

# THE DOWNS COMMITTEE

Clifton and Durdham Downs (Bristol) Act 1861

**Reply to** Oliver Harrison

To : Members of the  
Downs Committee

**Telephone** 0117 35 26162  
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gov.uk  
**Date** Friday, 30 March 2018

## **The Lord Mayor and 6 City Councillors**

The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor Councillor Lesley Alexander  
Peter Abraham Donald Alexander  
Clare Campion-Smith Barry Clark  
Kye Dudd Cleo Lake

## **The Master and 6 Merchant Venturers**

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 9 April 2018 at City Hall, College Green, Bristol, BS1 5TR.**

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

Yours sincerely,

Oliver Harrison  
Democratic Services Officer

### **Democratic Services Section**

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## **Agenda**

- 1. Apologies and introductions**
- 2. Minutes of last meeting (Pages 3 - 7)**
- 3. Declarations of interest**
- 4. Public Forum**
- 5. Matters Arising from Events and Finance Group (Pages 8 - 9)**
- 6. Matters Arising from Place and Movement Group - Seven Sisters Loop (Pages 10 - 11)**
- 7. Rethinking Parks - Bristol and Bath Parks Foundation (Pages 12 - 21)**
- 8. Downs Management Report (Pages 22 - 27)**
- 9. Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge Report (Pages 28 - 31)**
- 10. Any Other Business**

Oliver Harrison, Democratic Services Officer  
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Phone: 0117 35 26162

## Bristol City Council Minutes of the Downs Committee

22 January 2018 at 2.00 pm



### **Members Present:-**

**Councillors:** Lesley Alexander (Chair), Peter Abraham, Donald Alexander, Clare Champion-Smith, Barry Clark, Kye Dudd, Cleo Lake

**Merchant Venturers:-** J Baker, F Greenacre, C Griffiths, J McArthur, M Prior and T Ross

### **Officers in Attendance:-**

Becky Belfin, Mandy Leivers, Jemma Prince, Ben Skuse, Melissa Inman, Oliver Harrison

### **Others in attendance in whole or part:-**

Tom Hedges (Bristol Zoo), Dr Adrienn Tomor (UWE), Nancy Rollason (BCC – Legal), Kate Fryer (BCC – Legal), Richard Fletcher (BCC – Parks), Jack Penrose (FODAG), Robert Westlake (FODAG)

### **1. Apologies and introductions**

### **2. Minutes of last meeting**

Minutes approved

### **3. Declarations of interest**

James McArthur declared an interest as a shareholder of Bristol Zoo.

### **4. Public Forum**

Peter Weeks made a public statement on behalf of Downs for People re: Zoo Parking on Ladies Mile. DfP believe that the Downs should not be used for car parking and asks the Committee not to renew the Zoo's licence for parking on Ladies' Mile. The Zoo should be charged more for their use of the land.

### **5. Bristol Zoo use of Ladies Mile Annual Report**

Tom Hedges, Director of Estates, Bristol Zoo

TH presented a report on Bristol Zoo's use of the Downs for parking. It is inevitable that some people will travel to the zoo by car, but taking steps to reduce car use, e.g. changing rooms, electric points, big



discounts for public transport (33%). Promoting discounts through newsletters and social media. For staff provide tax free loans for cycle purchases, limited staff car parking. Zoo has strong relationship with BCC parks staff. Ladies Mile is invaluable asset for parking spikes in summer. The ground is well managed and in very good condition. The agreement has been in place for a long time and benefits both zoo and downs. Maximum expected use this year is 35 days.

A member noted that while objections to the parking scheme were understandable, they were not pragmatic. Before the scheme was introduced, traffic was very heavy and ad-hoc parking on the Downs was common. If the scheme ends, more damaging ad-hoc parking could return and there are no resources to police against it.

Members agreed that the current level of charging for zoo parking on the Downs was too low. This should be revisited at the next Events and Finance sub-Committee when the landowner permissions are due to be renewed. Extra income could be used for parking enforcement.

## **6. Bridge Valley Road Footbridge**

Dr Adrienn Tomor attended to give a verbal update on the Bridge Valley Road Footbridge position.

AT worked with FODAG to develop a footbridge to link two parts of the downs to avoid the dangerous on road crossing. All planning has been voluntary funded so far. Downs Committee considered and approved the bridge in principle. Planning went in 2 years ago, was rejected due to trees. Appealed to planning inspectorate and won appeal. After securing planning, we are getting other permissions (including the land owner). Founding a dedicated charity to raise £2m build cost.

Members clarified that the principle had been agreed but a further detailed report would be needed to agree the plan proper, including finances. Suggest that the finance group or a task and finish group come together with officers to examine the scheme alongside the planning application.

It was clarified that Downs Committee is the relevant body for landowner consent rather than Merchant Venturers. Some DC members were sent plans during the planning permission consultation period, but not all of them. There may be conditions placed on any future permission granted to protect DC from liabilities. AT mentioned that BCC may be taking long term maintenance obligation under highways, so DC and BCC will have to work closely on this.

## **7. Update on Downs Toilet Position**

Officers presenting: Nancy Rollason, Richard Fletcher, Kate Fryer

It was agreed at the recent finance and events sub-group to bring officer views and recommendations here to for the Committee to consider. Stoke Road toilet facility is currently damaged and out of use, it



was previously agreed at the toilet sub group that this toilet should be returned to working order before hand over on 1 Feb. Officers agreed to do this.

Confirmed that the suspension bridge trust will be taking over the service and maintenance of the bridge toilet due to an extant lease.

References to Merchant Venturers owning toilets in the report should be changed to Downs Committee as BCC/MV responsibility transferred to the committee under the Downs Act. BCC is ceasing to fund the cleaning and maintenance of these facilities rather than 'decommissioning' them.

BCC officers confirmed that there is no council budget to manage the Downs toilet facilities. It is up to the Downs Committee how to finance and manage maintenance of these facilities, BCC is offering to help with procurement if needed. Downs Committee is currently in discussion with BCC finance and legal colleagues about how DC can have a payment mechanism for a third party cleaning / maintenance contractor.

Legal view was given that TUPE was unlikely to apply due to the nature of the service and commissioning body being different.

It was clarified that the BCC parks team would not be able to provide an interim service as was suggested as a possibility at the previous meeting.

It was agreed that references to estimated costs of maintaining the toilets should be removed as these were unlikely to be accurate.

Downs Committee thanked all parties involved for their good work on this.

**ACTION** Jonathan Baker, Cllr Don Alexander and Nancy Rollason to liaise on the practicalities

## 8. Downs Management and Events Report

Melissa Inman introduced the report

Negotiations are still ongoing about holding a 2 day concert. Colston Hall has been approached but is not available. An update will be written for the next sub group meeting. Ben is doing a site visit with the Race for Life organisers to walk through the route. Ben is also waiting to hear back from organisers on parking issues. Extension to 2018 has been approved to Russian circus, but parking should also be discussed for that. The new Gromit trail has proposed locations on Zion hill, Stoke road and Observatory. DC will be given a proportion of BCC's income from all sites in the City.

*Recommendation on Gromit locations approved*

Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust is renovating the toll booths and has requested permission for a construction compound. Members agreed that a detailed plan / footprint and more specifics on the time



period were required. Committee should also look at land charging for any period over 3 months and enacting penalties for overrunning.

**ACTION BS** to ask Bridge Trust to submit formal plans to the committee via OH

## 9. Finance Report

Jemma Prince presented the finance report, recommending the committee to approve and adopt a draft 18/19 budget. This budget was discussed in detail and approved at the sub-committee. Savings target in 17/18 was to reduce budget by £62k. Savings should be £79k over this target. Next year target is to achieve a further £100k saving, but this target is currently expected to be missed by circa £16k. This is largely due to the possibility of £17k income loss from not achieving a 2 day concert.

*Committee thanked JP for her good work in getting finances in shape and approved the adoption of the draft budget*

## 10 Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project Annual Report

Becky Belfin introduced the report.

Scrub clearing over winter has gone well, tricky and requires rope access. Goats are useful to control scrub, 2 have been killed by dogs this year. have put up new signs and public space protection order. In future, team will look at ways to exclude dogs from that area altogether. Positive numbers counted of the Silky Wave Moth, which is only found in the Gorge.

Mandy Leivers reported on the achievements of the Education Programme

Was a very successful year, we engaged with over 11,000 people. The events programme has proved popular among all age groups. 2000 primary school children have been engaged, with the involvement of 5 new schools. Sessions have excellent feedback, with a 9/10 average. We also engaged with 7,932 people through community activities. Work began on an Audience Development Plan in autumn 2017. This is looking to identify people we currently do not reach. Including setting up projects to work with children, young people, older people and refugees from the less well-off areas of the city. Committee congratulated Mandy on developing the programme successfully.

**ACTION ML** to supply 15 year review document to Claire Campion Smith, so that she can see where visitors to the Downs are coming from.

Report was noted

## 11 Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge Report

Robert Westlake introduces report. Jack Penrose was elected chair of FODAG, all other officers remain unchanged. Held the Downs Star Party in conjunction with the Avon Gorge & Downs Wildlife Project and



Bristol Astronomical Society. The Downs is a designated Dark Sky Discovery site, due to less light pollution than other areas of the city. There was the first snow on the Downs since 2014, which drew lots of visitors. An anonymous poet has been posting poems on the Downs. FODAG is increasingly concerned about dogs attacking the goats. The report at the next Downs Committee will be FODAG's 10 year anniversary.

Report was noted

## 12 Any Other Business

Meeting ended at 3.40 pm

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

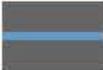


By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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### Seven Sisters Loop

-  Existing walking and cycling provision
-  Proposed shared recreational trail supporting walking and cycling
-  Proposed shared recreational trail walking and cycling (A4018 corridor)

Funding identified
Not applicable
No
Yes

**Downs Committee**  
**Matters Arising from Place and Movement Sub Group Meeting**  
**20 February 2018 at 11.00 am**

**1. Downs Outline Vision Plan**

Richard Goldthorpe introduced the hybrid diagram, based on previous agreement on the place and movement strategy and the last place and movement group meeting. The group agreed to scenario A, along with elements of B and C. Developing the vision further would be dependent on funding, ground investigation, traffic survey, consultation and statutory consents.

**Group resolved that a diagram of the Seven Sisters loop should be taken to Full Committee with a recommendation that the works be approved for progression**

Noted that nearby residents will be very keen for involvement and changes should be subject to consultation. Two most common complaints from the public are unregulated cycling and parking. If strategy addresses these points, it would get support.

Possibility of cycling permits was raised, but conflicts with provision of public service and encouragement of recreation. Other parks have considerate cycling rules which could apply here. Nature of the cycle path surface means it is suited to recreational, not utility cyclists.

Group considered running path behind water tower but agreed this is not practical.

Confirmed that the A4018 proposed shared walking and cycling trail has funding, but the rest of the seven sisters loop does not.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 7a of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

**BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL**

**DOWNES COMMITTEE**

**9th April 2018**

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

**Title:** Downs Management and Events report

**Ward:** N/A

**Officers Presenting Report:** Melissa Inman, Arts and Events Manager  
Ben Skuse, Downs Supervisor

**Contact Telephone Number:** 0117 9037141  
0117 9736210

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- *Recommendation: That the committee approves the Clifton Suspension Bridge trust's plans to use part of the Downs at Sion Hill Clifton for a compound.*

**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) Event & Festival Updates**

The Events & Finance Sub Group Meeting took place on the 23rd March 2018. The following was discussed.

Team Love concert: sub-committee were disappointed that promoters are unable to secure a second day concert. Agreed that in light of this, there should be no 3-year agreement.

The event team are in negotiation with promoters regarding the fees and it was agreed by the sub group to request increase on the current price per head.

Grand Appeal: sub-committee noted proposed fee for new Gromit trail to be split across 22 locations.

Tour of Britain: initial discussions are being held on the Tour of Britain returning to Bristol.

Sub-committee stressed the importance of the Downs Committee being consulted on organisation and recompensed for any maintenance costs. It was recommended that the Events Team liaise with Cllr Kye Dud, Cabinet Member for Sport to brief and discuss next steps.

### **3b) Proposed future events 2017**

Funderworld are currently onsite on the Water Tower Site at the Downs. They pulled onsite a week earlier than usual so that they could operate longer due to Easter being early this year. The event days are from 16th March to 8th April. The timings for the event have changed this year. The event will only run till 9pm every evening.

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 water involved in this event. The event will be onsite from the 17th to 20th May 2018. The set up date is 17th May; operating dates are the 18th to 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. They plan to close Parris Lane so that they can use this as a bus stop and taxi drop off point. No parking allowed for this event.

The Lady Boys of Bangkok took a break in 2017, but will be operating on the Downs in 2018. Their previous location, Castle Park, which 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.

Gromit Unleashed 2 will be placing some statues on the Downs as part of their arts trail. There will be 3 statues placed on the Downs for this event. They will be onsite from 2nd July to 2nd September. 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.

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



**b) The Downs, Stoke Road near Downs Water Tower**



The Downs Concert will be returning in 2018. This will be a one day event only for 2018. This event pulls onsite on the 24<sup>th</sup> August to 7<sup>th</sup> Sept; the event day will be the 1<sup>st</sup> September located at Sea Walls.

The Student Union Welcome Fair will be operating in 2018, the dates are still to be confirmed. A meeting is set up with the organisers to confirm their plans for this year.

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 but will take place during late September/early October.

#### **4. Parks Update**

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

The Avon Gorge and Downs education officer, Ariane Duperon, left at the end of February and Jill Parsons took on the role of at the beginning of March.

Although it's a relatively quiet time of year, we engaged with 421 people through the education programme. This included: two guided walks; two talks; one children's event; three talks to community groups and a lecture to one higher education group. We have also been busy booking in school educational visits for the spring and summer terms. As part of the Audience Development Plan, we met with staff from Bristol City Council's Inner City and East Bristol Health Improvement Team and staff from Bridges for Communities (an organisation that works with refugees and asylum seekers), to plan the 'Wild Adventures Family Project'. Through the project we are aiming to provide opportunities for Syrian families (who are new to the city), to have some fun together and to learn about the special wildlife living on the gorge and Downs. We have suggested a number of dates and themed visits, and Bridges for Communities are now contacting the

Syrian families to invite them to take part in the project.

At the end of March we ran our first session in our new 'Downs Challenge' programme. This project was developed as a result of the Audience Development Plan and is a partnership programme with Imayla (an organisation that works with children facing difficulties). During a series of sessions throughout the year, the children will complete different 'challenges' to discover the wildlife of the gorge and Downs and develop a sense of attachment to place. Our first session was a great success - 13 children had a wonderful time finding out about the rare plants of the Avon Gorge and visiting the goats in the Gully. We have given every child a ring-binder to keep activity sheets from each session in. The activity sheets will enable ongoing learning, discovery and creativity between sessions.

#### **4b) Management and Resources** **Downs Team Report; provided by Ben Skuse.**

Snow has been quite prevalent in the period covering this report. Unseasonably cold weather on two occasions has certainly meant changes to the normal line up of jobs and routines for the team at this time of year.

I and other staff, plus our 4x4 vehicles were commandeered by the civil protection team to assist meals on wheels and homecare nurses to get around the city. Team members left at the Downs worked hard to get grit onto our footpaths and battled through drifts to keep bins emptied.

Due to the snowfall the ground in parts of the Downs remains quite saturated and it was not an ideal situation to have Funderworld arriving to set up in time for an early Easter. Normal duties as best as possible, have been maintained complemented by some unseasonable additions, like breaking the ice on the water tank in the goat enclosure for a number of days!

Since February 1<sup>st</sup> the team have taken over temporary duties opening/closing and cleaning the sea walls toilets. This agreement is meant to bridge between Feb 1<sup>st</sup> and March 23<sup>rd</sup> when I hand them over to a cleaning company commissioned by the Downs Committee to run them going forward. That hand over has currently been delayed somewhat due to some outstanding repairs. However when they are handed over this will allow for a more suitable coverage for locking up times and at weekends than parks staff can give currently.

The team still stand at 4 in number since one member of staff left in December. I am in discussions with the North area parks manager about how to get a solution to this. I hope to be able to report at the full meeting in April that I am back to a compliment of 5.

#### **New bridge works compound**

Members will remember from the last meeting that the Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust wishes to build new toll booths for the Clifton Side in 2018. It was thought that more detail was needed about the proposal to have another compound on the Downs on Sion Hill.

I have with me copies of the more detailed plan form Trish Johnson the Bridge master. I also have plan diagrams of the works for discussion.

Members will note the comment in her email that "this approval will be required before we can issue tender documents".

- **Recommendation: The committee approves and permits the Bridge trust to**

**have another compound on Sion Hill, Clifton in summer 2018.**

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

The draft document is just having maps finalised by the GIS team. Stakeholders have been identified. They will be sent the document for a 6 week consultation period. 1 week to review responses then 2 weeks for design team to update the draft. The plan is to be complete in June. Then it can be presented to the committee at July's meeting.

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**

The sub-group has met on 2 occasions since the last full committee. The key points of the plan were reviewed and assessed. A funding source has been identified to enable part of the works to realise a seven sister's loop (pedestrian and recreational cycling). It was thought by members that given this funding opportunity realising this aspect of the framework was achievable and would represent a good place to start. In this way realising other aspects of the framework in the future could be looked at with some context and we will have better understanding of how achievable other aspects may be.

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. Sadly, we have a dead Monkey puzzle tree on Zoo banks, the only one on the Downs. It is being inspected and the likelihood is that it will have to be removed.

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

The way that we use BCC security services officers on the Downs to enforce bye-laws is being reviewed. Prior to committing to using and paying for the services of this section for 2018 I am trying to identify what exactly they can do in terms of enforcement and to what extent this matches up with what the committee wants in terms of enforcement. If it turns out that BCC security services cannot provide the level of enforcement members deem necessary then other options can be explored.

### **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



## Report of the Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge

APRIL 2018

FOD+AG welcome the opportunity to update the Downs Committee on our most recent activities.

FOD+AG remains committed to its core values to represent legitimate users of the Downs and reaffirms its commitment to support the City Council and the Downs committee in the governance of the Downs.

As reported in January, annual maintenance and repairs to the Victorian steps had been planned as part of our winter works programme. This project has now been completed and we are pleased to report that the steps and footpath remain in relatively good order.

Early in February FOD+AG volunteers renovated the dead hedges. These are the hurdle like structures you see all along Circular Road and are designed as a simple and cost effective method to deflect joggers away from sensitive meadow areas.

Again in February volunteers met for Conservation Sunday. This is also part of our winter programme and is the fifth event of this kind. Volunteers have contributed over seventy hours to a variety of tasks including scrub removal and managing encroaching Ivy.

FOD+AG Litter collectors were out in force in February. Twenty two intrepid womblers divided into three separate groups to tackle litter from some of the most inaccessible parts of the Downs. 44 volunteer hours were recorded and over 30 black sacks of assorted litter and debris collected. The final litter pick of the winter was completed at the end of last month and targeted the Zoo Bank to Ladies Mile and the Dumps to Fountains Hill.

Volunteers continue to assist the Downs team with regular weekend goat monitoring.

Early in February FOD+AG held a members social evening at St John's School. The popular event was to celebrate ten years of FOD+AG. The event was well attended and provided an opportunity for our members to reflect on the last ten years and to express their views about a wide range of Downs related issues. Common themes and concerns from our members included,

The future of the Downs, austerity cuts and income generation.

Inappropriate uses of the Downs.

Zoo Parking and the importance of maximising income for the Downs.

Cycling on the Downs.

A timeline of a few of the FOD+AG achievements over the last ten years is included with the report.

FODAG congratulates the Downs Committee on its commitment to public convenience provision on the Downs and remain optimistic that the committee will be able to preserve some of the other unique features of the Downs.

The Downs Committee may be aware that the Bristol Parks Forum is proposing to the City Council an alternative business model for our Parks. To be known as a Foundation the Parks would remain in the ownership of the Council but be managed differently. The main advantage being that a Foundation would be able to apply for grants and funding opportunities currently denied to the Council.

Should a Foundation type business model prove acceptable the role of the volunteer will become much more significant, however FOD+AG reassert **its** commitment not to carry out day to day activities normally done by the Downs team.

FOD+AG support the aims and aspirations of the Parks Forum and would be keen to explore any viable alternative that allows all our parks including the Downs to flourish.

Volunteers from FOD+AG will shortly undertake the repainting of the Downs 'White Tree' The definitive history of why this tree was originally painted white is not fully substantiated but is thought to date back to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and to have been a marker to assist travellers as they made their way across the Downs at night. FOD+AG are pleased to keep this quaint tradition alive.

In acknowledgement of the important work undertaken by volunteers The Downs Commoners have donated a significant sum to FOD+AG. This will be used for a variety of projects in support of the Downs.

FOD+AG committee member Richard Bland has recently compiled a fascinating history of the Downs avenues. There are in fact 21 different avenues across the Downs, nearly nine hundred metres in total length and comprising over twenty different tree species.

This informative piece of work can be downloaded from the FOD+AG website.

Working with the Avon Gorge Wildlife Project and other partners we will be offering a wide range of activities throughout spring and into summer. Walks, talks, bird identification, plant sketching and tree tours will all be available.

Later in the summer as part of a national initiative our important work monitoring butterflies will also continue.



Date	Activity/Event/Initiative	Status
2005	BCC Downs Action Plan Exhibition including opportunity to volunteer to be involved in a Friends Group followed by 2 years of meetings	Complete
2008	Formation by 14 remaining volunteers from 140 attending original meeting of FOD+AG. Aims, ambitions and initial constitution drawn up; walks, talks and first Deep Litter Clearance (DLC) initiated	On-going On-going
2009	Butterfly Monitoring Transects set up and monitors trained and practiced UKBMS scheme: further walks, talks and entertainments; Downs traffic and parking surveys carried out; first proposal for a pedestrian bridge across top of Bridge Valley Road made to Downs Committee	On-going  Enacted On-going
2010	Full season's Butterfly Data lodged with UKBMS; Downs Traffic Working Party set up; Zoo access path from supplementary car park improved for safety of wheelchairs and pram	On-going Enacted Enacted
2011	"Downs 150" celebrations initiated & organized; Children's Art competition for local schools; Water Main proposal - survey & response to environmental impact led to route changes; Goats introduced into Gully, weekend monitoring Environmental assessment of BVR Bridge site	On-going Complete Complete 2012 On-going Complete
2012	UBB Garden Downs meadow planted & monitored Help with Downs Diamond Jubilee celebrations; "Adopt a hawthorn" scrub clearance project; Traffic survey for BVR Bridge Project FOD+AG website established & fully operational;	On-going Complete To 2015 Complete On-going
2013	"Downs 150" Art/Poetry Boards installed & prize-giving; Downs Traffic and Parking Study Report FOD+AG 3-fold leaflet drawn up and edited; Dead-hedging to protect wildflower meadow;	Enacted On-going On-going On-going
2014	Traffic/Parking Plan Enacted; 3-fold leaflet printed Gully Quarry Meadow redesignated for conservation; this & outlook meadow re-seeded FOD+AG represented at : Peaceful Portway & at Bee & Pollination Festival	On-going On-going On-going  On-going
2015	Downs App completed and operational; Victorian Steps Restoration to celebrate Bristol's Year as European Green Capital; H&S Training up-dated and extended - 7 now qualified;	On-going Work finished. In place
2016	Victorian Steps Maintenance established Victorian Steps Formal Opening by Lord Mayor Information Boards in preparation; FOD+AG Facebook Page on-line	On-going  On-going On-going
2017	Haven Restoration & Board completed Student Engagement sought via Fresher's Day Scrub Clearance programme involvement begun	In place On-going On-going
2018	Tenth Anniversary	First of many! On-going