

THE DOWNS COMMITTEE

Clifton and Durdham Downs (Bristol) Act 1861

Reply to Steve Gregory

To: Members of the
Downs Committee

Telephone

E-mail

steve.gregory@bristol.gov.uk

Date

Friday, 2 June 2023

The Lord Mayor and 6 City Councillors

The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor Councillor Paul Goggin
Councillor Steve Smith
Councillor Paula O'Rourke
Councillor Kye Dudd
Councillor Jos Clark
Councillor Philippa Hulme
Councillor Katy Grant
Councillor Christine
Townsend

The Master and 6 Merchant Venturers

Patrick Despard Master of the
Society of Merchant Venturer
Jonathon Baker David Freed
Mike Bothamley
Mark Burchfield
Bevis Watts
Robert Bourns

Dear Member,

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **Downs Committee** to be held at **11.00 am on Monday, 12th June, 2023 at The Society Of Merchant Venturers, (Merchants' Hall, The Promenade, Clifton, Bristol, North Somerset).**

The agenda for the meeting is set out overleaf and the supporting documents are attached.

Yours sincerely,

Steve Gregory Clerk to Downs Committee

Democratic Services Section

3rd Floor Deanery Wing
City Hall PO Box 3399
College Green,
Bristol BS1 9NE

Website

www.bristol.gov.uk

Agenda

1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

2. Apologies for absence

3. Declarations of interest

To note Declarations of Interest raised by Councillors.

4. Minutes of last meeting - 25 April 2023 (Pages 4 - 8)

5. Action Tracker (Page 9)

6. Matters Arising from the Events and Finance Group (Pages 10 - 12)

7. Downs Advisory Panel

For discussion and update

8. Public Forum

Up to 30 Minutes is permitted for this item.

To consider items of Public Forum sent to the Downs Committee.
Interested parties can submit:

- A written statement of approximately one side A4 no later than 12pm on 9 June 2023.
- A maximum of 2 written questions (which will be answered verbally at the meeting) must be received 3 clear working days prior to the meeting. For this meeting, it means that your question(s) must be received no later than 5pm on 6 June 2023.
- You will have the opportunity to ask one supplementary question arising directly out of each of the original questions or replies.

Please send submissions to Democratic Services at democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk.

Please note that your statements and questions will be sent to Committee Members and published on Council's website prior to

meeting.

- 9. Downs Management Report (Page 13)**
- 10. Downs Education Report - Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project (Pages 14 - 17)**
- 11. Events Report (Page 18)**
- 12. Finance Report - Outturn 22-23 and forecast for 23-24 (Pages 19 - 22)**
- 13. Any Other Business**
- 14. Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 18th September, 2pm at City Hall.

Steve Gregory, Democratic Services Officer
Email: democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk

THE DOWNS COMMITTEE

Clifton and Durdham Downs (Bristol) Act 1861

Minutes of the Downs Committee - 25 April 2023

Present: Cllr Paula O'Rourke, David Freed, Cllr Kye Dudd, Patrick Despard, Jonathon Baker, Mark Burchfield, Cllr Philippa Hulme, Cllr Christine Townsend, Robert Bourns, Cllr Steve Smith

Officers: Jon James (Head of Parks), Stefan Edwards (Events Officer), Anna Stevens, (Avon Gorge & Downs Wildlife Project), Amy Rodwell (Democratic Services Officer)

1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mike Bothamley, Bevis Watts, Cllr Katy Grant, and Cllr Jos Clark.

3. Declarations of Interest

There was none.

4. Chair's Business

The Lord Mayor noted it was her last meeting as Chair of the committee and wanted to make some comments.

'The 'weakest link' for the Downs Committee is the Lord Mayor and I have thought this even more strongly having undertaken the role. It's a difficult role and varied role and there is not a lot of resources to support it. In previous years when I was a member of committee, it feels business as usual and hard to be proactive because someone has to drive it.

I had been on committee before following in footsteps of strong people in role, both Councillors and Merchants, I was able to have clear targets for the past year. There has been some great work by previous Masters and Lord Mayors and I was lucky to have come in when I did. I have reflected on own performance and consider how perception is everything. I wanted to get to the vision, I needed to do 4 things: get an agreement on new governance arrangements, establish a strong ally with FODAG, set up Advisory Panel, and go out and recruit for a Downs Manager. We have achieved all of those 4 things which takes a lot of work going on in the background.

We changed a couple of meeting dates which some people weren't happy about, but it was better to do this to move for progress. Would have been good if we didn't have to change them but there were delays and there would be a better outcome by waiting. In the background we have had 2 task and finish groups on Parking and Infrastructure. We have an interim report today from Parking. Also, there is some really good work going on for the infrastructure T&F. We have done a lot and I am grateful for the support from the Committee thanks to Merchants and Councillors. I will still be on the Committee, so we will have continuity going forwards.'

5. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Resolved; That the minutes of the previous meeting on 28th February 2023 be approved as a correct record.

6. Action Tracker

The action tracker was noted.

7. Matters Arising from the Events & Finance Group

Patrick Despard gave a brief update on the last sub-group meeting highlighting that there were discussions around the pressure on the Committee's finances, specifically staff wages and the rise in utilities costs. It was noted that this was a struggle, but the Committee were heading in the right direction and had good prospects for the future.

8. Public Forum

The following Public Forum questions were received:

1. Mark Ashdown (in person)
2. Andrew Lynch (in person)
3. Bristol Disability Equalities Forum, David Redgewell (in person)
4. South West Transport Network, David Redgewell (in person)
5. Gloucestershire/Somerset Catch the Bus Service Campaign, David Redgewell (in person)

The Chair provided verbal answers to the questions and supplementary questions.

The following Public Forum statements were received and noted by the Committee:

1. Susan Carter, Downs for People
2. David Redgewell, South West Transport Network and Rail future Severnside
3. Robert Westlake, Friends of the Downs & Avon Gorge

9. Downs Advisory Panel Update

As part of the Friends of the Downs & Avon Gorge Public Forum submission, Robert Westlake covered this item providing an update on the newly established Downs Advisory Panel.

The proposal was for FODAG to lead on the Advisory Panel and would Chair the panel's meetings. Attendees would include Councillors, the Wildlife Project, colleagues from the Council's Parks Team and volunteers. Bristol Zoo would be providing a space and the panel anticipate the first meeting would take place at the end of May/early June, occurring 4-6 times a year going forwards.

Robert Westlake noted that FODAG had been trying to organise restoration works to a viewpoint on the Downs and had arranged for a quotation through the Council's Parks Team which came to a total of £2800. FODAG were looking to raise that funding and thanked the Society of Merchant Ventures for their offer to contribute half of the total cost.

10. Interim Report from the Parking Task & Finish Group

The Lord Mayor briefly introduced the report and noted that this was an interim update; the Task & Finish Group would report back at the Committee again in June.

The Committee would like to introduce parking charges to generate income for maintenance and would like to ensure that citizens parking at the North Car Park are doing so to visit the Downs.

It was noted that there was already a TRO in place for the North Car Park site as it had been used as a car park previously for the Zoo, but colleagues were seeking legal advice on the Committee's proposals for its future.

There was a discussion around van dwellers who were breaching parking regulations on the Downs. The current regulation allows vehicles to park for up to 5 hours and not return within 2 hours, but enforcement of this was difficult. It was noted that this needed a citywide approach, looking at meanwhile sites for van dwellers who would be displaced.

It was noted that this piece of work was ongoing; the Director of Management of Place had been involved in conversations and would provide updates when available.

11. Downs Management Report

The Area Parks Supervisor has sent his apologies for this meeting, so the Downs Management Report was noted.

12. Downs Education Report

Anna Stevens, the Avon Gorge & Downs Wildlife Project Manager introduced the item.

- It was noted that they have engaged with 670 people in total through various activities though wildlife talks, wildlife walks and workshops with public.
- The team were trying to develop their outreach and would be looking at engagement going forwards trying to reach all areas of the city, not just local schools.

- The short term engagement strategy for the project was shared with the meeting papers.
- The team were working with the Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust doing bird surveys in the area and looking at a citizen science project.
- The project were considering charging schools for some activities to cover the costs of equipment, specifically as secondary schools as it can be more expensive.

The Committee raised concerns around charging schools as those in areas of deprivation may be excluded from the project. Parents may not be able to afford to pay for their child to take part so Members would be interested in how the project will mitigate this. It was noted that this was being discussed at Steering Group meetings and that updates could be provided at future Committee meetings.

ACTION: AS to provide an update on the Wildlife project's proposals around charging schools to take part in activities.

13. Events Report

The Events Officer introduced the report and highlighted key points.

- Funderworld has been dealing with challenging weather conditions so had opened the fairground later than expected. The bad weather may have an impact on the ground but the extent of it would not be known until after the event and this would be no fault of the event organisers.
- Forwards Festival would now take place on Friday 1st & Saturday 2nd September.
- There was a new circus provider for 2023.
- There had been no official complaints, but one informal complaint had been received via local councillors. Site Permissions had responded, and no official complaint was made.
- No further events had come forward for 2023 but it was noted that there were events lined up for 2024 and the schedule would be shared at the next meeting.

The Events Officer noted that there had been a request from Bristol Pride asking for the Committee to cover a one off initial cost of £5k to BT for Wi-Fi installation works on the Downs. This would involve dig ducting to run a new cable and colleagues have studied the path that it would need to follow running along a fence. The job would only need to be completed once and would give attractive business case for attracting other events to the site going forwards.

Members raised concerns around the budget which was already in a deficit but agreed that this would be a worthwhile investment for the Committee and therefore, it was:

Resolved; That the spend of £5k for Wi-Fi installation works be approved. (unanimous)

14. Downs Manager Recruitment

The Lord Mayor introduced the item and gave a brief update on the Downs Manager recruitment.

It was noted that huge budget pressures had delayed the progress of this recruitment, but it had been agreed by the Society of Merchant Ventures that they would part fund the role 50/50 with the Council. The role would be part time (2 days a week), fixed term for 1 year.

ACTION: Lord Mayor to share the job description for the Downs Manager with the Committee.

The Lord Mayor shared her thanks to the Society of Merchant Ventures and Stephen Peacock, the Council's Chief Executive, for their support.

15. Finance Report

The Finance Officer has sent his apologies for this meeting, so the Finance Report was noted.

16. Any Other Business

There was none.

17. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to be held on 12th June 2023, 11am at Merchants' Hall.

Agenda Item 5

ACTION TRACKER – FOR DOWNS COMMITTEE 25 April 2023

Date of Meeting	Action Description	Holding Action	Deadline for Completion	Action Taken
28 Jun 2022	Investigate the issue around a resident installing a private driveway that is thought to be on Downs Committee owned land and provide an update at the next Committee meeting.	SS	28 Feb 2023	This issue is currently with the Parks Team and Legal Services.
28 Feb 2023	Transport and Parks Officers to attend a future meeting to brief the Committee on Pay and Display parking.	POR	25 April 2023	
28 Feb 2023	Discuss engagement with disadvantaged children for the Education and Engagement Strategy.	CT/AS	25 April 2023	
28 Feb 2023	Meet with the Chief Executive and Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance & Performance to discuss budget expectations for the Downs Committee and bring an update to the next meeting.	POR	25 April 2023	
25 Apr 2023	Provide an update on the Wildlife project's proposals around charging schools to take part in activities.	AS	12 June 2023	
25 Apr 2023	Share the job description for the Downs Manager with the Committee.	POR	12 June 2023	

**Downs Committee
Events & Finance Sub-Group Meeting Minutes
25 May 2023 @ 2pm**

Members:

Patrick Despard (Chair)
Jonathon Baker
Mike Bothamley
Councillor Jos Clark
Councillor Katy Grant
Councillor Steve Smith

Officers:

Steve Hunt (Events Officer)
Kevin Jay (Finance Officer)
Steve Gregory (Democratic Services Officer)

Apologies:

Ben Skuse (Parks Supervisor)

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting on 22 February 2023

Resolved – That the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2023 be approved as a correct record.

Matters arising

Downs North car Park

1. Noted that pay and display on street parking on the Downs was the preferred option as a long stay car park for benefit of Downs.
2. Private sector national pay and display providers were considered best option as they would provide the capital funding.
3. Bristol City Council was currently seeking legal advice regarding both practical and political issues.
4. Noted that the process was lengthy particularly having regard to the Zoo ceasing operations in about six months' time.
5. There were three options being considered regarding a supplier.
6. Important that this process be transparent having regard to the various interests in relation to the Downs. The written paper to next Downs Committee would outline preferred option.
7. The newly formed Downs Advisory Panel could look at this when it meets in second week of June.

It was agreed -

- **That the process be expedited as quickly as possible.**

- That it be done independently of the wider BCC car park review,
- That Counsel's advice be sought as soon as possible.
- That a clear recommendation be given to the Downs Committee on 12 June 2023.
- That in the meantime the Chair liaise with Downs for People to ensure full inclusivity.

Action PD

8. Finance Update

The Finance Officer summarised the key points in the financial update paper.

- It was noted that the Outturn for 2022/23 showed an outturn of £75k deficit for 2022-23, resulting from Gross income for 2022-23 showed a surplus of £35k, expenditure overspent by (£110k), resulting in a net deficit of (£75k).
- The deficit was a result of pressures across the service including, employees, for an agreed pay award and overtime, support services, as well as higher premises costs in relation to buildings R&M, cleaning, and energy costs.

Arising from discussion/questions the following key points were raised/clarified –

- There was a £145k deficit pressure for the 2023/24 financial year.
- The figure of £48,850 highlighted in red in the paper related to loss of income due to lost events. This would need to be mitigated by either a reduction in costs or sourcing new income streams. Costs remained high overall.
- The estimated income from parking was shown as £20,500 rather than the predicted £41,000. This was shown as the Zoo's position was not clear, if it was 'business as usual', as expected, the figure would be adjusted accordingly. A meeting to be set up with the Zoo's Commercial Director to clarify the position. **Action MB**
- Costs associated with clearing operations for multiple uses of the Downs remained high. Important to explore a wide range of options to increase income.
- The new Downs Manager post would have a particular focus on income opportunities as well as cost reduction. In the meantime, the Chair would explore options with the Parks Supervisor. **Action PD**

9. Events Update

The Events Officer summarised the key points in the events update paper.

Arising from discussion/questions the following key points were raised/clarified –

- A number of events had been lost due to providers finding alternative venues 2 events moved to Queen Square Comedy Garden and Adventure cinema due to operational reasons for the organisers.
- It was anticipated that there would be an increase in events for 2024 including new proposals from several large events.
- For 2023 there were Race for Life, Forwards, Pride, Student Union Welcome and Circus Extreme.

The paper requested a steer from the Downs Committee about which of the events should proceed and what fees they would like to propose.

Members of the Group had differing views but, regarding charges broadly, thought that the Site Permission fee for 200 people attending a charity event should be increased from the current £375 site permission fee to £500 and that the possibility of raising fees for larger events be further considered.

The Event Officer was asked to explore this further with the Parks Supervisor. **Action SH**

10. Any Other Business

There was none.

Meeting ended at 15:10

Downs Management Report – 12 June 2023

We have reached mid-summer on the Downs.

The best time of year for verdant greenery and bright colourfulness !. A thick covering of grass now goes a long way to covering over the scars of winter. We have bright green leaves on the trees and flowers of all types bringing colour to our meadows and verges.

Hopefully members have had a chance to get up to site and see some of these beautiful scenes. The second half of the summer has the tendency to be less pristine looking !. Higher temperatures/heatwaves, parched grass, fires/BBQs and the gradual effect of increased footfall/litter, but the team will keep up the efforts to keep the site looking as good as possible. We are assisted in this more and more by members of the public, friends groups and corporate groups which is all very welcome and very needed.

So we are deep into continual, cyclical grass mowing and clearing bins and litter daily. This work pattern is entirely normal for the time of year in the industry of managing busy parks. I have held pre event site meetings with the organisers of

Race for Life Sunday 25th June

Pride Saturday 8th July

Forwards Friday 1st Saturday 2nd September

This is in order to make preparations and get the sites ready to welcome all 3 events.

The Funderworld site (Water Tower) was left in its usual poor state after this year's Funderworld. I want to state though that I do not place much blame with the organisers for this. It is an inevitable outcome of bringing a funfair, with all of its heavy vehicles, onto ground that is already sub-par in March. The site is, whilst far from ideal, not as bad as I have seen it in the past. We can recover it and there is nothing on that site now until Funderworld return next year. So a welcome period of recovery which we will put to good use. The organisers cleared up conscientiously. We talked about the ground on the site hand back and they agreed to contribute towards soil costs.

Members will have noticed that works to improve the drainage situation at the Clifton playground have taken place. Hopefully this will see an improvement in the usual muddy conditions that the playground suffers from across winter.

As ever my thanks to FODAG volunteers and the community payback team for the valuable contributions that they make with various tasks throughout this period.

Ben Skuse

Bristol City Council Parks

Area Parks supervisor, Downs, Blaise and Kingsweston Estates

Report for May and June 2023 Summary of activities of the Avon Gorge and Downs wildlife project learning and community engagement programme

Reporting Officer: Anna Stevens Avon Gorge and Downs wildlife biodiversity engagement and learning manager

In May and June we directly engaged with **1046 (as at end of June on current bookings)** people through the learning and community engagement programme. We engaged indirectly at the Sparks installation with 8000 plus people in the first weekend but final numbers for the first week are not yet available from Sparks.

Avon Gorge & Downs Wildlife Project (AGDWP) events programme May-June

As part of the events programme we ran: four Discovery Walks in May and June ('a Step through time', 'Dawn chorus spectacular', 'Trees of the Granny Downs' and 'Magical meadows'); and a 'Birdsong ID' workshop. Two of the walks are run as part of Bristol Walk Fest. We also ran a family event for the Festival of Nature on the Downs in June on a theme of 'Marvellous meadow minibeasties'. All of our events have been very well received with rewarding quotes given on feedback forms:

participants particularly enjoyed:

"..Mike's knowledge and enthusiasm!" and "The expertise of those guiding us."

"..Ed Drewitt is an excellent teacher. The information sent before the day was informative."

"..Mike Dilger as a guide. Anna plus her team giving extra info about site and facts."

Our events can be found here <https://avongorge.org.uk/whats-on/> and we welcome the attendance of any Downs Committee members.

School education sessions

During this period, we taught 837 (as end of June on current bookings) school and college children. We have taught children from 11 different schools on the Downs. This includes some local schools, some schools from outside Bristol, as well as schools from more deprived areas of Bristol and special schools and colleges. We are enjoying a partnership with the University of Bristol Botanical Gardens where we have used their wildlife pond for schools' engagement. This opportunity allows us to offer new curriculum linked sessions to both primary, and in particular secondary, schools. A session at the Botanical Gardens is easily combined with a session on the Downs to provide a rounded habitat investigation. Going forward this should be successful with regard to attracting secondary schools and we will be purchasing some necessary equipment. We'd like to thank the UoB Botanical Gardens for allowing us this opportunity.

We are continually updating and adding to our primary schools programme this summer, making changes where we can to modernise and bring in new ideas, perspectives and plans. This keeps our programmes relevant and ensures that we meet the schools' learning objectives and we will offer bespoke activities if required. Until this year programmes were only half day and many schools followed two sessions in one day causing an overload of information by studying two different topics. Most of the old programmes we are expanding from half day only to offering a full day option to allow more in-depth learning. We are continuing to offer two programmes in one day if the school requests it.

This changes the way we monitor our numbers. In the past if a child has attended on one day but attended two separate half day sessions they have been counted twice in the figures. Going forward if a child attends two separate half day sessions on one day they will only be counted once as if they are attending a full day session. This will most likely reduce our number count compared with previous years.

We have had very positive feedback from our schools so far this year:

schools commented:

"..Yes it matched perfectly with the science topic."

"..Yes. All activities were relevant and linked to our EYFS and school curriculum."

"..Yes- we've been doing a topic focusing on plants and minibeasts. It was perfect for that!"

Committee members are welcome to observe any education session AGDWP runs this year in order that they can understand how we operate in the formal education capacity. AGDWP will need to seek permission from the education group attending.

City Nature Challenge – outreach / citizen science

We worked in collaboration with Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust at the learning annexe by the suspension bridge to run one of our sites for the City Nature Challenge Bioblitz at the very end of April/beginning of May. Our second hub was on the Downs at the site of the Downs Café. The aim of the City Nature Challenge was to engage the public in recording as much wildlife as possible on the Downs onto the iNaturalist app for our AGDWP iNaturalist project. We offered owl pellet dissection and bug hunting as well as fun activities on birds and mammals to engage a variety of age groups. We directly engaged with a total of 110 people over the four and a half hours we were present on both sites, and over the full four days of the City Nature Challenge a total of 136 observations were added to our iNaturalist project.



Bird survey

Our bird survey in conjunction with Bristol Ornithological Club (BOC) continues and in May our survey took place for the second time at Fairyland and Zoo Banks and in June in the Gully.

Volunteers

In May we have had thirteen volunteers helping us for a total of approximately 88 hours on our events and with schools sessions.

In June we have had sixteen volunteers helping us for a total of approximately 130 hours on our events and with schools sessions.

Social media

We have been widely sharing our Facebook posts in order to extend our reach to the general public as well as specialised Facebook groups and this effort has been rewarded through an increase in Facebook views: 4412 to 26th May. We can be found at www.facebook.com/avongorge/.

Sparks project - outreach

We successfully completed our installation at Sparks Bristol the day before the opening of the site on 13th May. This is a creation by AGDWP in the style of 'Wake the Tiger' with help from a member of staff from the UoB Botanical Gardens as well as several of our very dedicated and creative volunteers. The installation is designed to hook the general public, and engage them through a series of scenarios with an aim to ultimately confirming positive behaviours for the benefit of our Downs and Avon Gorge wildlife. It also provides information on the amazing species which we are so lucky to have on our site. The installation has upheld well for the first week and two weekends of opening, and will be monitored regularly. The plan over the following six months is to update and develop the materials as we go through being open to the public. The site is open between Wednesday and Sunday until December 2023. The whole site attendance is being monitored by Sparks and on the first weekend of opening more than 8000 people entered the site. Our installation is situated in the Nature Area right at the front of the Broadmead entrance to the site. For more information on Sparks please visit <https://sparksbristol.co.uk/about/>. We continue to aim to deliver schools and playscheme workshops in Sparks later on in the year.



Festival of Nature - outreach

The Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project will have a stand within the Bristol Zoo Project tent this year at the Festival of Nature in Bristol between 16th-17th June. AGDWP will offer activities such as 'owl pellet dissection' and 'guess the weight of the baby peregrines' for a scientific perspective and 'willow bird feeder' creation and other craft activities for a more generic interaction. We will also be suggesting and providing ways in which the general public can help in the conservation and long term success of wildlife and the ecosystem of the Avon Gorge and Downs.

AGDWP is also offering a family session on the Downs investigating invertebrates which live in the grasses, bushes and trees with an entomologist as part of the FoN.

Nature Works

The project is meeting with Off the Record Nature Works, a youth mental health charity, in order to plan a series of sessions for young people aged 11-25 in Bristol on the Downs. The aim of this is to produce calming and stress-reducing opportunities for those who may not find them in everyday life. Alongside this, trying new things, gaining new skills and learning ways to relax in the outdoors can be hugely uplifting and provide an invaluable opportunity to improve confidence, self esteem and resilience.

Other

Anna Stevens from the AGDWP has accepted an invitation from FoDAG to be on the first Downs Advisory Panel (DAP) and has agreed to facilitate the use of a meeting space within the CEC at the former Bristol Zoo site. We have also put out a request to the AGDWP Steering Group for a second person from AGDWP to be on the DAP. Councillor Katie Grant has expressed an interest in this and this interest has been passed on to Robert Westlake of FoDAG. An initial meeting of the DAP will take place on 9th June.

The lack of song birds on a sunny May afternoon was noted during a birdsong identification workshop by bird expert Ed Drewitt. There was some discussion as to why this might be and that this may be a cause for concern. Considerations with regard to this will be put forward to BCC following its request for information to inform the new management plan.

The Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project is requesting that Vanessa Adnitt, the Project officer, is funded or part funded until the end of the year 2023. Vanessa is a valued member of staff and carries out a wide variety of administrative duties such as managing the volunteers, as well as teaching. If remaining in post Vanessa will also be in a position in the autumn/winter to run the pre-school age sessions which it is planned will begin in September, either at the Downs or in Leigh Woods. If the current officer is able to run these sessions there will be no need to employ a further tutor. The cost to continue the employment of Vanessa Adnitt is expected to be approximately £6,346 between September to December 2023.

Anna Stevens continues her studies for parts of June and July this year 2023, and will be taking some study leave with regard to this as agreed with Bristol Zoological Society.

Downs Committee – 12th June 2023

Events Update

1. Events that have taken place since last Downs Committee

Funderworld had a challenging build due to the bad weather which affected overall attendance figures. Ground conditions became quite poor at one point, but the weather dried up towards the end of the hire.

2. Confirmed events 2023

The following events are currently booked for The Downs in 2023, subject to site permissions. Please note slight adjustments to live dates for Forwards Festival and the Circus.

March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October
Funderworld Water Tower 31/03/23 - 01/05/23							
			Race for Life Circular Road 25/06/23				
				Bristol Pride Parrys Lane 08/07/23			
						Forwards Festival Circular Road 1/9/23 - 2/9/23	
						Bristol Uni Fayre Parrys Lane 22/09/23	
						Circus Showground 15/09/23 - 08/10/23	

3. Complaints relating to events on the downs

There have been no new complaints through the official council complaints system relating to events on the downs since my last report.

Downs Committee Financial Report

1. Outturn Report for 2022-23

- 1.1 The report provides the **outturn** of the financial performance of the Downs for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.
- 1.2 The budgeted and actual income and expenditure up to period 12, April to March 2023, has been analysed and it has resulted in some variances.
- 1.3 A high-level summary of the outturn income and expenditure for 2022-23 and the prior year comparators, can be seen in Table 1.

TABLE 1 - Overall Income and Expenditure Summary

	Full Year Budget £	2022/23 Actual Outturn (P12 - Mar23) £	Variance £	Notes	2021/22 Outturn £	2020/21 Outturn £
Income						
Gross Income	394,750	430,170	35,420	Surplus	332,600	227,613
Expenditure						
Total Expenditure	(394,750)	(505,172)	(110,422)	Overspend	(637,576)	(465,603)
Transfer from Reserves	0	0	0	Reserves are exhausted	97,680	237,990
NET OUTTURN	0	(75,002)	(75,002)	Net surplus / (deficit)	(207,296)	0

- 1.1 Gross income for 2022-23 shows a surplus of £35k, expenditure overspent by (£110k), resulting in a net deficit of (£75k).
- 1.2 The deficit is a result of pressures across the service including, employees, for an agreed pay award and overtime, support services, as well as higher premises costs in relation to buildings R&M, cleaning, and energy costs.
- 1.3 Further information and explanations can be seen in Table 2.

TABLE 2 - Income and Expenditure Analysis

	Full Year Budget £	2022/23 Actual Outturn (P12 - Mar23) £	Variance £	Notes	2021/22 Outturn £	2020/21 Outturn £
Income						
Fees - Events	285,000	284,560	(440)	Deficit	237,214	58,926
Fees - Licensing & Rents	104,750	135,810	31,060	Surplus	82,060	145,891
Fees- Other	5,000	9,800	4,800	Surplus	13,327	22,796
GROSS Income	394,750	430,170	35,420	Surplus	332,600	227,613
Expenditure						
Employees	(205,060)	(273,515)	(68,455)	Additional Gardner post, pay award and higher overtime	(258,171)	(197,642)
Premises	(33,740)	(73,082)	(39,342)		(68,087)	(56,801)
* Planned R&M	(2,400)	0	2,400		(2,321)	0
* Buildings R&M	(11,300)	(18,300)	(7,000)	Downs compound, toilets and changing rooms	(17,515)	(21,030)
* Grounds Maintenance	0	(3,335)	(3,335)	Timber survey, public notices re: gas works	0	(1,665)
* Fuel costs	0	(2,502)	(2,502)		(1,873)	(797)
* Cleaning Contract	(17,040)	(41,909)	(24,869)	Strict cleaning regime and locking up of toilets with continuing contractor	(40,737)	(29,555)
* Utility Costs	(2,500)	(6,566)	(4,066)	Electricity, water and sewerage	(5,289)	(2,341)
* Waste Management	(500)	(470)	30	Septic tank	(352)	(1,412)
Transport	(26,600)	(21,007)	5,593	Vehicle R&M, fuel, contract hire	(25,325)	(18,876)
Supplies and Services	(39,750)	(35,975)	3,775		(199,423)	(122,562)
* Equipment & Materials	(11,750)	(10,363)	1,387	Seed, soil, uniforms, hire of mobile work platform	(34,335)	(17,402)
* Contribution to Educational posts	(28,000)	(25,612)	2,388		0	(27,000)
* Fees & Charges - Legal	0	0	0		(160,294)	(62,798)
* Traveller eviction costs	0	0	0		(4,794)	(14,545)
* Security Costs	0	0	0		0	(818)
Third Party Payments	(5,000)	(5,000)	0	Annual contribution towards managing the Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project	(5,000)	(5,440)
Total Expenditure	(310,150)	(408,579)	(98,429)	Overspend	(556,006)	(401,322)
Net Total before Support Services	84,600	21,590	(63,010)		(223,406)	(173,708)
Support Services	(84,600)	(96,592)	(11,992)		(81,570)	(64,281)
* Events Team	(34,350)	(34,379)	(29)	15% of gross income from event fees (excluding football fees)	(25,580)	(9,575)
* Human Resources	(250)	(57)	193		(26)	(40)
* ICT	0	0	0		(62)	0
* Finance	(4,300)	(4,300)	0		(4,200)	(4,200)
* Democratic Services	(6,000)	(5,900)	100		(5,900)	(5,900)
* Parks Management	(12,700)	(12,700)	0		(12,700)	(12,700)
* Other	(27,000)	(39,257)	(12,257)	Parks technical support, asset management, tree works and advice	(33,102)	(31,866)
Net Position	0	(75,002)	(75,002)	Deficit	(304,976)	(237,990)
Transfer from Reserves	0	0	0	Reserves exhausted	97,680	237,990
Net Outturn	0	(75,002)	(75,002)	Net surplus/ (deficit)	(207,296)	0

2. Forecast Report for 2023-24

- 2.1 The report provides a forecast of the financial performance of the Downs for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.
- 2.2 The budgeted and actual income and expenditure up to period 2, April to May 2023, has been analysed and projections have been made resulting in some potential variances.
- 2.3 A summary of the forecast income and expenditure for 2023-24, the change from the budget and prior year comparators, can be seen in Table 4.

TABLE 4 - Overall Income and Expenditure Budget Summary

Budget 2023-24	Full Year GROSS Budget £	2023-24 Forecast (P2 - May23) £	Variance £	Notes	2022/23 Outturn £	2021/22 Outturn £	2020/21 Outturn £
Income							
Gross Income	394,750	341,900	(52,850)	Deficit	430,170	332,600	227,613
Expenditure							
Total Expenditure	(394,750)	(486,856)	(92,106)	Overspend	(505,172)	(637,576)	(465,603)
Transfer from Reserves	0	0	0	Reserves are exhausted	0	97,680	237,990
NET OUTTURN	0	(144,956)	(144,956)	Net surplus / (deficit)	(75,002)	(207,296)	0

- 2.4 Gross income for 2023-24 is currently forecasted to be in deficit by £53k, expenditure is forecast to overspend by (£92k), resulting in a net deficit of (£145k).
- 2.5 Expenditure pressures are forecast to occur from out of hours working; pay awards and higher premises costs including, buildings R&M, cleaning, and energy costs.
- 2.6 Income pressures are forecast to occur from changes to several income generating events and lower parking income. The events team are working with current and new providers to improve the situation.
- 2.7 Further information, explanations and comparisons to prior years can be found in table 5.

TABLE 5 - Income and Expenditure Budget

Budget 2023-24	Full Year GROSS Budget £	2023-24 Forecast (P2 - May23) £	Variance £	Notes	2022/23 Outturn £	2021/22 Outturn £	2020/21 Outturn £
Income							
Fees - Events	310,750	257,900	(52,850)	Deficit	284,560	237,214	58,926
Fees - Licensing & Rents	79,000	79,000	0	Breakeven	135,810	82,060	145,891
Fees- Other	5,000	5,000	0	Breakeven	9,800	13,327	22,796
GROSS Income	394,750	341,900	(52,850)	Deficit	430,170	332,600	227,613
Expenditure							
Employees	(205,060)	(285,335)	(80,275)	Forecast per 22-23 plus 5% inflation - Additional Gardner post, pay award and overtime	(273,515)	(258,171)	(197,642)
Premises	(33,940)	(62,435)	(28,495)		(73,082)	(68,087)	(56,801)
* Planned R&M	0	0	0		0	(2,321)	0
* Buildings R&M	(13,700)	(19,000)	(5,300)	Downs compound, toilets and changing rooms	(18,300)	(17,515)	(21,030)
* Grounds Maintenance	0	(2,500)	(2,500)	Average of prior years	(3,335)	0	(1,665)
* Fuel costs	0	(1,700)	(1,700)	Average of prior years	(2,502)	(1,873)	(797)
* Cleaning Contract	(17,040)	(33,735)	(16,695)	Based on Apr23 invoice - Strict cleaning regime and locking up of toilets continuing with contractor	(41,909)	(40,737)	(29,555)
* Utility Costs	(2,700)	(5,000)	(2,300)	Electricity, water and sewerage	(6,566)	(5,289)	(2,341)
* Waste Management	(500)	(500)	0	Septic tank	(470)	(352)	(1,412)
Transport	(26,600)	(26,600)	0	Vehicle R&M, fuel, contract hire	(21,007)	(25,325)	(18,876)
Supplies and Services	(39,750)	(39,750)	0		(35,975)	(199,423)	(122,562)
* Equipment & Materials	(11,750)	(11,750)	0	Seed, soil, uniforms, hire of mobile work platform	(10,363)	(34,335)	(17,402)
* Contribution to Educational posts	(28,000)	(28,000)	0		(25,612)	0	(27,000)
* Fees & Charges - Legal	0	0	0		0	(160,294)	(62,798)
* Traveller eviction costs	0	0	0		0	(4,794)	(14,545)
* Security Costs	0	0	0		0	0	(818)
Third Party Payments	(5,000)	(5,000)	0	Annual contribution towards managing the Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,440)
Total Expenditure	(310,350)	(419,121)	(108,771)	Overspend	(408,579)	(556,006)	(401,322)
Net Total before Support Services	84,400	(77,221)	(161,621)	Deficit	21,590	(223,406)	(173,708)
Support Services	(84,400)	(67,735)	16,665		(117,600)	(81,570)	(64,281)
* Events Team	(34,350)	(17,685)	16,665	Less events income at the moment - 15% of gross income from event fees (excluding football)	(34,379)	(25,580)	(9,575)
* Human Resources	(50)	(50)	0		(57)	(26)	(40)
* ICT	0	0	0		0	(62)	0
* Finance	(4,300)	(4,300)	0		(4,300)	(4,200)	(4,200)
* Democratic Services	(6,000)	(6,000)	0		(5,900)	(5,900)	(5,900)
* Parks Management	(12,700)	(12,700)	0		(12,700)	(12,700)	(12,700)
* Other	(27,000)	(27,000)	0	Parks technical support, asset management, tree works and advice	(39,257)	(33,102)	(31,866)
Net Position	0	(144,956)	(144,956)	Deficit	(96,009)	(304,976)	(237,990)
Transfer from Reserves	0	0	0	Reserves exhausted	0	97,680	237,990
NET OUTTURN	0	(144,956)	(144,956)	Net surplus/ (deficit)	(96,009)	(207,296)	0