

# THE DOWNS COMMITTEE

Clifton and Durdham Downs (Bristol) Act 1861

Reply to Norman Cornthwaite

To : Members of the  
Downs Committee

Telephone 0117 92 22390  
E-mail norman.cornthwaite@bristol.gov.uk  
Date Friday, 15 September  
2017

## The Lord Mayor and 6 City Councillors

The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor Councillor Lesley  
Alexander

Peter Abraham

Donald Alexander

Clare Champion-Smith

Barry Clark

Kye Dudd

Cleo Lake

## The Master and 6 Merchant Venturers

C McAlpine

J Baker

A Brown

F Greenacre

C Griffiths

J McArthur

T Ross

Dear Member,

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **Downs Committee** to be held  
at **2.00 pm on Monday, 25th September, 2017 at City Hall.**

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

Yours sincerely,

*Norman Cornthwaite*

Norman Cornthwaite.

### Democratic Services Section

3rd Floor Deanery Wing  
City Hall PO Box 3176  
College Green,  
Bristol BS39FS  
Sat nav BS15TR

### Shana Johnson

Democratic Services Manager

### Website

[www.bristol.gov.uk](http://www.bristol.gov.uk)

## **Agenda**

### **1. Change in Downs Committee Membership (Pages 3 - 6)**

The Committee is asked to note the change in BCC Membership of the Downs Committee.

### **2. Apologies and introductions**

### **3. Minutes of last meeting (Pages 7 - 10)**

To be agreed as a correct record of the Meeting and signed by the Chair.

### **4. Declarations of interest**

### **5. Public Forum**

### **6. Delegated and Upcoming Events Proposed on The Downs (Pages 11 - 16)**

### **7. Finance Report (Pages 17 - 18)**

### **8. Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge (FOD+AG) Report (Pages 19 - 22)**

The Committee is asked to note the report.

### **9. Any Other Business**

Norman Cornthwaite, Democratic Services Officer

Email: [norman.cornthwaite@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:norman.cornthwaite@bristol.gov.uk) or

[democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk)

Phone: 0117 92 22390



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Any statement submitted should be no longer than one side of A4 paper. If the statement is longer than this, then for reasons of cost, only the first sheet will be printed for Members of the Committee and made available at the meeting. For copyright reasons, we are unable to reproduce or publish newspaper or magazine articles that may be attached to statements as supporting paperwork.

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Where appropriate, we will endeavour to remove other personal details such as contact details. However, because of time constraints we cannot guarantee this and you may therefore wish to consider if your statement contains information that you would prefer not to be in the public domain. Public Forum statements will not be posted on the Council's website.

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## Process during the meeting:

- Public Forum is normally one of the first items on the agenda, although statements and petitions that relate to specific items on the agenda may be taken just before the item concerned.
- There will be no debate on statements or petitions.
- The Chair will call each submission in turn. When you are invited to speak, please make sure that your presentation focuses on the key issues that you would like Members to consider. This will have the greatest impact.
- Your time allocation may have to be strictly limited if there are a lot of submissions before the meeting.
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**Downs Committee**

**25<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

**Report of:** Strategic Director Resources

**Title:** Downs Committee Membership Changes

**Ward:** N/A

Officer Presenting Report: Norman Cornthwaite, Democratic Services Officer  
Contact Telephone Number: (0117) 9222390

**Downs Committee- BCC Membership**

The Committee is requested to note that Councillor Nicola Beech has been replaced by Councillor Kye Dudd as a Member of the Committee.

**Recommendation: that the membership change be noted.**

# THE DOWNS COMMITTEE

Clifton and Durdham Downs (Bristol) Act 1861

**Downs Committee Meeting**

**3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017 at 11.00 am**

**Merchants Hall**

**Present:**

BCC -

Lord Mayor Councillor Lesley Alexander (Chair)

Councillor Peter Abraham

Councillor Donald Alexander

Councillor Barry Clark

Councillor Cleo Lake

Merchant Venturers -

Cullum McAlpine – Master

Jonathon Baker

Anthony Brown

Francis Greenacre

Charles Griffiths

James McArthur

Tim Ross

Also in attendance -

Sarah Blazier – Parks

Melissa Inman- Events

Ben Skuse – Downs Maintenance

Jemma Prince – Finance

Norman Cornthwaite – Democratic Services

Mandy Leivers – Avon Gorge and Downs Biodiversity Education Officer

Robert Westlake – Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge (FOD+AG)

Jack Penrose - Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge (FOD+AG)

**33. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Nicola Beech.



**34. Changes to BCC Membership of the Downs Committee**

**Resolved – that the changes to the BCC Membership be noted.**

**35. Minutes of the Last Meeting**

**Resolved – that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2017 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

**36. Declarations of Interest**

None were received.

**37. Public Forum**

Nothing was received.

**38. Downs Management and Events Report**

**Events, etc.**

Melissa Inman introduced this part of the report and summarised it for everyone. She confirmed that the BBC Children In Need Event would take place on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2017. The Clifton Suspension Bridge will be closed for 15 minutes on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2017.

Concerns were expressed about the widespread parking on the Downs associated with Events on the Downs. It was noted that designated area (s) for parking is agreed for each Event. It was agreed that the issue needs to be addressed by the Events Team and the Parks Section. It was also agreed that the Events Sub Group could consider the issue. Once the Events Team have new staff in post a series of Events Sub Group Meetings will be arranged. In the meantime a Meeting of the Group will be arranged in the coming weeks.

Referring to the proposal to site a Traditional British Telephone Box on the Downs, it was noted with concern that the primary purpose of it was to encourage visitors to Clifton Village. It was confirmed however that the Downs Committee should receive and income from it should permission be given to site it on the Downs. It was agreed that the Events Sub Group should give this issue further consideration. It was also suggested that the Events Sub Group could give further consideration to the charges for Events on the Downs, It was noted that the structure of charges in place had been agreed by BCC.

**Management Update**

Sarah Blazier introduced this part of the report and summarised it for everyone. Referring to the request for Hospital Helicopter Landings on the Downs, she stated that a specific site had not yet been agreed but was likely to be by the Water Tower.

An update on the Travellers issues was noted as was the prompt action by BCC to remove them from the Downs.

## **Wildlife Project Education Programme**

Mandy Leivers introduced this part of the report and summarised it for everyone.

**Resolved – (1) that the report be noted; as well as**

**(2) that approval be given for Event proposed for 2017 subject to the Telephone Box being considered further by the Events Sub Group;**

**(3) that Events proposed for 2018 be discussed in detail at forthcoming the Event Sub Group meeting with a report back at the next full Committee meeting;**

**(4) that approval be granted for the installation of sensitively placed Samaritan signs at the Sea Walls location;**

**(5) that permission for helicopter landings by Search and Rescue helicopters on the Downs be granted; and**

**(6) that approval of ground investigations and infiltration testing for potential Sustainable Drainage System (SuDs) pond on Durdham Down near Henleaze Road be granted.**

### **39. Finance Report**

Jemma Prince introduced the report and summarised it for everyone. She explained that the BCC Budget was being reduced to zero over the coming years and that a number of Meetings of the Committee's Finance Sub Group had taken place to discuss reducing the budget and increasing income. A Budget 2017/18 would now be developed. It was agreed that there is now more clarity about the Committee's financial situation. It was also noted that some more work is still required to ensure that all of the costs are attributed to the correct descriptions. The Downs Cost Centres would continue to be monitored.

**Resolved – (1) that the report be noted; and**

**(2) that a Budget be developed for 2017/18.**

### **40. Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge (FOD+AG)**

Robert Westlake introduced the report and summarised it for everyone.

**Resolved – that the report be noted.**

### **41. Finance Sub Group's Terms of Reference**

It was agreed that the wording of paragraphs 1 and 5 be amended to reflect the fact that the Downs is not a park and that BCC had requested that the Downs become cost neutral from 2020.

**Resolved - that the Terms of Reference be agreed subject to the agreed amendments.**

**42. Any Other Business**

**Toilets on the Downs.**

Francis Greenacre drew attention to proposals by BCC to close a number of public toilets, including those on the Downs. These proposals were the subject of a current consultation and it was suggested that the Downs Committee should express its opposition to the loss of a vital public service for the huge numbers of people making use of the Downs. The Meeting concurred and noted that the financial numbers recently made available confirmed that the Downs Committee's past contribution to the costs of toilet maintenance could be repeated this year. Reservations were however expressed about the liability for any upgrade or other major investment. Mr Ross suggested that the latter was a matter for the future and, in the meantime, believed that a formal Downs Committee decision would be required before any current closure was implemented.

**43. Next Meeting**

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at 2.00 pm at City Hall.

Meeting ended at 12.50 pm.

(Chair)

## Bristol City Council

**Downs Committee  
25<sup>th</sup> Sept 2017**

**Report of:** Service Director, Neighbourhoods and Service Director,  
Culture

**Title:** Downs Management and Events report

**Ward:** N/A

**Officers Presenting Report:** Melissa Inman, Senior Events Officer  
Ben Skuse, Parks Supervisor

**Contact Telephone Number:** 0117 9037141

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Recommendation: that Downs Committee approve a spend from the Downs budget of £5500 for Fertiliser for the football pitches, to be applied in accordance with advice from Natural England.
- That the Downs Committee agrees to extend the Circus contract for a further year and for a new contract to become operative from 2019 for a period of 3 years subject to CPG approval.
- That the Downs Committee agrees to Lets Rock taking place on the Downs in 2018 subject to licensing and Site Permissions approval.

### 1. Policy

Not applicable

### 2. Consultation

#### a) Internal

John Williams, Area Manager North.  
Becky Belfin, Parks Development Officer  
Sarah Blazier, Operations Coordinator North  
Ben Skuse, Downs Supervisor  
Gemma Dando, Service Manager  
Melissa Inman, Arts and Events Manager

### 3. Events Report; provided by Melissa Inman.

### **3a) Filming**

### **3b) Event & Festival Updates**

#### **Music Concert Downs**

The music concert has been considered a big success with no adverse feedback received from key stakeholders. Approximately 21,000 tickets were sold and de-brief with the organisers is due to take place in October with the Events Team and Members of the Bristol's Safety Advisory Group.

#### **Circus Tender**

It was agreed that the Downs Committee be recommended to agree to extend the Circus contract for a further year and for a new contract to become operative from 2019 for a period of 3 years. If agreed at full committee the Events Team will arrange for the extension to be agreed and will also begin work on the new tender process.

#### **Proposed events programme for 2018**

The 2018 events programme was reviewed at the Event Subgroup committee on the 11<sup>th</sup> September. It was noted that these could be quite disruptive in terms of car parking and road closures. It was therefore felt that perhaps a cap could be placed on the number allowed each year and agreed that the Events Sub Group committee should receive a report with a suggested cap on the number of Charitable Events allowed each year on the Downs for review at the next meeting.

Let's Rock concert proposal for 2018 was discussed and it was decided by the Event Sub Group that the recommendation is made to the Downs Committee to agree to Lets Rock taking place on the Downs in 2018 subject to licensing and Site Permissions approval.

### **3c) Future 2017 Events**

#### **Funderworld - Ticketed funfair**

Set up dates: 7-15 March 2017

Operating dates: 16<sup>th</sup> March - 8<sup>th</sup> April 2017

Breakdown dates: 9 -13<sup>th</sup> April 2017

Projected events site fee income to the Downs Committee for 16/17:  
**£108,321.88** (not including the concert levy at £1 per ticket sold)

Site Fees are based on the schedule of charges 16/17.

#### **4a) Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project Education Programme; provided by Mandy Leivers.**

During July and August we engaged with 722 people through the education programme. We ran two guided walks, two children's holiday events and took part in the 'Cycle Sunday on the Downs' event.

In July, 302 school children visited us for education sessions including a pupil from Hedgeway school (which caters for children with severe autism). We have taken bookings for 16 sessions for September and October.

A rainbow and a brownie pack enjoyed evening sessions on the Downs, and over the school holidays 152 children, from across the city, visited for play scheme sessions. In August, 10 children and mums from the Easton Family Centre visited for a 'Discover the Downs' session. The event was run in conjunction with Bristol City Council's Inner city and East Bristol Health Improvement Team. Unfortunately our second family event with the Somali Forum was cancelled.

We teamed up with FODAG to lead two 'Your Downs' guided walks. The first was for eight people from Headway (a charity working with people recovering from brain injury) and the second was for eight people from the Five Ways to Wellbeing group who are co-ordinated by the Inner City and East Bristol Health Improvement Team.

We have also been planning and preparing for the Peaceful Portway event on the 17th September. We are organising a 'Gorge-ous Avon Gorge' family trail. Along the trail participants will meet various knowledgeable people who will talk about a particular aspect of the gorge's wildlife, geology or history. We are running this event in conjunction with: the FODAG, Clifton Suspension Bridge, University of Bristol, and the National Trust.

#### **4b) Management and Resources**

##### **Downs Team Report; provided by Ben Skuse.**

This report covers a period from July to September when we get peak visitor numbers in the year. Due to this, clearing the ground free of rubbish and keeping up with overflowing bins becomes our primary focus, followed by continuing grass mowing when the ground is clear. Daily duties continue, goat checking etc.

During August the team have marked the 28 pitches necessary for our Football activities back onto the ground for the 17/18 season ahead. Also during August the annual hay cut of our meadow areas took place and went well.

I am sad to report that at the back end of July we lost one of our 6 Goats.

This was due to an unsupervised dog getting into the enclosure and chasing one of our herd towards and off the cliff that is behind the water pumping station on the Portway. Both the goat and the dog died in the fall. As a result of this incident we have posted up more signs around the enclosure insisting on dogs being kept on leads when inside. We have also taken measures to make our fence line harder for dogs to penetrate. The owner of the dog was very apologetic and expressed a wish to contribute financially to getting another animal should we wish to go down that route. One crumb of comfort to come out of this sad incident is the news from the vet at Bristol Zoo. In the post mortem report they stated that other than the injuries sustained in the fall they found the Goat to be in good health. So hopefully if this is representative of the health of the others then they are doing well.

Lastly as no doubt members will be aware, the Downs music event took place on Saturday Sept 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Downs team worked alongside Team Love in the weeks leading up the event itself to ensure a smooth handover of the site. The event itself enjoyed good weather this time around and seemed to go well. The grounds are now back in use for football season.

As we move back to Autumn now the team will be moving back to working on the Downs scrub management plan, identifying and removing areas of scrub on the Downs to halt the loss of limestone grassland habitat that the Downs is important for.

Ben and Sarah attended a site visit with members of the Avon Gorge Working Group to identify actions and a further group meeting is due to take place in September to discuss these.

- Recommendation: that Downs Committee approve a spend from the Downs budget of £5500 for Fertiliser for the football pitches, to be applied in accordance with advice from Natural England.

#### **Access:**

- The Bridge Trust compound was removed on 30<sup>th</sup> August which was ahead of schedule. The site has been re-turfed.

#### **Sustainable Drainage Scheme:**

- Trial pit dug on 18<sup>th</sup> Aug. Outcome TBC. Reinstatement to be carried out.

#### **4c) Management Plan**

The first initial draft has been produced. This was circulated to the sub group and a sub group meeting took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2017, during this meeting comments and amendments were raised by the group and the plan is now being updated to reflect these.

The plan will next be circulated to all Downs Committee members and then to

the key stakeholders for consultation. Following the consultation period the sub group will meet to review any comments, final alterations will be made as appropriate before the plan is brought back to the Downs Committee for approval and implementation.

Management plan sub group members are: Councillor Fodor, Councillor Alexander, Anthony Brown, Francis Greenacre, Mandy Leivers, Becky Belfin, Ben Skuse and Sarah Blazier.

#### **4d) Movement and Place Framework subgroup**

A sub group is due to take place. Date TBC.

Movement and Place sub group members are: Lord Mayor, Councillor Peter Abraham, Councillor Martin Fodor, Anthony Brown, Francis Greenacre, Tim Ross, Richard Ennion, Richard Goldthorpe, Sarah Blazier, Mark Sperduty, Ed Plowden, Oliver Coltman, Mandy Leivers, Becky Belfin.

#### **4e) Tree safety works**

The tree officer continues inspections for dead or high risk trees and tree removals follow as required.

#### **4f) Health and Safety:**

- The rock catch fence replacement was completed at Sea Walls, Black Rock Quarry in April / May 2017.
- The annual rock face inspection for the zig zag path, childrens playground and slopes above Bridge Valley Road were completed in March 2017. Next year the Bridge Road rock face will be included in the report.
- Black Rock Quarry / Sea Walls had a qualitative rock face risk assessment in February 2017.

### **5. Public Sector Equality Duties**

5a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:

- i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
- ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
  - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
  - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people



- who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
- encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
- tackle prejudice; and
  - promote understanding.

## **6. Legal and Resource Implications**

The Clifton and Durdham Downs (Bristol) Act 1861 provides that the Downs should remain as a place for the resort and recreation of the citizens of Bristol, and that a committee should be appointed to manage them. The recommendations of this report are within the powers conferred by this statute.

**7. Land:** The land is under the control of the Downs Committee.

**8. Personnel:** Not applicable

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

Background Papers: None



## 1. Proposed Budget 17/18 Income and Expenditure

Subsequent to the actual result for 2016/17 having been reviewed by the Downs Committee, the proposed budget for 2017/18 is presented here below. This aims to deliver a £60,000 saving as contribution to the bridging of Bristol City Council's current year budget gap.

Work continues to explore additional income opportunities to deliver further savings in the next two years with the aim of reducing the net position to zero (breakeven) by 2019/20.

**Table 1: 2017/18 proposed income and expenditure budget (including other direct costs and indirect costs) presented alongside 2016/17 actual income and expenditure for comparison purposes**

	2016/17 Actual £	2017/18 Proposed Budget £	Commentary
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	224,691	210,600	Includes salaries costs and non-contractual overtime related to provision of football pitches.
Premises	24,151	14,000	Includes some grounds maintenance and general tree work
Transport	295	-	
Supplies and Services	74,399	88,850	Includes security and contribution to the Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project (16/17)
Third Party Payments	12,625	8,500	Includes further contribution to the Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project (17/18) and work on drains
Support Services	19,966	17,350	Includes property repairs
<b>Sub-Total Expenditure</b>	<b>356,127</b>	<b>339,300</b>	
Indirect Costs	25,144	25,000	Includes Parks Management, Finance and Democratic Services, but does not include for the Events team.
Other Direct Costs	51,144	51,000	Includes grounds maintenance incurred by Parks Services, changing room cleaning costs and fleet running costs, but does not include allowance for fleet renewal charges (i).
Employee Adjustment	-17,570	-17,000	Less the cost of Employee time spent at Blaise and Kingsweston Estate
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>414,845</b>	<b>398,300</b>	
<b>Income</b>			
Council contribution	-262,090	--200,000	
Fees - Leisure Services	-115,198	-143,850	Funderworld, Circus, Elbow concert and Football pitches
Fees - Licensing	-34,525	-70,400	Zoo parking, Ladies Mile parking and Ice cream
Rents Commercial	-18,000	-18,000	Annual concession for Café Retreat
Fees Other	-5,033	-5,000	Grass cutting for Cote House and income from filming
Income Misc.	478	-	
<b>Sub-Total Income</b>	<b>-434,368</b>	<b>-437,250</b>	



Additional Income Identified	-36,096	-	Representing adjustments to income for 16/17
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-470,464</b>	<b>-437,250</b>	
Expenditure Less Income	-55,619	-38,950	Downs generated surplus
Removing Council contribution	262,090	200,000	
<b>Net Position</b>	<b>206,471</b>	<b>161,050</b>	<b>Aiming for 0 by 19/20</b>

(i) *The last estimate for these as provided by fleet services is £22,264. These costs are to be noted however will not be transacted against the Downs cost centre.*



## **Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge.**

### **September 2017**

**Introduction:** The purpose of this brief report is to update Committee on our recent activities, achievements and our plans for the future.

FOD+AG remains committed to our Terms of Reference to fairly represent legitimate users of the Downs and whilst retaining its independence will actively support the Committee on a range of initiatives.

However it remains FOD+AG's intention to keep a watchful eye on what still seems like an uncertain future.

**Activities and Achievements:** FOD+AG continue with all our usual volunteer activities across the Downs and Gorge, including, goat monitoring, butterfly surveys, litter collections, clearing pernicious weeds, maintaining dead hedges and scrub removal. We regularly update our website and the Downs app. We can also be followed on our Face book page.

In addition to our regular activities FOD+AG volunteers attend many Downs and Avon Gorge events. In July FOD+AG volunteers were alongside the Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project and Sustrans in support of Cycling Sunday. This was a wonderful celebration of all things bike and a treat to see so many youngsters {one still in nappies} enjoying a traffic free day on the Downs.

In August FOD+AG members provided a significant presence at the Bee Festival and at the Botanic Gardens. Our stand generated a great deal of interest with many questions about the future of the Downs.

Earlier this month FOD+AG volunteers had a stand at the Universities Fresher's Fair and were in attendance at the Peaceful Portway event.

Throughout the summer months FOD+AG in conjunction with The Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project have supported many walks and talks on a wide range of Downs's related subjects.

It was with great sadness that the FOD+AG volunteers who monitor the goats at weekends learned that one of the six had died. Investigations by the Downs Supervisor confirmed a fall

from one of the cliff edges after being pursued by a dog. The dog also died in the same incident.

It is important that this setback does not impact on the overall initiative to restore the Gully to its botanical importance. Committee may be interested to note that at the start of the project our own botanical expert Richard Bland observed 75 different plant species; in 2016 this was up to 129 and now stands at an impressive 135. A genuine success story.

FOD+AG volunteers are planning to organise a cleaning rota for the recently renovated Haven. The shelter has become somewhat a victim of its own success, ironically with smokers from nearby medical institutions.

Our members will carry out regular cleaning and monitor the condition of the structure.

Every year FOD+AG contribute in excess of 500 volunteer hours to the betterment of the Downs, this is exclusive of any support and organisational time required to maintain all its activities and inputs.

The FOD+AG committee strives to fairly represent the views of our members and all legitimate users of the Downs and will this year and next be looking to improve the diversity of our own organisation. We intend through our quarterly newsletter and at our AGM to encourage a wider range of representation than is currently the case.

Looking forward to next year FOD+AG will be celebrating its first ten years of existence. A range of activities will be presented to mark the event.

FOD+AG members sit on 'Your Downs' group committee and two FOD+AG members attend all Bristol Parks Forum meetings.



