

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.

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
DOWNS COMMITTEE
HELD ON 1ST JULY 2013 AT 11.00 A.M.**

- P The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor
Councillor Faruk Choudhury (in the Chair)
- P Councillor Abraham)
P Councillor Janke)
P Councillor Khan) 6 City Councillors
P Colin Smith)
P Councillor Townsend)
Vacancy)
- P Peter Rilett - Master
- P Chris Booy)
P Anthony Brown)
P Andrew Densham) 6 Merchant Venturers
A Francis Greenacre)
P Tom Hood)
P Sir James Tidmarsh)

DWN

36.7/13

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND INTRODUCTIONS

Apologies were received from Francis Greenacre.

DWN

37.7/13

CHANGES TO DOWNS MEMBERSHIP

The Committee considered a report which outlined changes in the Councillor membership of Downs Committee following Bristol City Council's Annual meeting on Tuesday 21st May 2013 and the subsequent meeting of Outside Bodies Committee on 30th May 2013.

RESOLVED:-

(1) that the membership changes be noted

- (2) that letters of thanks on behalf of the Downs Committee be sent to outgoing Members (Cllr Main, Morgan, Davies and Hugill) for their contribution to the work of the Committee.
- (3) that Cllr Townsend be appointed to sit on the Avon Gorge Steering Group

(Action: Ruth Quantock)

**DWN
38.7/13**

MINUTES – DOWNS COMMITTEE – 22ND APRIL 2013

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Downs Committee held on 22nd April 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

P8 Public Forum Statement 4 – Funderworld. Cllr Abraham indicated that whilst he had not been at the last meeting, the statement which had been made by an officer that no complaints had been received by Events, Parks or Highways was inaccurate, as he had passed on a number of complaints he had received from local residents to officers in these departments.

Following discussion it was clarified that it was appropriate for Cllrs to pass on complaints they had received from local residents direct to officers and that 'Fair Comment' was to be used for general comments from the public or as a mechanism for escalating an unsatisfactory response in relation to the procedure which had been followed ie a formal complaint.

**DWN
39.7/13**

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	Replacement of felled trees on the Downs	Clive Stevens, Chair Bristol TreeForum	1

N/A	Bridge Valley Road Project	Jack Penrose, Chair of FODAG	2
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Statement 1 – Replacement of felled trees on the Downs

In response to this statement the Downs Ranger indicated that the management of the Downs tree stock is detailed in the Downs Management Plan (2012- 2017) which is available on line on the Bristol City Council website. In addition, council officers had prepared and presented to the Downs Committee on 10th September 2012 a detailed planting scheme to include replacements. This report contained references to tree management in general which can also be found in the Management Plan.

Cllr Townsend requested a copy of the report as she was not a member of Downs Committee at that time. **Action Robert Westlake.**

The Committee noted the response and requested that Clive Stevens be replied to accordingly. **Action Ruth Quantock**

Statement 2 – Bridge Valley Road Project

An update on the outline proposals were provided by Adrienn Tomar, UWE and supported by a plan of the proposed bridge design.

Members of the Committee raised concerns that the provision of a cycle route over the bridge would encourage cyclist to use the footpaths over the Downs which was not permitted and already a problem to enforce.

It was clarified that a report will shortly be submitted to Bristol City Council officers to appraise the proposal in full and a report will be brought back to the Committee in September 2013 (to include any financial implications including long term maintenance).

The update was noted.

REDUCTION OF TRAFFIC SPEED FROM 30 MPH TO 20 MPH ON THE ROADS SURROUNDING THE DOWNS

The Committee considered a report of the Service Manager, City Transport (agenda item no. 5) considering the proposal to reduce the speed from 30 mph to 20 mph on the roads surrounding the Downs which are within the Inner North area (Phase 3) 20 mph citywide rollout. Engagement with neighbourhoods will be central to the design of the schemes and will inform any decisions about which roads should remain with higher speeds.

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

- Members were concerned that reducing the speed limit to 20 mph on some of the wider, more open roads around the Downs eg Ladies Mile would encourage overtaking which was dangerous and more likely to result in an accident.
- Cllr Abraham indicated that the Neighbourhood Forum had been very critical of the proposals during preliminary discussions. It was noted that Traffic Officers will be consulting in the areas affected through the next round of Neighbourhood Forums/ Partnerships.
- The majority of the Committee were not in favour of reducing the speed limit to 20 mph as it was felt that it was not needed in the area as there were no perceived safety or traffic problems. This had also been the view of the Traffic Management Sub-group.
- The Committee also queried whether, as the owners, it was actually the Downs Committee who had the ultimate authority to make the final decision on the speed limit for certain roads that pass over the area designated as Downs land. Michael Baugh agreed to clarify the position. **Action Michael Baugh**

RESOLVED - that the Committee defer making a formal response at this stage and requested that the outcome of the wider consultation process with the relevant Neighbourhood Partnerships/Forums and local residents be brought back to the next meeting in September in order to inform their decision.

DOWNNS RANGER REPORT

The Committee considered a report of the Service Director, Environment and Leisure (agenda item no. 6) receiving an update on works and developments carried out since the last meeting.

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

- Concession for ice cream sales at the junction of Suspension Bridge Road and Observatory Road. The Committee gave approval for the Downs Ranger to investigate the feasibility of replacing the current facility at this location with a purpose built drop in unit to provide refreshments other than just ice-cream sales. However, some reservations were noted around the principles of construction and other planning restrictions associated with this area.
- Funderworld. Following departure of the event at Easter, extensive repairs to the event site are now complete. The continued use of the site for a major event of this type during unfavourable weather conditions have left some sections of the ground in a poor state. There will continue to be a decline in the condition of the site whilst Funderworld remains an annual event. For future applications, the Committee may wish to consider the long term detrimental effects to this part of the Downs against the positives of the Funderworld event which bring significant income and encourages visitors from areas of the City who may otherwise not come.
- Bristol Water Update. The BCC landscape architects have raised concerns that concrete bases used to accommodate valve covers along Westbury Road were obtrusive and not in keeping with the Downs landscape. The Downs Ranger was in negotiations with Bristol Water to remedy the situation.
- Rock Fall at Seawalls. Initial recommendations of the working group had been circulated to Members and an emergency briefing had taken place on 7th June. Members present were advised that there was no recourse to Insurance Services to cover the cost of the project . After considering the Parsons Brinckerhoff reports Members agreed that 'to do nothing' was not an option and strongly recommended that the Downs Committee retain the services of Parsons Brinckerhoff to undertake the work as set out in

the report. The current financial advice was that the sum can be met from the Downs reserve.

- AG&D Wildlife Education Programme. Members were incredibly impressed with the work of the Education Officer and the seasonal educational officer. The wide range of activities delivered had enabled children of all ages and backgrounds to discover, and enjoy the wildlife and landscape of the Downs which would hopefully engage them for the rest of their life. The Committee also took the opportunity to praise the work of the Blaize nursery which did a magnificent job in supplying the plants and flowers to support Bristol's annual Britain in Bloom bid and also provided a significant income to the Council by selling directly to the public.
- Dark Sky Discovery. The Dark Sky Discovery Partnership's growing network of Dark Sky Discovery Sites pinpoints the best spots in a number of rural and urban areas to see the night sky in the UK because of their low levels of light pollution and good public access. Activities are arranged by small organised groups to promote stargazing and learning about astronomy. The Committee supported the proposal that The Downs be nominated as a Dark Sky Place. **Action Robert Westlake.**

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the feasibility of replacing the current ice cream facility at the junction of Suspension Bridge Road and Observatory Road be investigated and a report be brought back in due course to include the views of Planning officers.**
- (2) That the findings of the members who attended the June briefing to retain the services of Parsons Brinckerhoff in relation to rock fall at Seawalls and Bridge Road be endorsed.**

**DWN
42.7/13**

OUTDOOR TRAINING SYSTEM

The Committee considered a report of the Service Director, Environment and Leisure (agenda item no. 7) which sought

approval for the installation of a modern outdoor training system for a twelve month trial period on the Downs.

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

- The proposal is for a state of the art modern training system designed specifically to encourage exercise and muscle development.
- The installation will go part way to replacing the redundant Trim Trail equipment on the Downs.
- There is no equivalent product currently available on the Market.
- The equipment is made in Bristol so supports the local economy and was being offered to the Downs Committee without charge for the supply and installation. In response to a question it was confirmed that the manufacturer of the equipment was the sponsor. It was agreed that the name and logo of the sponsor to be displayed on the equipment would be circulated to Members. **Action: Andy Gordon**
- It was confirmed by officers that the equipment is robust and virtually maintenance free. Regular inspections of the equipment will be carried out in-house by ROSPA qualified personnel.
- It was confirmed by officers that at the end of the trial period, if the Committee wanted the equipment to stay there would be no purchase cost but if the Committee did not like it, it could be removed by the supplier at no cost. If the pilot is successful it could be purchased by the council and installed in various locations around the City.
- The Committee agreed to the proposal in principle but requested that a full risk assessment be undertaken to include the Committee's public liability in the event of injury and legal indemnity costs, and that options for locations on the Downs be presented to the next meeting (the location would need to be fairly visible from the road to deter vandalism)

RESOLVED –

that the proposal for the installation of a modern outdoor training system for a twelve month trial period be accepted in principle subject to further information being brought back to the next meeting on 9th September.

**DWN
43.7/13**

DELEGATED AND UPCOMING EVENTS PROPOSED ON THE DOWNS

The Committee considered a report of the Service Director, Communications and Marketing (agenda item no. 8) –

- (1) noting the events and filming that have taken place between committee meetings under Delegated Powers; and
- (2) noting proposed future events between committee meetings.

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

- **Outdoor Events Policy.** The current policy for outdoor events on the Downs was agreed in 2009 and is due to be reviewed in line with a larger council wide review of the outdoor policy for events currently taking place . Ideally the revised policy will better reflect the Committees appetite for events activity, outlining the type, frequency and appropriateness of different events at different times of the year. It was agreed that a working group be set up to discuss the existing policy, identify areas for review and drive policy change.

RESOLVED –

- (1) that a working group be set up to review the policy for outdoor events on the Downs comprising of Colin Smith and Richard Bevan (plus a representative from Merchant Venturers if possible)**
- (2) that the events and filming activity that has taken place on the Downs under delegated powers be noted; and**
- (3) that the proposed future events to take place on the Downs between committee meetings be noted.**

**DWN
44.7/13**

CHARGING SCHEME FOR PERSONAL TRAINING IN PARKS

The Committee considered a report of Peter Watts, Festivals and Events Officer (agenda item no. 9) which sought agreement to develop a new policy, revisit the existing bye laws to support such

a policy and authorise the right to charge personal trainers for the use of Clifton and Durdham Downs.

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

- It was recognised that this was a growth industry and the Committee had a 'duty of care' to the public to regulate the activity to ensure that the personal trainers were reputable and responsible.
- The review will be consistent with the proposals currently being developed by BCC Sports Development for a new fitness trainer policy for all BCC owned and managed sites
- Cllr Abraham indicated that he was opposed to amending or introducing a new byelaw in order to charge personal trainers for the use of the Downs.
- Other Members felt that as Filming on the Downs attracted a fee then it should also apply to Personal Trainers who were charging for their services.
- It was suggested that there be a scale of charges which differentiated between individuals providing fitness training and large companies which perhaps operated across the country.
- In light of the recent non-payment of the parks permit by British Military Fitness, some Members were concerned about how the the charging scheme could be enforced and the costs that would be incurred in recovering a relatively small fee.

RESOLVED – that the decision to charge personal trainers for the use of the Downs be deferred pending the outcome of the review currently being undertaken by BCC Sports and that a further report be brought back to the Committee in due course.

**DWN
45.7/13**

A.O.B

The Chair requested that a standard item 'Any Other Business' be included on the agenda for future meetings. Cllr Abraham pointed out that generally this was not considered good practice as under the Access to Information rules all items to be discussed by the Committee should be published on the agenda in advance of the meeting.

It was agreed that AOB be included on future agendas but that it be used for information sharing or raising issues that could be put on the agenda for the next meeting in order to be discussed in full.

- Residents Parking Zone. The Chair referred to a motion that had been submitted and agreed by Full Council in respect of the rollout of RPZ which in summary wanted a more concentrated roll out around the City core, with the final decision left in the hands of local people. As the implementation of RPZ, particularly in Clifton could have a detrimental impact on the Downs, he wanted to draw this to the Committee's attention. It was confirmed that the Traffic Management sub-group were already looking in to this as part of the consultation process and would report back to the Committee in due course.
- Redland Green School Fireworks Display. Ruth Quantock indicated that a request had been received from the school, for permission to hang a banner on the railings at the junction of Stoke Road and Blackboy Hill to advertise the display a week ahead of the event in November. Members were in agreement that the request should be declined on the grounds that to permit any organisation, however laudable the cause would set a precedent and would prompt requests from other organisations to do the same.

DWN
46.7/13

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED - that the next meeting of the Downs Committee be held on 9th September 2013 at 4.00 p.m. at the City Hall, College Green, Bristol BS1 5TR.

(The meeting ended at 12.50 pm)

CHAIR