

Clifton and Durdham Downs (Bristol) Act 1861

**Minutes of the Downs Committee
held on 7th September 2015 at 2.30 pm
at Brunel House**

Present:

City Councillors

P The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor
Councillor Clare Campion-Smith (Chair)

P Councillor Peter Abraham
P Councillor Barry Clark
P Councillor Martin Fodor
P Councillor Glenise Morgan
P Councillor Mahmudur Khan
P Councillor Bill Payne

Merchant Venturers

P Chris Curling (Master)

P Anthony Brown
A Andrew Densham
P Francis Greenacre
A Dayrell McArthur
A Tim Ross
A Sir James Tidmarsh

Also in attendance:

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

Becky Belfin – Nature Conservation
Emma Williams – Bristol 2015
Zoe Cameron – Local Artist
Audrey Michel – Bristol Ensemble
Norman Cornthwaite - Democratic Services

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

Apologies were received from Andrew Densham, Dayrell McArthur, Tim Ross and Sir James Tidmarsh.

46. Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th July 2015 (Agenda Item No. 2)

Referring to Minute No. 40, it was noted that the Place and Movement Strategy would account of the whole issue of parking including outside the Zoo.

Richard Ennion provided an update on tree planting – they have attracted 25 sponsors so far and discussions are ongoing about a tree planting event on either 14th or 28th January 2016; details to be confirmed in due course.

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

47. Declarations of interest (Agenda Item No. 3)

None were received.

48. Public Forum (Agenda Item No. 4)

Statements were received from:

Susan Carter on behalf Downs for People relating to Zoo Parking on the Downs. It was confirmed that a response would be sent in due course, following a Meeting of the Committee's Traffic Sub Group.

A copy of this statement is contained in the Minute Book which is held by Democratic Services.

49. Downs Management Report (Agenda Item No. 5)

Andrew Gordon introduced the report and summarised it for everyone.

Enjoyment: It was not considered appropriate to erect any further by-law signs on Christchurch Green. It was noted that most of the problems in this area are associated with the Balloon Fiesta and these issues can be addressed by other methods.

Place and Movement Sub Group: Andrew Gordon explained that a meeting was convened on 3 September by Bristol Design to present to the Sub Group (made up of DC members) the work carried out so far on the Downs Movement and Place Framework and invite comment to help develop the strategy. The presentation included:

1. Explanation of the purpose of the framework namely to provide a vision for the Downs, baseline information, identify key issues and constraints; provide a strategic and balanced consideration of Place and Movement on the Downs and provide an active transport focus.
2. The scope and context of the framework will include key places in and around the Downs, existing rights of way and cycle networks, public transport, and parking
3. Observations following visits to other open spaces in the UK to see how multi use issues are addressed and whether they might provide solutions for the Downs.
4. Suggestions for a range of scenarios for intervention to address issues and enhance users recreational experience

It was agreed that Bristol Design would a draft report for the Sub Group by the 1st week of October to enable them to provide feedback/comment in a meeting to held in the 3rd week in October and then produce a revised draft end of October in time for DC members to consider at their meeting by November.

Bridge Road: It was noted that the estimate has doubled and that the total cost of the scheme was now in the region of £50,000. This amount would be charged to Downs Committee. Concerns were raised about the increase in the cost of the scheme, the impact on the Downs Budget and issue of the level of reserves to be held by the Downs Committee. It was also noted that the Downs Committee Budget is to be reviewed and the level of reserves to

be held in the future will be part of this review. This scheme is being progressed for Health and Safety reasons.

Black Rock Quarry: Concerns were raised the responsibility for the rock face and use of the Downs Committee's reserves to fund this scheme. It was noted that the liability rests with BCC but as the Downs Committee holds a BCC Budget, this budget should be used to pay for the scheme. Councillor Clark moved that the commissioning of WSP PB by the Downs Committee to undertake the Black Rock Quarry risk assessment be refused and that a long terms solution for the funding of such schemes be identified. This was seconded and voted on. This motion was agreed.

Finance: Andrew Gordon reported on tendering the refreshment concession on Seawalls and recommended that the Committee accept the tender of £13,000 for the Seawalls refreshment concession. This was agreed.

Risk Assessment: Andrew Gordon reported that in relation to the paragraphs outlining the outcome of a meeting with interested individuals concerned about ways to reduce suicide on the Downs, it was recommended that: In liaison with Natural England (NE), Officers will assess where there are gaps in existing hedges along the cliff edges that could be planted with thorny bushes and to quantify the impacts on the Avon Gorge SSSI and Special Area of Conservation as a result of retaining existing hedges and planting the gaps, on the basis of seeking consent from NE. This was agreed.

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

- (a) that the request for a by-law sign to be erected on Christchurch Green to deter antisocial behavior be refused;**
- (b) that the Downs Committee commission the printing of 5,000 of each trails at a total cost of £1,430;**
- (c) (voting 8 for, 2 against) that the commissioning of WSP PB to undertake the design, tendering and supervision of Bridge Road stabilisation works be approved;**

- (d) (voting 6 for, 3 against, 1 abstention) that the commissioning of WSP PB by the Downs Committee to undertake the Black Rock Quarry risk assessment be refused and that a long term solution to the funding of the this and similar schemes be identified;**
- (e) that the formal adoption of the Clifton & Durdham Down Scrub Management Plan be approved;**
- (f) that Members accept the tender of £13,000 for the Seawalls refreshment concession; and**
- (g) that in liaison with Natural England (NE), Officers be authorised to assess where there are gaps in existing hedges along the cliff edges that could be planted with thorny bushes and to quantify the impacts on the Avon Gorge SSSI and Special Area of Conservation as a result of retaining existing hedges and planting the gaps, on the basis of seeking consent from NE.**

50. Delegated and Upcoming Events Proposed on The Downs
(Agenda Item No. 6)

Victoria Holden introduced the report and summarised it for everyone.

She explained the situation with the cinema event, confirmed that a site fee of £800 has been paid and the she is happy with the arrangements.

In response to a question from Councillor Abraham, she confirmed that the Circus Tender had been awarded on the basis of a larger site fee being offered.

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.

51. Finance Report (Agenda Item No. 7)

Mike Allen introduced the report and summarised it for everyone.

Resolved – that it be noted that there are no significant variations from budget to the end of July.

52. Installation of Cycle Stands at climbing sites on the Avon Gorge (Agenda Item No. 8)

Resolved – that cycle parking is installed at 2 climbing sites on the Avon Gorge, Black Rocks Quarry and below The Gulley.

53. Bristol 2015, Neighbourhood Arts Programme (Agenda Item No. 9)

Emma Williams introduced the report and summarised it for everyone.

Following a debate it was

Resolved – (1) that the installation of a temporary public artwork for The Downs, led by local artist Zoë Cameron as part of the Bristol 2015 Neighbourhood Arts Programme be approved;

(2) that the desired location for the artwork as set out in this document for installation in October 2015 so we can gain approval from Bristol City Council's Site Permissions team be agreed; and

(3) that the desired dates for the installation to take place (14th – 27th October including installation and take down time) be agreed.

54. Bristol Ensemble Treesong (Agenda Item No. 10)

Audrey Michel introduced the report and summarised it for everyone.

Resolved – that the installation of a temporary public artwork by the Bristol Ensemble and artist Jony Easterby be approved.

55. Any Other Business (Agenda Item No. 11)

- (i) Observatory – The Lord Mayor reminded everyone that they have received an invitation to visit the Observatory.
- (ii) Cycle Sunday – The Lord Mayor reminded everyone that they have invited to this event on 20th September 2015.

(The Meeting ended at 4.25 pm.)

Lord Mayor