

DISCLAIMER

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BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
DOWNS COMMITTEE
HELD ON 9th SEPTEMBER 2013 AT 4.00 PM.**

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

DWN

47.9/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND INTRODUCTIONS

In the absence of the Lord Mayor Councillor Faruk Choudhury & Peter Rilett (Master), Anthony Brown took the Chair for the first ten minutes of the meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Janke, Smith and Payne. Apologies were also received from Tom Hood, Peter Rilett and John Williams.

DWN

48.9/13 MINUTES – DOWNS COMMITTEE – 1ST JULY 2013

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Downs Committee held on 1st July 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

DWN**49.9/13 PUBLIC FORUM**

None received

DWN**50.9/13 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. 4) 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.

John Roy (JR), Group Manager – Transport Assets was in attendance to present the item. An action in the minutes of meeting of the 1st July meeting requested confirmation that the Downs Committee would have ultimate authority to make the final decision on the speed limit for certain roads that pass over the area designated as Downs land. JR confirmed legal advice that the decision would not sit with this Committee but sat with Service Director for Transport Service in consultation with the Assistant Mayor for Transport, Planning, Strategic Housing and Regeneration in line with all other roads covered by the 20mph citywide project. The roads subject to a proposed change in speed limit in the Downs area would be subject to an advertised Speed Limit Order. The Committee would be able to submit comments or objections about the advertised amendments, to reduce the speed limit on roads on Downs land, as part of that formal process. All comments and objections would be summarised and presented by the Project Manager for this scheme to the Service Director for Transport Service in consultation with the Assistant Mayor for Transport, Planning, Strategic Housing and Regeneration.

Officer recommendations were due to be presented to the Neighbourhood Partnership (NP) meetings later in September.

The Group were invited to ask questions and the following comments were made;

- Cllr Abraham noted that speed limit on the roads over the Downs had only recently been set at 30 mph. The Henleaze, Stoke Bishop and Westbury on Trym NP had set up a sub-group to consider a further reduction from 30 mph to 20 mph; the NP had unanimously agreed that they would not support a further reduction in speed. NP members were concerned that motorists would not adhere to a 20 mph limit; the police have publically stated they would not be enforcing the limit. PA requested further clarification that the Downs Committee would not have ultimate authority to

make the final decision on the speed limit for certain roads that pass over the area designated as Downs land. **Action – John Roy.**

- The Chair suggested the comments from the Neighbourhood Partnership meetings would have been beneficial as part of the discussion. Cllr Khan re-iterated that the Committee would be in a better position to consider the proposals if the outcomes of discussions with consultees (i.e. Police, Fire Brigade and Ambulance Service) had been provided.
- Cllr Townsend referred to the statistic relating to the difference between the affect of a 30 mph collision in comparison to a 20 mph crash; with significant less injury inflicted at the slower speed. The Bishopston, Cotham and Redland NP Members had agreed that the 20mph limit should be applied in residential and recreational areas and the Downs should be considered as an area of recreational use.
- Committee members suggested that a consequence of motorists travelling at a slower speed could lead to unintended consequences i.e. increased dangerous driving. To date, there was no evidence of serious accidents occurring on the Downs at the 30 mph speed limit.
- JR confirmed that the road layout could be altered to encourage the lower speed, road markings could also be used. Any proposed treatments would be presented to the Downs Committee for comment. Formal consultation on the 20 mph speed restriction would take place in February 2014.
- The Committee agreed to vote on the proposed changes in speed limit to 20 mph;
 - 4 – Against
 - 2 – For
 - 1 – Abstention.

RESOLVED - the Downs Committee agreed (by a majority vote) that they would not support the reduction of traffic speed from 30mph to 20 mph on the roads surrounding the Downs.

DWN

51.9/13 DOWNS RANGER REPORT

The Committee considered a report of the Service Director, Environment and Leisure (agenda item no. 5) receiving an update on works and developments carried out since the last meeting.

Robert Westlake – Down Ranger, presented the report and highlighted the salient points.

The Committee agreed that the Rock Fall sub-group should be given authority to act on recommendations following the submission of the Parsons Binkerhoff report.

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

- The Downs Ranger confirmed that metal detectors were still being used but suggested different people were responsible for the damage caused. Following discussions with the police, the BCC communications team would be contacted and a publicity strategy discussed. **Action – Robert Westlake.**
- The Committee considered the report relating to the veteran Ash tree along Ladies Mile. The alternative to felling would be a most costly option as fencing and protective planning would be required – costing £4000. The Committee agreed that the tree should be felled, as per the original recommendations.
- In addition to the information on the report, reference was made to the request from the Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project for two Councillor representatives from the Downs Committee. The Committee agreed that Cllr Townsend would be nominated. Cllr Payne would be contacted regarding the other vacancy and the Lord Mayor and Master would agree the nomination outside the meeting. **Action – Karen Blong to contact Cllr Payne.**
- Cllr Townsend noted the good work of the community payback scheme. The Downs Ranger praised the scheme supervisor who ensured that work was completed to a good standard. The scheme would be ongoing.
- The Committee discussed the experimental BBQ areas and the implementation of litter bins and the following was noted;
 - Frances Greenacre suggested that the designated BBQ area had failed to prevent the use of BBQs in other areas of the Downs. The experimental litter bins were unsightly and bins more visually appealing should be explored for next year.
 - Cllr Townsend suggested that the use of BBQ encourages more BBQ use. Park users in other areas had complained that the use of BBQ's encouraged loud music and alcohol consumption.
 - The Chair referred to the need for open space for residents with no gardens.
 - Anthony Brown observed the success of the BBQ area but suggested additional advertising would be required to ensure that people were aware of its existence. The Committee agreed that rules should be firmly enforced.

The Downs Ranger noted that the BBQ area allowed space for 12 BBQs which could not accommodate all those who wished to BBQ. The security teams monitored the use of BBQs in non designated areas and had found it easier to enforce the rules because of the alternative option. Many people complied but there would always be a sections of the community who would break the rules.

The Chair thanked the Downs Officer team for their contribution to the Green Flag Award.

The Committee agreed that the award was non-political and should have been awarded to the Lord Mayor rather than Mayor George Ferguson.

RESOLVED -

- (1) the Rock Fall sub-group be given authority to act on recommendations following the submission of the Parsons Binkerhoff report;**
- (2) that the Committee support the original recommendation to fell the veteran ash tree along ladies mile;**
- (3) that Cllr Townsend be nominated to the Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project and that the additional vacancy would be agreed by the Lord Mayor and the Master outside of the Committee meeting;**

DWN

52.9/13

DELEGATED AND UPCOMING EVENTS PROPOSED ON THE DOWNS

The Committee considered a report of the Service Director, Communications and Marketing (agenda item no. 6) –

- (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.

Peter Watts, Festival and Events Officer summarised the report, noting that the total income to date would be £64,000. A proposal for future events would be created which would take in to account all income opportunities. A review of Personal Training activities would be taking place following the withdrawal of the permit scheme. A full report would be presented following internal consultation.

The Committee were invited to ask questions and the following was noted;

- PW noted the Committees concerns related to unofficial parking during the Race for Life event. The general public should not be prevented from accessing the Downs during the event and other parking options would be explored.

- Event organisers were required to pay a litter bond prior to most major events. BCC would recover any costs at the end of the season.

RESOLVED - that the report be noted.

DWN

53.9/13 FINANCE REPORT 2013/14

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Organisational Development (agenda item no. 7) presenting the estimated financial outturn position.

Mike Allen, Finance Business Partner was in attendance to present the report. MA noted that financial reserves would be affected by the work required and a request for match funding. Additional income streams should be seriously considered as BCC would be unable to financially support the Committee.

The following key issues were noted;

- MA noted a misprint in the report; the figures were until the end of July 2013 (not June as stated).
- MA was unable to confirm when the Zoo or Bristol Waterworks would be required to pay the fees – the information would be circulated following the meeting. **Action – Mike Allen.**

RESOLVED – That the estimated outturn for 2013/14 be noted.

DWN

54.9/13 UPDATE FROM FODAG

The Committee discussed the Information report and the following was noted;

- Sir Tidmarsh suggested that a bridge would not be required as there were no issues when crossing Bridge Valley Road. Cyclist using the bridge and then the adjoining promenade would be a concern. Cllr Abraham re-iterated the concerns.
- A spokesperson from FODAG was invited to comment and noted that the pre-planning application would provide guidance on what information would be required and the consultation process.
- The Committee requested a presentation from FODAG and Dr Tomor at the next Downs Committee meeting, to include information on the outcome of the pre-planning application. Sir Tidmarsh requested information on how cyclists would be discouraged from using the bridge.

- Francis Greenacre noted that the idea for a bridge originated from the Downs Committee and it was a positive step that FODAG had developed the idea. The concept of a stone bridge could be problematic.

DWN

55.9/11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr Townsend noted that consultation had begun on the resident parking scheme in Clifton. Anthony Brown highlighted that the NP transport sub group had considered the affect of the scheme on the Downs and suggested options to mitigate against the knock on effects, for example, imposing a time limit on the Downs of four hours Monday to Friday.

It was agreed that the Resident Parking Scheme would be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

DWN

56.9/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED –

That the next meeting of the Downs Committee be held on 18th November 2013 at 4.00 p.m. at the City Hall, College Green, Bristol BS1 5TR.

(The meeting ended at 5.45 pm)

CHAIR