

## **DISCLAIMER**

**The attached minutes are DRAFT minutes. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information, statements and decisions recorded in them, their status will remain that of a draft until such time as they are confirmed as a correct record at the subsequent meeting.**

## Clifton and Durdham Downs (Bristol) Act 1861

### Minutes of the Downs Committee held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2015 at 11.00 am at Merchant's Hall

#### Present:

##### City Councillors

- P The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor  
Councillor Clare Champion-Smith (Chair)
  
- P Councillor Peter Abraham
- P Councillor Barry Clark
- P Councillor Martin Fodor
- P Councillor Glenise Morgan
- P Councillor Mahmadur Khan
- P Councillor Bill Payne

##### Merchant Venturers

- P Chris Curling (Master)
  
- P Anthony Brown
- A Andrew Densham
- P Francis Greenacre
- P Dayrell McArthur
- P Tim Ross
- P Sir James Tidmarsh

#### Also in attendance:

Andrew Gordon - Estates Management  
John Williams – Parks and Caretaking  
Ben Skuse – Downs Maintenance Supervisor  
Adam Mullinger - Events Team  
Richard Ennion – Environmental Improvement  
Manager  
Mike Allen – Finance

Mark Sperduty – Highways  
Becky Belfin – Nature Conservation  
Norman Cornthwaite - Democratic Services

**35. Apologies for Absence and Introductions (Agenda Item No. 1)**

No apologies were received.

**36. Changes to Downs Membership (Agenda Item No. 2)**

**Resolved – that the changes to the Bristol City Council Membership be noted.**

**37. Minutes of the Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2015 (Agenda Item No. 3)**

Referring to Minute No. 34 (iii), Richard Ennion summarised the event in Brussels and his talk on the Avon Gorge as part of the Nature Theme. Becky Belfin described the visit of EU Delegates and Green Capital Delegates to the Avon Gorge.

**Resolved - that the Minutes be agreed as a correct record of the Meeting and signed by the Chair.**

**38. Declarations of interest (Agenda Item No. 4)**

Dayrell McArthur stated that he is shareholder in Bristol Zoo.

**39. Public Forum (Agenda Item No. 5)**

Statements were received from:

1. Maggie Shapland, Clifton and Hotwells Improvement Society (CHIS), and Trustee of the Clifton Rocks Railway Trust - Historic Telegraph posts
2. Dr Bryan Carroll, Bristol Zoo - Parking Restrictions
3. Maggie Cameron, Samaritans – Prevention of suicides (a written version of the statement was received after the Meeting)

A copy of these statements is contained in the Minute Book which is held by Democratic Services.

#### 40. **Parking Restrictions** (Agenda Item No. 6)

Mark Sperduty introduced the report and summarised it for everyone. He asked that the Committee take a view on the request from Bristol Zoo to increase the time limit from 4 hours to 5 hours. He also drew attention to the Recommendations.

It was noted that the Traffic Sub Group had looked at everything very thoroughly and had been supportive of the proposals relating to Stoke Road; had suggested a time limit of 4 hours as a way of preventing all day parking on the Downs (but were not tied to this time limit); and had not been persuaded that the parking spaces on Roman Road should be removed.

Noting the importance of the Zoo to the City, Members of the Committee were supportive of the request from the Zoo to increase the time limit from 4 hours to 5 hours and to not impose restrictions on Bank Holidays.

There was general - but not unanimous support - that parking should remain available on Roman Road, albeit subject to the (suggested) time limit of 5 hours and no restrictions on Bank Holidays.

It was noted that the Place and Movement Strategy being developed would consider this issue as part of the options and recommendations to deal with the issues of traffic, parking, etc. that affect many Downs users.

Following a debate it was

**Resolved - (1) that the Committee supports sections of no waiting at any time and no waiting Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm on Stoke Road;**

**(2) that the Committee supports sections of no waiting at any time on other roads across the Downs;**

**(3) that the Committee supports a 5 hour time limit (rather than 4) across most of the remaining parking spaces with no restrictions on Bank Holidays;**

**(4) (Voting 11 for and 2 against) that the Committee does not support restricting the use of Roman Road to cyclists, public transport and emergency services only, but instead supports parking remaining available on Roman Road, subject to a 5 hour time limit with no restrictions on Bank Holidays; and**

**(5) that the views of the Committee be submitted to Highways.**

**41. Downs Management Report (Agenda Item No. 7)**

Andrew Gordon introduced the report and summarised it for everyone.

During the debate on the Rock Falls Group the issue of Finance was raised. Some concerns were raised about the Reserves held by the Downs Committee and the payment from these Reserves for items over which the Downs Committee has no control. Mike Allen explained that holding a Reserve was unique to the Downs Committee in respect of other BCC Budgets; that the Downs Committee Budget has not been reduced in the same way that other Parks Budgets have been reduced; that he has agreed a clear and sustainable Reserve of £50,000 for the Downs Committee with the Service Director, Finance; that the payment for the Bridge Road rock stabilisation work would be the last to funded in this way; that the Downs Committee Budget will be reviewed this year; and that the Downs Committee would to plan how to fund projects that it wants to undertake.

Richard Ennion drew attention to the tree planting scheme. He drew attention to the event planned for November/December 2015. He also assured Members that any trees planted would not be in conflict with Planning Regulations.

The response of Network Rail to the issue of the fence they have erected was not considered acceptable and it was agreed that this issue should be pursued with them.

It was noted that the bid for the Parry's Lane Concession has not been able to proceed as a permanent structure was not part of the bid. It will now be retendered along with Sea Walls.

It was noted that the planting thorn bushes would require the consent of Natural England as there may be concerns about

planting them near other species. It was agreed that the issue be progressed.

Francis Greenacre proposed that a letter of thanks be sent to the Clifton and Hotwells Amenity Society concerning the playground bench and this was agreed.

Referring to Public Forum Statement concerning the Historic Telegraph Posts it was agreed that the Clifton and Hotwells Improvement Society be consulted about the erection of a notice of a certain size.

**Resolved – (1) that the report be noted and that the recommendations in the report be agreed including the following:**

- (a) that the Parsons Brinkerhoff WSP proposal, presented to Members at the last meeting, to stabilise the rock face, by completely rock netting the eastern section of rock face and partially netting and rock bolting the western face;**
- (b) that the Blackrock Quarry car park works be approved;**
- (c) that Officers be authorised to further challenge Network Rail's response as they do not wish the installation of the fencing on the Downs;**
- (d) that the tree planting scheme and the event in November/December 2015 be supported; and**
- (e) that the safety improvement works recommended by BCC Corporate Safety be approved and the Samaritans suggestion of planting thorn bushes along the Downs cliff edges be pursued.**

**42. Delegated and Upcoming Events Proposed on The Downs**  
(Agenda Item No. 8)

Adam Mullinger introduced the report and summarised it for everyone. He advised that his secondment would soon end as a permanent member of staff has been appointed.

Referring to the Circus tender, Councillor Abraham stated he had

been contacted by Tony Hopkins concerning his unsuccessful bid. Adam Mullinger stated that he would find out about the background and let Councillor Abraham know the information.

**Resolved – (1) that the events and filming activity that has taken place on The Downs under delegated powers be noted; and**

**(2) that the proposed future events to take place on The Downs between Committee Meetings be noted.**

**43. Finance Report (Agenda Item No. 9)**

Mike Allen introduced the report and summarised it for everyone. He noted that the issue of the Reserve had been discussed earlier in the Meeting.

**Resolved – (1) that the projected outturn for 2014/15 be noted;**

**(2) that the budgetary position for 2015/16 be noted;**

**(3) that it be noted that a budget review will be carried out prior to 2016/17 budget setting.**

**44. Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge Bi-Annual Report (Agenda Item No. 10)**

**Resolved – that the report be noted.**

**45. Any Other Business**

- (i) Anti-Social Behaviour by Cyclists – Andrew Gordon advised that he had asked the Cycling Team to re-instate the Cycling Signs.
- (ii) Road Closures – These are for private events so the usage is not recorded Feedback on events is received and the Events Team can include Downs Committee Members as part of the consultation and/or planning for future events.

(The Meeting ended at 12.50 pm.)

Lord Mayor