

Clifton and Durdham Downs (Bristol) Act 1861

Minutes of the Downs Committee held on 7th July 2014 at 11.00 am at Merchants Hall

Present:

- P The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor
Councillor Alastair Watson Chair
- P Councillor Peter Abraham)
P Councillor Martin Fodor)
P Councillor Glenise Morgan) City Councillors
A Councillor Mahmudur Khan)
A Councillor Bill Payne)
P Colin Smith)
- P Anthony Brown (Master)
- A Chris Booy)
A Chris Curling)
A Andrew Densham) Merchant Venturers
P Francis Greenacre)
P Chris Pople)
A Sir James Tidmarsh)

Also in attendance:

Mike Allen - Finance
Becky Coffin – Nature Conservation
Andrew Gordon - Estates Management
David Sarson - Highways
Mark Sperduty - Highways
Jon Usher – Area Manager, Bristol, representing Sustrans
Peter Watts - Events Team

Norman Cornthwaite - Democratic Services

DWN

40.7/14 Apologies For Absence And Introductions

Apologies were received from the Councillors Khan and Payne; Chris Booy, Chris Curling, Andrew Densham and Sir James Tidmarsh

DWN

41.7/14 Minutes – Downs Committee – 14th April 2014

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Downs Committee held on 14th April 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair

DWN

42.7/14 Declarations of Interest

The following declarations were received and noted:

Colin Smith - Agenda Item No. 8 - Member of the Suspension Bridge Trust.

Francis Greenacre - Agenda Item No. 8 - Member of the Suspension Bridge Trust.

Councillor Abraham - Agenda Item No. 11, temporary artwork - Member of the Development Control Committee, but will take no part in the item.

DWN

43.7/14 PUBLIC FORUM

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

AGENDA ITEM	ISSUE	NAME	Comments
N/A	Anti-social Behaviour	Beverley Verwoert	This issue should be considered at a future Meeting of the Committee

N/A	Public Transport Access to the Downs	David Redgewell	The Committee should receive a report on Park and Ride access to the Downs at a future Meeting
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DWN

44.7/14 Changes to the Downs Membership (Agenda Item No. 5)

It was noted that Councillors Fodor and Morgan have replaced Councillors Janke and Townsend.

It was also noted that Councillor Morgan has agreed to sit on the Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Steering Group Project.

DWN

45.7/14 Cycling on Clifton and Durdham Downs (Agenda Item No. 6)

The Committee considered a report on the above.

Jon Usher introduced the report and summarised it for everyone. He noted that the recommendations are aimed at those who do not already cycle.

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

- Main routes are the priority for investment and the two main pedestrian routes across the Downs will become cycle tracks; the aim is for anyone living in Bristol to be within 500 metres of a cycle track
- Some Members, whilst supporting the principle of cycling, considered that the Downs should remain cycle free because of the potential clash with pedestrians; cycle routes could be adjacent to the edge of the Downs; it was noted that the RPZ may encourage people to cycle across the Downs
- There was agreement that the scheme should be progressed and that proposals should be considered at a future meeting

- Jon Usher confirmed that he would take the Committee's views back to the Sub Group

Resolved - (i) that the report be noted; and

(ii) that a further report on proposals be received at a future Meeting.

DWN

46.7/14

Parking Restriction Scheme (Agenda Item No. 7)

Mark Sperduty introduced the report and summarised it for everyone. Consultation would take place within the next 2 weeks and it is expected that the scheme will be in place by April 2015 - although this may be earlier or later.

Resolved - that the report be noted.

DWN

47.7/14

Proposed Highway Improvement in the Suspension Bridge Road area (Agenda Item No. 8)

David Sarson introduced the report and summarised it for everyone.

Resolved - that the report be noted.

DWN

48.7/14

Delegated and upcoming events proposed on the Downs (Agenda Item No. 9)

Peter Watts introduced this report and summarised it for everyone.

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

- Minutes of the Safety Advisory Group will be brought to the next Meeting of the Committee
- The fees for filming may need to be reviewed; rates are set each year depending on the nature of the event; attempts are made to ensure that there is parity with the rates for Ashton Court Estate

- Funderworld threatened to withdraw and go outside Bristol

Resolved - that the report be noted.

DWN

49.7/14

Income and Revenue Optimisation at the Downs (Agenda Item No. 10)

Peter Watts introduced this report and summarised it for everyone.

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

- It was noted that some events are controversial and it was agreed that a Sub Group be established to consider proposed events with the power to refer to the Committee; the group should operate primarily through e-mail; it was suggested that the Membership comprise the Lord Mayor, the Master, 1 Councillor and 1 Merchant Venturer
- It was confirmed that the Downs could be included in meetings relating to the Green Capital
- It should be publicised that all of the income from events on the Downs goes to support the Downs

Resolved - (i) that the relaxing of delegated powers be approved on the understanding that an Events Sub Group will initially inform any decision making regarding major events; the Sub Group Membership will comprise the Lord Mayor, the Master, 1 Councillor and 1 Merchant Venturer; the Group will operate primarily through e-mail and with the power to refer to the Committee; and

(ii) that suitable areas (or unsuitable areas) to market the Downs for increased event activity be identified.

DWN

50.7/14

Downs Management Report (Agenda Item No. 11)

Andrew Gordon introduced this report and summarised it for everyone.

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

- The second item of OTIS training equipment is to be the same as on Ladies Mile and could be allowed for 12 months initially
- Referring to the proposed movement of the BBQ are, it was noted that although Natural England have raised concerns their scientific case is challengeable and the soil can be tested for phosphate levels
- It was noted that although most authorities operate a blanket ban on BBQ's this was an area identified as being suitable and has been successful over the last 3 years
- It was agreed that Andrew Gordon and Becky Coffin would draft a letter to Natural England and include phosphate test results as part of the evidence
- It was noted that the Sea Walls situation is an on going problem for the Downs Committee and BCC; consideration is being given to buying the land below but the owner is asking for a large amount of money; it may be possible to arrange an exchange of land; the Committee will be kept aware of progress
- It was noted that consideration is being given to tendering for the non ice-cream concessions

Resolved - (i) that a second item of OTIS training equipment be allowed on the Downs for a period of 12 months;

(ii) that the agreed location for the Oscar Tuazon temporary artwork be noted;

(iii) that in relation to the proposal to move the BBQ area the scientific case put forward by Natural England be challenged and that a letter be sent to Natural England which includes phosphate test results of the soil be as part of the evidence;

(iv) that the progress made by BCC Legal Services to try to

resolve issues with the neighbouring land owner at Sea Walls be noted; and

(v) that the proposals for ways of raising additional revenue on the Downs be considered.

DWN

51.7/14 Finance Report (Agenda Item No. 12)

Mike Allen introduced the report and summarised it for everyone. He noted that potential rock falls in the Avon Gorge is a great financial concern for the Committee.

Resolved - that the report be noted.

(Meeting ended at 12.50 pm.)

Chair