

Agenda item 2

Clifton and Durdham Downs (Bristol) Act 1861

**Minutes of the Downs Committee
held on 14th April 2014 at 4.00 pm.**

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------|
| A | The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor
Councillor Faruk Choudhury | |
| P | Councillor Abraham |) |
| P | Councillor Janke |) |
| A | Councillor Khan |) |
| A | Councillor Payne |) |
| P | Councillor Colin Smith |) |
| P | Councillor Townsend |) |
| | | City Councillors |
| P | Anthony Brown (Master) | Chair |
| A | Chris Booy |) |
| A | Chris Curling |) |
| P | Andrew Densham |) |
| P | Francis Greenacre |) |
| P | Sir James Tidmarsh |) |
| P | Chris Pople |) |
| | | Merchant Venturers |

DWN

29.4/14 Apologies For Absence And Introductions

Apologies were received from the Lord Mayor (Cllr Choudhury), Chris Booy and Chris Curling.

DWN

30.4/14 Minutes – Downs Committee – 27th January 2014

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Downs Committee held on 27th January 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair

Matters Arising

P14 Veteran Ash - Andrew Gordon indicated that a protocol had been drafted by Becky Coffin for the future management of

dangerous trees and would be circulated to Members in due course. **Action Becky Coffin**

DWN

31.4/14 Declarations of Interest

None.

DWN

32.4/14 PUBLIC FORUM

The following items of public forum were received and are available for inspection in the minute book.

AGENDA ITEM	ISSUE	NAME	STATEMENT NO
N/A	Access to the Downs and the Zoo by sustainable transport	D Redgewell	1
N/A	Public equalities duty and disabled access to the Downs	M Simmon	2
N/A	Henbury Loop Railway	A Devonshire	3

Statement 1 – Access to the Downs

D Redgewell spoke to his statement which asked the Committee to market access to the Downs and Zoo by sustainable transport. The Committee noted the contents of the statement and agreed that the issue would be picked up by the Traffic Management subgroup which would be meeting again in June 2014.

It was noted that a new Park & Ride service from Long Ashton to Clifton Village and Downs, then Southmead was now in operation. The Zoo would be asked to promote this form of sustainable transport as much as possible. **Action Andrew Gordon**

Statement 2 – Public equalities duty

On behalf of M Simmon, D Redgewell spoke to this statement which asked the Committee to consider the need to promote equality for persons with ‘protected characteristics’ before making decisions and as part of the day to day management of the Downs. The contents of the statement were noted by the Committee.

Statement 3 – Henbury Loop Railway

On behalf of A Devonshire, D Redgewell briefly spoke to this statement indicating that support for the re-opening of the Henbury Loop had already been covered under Statement 1 above. The contents of the statement were noted by the Committee.

DWN

33.4/14 Pedestrian and cycle bridge over Bridge Valley Road (agenda item 5)

The Committee considered a report of Dr Adrienne Tomor which provided an update on the proposal to build a pedestrian and cycle bridge over Bridge Valley Road.

During her presentation, Dr Tomor was pleased to report that funding for the ecology and environmental surveys had now been secured by an anonymous donor so the Committee were no longer being asked to make a financial contribution.

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

- Assurances were sought that in the longer term the proposed bridge would not interfere with the growth of two commemorative 'royal' trees which had been planted in that location. In response, Dr Tomor indicated that the arboricultural survey was due to be undertaken in the next couple of months and she would ensure that these factors were taken into consideration.
- One member indicated that he was not opposed to a bridge in principle but had real concerns about the design and the material to be used which he felt was not in-keeping with the area. He was also reluctant to support the project on to the next stage which was a planning application without sight of a business plan setting out where the funding would be coming from (estimated £2m).
- One member commented that whilst he supported the principle of a bridge, he would prefer it to be made of metal. He felt that the Committee had agreed in principle to 'a bridge' and not a stone bridge specifically. He also had concerns about the proposed cycling infrastructure to and from the bridge.
- It was clarified by Dr Tomor that as stated at the November meeting of Downs Committee, a stone bridge was the only option that UWE were willing and able to take forward at no cost to the council. The Democratic Services Officer

commented that as far as she could recall, the Committee at the November meeting had agreed in principle to support the request for a stone pedestrian bridge over Bridge Valley Road, however the minutes would be checked. The Master was also of the view that this had been the decision of the Committee at that time.

- In response to a question, Dr Tomor indicated that the outcome of the pre-planning application enquiry had been generally positive and provided the necessary confidence to move forward to the planning application. She pointed out that the original enquiry had not included cycle links because the Committee had requested these later at the November meeting. She confirmed that the planning application would include the cycling infrastructure proposed.
- The need to create a safe circular path allowing people to access the Gorge from the Downs has already been identified in 'A Management Plan for the Bristol side of the Avon Gorge'. However it was noted that to date there had been no take up to develop such a scheme. With enthusiasm and skills UWE have been working (for free) with FODAG to develop this proposal, led very passionately by Dr Tomor.
- Planning permission would be based on a full technical assessment by planning officers and wider consultation including Natural Heritage. It was suggested that this be the final test to determine whether the project should be taken forward.
- A number of Members had reservations about the project being progressed to the Planning Application and felt it should be halted at this stage before more time and effort was expended. Other Members felt that the Committee had already had the opportunity to pull the project at a much earlier stage in the process as it had received regular updates from Dr Tomor.

Colin Smith proposed that the project be allowed to progress to planning application, which was seconded.

Upon a vote being taken it was

RESOLVED that the proposal for a stone bridge over Bridge Valley Road with cycling links be progressed to a planning application.

(Voting 4 For, 4 Against, 1 Abstention – The Chair exercised his right to a casting vote and voted for the proposal)

DWN

34.4/14 Summertime Public Art Commission: Bristol Downs (agenda item 6)

The Committee considered a report of the Senior Public Art Officer requesting approval for the installation of a temporary public artwork for community summertime activities on the Downs from 19th July to 9th November 2014.

The artwork coincides with the exhibition 'The Promise' at Arnolfini in summer 2014, focussing on architecture and urban planning for the society we live in and the relationship between Bristol and its residents. Due to the strong public dimension and connection to the city itself, the exhibition will take place inside and outside the Arnolfini, with art works situated in public spaces and amongst its communities.

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

- It was confirmed that the project was being funded by Arnolfini at no cost to the council or Downs Committee.
- During the discussion of the report at the agenda conference, the area designated for barbecue use had initially been suggested as a suitable location for the structure. However, officers had since found out that this location has been designated as a site of special scientific interest so it cannot be used as a barbecue area (see update under Downs Ranger report). An alternative site had been suggested for the art work (the area north of the circular road that is not a site of SSI). One of the local ward Councillors had concerns about this location so it was suggested that this could be agreed with Members/Parks/Natural England outside of the meeting before July 2014. **Action Aldo Rinaldi**
- Some members were concerned that the structure would encourage the illegal use of barbecues on the Downs which has been an ongoing problem. In response to a question, it was confirmed that when not in use for an organised event the structure would be locked and secured so that it could not be used by the wider public for unofficial cooking.

- Members requested that any damage to the ground/grass caused by the structure be repaired to its original state by Arnolfini.

RESOLVED -

- 1) That BCC and Arnolfini can progress with the siting of a temporary art work on the Downs by Oscar Tuazon from 19 July – 9 November 2014.
- 2) That this work is a sculpture that integrates a cooking facility, and that this can be used to cook only during programmed events organised by Arnolfini.
- 3) That at other times the sculpture cooking element will be locked and secured so that it cannot be used for a wider public use for unofficial cooking.
- 4) That the location for the work will be agreed prior to July 2014 with the Downs Committee, Parks and Natural England and that any damage to the ground/grass caused by the structure will be re-instated by Arnolfini.

DWN

35.4/14

Delegated and upcoming events proposed on the Downs

The Committee considered a report of the Service Director Communication and Marketing (agenda item no. 7):

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

The Committee was pleased with the event management on the Downs and the income it has generated to re-invest into the on-going maintenance of this unique public space.

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.

REPORT OF THE DOWNS RANGER

The Committee considered a report of the Downs Ranger (agenda item no. 8) updating on works and developments carried out since the last meeting.

The following main issues were noted during the discussion:-

- Proposal for the installation of a second item of outdoor training equipment on the Downs. Following concerns raised by Members at the last meeting, the proposer has resubmitted the proposal with a 50% reduction in promotional material and identified two possible locations (see attachments to the report).
 - One Member was disappointed that the equipment was exactly the same structure as the first installation. She was hoping that it would have been similar to the Trim Trail that was being replaced as this was a wooden structure which blended into the landscape when not in use.
 - A number of Members indicated their support for the installation as it promoted health and wellbeing and encouraged access to the Downs by a wide range of users.
 - The Committee agreed to the second installation of equipment at location A.
- Designated barbecue area. Following Downs Committee agreement to permit a small area of the Downs to be used for barbecues an application to Natural England had been submitted. During discussion with Chris Westcott, officers have found out that this location has been designated as a site of special scientific interest so it cannot be used as a barbecue area. The Conservation officer has negotiated consent for 1 year with Natural England but the Committee will need to think about where the designated barbeque area might be located in the longer term.
- Working Groups
 - a) Traffic Management. The group had met on 10th April and the notes of the meeting would be circulated to the Committee. **Action Andrew Gordon.**
 - Two key issues discussed had been Residents Parking Zone for Clifton and the introduction of a dedicated cycle path across the Downs. Officers will be asked to present reports on these issues to the next meeting of Downs Committee in July.

Action Andrew Gordon / Ruth Quantock to update work programme

- b) Rockfall. Members were asked to note additional engineering fees relating to the rock stabilisation works totalling £3245.
- The dispute with an adjoining owner where rock from Sea Walls rock face has fallen on their land is in the hands of the council's solicitors. The stabilisation work was therefore in obeyance until this had been resolved.
 - Phil Lloyd had now left the council and there was no BCC replacement to oversee the contract with CAN Geotechnical LTD. Parsons Brinckerhoff would be able to do the work and a quote would be circulated to Members in due course. **Action Andrew Gordon**
 - It was agreed that the Rock Fall working group would meet again in due course to receive a further update and resolve any outstanding issues.
- Finance. The concession refreshment van located at Parry Lane has accumulated significant arrears backdating to 2012. Steps are being taken to terminate the contract and undertake debt recovery. It was confirmed that BCC markets will bear the cost of this not Downs Committee. The Finance Officer confirmed that the arrears were not included in the end of year finance report because projected income had been based on what was actually received in the previous year.
 - Following completion of the tendering process for the Downs ice-cream concession the contract has been awarded to Lopresti and Sons who were the current operators.
 - Downs Ranger. It was noted that Robert Westlake had now left the council and the Committee wished to put on record its thanks to Robert for his commitment to the role of Downs Ranger. Members were disappointed that they had not been given the opportunity to thank Robert in person. It was agreed that a letter of thanks would be written on behalf of the Committee by the Lord Mayor. **Action Ruth Quantock to liaise with LM office**

RESOLVED -

- (1) **That the proposal for the installation of a second item of outdoor fitness equipment (OTIS) on the Downs in location A be approved.**

- (2) **That the Downs Committee Rock Fall Working Group meets in due course to resolve any outstanding issues.**

DWN

37.4/14

Finance Report 2013/14 and draft budget 2014/15

The Committee received a report of the Service Director, Finance (agenda item no. 9) presenting the estimated financial outturn position and draft budget for 2014/15.

The following key issues were noted during the discussion:-

- The reserves will be reduced to under £70,000 once all liabilities have been charged.
- Members were encouraged to work with officers to identify more ways in which income can be generated.
- The comment was made that the fee for the Zoo car park of £34k was worth significantly more in commercial value to the Zoo and it was suggested that the fee be re-negotiated next time it was up for renewal. A member commented that in the past the fee had been fixed democratically at Member level with advice from officers. The Master agreed to be involved in this process and invited other Members to participate if they were interested in future. **Action: Andrew Gordon to find out when fees can be re-negotiated.**

RESOLVED that the estimated outturn for 2013/14 be noted and the draft budget for 2014/15 be approved

DWN

38.4/14

A.O.B

Cllr Townsend indicated that this would be her last meeting of Downs Committee as she would be stranding down at the May Election. She had very much enjoyed her service on the Committee over five years in total having spent many happy times on the Downs with her family.

On behalf of the Committee the Master thanked Cllr Townsend for her significant contribution to the work of the Committee and in particular her commitment to the Avon Gorge and Wildlife Project.

DWN

39.4/14

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED -

That the next meeting of the Downs Committee be held on 7th July 2014 at 11.00am at Merchants' Hall, The Promenade, Clifton, Bristol BS9 3NH. (Please note change to usual time and venue.)

(The meeting ended at 6.05 pm)

CHAIR