

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Downs Committee

19 November 2018 at 2.00 pm



Members Present:-

Councillors: Councillor Cleo Lake (Chair), Councillor Peter Abraham, Councillor Donald Alexander, Councillor Barry Clark, Councillor Kye Dudd, Councillor Christopher Davies, Councillor Paula O'Rourke

Merchant Venturers: Antony Kenny (Vice-Chair), Ross Ancell, Jonathon Baker, Francis Greenacre, Mary Prior and Tim Ross

Officers in Attendance:-

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

1. Apologies and introductions

All present introduced themselves for the benefit of the new committee members

Apologies were received from Simon Cooper

2. Membership for 2018/19

Membership was noted as correct

3. Chairing Arrangements

Chairing Arrangements were noted

4. Retiring Members

Charles Griffiths and James McArthur were noted as retiring members.

ACTION OH to send letter of thanks



5. Dates and Times for Upcoming Meetings

The dates and times for upcoming meetings were noted.

ACTION OH to circulate timetables and electronic diary invitations

6. Delegations

Delegations were noted

7. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting 24 September 2018 were accepted as a true record.

8. Declarations of interest

Ross Ancell declared an interest as a member of Quartet Community Foundation, who are coordinating the funds for the proposed Sea Walls Café development.

9. Public Forum

Susan Carter from Downs for People introduced a public statement

DfP is disappointed about lack of action on zoo parking over the past 10 years. Concerned about Downs Committee being secretive as zoo parking has been discussed openly in the past. DfP are hoping to meet with the Lord Mayor to discuss the principles.

The LM said it was inaccurate to say the last public statement from DfP was ignored.

TR reminded committee that public statements are not required to be debated. He gave a short update on zoo parking, having met recently with the new zoo director. A meeting of the finance group has also happened, where 2 members of that group have been delegated to progress negotiations with the zoo. DC will have to ratify the decision once a draft agreement is in place.

10 Matters Arising from Events and Finance Group

Report was noted

11 Future Proof Parks - Ground Works



Charley Murrell from Groundwork gave a presentation on Futureproofing Parks.

National Lottery Funding has been secured for the project, and CM has been discussing possible activities with FODAG, Ben and Mandy. CM would like approval to work on the Downs.

Questions were asked about the funding and how it was being distributed over the four Bristol parks. The funding goes to Groundworks, who then work with the friends groups of each park to increase engagement of young people.

Members agreed that the objectives of the project were very positive, but were curious about what would happen in practical terms and how the Downs Committee would be involved. CM will recruit young people locally to develop projects on the Downs e.g. maintenance of certain areas that DC cannot currently do themselves.

Members agreed with the principle of the project, but would need an outline of well-defined project proposals for the Downs to examine.

Members asked for a copy of the bid document to see what the parameters are. There is not currently much work being done on preserving heritage in parks, which would be complementary to the wildlife activity that currently exists. It is about filling the gaps we don't currently cover. There have been public enquiries about a history programme, so this presents a good opportunity. Heritage is core to the lottery funding, so we should be mindful that is the priority and that funders are likely to check this.

It was RESOLVED that CM and Groundworks continue to work with BS and ML to develop some projects for the Downs, then report back to committee.

12 Downs Management Report

MI confirmed that the circus tender has been awarded.

ACTION OH to circulate details of successful tender to all DC members

The organisers of Bristol Pride presented a proposal to the events sub group it was recommended to full committee that approval for the event is given approval in principle. All subject to agreement of fees and site permission and licensing approval.

Team Love organisers also presented and the sub group recommend that committee approve the principle of a 3 year licence for a 2 day music event, with an annual check on site permissions and fees. All subject to agreement of fees and site permission and licensing approval.

Events team to continue to take forward further discussions with the organisers.

RECOMMENDATION APPROVED



Avon Gorge & Downs Wildlife Project Education Programme Update

ML gave a summary of the busy autumn period. The audience development plan projects have been very successful. The last two refugee family sessions have been held, including an evaluation. Went well with some fantastic feedback from the adult participants. Children have created a book about what to do on the Downs, which they have taken back to the refugee centre to encourage others to visit. The final Downs Challenge sessions were also held, including a 'Brave the dark' event where the children found out about bats and moths. The children also created a display to share what they learnt during the project with visitors to St Paul's learning centre.

Maintenance Update

More grass cutting has been needed due to warm weather. The Wild Place zoo project has requested evergreen foliage to feed their giraffes. Fortunately for them an oak tree has fallen recently, so they can have that. BS will be visiting the granny Downs soon with BCC tree team to make an assessment. There is another possible restructure of BCC parks team, BS will keep us updated. Owners of the observatory want some building work done to create a café at the rear of the structure. This will fence off the middle footpath to the observatory for the next 3 weeks. Not ideal but preserves the grass. Nov 27 is likely start date. Observatory also has plans to increase lighting in the area to support evening events. The Sea Walls fencing requires repair work. The Granny Downs will have a tree trail launched in spring 2019, which fits in with the extant trails.

13 Delegated and Upcoming Events Proposed on The Downs

There was no change to the proposed 2019 event schedule.

14 Finance Report

JP presented the latest 6 month budget position, which is on track for a balanced position. JP will begin drafting a proposal budget for 19/20 soon.

15 FODAG Update

Report was noted

16 Any Other Business

Some members have been asked by residents how to collect foliage such as holly and ivy from the Downs. BS confirmed they can take a reasonable amount for themselves.



A vote of thanks was given for Richard Bland, who has recently died. He was a naturalist that made many contributions to the Downs.

Members requested that copies of the FODAG newsletter be available for DC meetings. ACTION OH to follow up.

17 Cycling Schemes

POR introduced a paper on cycling proposals for the Downs. This proposal initially went to the finance group due to the principle of a cycle hire scheme generating income. POR requested that the place and movement group meet to examine possibilities and report back to full committee in January. Would like to re-energise momentum on leisure cycling on the Downs.

Members discussed the large amount of work that was produced by the place and movement framework in 2015/16. Some principles were agreed, but the difficulty was a lack of funding. Included in the work was an examination of possible funding / grants that could be available. The Seven Sisters loop is progressing as funding is available via the A4018 highway project. Members were concerned about duplicating or repeating work.

There was agreement that in the 2 years since the framework was produced, there may be other options available to explore and a more secure financial position. There is community interest about the Cribs Causeway development and how that impacts on Falcondale Road. There is also a group that wants to close the circular road to traffic. The framework showed an appetite for cycling on the Downs within limited parameters. This would probably require modification of existing bye laws.

It was RESOLVED that transport colleagues should be briefed on the committee's intentions and report to the next committee in January. A place and framework group meeting should be convened as soon as possible after this.

Meeting ended at 3.15 pm

CHAIR _____

