

# Bristol City Council

## Minutes of the Downs Committee

20 November 2017 at 2.00 pm



### Members Present:-

**Councillors:** Lesley Alexander (Chair), Peter Abraham, Donald Alexander, Clare Campion-Smith, Barry Clark, Kye Dudd, Cleo Lake, C McAlpine, J Baker, A Brown, F Greenacre, C Griffiths, J McArthur and T Ross

### Officers in Attendance:-

1. Apologies and introductions
2. Membership of the Downs Committee

Membership of Downs Committee 2017/18 was noted.

3. Confirmation of Chairing Arrangements

Chairing arrangements for 2017/18 were noted

4. Retiring Members of the Committee

The retirement of Merchant Venturer members of the Committee was noted.

ACTION OH to draft a letter thanking them for past services to the Downs Committee, for the Lord Mayor's sign off.

5. Dates and Times of Meetings

Committee agreed to meet on the dates set out

6. Delegations



Correction: the Lord Mayor is not a delegate on the Events and Finance Sub Group. Membership is the Master, 3 Merchants and 4 Councillors.

## **7. Minutes of last meeting**

Amendment: On Toilets on the Downs item, resolution 1 should read “should BCC decide to withdraw funding for toilets on the Downs”, as the Downs Committee owns the toilets, with BCC supplying servicing.

Resolved – following amendment that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 September 2017 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **8. Declarations of interest**

Councillor Kye Dudd declared an interest as a player in the Downs Football League.

## **9. Public Forum**

The following statements were received and noted by the Committee:

Brian Worthington (Chair, Clifton and Hotwells Improvement Society) – Bridge over Bridge Valley Road

Maggie Shapland – Bridge over Bridge Valley Road

## **10 Downs Management Report**

Melissa Inman presented and summarised the Event update.

Noted that the first event and finance sub-group meeting has taken place

Charitable walking / cycling events will be staggered to prevent damage. Some sporting events have moved to other locations such as Blaize.

Parking for the Race for Life event is currently being negotiated. Downs has areas that could be used for parking, but not sure whether this would require a route change for the race. Awaiting response from organisers.

Timetable for charity events will be drawn up in August each year to mitigate concerns. Events programme 2018 is all agreed in principle. Detailed budget for events will be covered in the January sub-group meeting.



Proposing no parking on Downs in October to aid recovery. Will have to check on how this affects the circus. Team love wants to hold in September rather than July. July. Currently exploring the possibility of 2 day events, but nothing concrete.

Committee commended Team Love on their continued good engagement with local residents and professional attitude.

**ACTION MI to add the individual location on the Downs to each entry on the event list.**

Mandy Leivers and Ben Skuse introduced the parks update

Over 6 weeks Sep/Oct engaged over 900 people. Had to cancel 2 events due to storm Bryan. Just under 2k children on school visits this year. Freshers fair recruited 3 volunteers. Arianne funding extended over next 3 years.

Committee thanked Mandy for her good work in education this year

Local McDonalds have volunteered to clean up on the Downs. A student is volunteering one day per week with Ben's team.

The event portfolio for 2017 has ended and all sites are in good condition. Have 7 major events for 2018. Requirement to invest in maintenance otherwise permanent damage could happen. Football season will be delayed by a week, so BS will be sending a letter to football league chair.

**Resolved – Committee agrees to request a replacement member of staff for the maintenance team. Noted that ultimate decision on recruitment will be made at neighbourhoods DLT.**

**Resolved – Committee approves £5k spend on Avon Gorge Wildlife Project.**

Request for £2.5k spend on the creation of a new combined management plan. Cost is unallocated from 17/18 budget. Spend is for using BCC in-house design team to create glossy marketing and strategic document. Current document could be published as is, but it is crude and lacks images / diagrams. Document lasts for 5 years.

**Resolved – refer this matter to the finance sub-group to resolve where the £2.5k can be found. Refer back to full committee if problematic.**

**OH ACTION – Arrange meeting of the Movement and Place Framework sub-group and replace Fodor and Brown.**

## **11 Delegated and Upcoming Events Proposed on The Downs**

Upcoming event schedule was noted



## 12 Finance Report

Jemma Prince introduced and summarised the finance report.

Target to reduce DC budget by £60k this year, expectation is to realise an extra £39k in savings. This report is a half year result, so some irregularities due to not smoothing spend until year end.

Had some one-off income in first half of year, e.g. s106 changing rooms / football charges. Good income on filming and runs. Circus, football and ice cream concession not yet realised.

Costs are just under forecast, some additional cost in transport for vehicle fixes.

Noted that full breakdown of income / expenditure is analysed at the finance sub group.

Noted in planning committee Bristol Zoo went on record saying parking on the downs was worth £500k per year, so DC should review charges.

Downs Committee thanked JP for bringing clarity to the finances.

**ACTION JP to bring full year forecast and budget proposal to January DC meeting**

## 13 Downs Toilets Discussion

The Council consultation on public toilets has not been finished, though it will likely recommend dropping funding for Downs toilets. If so, toilets will be closed from 31 January so that the savings can be realised by the end of the financial year.

The toilet service contract is held by the waste company and must be terminated entirely to avoid TUPE issues. Possible that Downs Committee could ask BCC as agents to source an appropriate contractor. Also possible that Ben Skuse maintenance team could take on as additional work to the changing rooms, but this would need legal advice.

ACTION OH set up subgroup meeting ASAP, including Ben Skuse, Hayley Ash and a legal representative, preferably on 1 December. Toilet group will then refer matter to finance group for action on 10 January.

Downs Committee agreed to take on the servicing of the public toilets on the Downs in the event of BCC defunding, though this will require a minimum of £21k additional in the budget to cover. Under these circumstances, the current DC savings target should be reviewed.

Some longer term possibilities include combining the changing rooms and toilet, bridge trust taking on the bridge toilet and the sea walls toilet becoming a commercial site.



ACTION OH draft formal message to Alison Comley (Strategic Director Neighbourhoods) and Cllr Asher Craig (Cabinet Member Communities) that Downs Committee would like to take on cost of servicing public toilets on the Downs for a period of 6 months from 1 February while medium term solutions are found.

#### **14 Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge (FOD+AG) Report**

Robert Westlake presented and summarised the latest FOD+AG report, which was noted by Committee. The Committee thanked FOD+AG for their continuing assistance in the maintenance of the Downs.

#### **15 Any Other Business**

##### Bridge over Bridge Valley Road

Noted two public statements on the bridge, discussed the planning process so far. Proposer has pursued planning permission before getting a developer agreement. There has been no submission to Downs Committee on this matter as yet, despite being effectively 'the landowner'.

ACTION OH invite proposer to attend DC to explain plans for bridge funding and maintenance.

##### Goats

Another goat has been killed by being chased off the cliff edge by a dog.

##### Parks Forum

Downs Committee noted the good work of the Parks Forum during the Council's parks consultation process. Agreed to send a letter of thanks to Mr Acton-Campbell, provided it is made clear the Downs is not a Council park.

ACTION Francis Greenacre to draft letter for Lord Mayor's approval.

##### Bristol MP Meeting

Downs Committee noted that MPs are no longer able to meet on the 1 December as Parliament is now sitting on that date. DC received a letter from Darren Jones MP and Thangam Debbonaire MP with various questions related to commercial activity on the Downs and offering their support in preserving the site.

ACTION OH request that the meeting be rescheduled, as it would be easier and more effective to discuss these issues face to face rather than on paper.



### Changing Rooms

The lease on the football changing rooms has expired. Cllr Dudd has written to the FA to request funding and will meet to discuss the opportunities. This can also include toilet solutions around the changing rooms.

Meeting ended at Time Not Specified

**CHAIR** \_\_\_\_\_

