

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
DOWNS COMMITTEE
HELD ON 23RD APRIL 2012 AT 4.30 P.M.**

P The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor
Geoff Gollop (in the Chair)

P Councillor Cook)
P Councillor Davies)
P Councillor Goulandris) 6 City Councillors
P Councillor Hugill)
A Councillor Morgan)
P Councillor Stone)

P David Marsh (Master))
P Anthony Brown)
P Francis Greenacre) 6 Merchant Venturers
P Tom Hood)
P Peter Rilett)
A Sir James Tidmarsh)

**DWN
30.4/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Sir Jay Tidmarsh and Cllr Morgan.

**DWN
31.4/12 MINUTES - DOWNS COMMITTEE - 30TH JANUARY 2012**

**RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the
Downs Committee held on 30th January
2012 be confirmed as a correct record
and signed by the Chair.**

**DWN
32.4/12 PUBLIC FORUM**

None received on this occasion.

REPORT OF THE DOWNS RANGER

The Committee considered a report of the Service Director, Environment and Leisure (agenda item no. 4) updating on works and developments carried out since the last meeting.

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

Enjoyment.

An update was provided on the preparations for the Downs Jubilee Day to be held on 4th June. The Committee supported a request for the provision of a coach parking area along Ladies Mile to support the Olympic Torch relay scheduled for 23rd May. The Committee agreed that the Lord Mayor and Master be delegated the authority to approve up to £1000 for any unforeseen costs relating to these two events.

Access.

- The Committee supported the proposal that a Member/Officer sub-group be established to look at parking and traffic problems on the Downs and come up with a working document to discuss with Traffic Managers. It was agreed that the Downs Ranger, Richard Bevan, Cllr Hugill and a representative from FODAG would sit on this group. The Master indicated that he would discuss this further with the Merchant Venturers outside of the meeting and a representative would be nominated in due course. **Action: David Marsh / Robert Westlake**

It was also suggested that the Downs Ranger look in to the feasibility of a partial road closure around the Downs eg Ladies Mile to prohibit vehicular access for 1 day, from time to time. It was understood that the Executive Member Transport was considering similar initiatives across the City so it was suggested that the Downs event could be co-ordinated with these closures.

- in view of the significant disturbance, loss of public amenity and the cost of officer time being spent on the project, the Committee urged officers to negotiate hard with Bristol Water over the amount of compensation to be awarded for the installation of a new water main across parts of the Downs. Richard Bevan agreed to speak to Richard Ennion who was leading on this. **Action: Richard Bevan**

Anti Social Behaviour.

FODAG had organised a deep litter clearance day on 31st March and the area targeted this time was the wooded area known locally as Fairyland. The Lord Mayor indicated that he had subsequently received a complaint from a representative of FODAG about the significant amount of sex litter which had been collected during this task. At the suggestion of the Lord Mayor, the Committee agreed to set up a small working group to look at the issue and report back at the next meeting. It was agreed that the Downs Ranger, Cllr Davies and a representative from FODAG would sit on this group, together with representatives from Southmead police and the Terence Higgins Trust. The Master indicated that he would discuss this further with the Merchant Venturers outside of the meeting and a representative would be nominated in due course.

Action: David Marsh / Robert Westlake

Management and Resources.

Concerns were raised about the areas of wear around the Downs caused by its regular use by joggers and walkers. It was confirmed by the Downs Ranger that the areas worse affected were re-planted with more resilient grass. Synthetic running tracks/ cycle tracks were on the market but at considerable expense. It was noted that the deadline for applications for park improvements through the capital programme had been extended to 30th April. Richard Bevan agreed to circulate more information on the process for applying for this funding. **Action Richard Bevan**

The Committee thanked FODAG for the positive way in which it engages with the work of the Downs Ranger and his team.

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) that in order to facilitate the lighting of the Jubilee Beacon, the committee seek approval from the Strategic Director, Neighbourhoods and City Development to grant a waiver under his delegated powers, on the byelaw prohibiting fires on the Downs;**
 - (2) that the Lord Mayor and Master be delegated authority to approve up to £1000 for any unforeseen costs relating to the Downs Jubilee Day**

and supporting the Olympic Torch Relay;

- (3) that the table tennis event to be held on the Downs throughout July 2012 be supported;
- (4) that a Traffic Sub-Group be formed to seek solutions to traffic and parking related issues around the Downs;
- (5) that a temporary parking area for coaches along Ladies Mile to support the Olympic Torch relay scheduled for 23rd May 2012 be agreed; and
- (6) that the report be noted.

**DWN
34.4/12**

DELEGATED AND UPCOMING EVENTS PROPOSED ON THE DOWNS

The Committee considered a report of the Service Director, Communication and Marketing (agenda item no. 5);

- noting events and filming that have taken place between committee meetings under Delegated Powers; and
- noting proposed future events between committee meetings.

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

- the deadline for applications for road closures in order to facilitate Diamond Jubilee street events is Friday 27th April
- the organisers of the annual Run for the Future have recently communicated to local residents their plans to hold this event on 16th September, together with details of the proposed road closures. A number of residents have voiced their concerns about the closures, specifically Saville Road. This issue has

been raised previously by the Downs Committee and it was agreed that although the event could go ahead this year under officer's delegated authority, a full report to Downs Committee would be required for 2013. In particular, the Committee were interested to know the number of people involved (runners and spectators). **Action: Peter Watts**

- It was explained by officers that for all event applications the organisers meet with SAGE (Safety Advisory Group for events) prior to an officer decision being made. For events on the Downs the Downs Ranger also attends this meeting.
- It was noted that the Festivals and Events Officer has created a team of 'mystery shoppers' to attend events and provide feedback.
- It was requested that organisers be reminded of their responsibility to not commercially advertise their events through fly-posting which negatively affects the environment and is illegal. **Action: Peter Watts**

RESOLVED - (1) that officers bring a separate report to Committee in future for the Run For the Future Event

(2) that the report be noted

**DWN
35.4/12**

FINANCE REPORT 2011/12 AND DRAFT BUDGET 2012/13

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate Services (agenda item no. 6) noting the estimated outturn and potential use of reserves for 2011/12 and approving the draft budget for 2012/13.

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

- £26,140 unbudgeted cost associated with Bridge Valley Road works. In response to concerns expressed by the Committee, officers explained that had been necessary to carry out this urgent work whilst the road was closed. The work had been authorised by the previous Estate Manager who had shortly left the employment of the council so unfortunately the issue had not been picked up and reported to the Committee

at that time. Richard Bevan provided assurance that this breakdown in procedure would not be repeated.

- Leasing Budget. A further report will be brought back to the July Committee which will include details of potential acquisitions along with options for funding the replacement programme.

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) that the estimated outturn and potential use of reserves for 2011/12 be noted; and**
 - (2) that the draft budget for 2012/13 be approved.**

**DWN
36.4/12**

David Marsh (Master) wished to put on record his thanks on behalf of the Committee to the Lord Mayor Cllr Gollop for his efficient and business like chairing of meetings, and charming approach. In response the Lord Mayor indicated that he had very much enjoyed working with this Committee, and was impressed with the knowledge and expertise of members and officers around the table. He wished the Committee continued success in managing and maintaining this unique and prestigious piece of land.

**DWN
37.4/12**

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- RESOLVED - that the next meeting of the Downs Committee be held on 2nd July 2012 at 11.00 a.m. at Merchants' Hall, The Promenade, Clifton, Bristol BS8 3NH.**

(The meeting ended at 6.05 pm)

CHAIR