

THE DOWNS COMMITTEE

Clifton and Durdham Downs (Bristol) Act 1861

Reply to Oliver Harrison

To : Members of the
Downs Committee

Telephone 0117 35 26162
E-mail democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk
Date Friday, 12 January 2018

The Lord Mayor and 6 City Councillors

The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor Councillor Lesley

Alexander

Peter Abraham

Clare Campion-Smith

Kye Dudd

Donald Alexander

Barry Clark

Cleo Lake

The Master and 6 Merchant Venturers

J Baker

F Greenacre

J McArthur

A Brown

C Griffiths

T Ross

Dear Member,

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **Downs Committee** to be held at **2.00 pm on Monday, 22nd January, 2018 at City Hall.**

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

Yours sincerely,

Oliver Harrison

Democratic Services Section

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Agenda

- 1. Apologies and introductions**
- 2. Minutes of last meeting**
- 3. Declarations of interest**
- 4. Public Forum**
- 5. Bristol Zoo use of Ladies Mile Annual Report (Pages 3 - 6)**
(Tom Hedges)
- 6. Bridge Valley Road Footbridge**
(Dr Adrienn Tomor)
- 7. Update on Downs Toilet Position**
(Nancy Rollason)
- 8. Downs Management and Events Report (Pages 7 - 13)**
(Ben Skuse, Melissa Inman)
- 9. Finance Report (Pages 14 - 16)**
(Jemma Prince)
- 10. Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project Annual Report (Pages 17 - 21)**
(Mandy Leivers)
- 11. Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge Report (Pages 22 - 24)**
(Robert Westlake)
- 12. Any Other Business**

Oliver Harrison, Democratic Services Officer
Email: norman.cornthwaite@bristol.gov.uk or
democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk
Phone: 0117 92 22390

The use of land off Ladies Mile 2017 Annual Report to the Downs Committee Bristol Zoological Gardens

3 January 2018

1. Use of the land

Since Bristol Zoological Gardens successfully retained the use of Ladies Mile, for a further three years, back in spring 2017, it has been well utilised on school holidays, public holidays and key weekends. Its use, for now, is complete until spring 2018.

From the table below, it is clear that it was utilised within the allotted number of days. The site has remained in good condition and well managed by the Zoo.

High level usage statistics

	2016	2017	2018	2019
Days used	41/45	27/40	-/35	-/30
Total cars parked	10,067	6,532	-	-

- Used 14 days fewer than 2016 (2016 allocation is 41 and 2017 is 40)
- 3,535 fewer cars parked than 2016
- During a school holiday at the end of May/beginning of June we were unable to use Ladies Mile as there were travellers on the area of the Downs next to the car park. Historically travellers on the downs have been problematic for parking in this area, with thefts of ropes, children running around cars and travellers trying to park on Ladies Mile and causing issues. The Zoo does its best to avoid interference and mitigate any issues.

The reduction in usage is within line with our ongoing aim to reduce visitor travel by car, which is excellent news, however it is clear that the car will remain a popular method of transport for families with picnics and young children.

- Traffic congestion and emissions caused by driving around the surrounding area (looking for somewhere to park) is mitigated by the ability to park efficiently on Ladies Mile.
- BZG is sensitive to causing damage to the land and avoids use of the land when the ground is wet, even if the weather is fine on the day.
- Note – others may drive across the land in wet weather; e.g. Bristol City Council contractor's vehicles working in the area, other members of the public etc.

2. Sustainable travel, Travel Plan and Incentives in place

2.1 Physical measures:

- a. Covered guest cycle parking racks provided in the North Car Park
- b. Secure cycle parking for staff in the West Car Park, Education Centre and Gardeners' Yard
- c. Changing facilities, shower facilities and lockers for staff
- d. 6no. Electric car charging points in both the North and West Car Parks
- e. Real time information screens in the gift shop to inform guests of live bus time information.



Real time traffic information installed in the gift shop in 2017

2.2 Marketing measures and incentives for guests:

Bristol Zoo Gardens offer what we believe is the best discount available in Bristol and the Southwest to guests attending visitor attractions by sustainable modes of transport:

- a. **33% off** entry with proof of cycling to BZG (a cycle helmet, say)
- b. **33% off** entry with bus ticket. Available on First Bus and Wessex Bristol
- c. **33% off** entry with train travel when visitors travel by train and 2 for 1 entry with GWR
- d. **33% off** entry with Park & Ride (P&R)
- e. **33% off** entry with National Express ticket
- f. **33% off** entry with tourist bus 'hop-on hop-off' ticket
- g. Discounts are promoted through the website and member e-newsletters. On the home page there is a large 'Travel the right way' link to encourage guests to come by alternative modes of transport. The 'How to find us' button on the home page states that discounts are available for travellers by bicycle, bus and train. A single click takes you to the 'Getting to Bristol Zoo' page where the travel options and discounts are specifically promoted with, where appropriate, links to third party websites for ticket sales.
- h. Social media is used to regularly promote these alternative transport offers.

2.3 Staff measures

- a. Support for cycle purchase
- b. Provision of lockers, showers and changing facilities
- c. 10% reduction in bus season tickets available
- d. Interest free loan scheme for annual season ticket purchase
- e. Emergency cycle repair kit and high visibility vests available
- f. Bristol City Council Travel Roadshow
- g. Walk and Cycle breakfasts
- h. Staff parking in car parks is limited through a seasonal and annual pass system
- i. Telephone and video conferencing facilities available to avoid unnecessary travel
- j. Staff email system to promote initiatives to all staff
- k. Staff intranet with travel information available
- l. Dedicated BZG 'Green Team' made up of a selection of staff to promote sustainable initiatives which includes travel.

3. Travel surveys

Travel Surveys have been conducted in most of the last 10 years and allows us to look at patterns of travel since 2010. Surveys are carried out in the peak season, July-August, often in the School Holidays.

Trends from 2010 show that around 75% of our guests travel over 10 miles to visit in peak season. This restricts opportunities for using public transport, with consistently around 80% of visitors (excluding school parties) coming by car. However, car occupancy is consistently high (3.2-3.6 people per vehicle). Our average guest car occupancy would be envied by most Bristol businesses and the wider city and means that the 'car', in this instance, is actually considered a 'sustainable mode of transport'.

In 2017 we have seen a significant increase in uptake of the sustainable travel incentives and believe this is helped by our generous **33% off** entry when travelling by other means. This is shown below as % of paid entry:

	June	July	August
2016	1.5%	1.5%	1.9%
2017	3.7%	3.0%	6.1%

Percentage of visitors who travelled by alternative transport other than the car

Staff car use had also reduced over the period from 51%, driving alone, in 2012 to 42% in 2017.



Guests enjoying a picnic with their families at the Zoo

4. Stewardship of the land

a. An independent ecological survey is undertaken annually and the results of the 2017 survey indicates consistently that there is no year-on-year deterioration of the sward ecology. The findings of the 2017 survey are similar to those of previous surveys, with pertinent points as follows:

- The composition of the vegetation has been broadly stable since 2006, when surveys began.

- The car parking area, when compared to the control area, has a similar diversity of plants of unimproved grassland
- There is no evidence of any ongoing decline in the diversity of plants of unimproved grassland in the car parking area.
- There is no evidence of any ongoing increase in the diversity of plants indicative of disturbed conditions in the car parking area.

The overall diversity of plants indicative of unimproved grassland has increased since 2006, providing some evidence of an increase in the nature conservation value of the area, which may be due to improvements in the management of car parking (parking cars in various different directions).

- b. BZG maintain close contact with the City Council, in particular the Downs Rangers, on the management of the land, carrying out maintenance work using agreed seed mixes and to an agreed method. BZG have also repaired damage to the area caused by overnight joy-riders, who are not associated with BZG; this is of benefit to both BZG and the City Council.



The land off Ladies Mile used for car parking on the key busy days at Bristol Zoo Gardens

Conclusion

Although fewer total users, and used on fewer days in 2017, Ladies Mile has been invaluable to the Zoo throughout 2017 for those spikes in visitor numbers on specific key dates. The site has been well managed by the Zoo's in-house Grounds Team and the condition of the site is in good health.

The Zoo appreciates the agreement which has been in place for many years now. An agreement which provides a much needed source of income for Bristol's parks and at the same time helps the Zoo ensure its guests can still visit and enjoy the Zoo at the busiest times of the season.

2018 will see further reduction in use, down to a maximum of 35 days.

Tom Hedges MRICS
Director of Estates
Bristol Zoological Society

3 January 2018

AGENDA ITEM NO:

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

DOWNS COMMITTEE

22nd January 2018

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, Downs Supervisor

Contact Telephone Number: 0117 9037141

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *Recommendation: The committee approve the use of Sion Hill (where Gromit was, Princes' Lane/Sion Hill Corner, Clifton, BS8 4LD) and The Downs, Stoke Road near Downs Water Tower for two of the Gromit Unleashed trail sculptures*
- *Recommendation: The committee approve the use of an area of the Downs by the Suspension Bridge Trust for a compound between Aug 2018-July 2019.*
- *Recommendation: The committee approve the spend of £2500 for BCC Bristol Design Team to transform the new combined Downs and Avon Gorge Management Plan from a text document to a designed corporate looking plan complete with relevant images and maps alongside the text.*

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, Senior Events Officer

3. Events Report; provided by Melissa Inman.

3a) Filming

BFO Date	Description / Episode	10359 Downs
07/04/2017	The Great West Way	
13/04/2017	Babylon	
19/04/2017	Bomb	
19/04/2017	Utopias	
08/05/2017	Happy Hour	
18/05/2017	Breakfast	
07/06/2017	The First Brit	
03/08/2017	Kiri	
05/07/2017	Hugh's Health Kick	
19/07/2017	Acorn Lifestyle Shoot	
18/07/2017	Vocal Heroes	
01/08/2017	Womens Running	
09/08/2017	Kiri	
14/08/2017	Bristol	
18/09/2017	Tefal: The Toast of Breakfast	
25/09/2017	isite	
06/10/2017	Great Britain	
01/11/2017	Wild Britain	£2720

3b) Event & Festival Updates

No updates from the Site Permissions team.

3c) Proposed future events 2018

- Funderworld will be returning to the Downs in 2018. They will be operating an extra weekend for 2018 as the Easter Holidays are earlier in the year. Funderworld will be onsite from the 7th March till the 13th April: Set up dates: 7-15 March 2018; Operating dates: 16th March - 8th April 2018; Breakdown dates: 9 -13th April 2018
- The Foodies Festival will be on the Downs from the 8th till 15th May 2018. The set up days are 8th- 11th May; Operating dates are 12th-13th May; breakdown dates are 14th-15th May. The Bristol 10k will be taking place on the 13th May whilst Foodies Festival is taking place.
- Tough Mudder 10k is a new event for the Downs. This is a challenging 5k obstacle course. There will be no mud and **Page 8** involved in this event. The event will be

onsite from the 17th to 20th May 2018. The set up dates are 17th-18th May; operating date is the 19th May; the breakdown dates is the 20th May.

- Let's Rock will be moving from Ashton Court to the Downs for 2018. This event will be a 1 day concert based around 80's music with a capacity of 10,000. They will be onsite from 28th May to 5th June. The set up dates are 28th May to 1st June; the operating day is 2nd June; the breakdown dates are 3rd-5th June.
- The Lady Boys of Bangkok took a break in 2017, but will be operating on the Downs in 2018. Their previous location, Castle Park, is undertaking some works to reinstate the grounds. It will be onsite from 5th-25th June 2018 with the capacity of 400 per show. The set up dates are 5th-7th June; the operating dates are 8th-23rd June; the breakdown dates are 24th-25th June 2018.
- Race for Life will be returning to the Downs in 2018. In previous years, the Site Permissions team and the Parks team have received complaints regarding the parking at this event. Ben Skuse from Parks and Zoe Walmsley for Site Permissions, met with Race for Life to discuss the parking issue. It was recommended to the organisers that public transport would be the best option of transportation to and from the event. Race for Life have agreed to advertise a 'no parking available' for their event. This event will be onsite from 30th June to 1st July.
- The Downs Concert will be returning in 2018. Discussions are still happening in regards to extending this event to a 2 day event. Waiting on confirmation from the organisers. It will be onsite from the 26th August to 8th September. The set up dates are 26th -31st August; operating dates are 31st Aug(TBC) and 1st Sept; breakdown dates are 2nd-8th September.
- The Student Union Welcome Fair will be operating in 2018 dates still confirmed.
- The Russian Circus will be returning to the Downs. Their tender agreement has been extended another year. The dates for this event are still to be confirmed.

Gromit Unleashed 2 Arts Trail

The Grand Appeal together with Aardman will be launching a brand new arts trail in Bristol next year following the international success of their previous two trails, Shaun in the City and Gromit Unleashed.

Bounding back onto the streets of Bristol for his second starring role in the sculpture trail is Nick Park's much loved character Gromit, but this time he's not alone, the lovable canine will be joined by his pal Wallace and arch nemesis Feathers McCraw.

From Monday 2nd July until Sunday 2nd September 2018, over 60 original sculptures will descend on Bristol and will raise money for Bristol Royal Hospital for Children Special Care Baby Unit at ST Michaels Hospital.

Recommendation: The committee approve the use of Sion Hill (where Gromit was, Princes' Lane/Sion Hill Corner, Clifton, BS8 4LD) and The Downs, Stoke Road near Downs Water Tower for two of the sculptures (see Image **a.** and **b.** below).

a) Sion Hill (where Gromit was, Princes' Lane/Sion Hill Corner, Clifton, BS8 4LD)



b) The Downs, Stoke Road near Downs Water Tower



3d) Finances

Projected events site fee income to the Downs Committee for 17/18: **£108,321.88** (not including the concert levy at £1 per ticket sold)

Site Fees are based on the schedule of charges 17/18.

4. Parks Update

4a) Management and Resources

Downs Team Report; provided by Ben Skuse.

This report covers a time of the Downs year where we do most of our scrub removal work with the 10 year scrub removal management plan. The team will be working with the plan up to February 28th, identifying and removing scrub compartments to enable limestone grassland plant communities to have a space to survive and thrive.

Daily litter removal and Goat monitoring continues. Since the latest incident involving Dogs in the enclosure off leads, we have changed our signage to be more pictorial and are getting regular additional patrols by the Bristol City Council Dog wardens. Discussions are still being had about whether we can ban Dogs completely from the enclosure and what level of enforcement is available to us.

Staff cleared leaves from footpaths on the Downs prior to Christmas and briefly, snow from footpaths after Christmas.

Weekly Football provision continues, various works to keep the surfaces playable are carried out in this generally wet period.

All of our pitches and our 3 event areas have been fertilised. This has not been carried out since around 2002 so it was felt necessary. Quantity of Football played plus more

and more events are causing the Downs surface to become increasingly threadbare in places. The aim is that this application will see a really good flush of grass growth in the spring that will be of benefit to both the Football pitches and event areas.

Bench repairs continue as and when we see damage. A programme of cleaning and re-wood staining will commence in the spring, potentially involving community payback teams.

Discussions have been ongoing regarding the status of the toilets on the Downs. Through these discussions, involving myself and merchants, it is hoped solutions can be found to maintain an adequate toilet provision at the Downs.

As reported by myself at any other business in the last meeting, we have a staff vacancy currently. I am in ongoing dialogue with the north area parks manager about how and when this vacancy can be filled.

New bridge works compound

Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust is planning to replace the toll booths. They seek permission to erect a contractor's compound on Sion Hill and to provide a temporary footpath for pedestrians onto the bridge. They are envisaging that the compound will be needed from August 2018 until July 2019. The compound would be screened with the same green netting as before, and the buildings within would only be one storey.

- ***Recommendation:* The committee approves and permits the Bridge trust to have another compound in this area.**

4b) Management Plan

The first initial draft has been produced.

The plan has been circulated to Committee members and will now go out to the key stakeholders for consultation. Following the 6 week 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 in April for final approval and implementation. The question of approving the spend of £2500.00 for the document to be converted from its current format to a designed corporate plan will be decided upon via the finance sub group meeting on the 10th January.

- ***Recommendation:* The committee approve the spend of £2500 for BCC Bristol Design Team to transform the new combined Downs and Avon Gorge Management Plan from a text document to a designed corporate plan. The budget allows for alterations to be made should there be amendments after the consultation.**

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

4c) Movement and Place Framework subgroup

A sub group is to be booked.

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.

4d) Tree safety works

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

4e) Health and Safety:

There will be 3 planned road closures of Bridge Valley Rd on consecutive Sundays in the coming weeks.

Sunday January 28th

Sunday February 4th

Sunday February 11th

This is to carry out vegetation and tree cutting on the slopes above the road to enable inspection by rock safety officers from WSP.

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

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

AGENDA ITEM NO

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

Downs Committee

22nd January 2018

Title: Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project Annual Report 2017

Ward: Citywide

Officers Presenting Report: Becky Belfin Parks Development Officer, Parks Development Team
Mandy Leivers, Avon Gorge and Downs Biodiversity Education Manager

Contact Telephone Number: (0117) 3525656

Summary

To report, for information, on the activities of the Avon Gorge & Downs Wildlife Project during 2017.

The significant issues in the reports are:

A summary of the Project's main achievements with regards to conservation management, wildlife surveying and monitoring and the education programme.

1. Policy

Not applicable

2. Consultation

Internal:

Ben Skuse, Area Supervisor Downs, Blaise, Kingsweston estates

Sarah Blazier, Operations Co-ordinator North

External:

Jen Nightingale, Bristol Zoological Society

3. Context

The Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project was launched on 23rd October 1999. It is a partnership of Bristol City Council, the Downs Committee, Merchant Venturers, Bristol Zoo Gardens, Natural England, the University of Bristol, and Bristol Zoological Society. We also work with the National Trust, Forestry Commission and other landowners on the North Somerset side of the Gorge, as well as the Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge.

The aim of the project is 'to secure the future of the outstanding wildlife interest of the Avon Gorge and Clifton and Durdham Downs and to raise awareness and understanding of this unique location and its importance to people and wildlife'.

Annual review

This report provides a review of progress and key achievements of the Avon Gorge & Downs Wildlife Project between January and December 2017.

Habitat management works throughout the Gorge and Downs

The winter conservation works on the Bristol side of the Gorge continue to focus on the removal of scrub and invasive species, in order to protect the rocky limestone outcrops, and restore them back to species-rich grassland.

In the Gully, the goats are still effectively controlling the regrowth of scrubby species. The regular monitoring of the goats by the Council's Downs' Team and the Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge (FOD+AG) is continuing to ensure that they are well looked after. Sadly however, two of the goats have died in the last year as a result of being chased by dogs, despite signs on all the gates requiring dogs to be on leads. Measures have now been put in place to enforce a Public Space Protection Order in that area, which should reduce the likelihood of it happening again.

On the Downs, implementation of the Scrub Management Plan has continued for its third year, and is contributing to the gradual restoration of areas of species-rich grassland. The wildflower meadow areas continue to be managed on a hay cut to maintain their value.

Silky wave moth monitoring

The Avon Gorge is the only site in England for the silky wave moth (*Idaea dilutaria*). A total of 13 silky wave moth sites within the Avon Gorge were surveyed this summer by the Bristol Zoological Society. The survey season ran for three weeks from the third week of June to the first week of July 2017. For the majority of the sites the peak flight week was earlier this year than in the previous year i.e. in late June rather than early July. All sites showed a presence of silky wave moth.

This year the maximum peak count was 207 moths, which was an increase on the 2016 peak count. The peak moth counts on the Somerset side were the highest since the base line surveys began in 2011. Most sites showed comparable numbers given the cyclical trends we see for silky wave moths within the Gorge. We also surveyed Quarry 2 this year on the Somerset side to give us baseline data prior to habitat management work being carried out over winter.

The education programme

Overall, **11,174** people took part in one of our events, activities or educational visits this year.

The events programme continued to be popular with **882 people** taking part in one of our walks, talks, courses, children's or family events:

- 302 people attended one or several of 13 walks, including a spider walk in the Avon Gorge and an autumn bird identification walk;
- 361 people came to one or several of five talks, including the 'Myths, moths and butterflies' talk;
- Our six courses were attended by a total of 63 people; these included new wildlife-themed willow weaving workshops;
- 156 children and adults attended a total of seven children's and family events, including the popular 'Music with Mummy' sessions.



Juliette & Alex both really enjoyed both days. They brought back some lovely creations yesterday. Thanks for all your hard work.

'Fabulous falcons', 27.07
'Wild works of art', 03.08.2017

Formal education sessions

Primary schools

In 2017 we taught **1,947 children** from **23 schools** in **77 education sessions**, including 120 pupils during schools' day at the Bristol Festival of Nature. This is the busiest teaching season so far. We welcomed five new-to-us schools, and a few schools who hadn't visited for a while returned this year.

We received excellent feedback from teachers on our sessions, with scores for session content, presentation, length and level all between 9 and 9.2 out of 10. We were thrilled to receive positive and enthusiastic feedback from many teachers.



The session was tailored exactly to our needs. Outstanding addition to our classroom work. This is why we come back every year, such valuable learning experiences children remember and talk about for years.

Elmfield School for deaf children, 10.05.2017

Higher education

We also taught **165 higher education students** in **seven sessions**. These included a lecture and walks for students from the University of the West of England's foundation degree in Integrated Wildlife Conservation; lectures for students on Bristol Zoo Garden's Wildlife Conservation evening course; and two field sessions on the Downs for University of Bristol students. Following their sessions with us, several students joined our team of volunteers.



Holiday playschemes and uniformed groups

Bookings from playschemes and uniformed groups dropped a little this year, with **248 children** from **eight groups** taught over **13 sessions**. This included four new-to-us uniformed groups, of which three booked with us after hearing about our sessions through other group leaders – this shows that leaders really value our sessions and appreciate what we offer.

The feedback we received was extremely positive, with full marks received for session content, presentation and level, and 9.9/10 for length. All groups said they were very likely to return and we received some fantastic comments:



There is never a bad session with these amazing professionals. Please keep them for the children of tomorrow.

Thank you to Mandy and Ariane for a great summer of fun and education on the Downs. So sorry that summer is over and we have to wait a whole year before we come again.

Southville Centre, 16 and 24.08.2017

Community activities

In 2017, we engaged with **7,932 people** through **17 community activities** including outreach talks, walks for community or special interest groups, family activities, and community events. Highlights include the following activities:

Your Downs

In partnership with the Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge (FOD+AG), the Downs supervisor and Walking for Health, we continued to develop and deliver the 'Your Downs' initiative (a series of events to widen the range of people who visit and enjoy the site).

We continued to work with the Inner City and East Bristol Health Improvement Team, running guided walks and half-day activities for adults from areas such as Easton, St Paul's, Montpelier, Barton Hill and St George, and families from the Easton Family Centre and the Somali Forum. We also ran three guided walks for Headway, a charity that works with people recovering from brain injury.

Our Christmas Star Party on the Downs was a success with 58 people attending.

Bristol Festival of Nature

The Festival of Nature is the UK's largest celebration of the natural world. This year's festival ran from Friday 9th June to Sunday 11th June. We teamed up with the education teams from Bristol Zoo Gardens, Wild Place Project and Bristol Dinosaur Project (University of Bristol) to present the 'Dinosaor' tent. The aim was to increase knowledge and understanding about dinosaurs and their evolution into birds, linking in with the 'Dinomania' exhibition at the zoo, and to raise awareness out about British bird species and how to help them.

On the Friday schools' day, children learnt about the Avon Gorge peregrine falcons, what makes them such good predators and how they fit in the food chain.

The public days were a huge success. Throughout the weekend, visitors to our tent could take part in our bird-themed activities. Approximately **500 bird identification trails** were completed, **400 origami blue tits** were folded and **500 origami robins** were made. It was really lovely to see visitors, from the youngest to the oldest, learning to recognise birds on the trail or concentrating hard to get their origami right.

Overall, our tent was visited by **7,180 people** and was possibly the busiest tent of the festival.

Cycle Sunday

Roads on the Downs were closed to motor vehicles on Sunday 16th July for the 'Cycle Sunday' event organised by Sustrans. **149 children** enjoyed making masks at our wildlife mask making stall. It was a successful event which resulted in a number of bookings for our summer events.



Peaceful Portway

The Portway was closed to traffic for the 'Peaceful Portway' event on the afternoon of Sunday 17th September 2017. This year's event was particularly popular: an estimated 7,500 people attended.

As part of the day, we organised a 'Gorge-ous Avon Gorge family trail' which took participants on a wild journey along the gorge. Overall, **181 people** took part in our activities (trail and mask-making) and we received positive feedback from participants who really enjoyed their day out.



Bristol University Fresher's Fair on the Downs

In September, the University of Bristol brought their Fresher's Fair to the Downs. We had a small stall (shared with the Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge) in their charities' tent. During the day we engaged with **164 students**; **three subsequently applied** to volunteer on our project.

Volunteer support

Many of our events couldn't take place without the support of volunteers and work experience students. We're grateful to the **29 people** who **gave 391.5 hours** of their time over the year.

Audience development plan

In 2017, we started working on our audience development plan for 2018-2020. This involved assessing our current audience, meeting with potential partners, and developing new projects. This will inform our project work plan for 2018-2022 and will be used to support funding applications.

Proposal:

Other Options Considered

1. Not applicable

Risk Assessment

2. Not applicable

Public Sector Equality Duties

- a) *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.*

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal

Not applicable

Financial

(a) Revenue

None

(b) Capital

None

Land

The land is under the control of the Downs Committee.

Personnel

Not applicable

Appendices: None

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers: None



Report of the Friends of the Downs & Avon Gorge

January 2018

The Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge welcome this opportunity to update the Downs Committee on our recent activities.

FODAG remains committed to its core values to support the City Council and the Downs Committee and to represent without favour all legitimate users of the Downs.

Traditionally a quieter time for FODAG on the Downs but we have not been entirely inactive.

Following our AGM FOD+AG Committee members met in December to elect its officers. Jack Penrose was once again nominated as chairman and accepted the role for the coming year. All other officers of the committee remain unchanged.

Early in December Redwing and Fieldfare returned to the Downs. Both are regular winter visitors.

On a cold December evening, working with the Avon Gorge Wildlife project and the Astrological Society FOD+AG members gathered to organise the Downs Star Party. Thankfully the clouds cleared and those who had booked onto the event had an opportunity to discover some of our more prominent constellations. This was followed by star shaped biscuits, hot coffee and a sing along.

Some of the more recent appointees to the Downs Committee may not be aware that the Downs are a designated Dark Skies Discovery location. The absence of any significant light pollution and easy access near the Sea Walls allows these events to take place every winter.

On December 10th snow fell on the Downs for the first time since March 2014. There were further more significant falls again towards the end of the month. This prompted many visitors out on to the Downs to enjoy the wintery landscape and to create many imaginative snow persons.

At the end of December dozens of laminated A4 sheets were observed around the Downs. They had been fixed to dead hedges, bollards and railings. On closer inspection they were discovered to be the work of an anonymous poet and generated great interest and spontaneous joy. The identity of the Downs bard remains a mystery. {I have included an example of his or her work at the end of the report}

FOD+AG members continue with regular weekend goat monitoring and following the death of a second goat FOD+AG has increased its vigilance, reminding dog owners about their responsibilities when in the goat compound.

During the course of the winter FOD+AG members will undertake the annual maintenance of the Victorian steps. This includes the removal of debris and leaves. At the same time minor repairs will be carried out.

Regular cleaning of the Haven is also scheduled for the winter months.

Last Sunday volunteers undertook further planned clearance work to the Lichen Trail. This is one of several clearance projects undertaken this winter. Working closely with the Education Officer the aim is to reduce competing plant species.

Next Saturday another volunteer team will be out and about working to remove deep seated litter from some of the less accessible areas the Downs.

For the next meeting of the Downs Committee FOD+AG plan to report on our ten year anniversary activities and FOD+AG's position with regard to the criteria for future acceptable uses of the Downs.

Who am I? I hear you ask. Why am I here? What is my task?

Sssh I say and listen to me. I'll tell you now all you can be.

You are the thoughts in your mind, the leaves on a tree.

You are the wind in the mountains and all the fish in the sea.

You are a new baby's breath and the blind's will to see.

You are everything and nothing, you are black you are white.

And, with as much as a wish you could be daytime or night.

You see, my child, as much as you ask,

The answers the same as the time you asked last.

You're a perfect creation of all that was true

To come down here and just, be you.

Anon