



## Chairman's 2013 AGM Report

Just over five years ago, FOD+AG came into being. Slightly startled coupled with all the naivety of a new group. Personal baggage, forms to fill in, guidelines and so on. Since those early days there have been many achievements and recognition as a group with reasoned, researched influence.

The past twelve months have been no exception.

The greatest **Success** has been in the areas of membership involvement activities. Some activities have been going for five years. Deep litter and Alexander clearance, Goat, Meadow Butterfly and Fungus monitoring, walks and talks. Adoptathorn has been successful. At times over 20 different members have been involved in any one activity. Out of our 160 total membership, almost 50 members attended the Spring conference where they were encouraged to contribute to the debate on our future. The second part of the FOD+AG AGM will be devoted to inviting comment on 10 possible projects which might contribute to Green City 2015.

The newsletter is widely recognised as a quality document while the web site is work in progress.

FOD+AG were instrumental in the setting up of two Downs Committee sub-groups. Anti-social behaviour and Traffic and Parking.

In 2011 FOD+AG drew the attention of the Downs Committee, the need to make progress on the pedestrian link across Bridge Valley Road. The road was closed at the time. This link had previously been proposed in the Avon Gorge Management plan. UWE took up the opportunity and have recently submitted a pre planning application for a bridge.

Individual **reward** for members has come from being involved with Mandy Leivers in the *your Downs Group*. Greater access for those with the disadvantages has brought about many appreciative comments from those organisations who work so hard to improve the lives of others.

FOD+AG **external concerns** continue regarding the non Downland activities, for example Zoo parking on the grass, increased commuter parking due to the impact of the Residential Parking Zones and anti-social behaviour. The latter creating a FOD+AG no go area.

A major **Dilemma** continues with on one hand, the protection and enhancement of the downland while on the other, the increasing demand on available finances. Much needed Funds are often only forthcoming from some users which

otherwise would be seen in conflict with the very ethos of the Downs e.g. Parking on the downland. In the recent past the post of Downs Ranger was under threat due to financial constraints. In order to retain the required level of income there will undoubtedly be the need to consider other forms of income as well as a greater voluntary contributions

FOD+AG internal **Concerns** also continue regarding our human resources. For example we need a web master, someone to assist with the newsletter, a treasurer. Without more people willing to take on a leading/organising role for specific activities, can we continue with those very activities that we regard as needed to ensure the Downs and Avon Gorge has a future..

Jack Penrose – Chairman November 2013