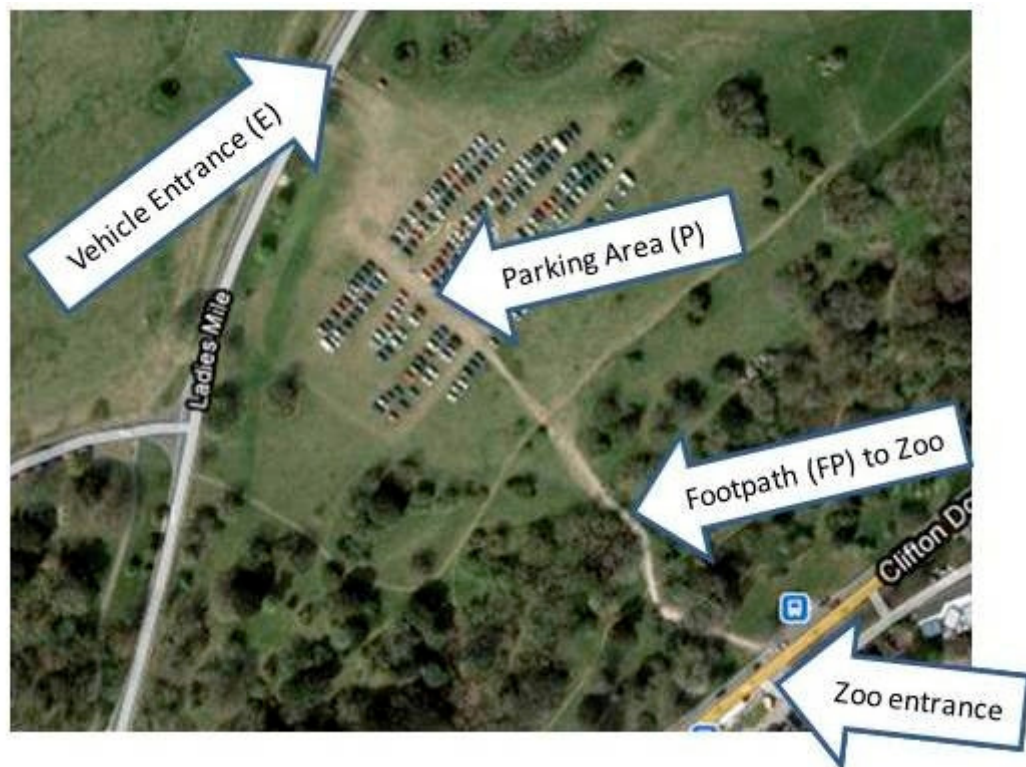
- 1b) Approvals be given either on a one year rolling basis or a maximum of two years  
The reason for the conditions are to ensure the parking does not become a permanent feature on the Downland and that pressure be put on the Zoo authority to demonstrate that they are working toward an exit strategy
- 2a) previous FOD+AG statements on the temporary parking have been limited ( restricted ) to commenting on the surface effect on the grass.  
A full impact assessment is required before any decision is made on continuing temporary parking. The impact assessment to include
- The loss of recreation area
  - Visual intrusion
  - Noise levels
  - Traffic generation within the Downs area –e.g. along Ladies Mile
  - Light intrusion
  - Pollution, of the air and water running off cars and engine oil
  - Access points impact, both from pedestrians and vehicles

#### **FOD+AG – policy on parking on the Downs and Avon Gorge**

FOD+AG supports uses/users which are compatible with the natural environment and  
FOD+AG supports uses/users that are compatible with the other accepted users,  
The FOD+AG position is that parking on the roads within the Downs and Avon Gorge is primarily for the use of users of the Downs NOT commuter vehicles, lorries or adjoining activities  
For these reasons parking on the grass is not acceptable, either in the medium or long term,

#### **Additional factors**

FOD+AG would like to see progress being made toward reducing the demand for car parking e.g.  
Improvements to the public transport system –more cost-effective system as a whole  
ticketing linking the use of public transport to entry to the Zoo. and possibly other attractions in the City. A joined up approach to tourism.



the photograph shows clear temporary damage to a very substantial area of the Downs and no study has been undertaken as to the possible long term impact this may be having on the natural environment, either directly or indirectly.

1.0b



Statement from Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge



### Clifton Downs Play Area Project –

The following are quotes from parents and children on site

(None of the parents spoken to, had placed their comments on the web or in the Library)

- *'we come here because it is different'*
- *'we come here because the children learn to take risks – in addition the parents learn to cope with risk taking'*
- *'it is part of the Downs – not like other play areas'*
- *'the first thing our children do is to climb the rocks.'*
- *'It is an area for up to 8 years olds. Any child over that age wants to go off on their own and climb, run, hide'*
- *'please – some picnic benches and seats for the parents and grandparents'*
- *'keep dogs out but not with railings'*
- *'some of the equipment needs replacing'*



The FOD+AG Initial response to the consultation process is as follows;  
The response is in two parts

### **PART ONE** the site and its context

- **context** The site under consideration is an integral part of a wider unique recreation area which has its own natural environment, character and history. We understand that the site is covered by strict environmental and construction restrictions
- The alternatives in the consultation process are very similar. Both are intrusive in form and layout. The evaluation of at least two other **options** might lead to a more appropriate and sympathetic layout
  1. Do nothing option
  2. Minimum change – new equipment within the existing spacial environment
- Were site studies or questionnaires undertaken ?
- Existing **spacial enclosure, levels, views in and out, etc** need to be considered.

### **PART TWO** the proposed new equipment

- Some of the existing equipment may need replacing
- Any new equipment should reflect the Downland setting
- Any new equipment should be sympathetic to the desires and needs of those visiting this unique Downland site

### **Conclusion**

In concept, the two options under consideration are not sympathetic to this unique site. One option to be considered is for some new equipment located within the existing spacial environment.

**Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge    February 2013**

All photographs taken in February 2013



## 1.0a



### Second Statement from Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge

#### Bristol Zoo – Temporary Car Parking on the Downs

##### Non Downs user traffic generated within the Downs area

The continuing use of a grassed area off Ladies Mile by a non Downs user, neither conforms to the stated aims contained in the Downs Act or the policies of FOD+AG to reduce access to non Downs users. The continuing use of the temporary car park generates car movements at the very heart of the Downs,

Proposals under consideration by FOD+AG and others, for temporary closures of Ladies Mile will be restricted by an intrusive activity generated from outside the Downs area at times when demand for recreation space is its greatest.

31<sup>st</sup> March 2013

## 2.0a

#### Bridge over Bridge Valley Road

In association with Dr Adrienn Tomor – UWE

All the necessary information has been collected and programmes established in order that a preliminary design with overall dimensions of the bridge can be prepared. Once this has completed it can be passed to a stonemason who will price it, undertake preliminary detailing and present a few options with the corresponding costs.

FOD+AG aim to have more details for the next Downs Committee meeting on the 1 July

## 2.0b

#### discussion evening

In celebration of its first five years, FODAG held a highly successful discussion evening on March the 20th 2013. 48 members of the Friends heard two short keynote addresses on the history of the Downs and Gorge by Francis Greenacre, a personal view of how the area might look in 50 years time from Robert Westlake, the Downs Ranger. Thereafter the meeting broke up into smaller discussion groups to address three key issues viz: What the the Downs and Gorge represent as a resource for Bristol and its citizens, what the role of FODAG should be as both an agent for positive change and a buffer against unwanted pressures, and finally how FODAG could attract a greater and more involved membership. After three hours of listening animated and enthusiastic discussion, a range of suggestions and proposals have been generated and will be taken forward by the Committee in the coming months.

## 4.0a

### Litter collection

The FOD+AG committee.....

*agreed that our responsibilities to members mean that in future litter collections should not take place in areas where sex litter is likely to be found. Clearing this should be the responsibility of the Terence Higgins Trust and BCC. We should also promote scrub clearance in these areas, and seek progress on the reinstatement of the old tramway as part of the long term aim of seeking Heritage status for the Downs and Gorge.*