

THE DOWNS COMMITTEE

Clifton and Durdham Downs (Bristol) Act 1861

Reply to Sam Wilcock

To : Members of the
Downs Committee

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Date Friday, 21 June 2019

The Lord Mayor and 6 City Councillors

The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor Councillor Jos Clark
Cllr Peter Abraham Cllr Donald Alexander
Cllr Kye Dudd Cllr Christopher Davies
Cllr Paula O'Rourke
Cllr Mike Langley

The Master and 6 Merchant Venturers

Antony Kenny Ross Ancell
Jonathon Baker Simon Cooper
Francis Greenacre Mary Prior
Tim Ross

Dear Member,

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **Downs Committee** to be held at **11.00 am on Monday, 1st July, 2019 at Merchants Hall, Merchants Parade, Bristol.**

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

Yours sincerely,

SamW

Samantha Wilcock

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Agenda

- 1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information**
- 2. Apologies**
- 3. Confirmation of Membership Changes**

The new municipal year for Bristol City Council started in May 2019. At the Annual Council meeting on 21st May 2019 Councillor Jos Clark was elected the Lord Mayor for the 2019-2020 year and would now chair the Downs Committee. Councillor Cleo Lake was elected the Deputy Lord Mayor.

Councillor Mike Langley would replace Councillor Barry Clark on the Downs Committee Membership and on the Events and Finance Sub Group.

- 4. Declarations of Interest**
- 5. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 4 - 8)**
- 6. Public Forum**

To consider items of Public Forum sent to the Downs Committee. Interested parties can submit a written statement of approximately one side of A4 to the Downs Committee by sending it to Democratic Services by no later than 12pm on Friday 28th June.

- 7. Matters Arising From Events and Finance Sub Group (Pages 9 - 10)**
- 8. Matters Arising from the Movement and Place Sub Group**

A meeting of the Movement and Place Sub Group is due to take place on the 25th June 2019. There will be a verbal update provided to this meeting.

- 9. Downs Maintenance Report & Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project (Ben Skuse, Mandy Leivers) (Pages 11 - 13)**
- 10. Events Report (Amanda Sharpe) (Pages 14 - 15)**

11. Finance Update (Kevin Jay) (Page 16)

12. Friends of Downs and Avon Gorge Report (to follow, if received)

13. Any Other Business

14. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to be held on 23rd September 2pm in a Committee Room in City Hall.

Sam Wilcock, Democratic Services Officer

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Bristol City Council Minutes of the Downs Committee

8 April 2019 at 2.00 pm



Members Present:-

Councillors: Councillor Cleo Lake (Chair), Councillor Peter Abraham, Councillor Donald Alexander, Councillor Barry Clark, Councillor Kye Dudd, Councillor Paula O'Rourke, Antony Kenny, Ross Ancell, Jonathon Baker, Simon Cooper, Francis Greenacre, Mary Prior and Tim Ross

Officers in Attendance:-

Ben Skuse, Ann-Marie Leighton and Jemma Prince

1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting.

2. Apologies and introductions

Apologies were received from Councillor Christopher Davies.

3. Minutes of last meeting - Monday 28th January 2019

The minutes were agreed with the following minor corrections;

- Item 13 title – swap 'British' for 'Bristol'.
- Item 13 first bullet point – add word 'fewer'.
- Item 14 penultimate paragraph substitute 'helping the Downs Football League *share their vision*'

4. Declarations of interest

There were none.

5. Public Forum

- (1) Robert Westlake – Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge



The Committee agreed to a request to display some items of litter at the entrance to the Downs for a few days in order to highlight the ongoing problem of managing litter on the Downs.

(2) Peter Weeks – Downs for People

The Committee stated that they were aware of the issues and concerns outlined and that whilst discussions were ongoing with the zoo they were unable to comment further. The results of those discussions would be considered by the Finance and Events Sub Committee and ultimately would return to the July meeting of the full Committee.

(3) Ms D Holvey

The statement was noted.

6. Matters Arising From the Events and Finance Group - Wednesday 27th February 2019

There were no further comments on the report.

7. Events Report (Ann-Marie Leighton)

The officer presented the report which had been included within the agenda papers. She was thanked for her time and there were no further questions raised.

8. Downs Maintenance Report (Ben Skuse)

Ben Skuse introduced the report and the following points were commented on:

- (1) The breakdown of the football trailer had been unfortunate however a spare trailer was not a realistic option. The Downs League had now been able to reconfigure the fixtures that were lost. In response, Councillor Dudd highlighted the need for reviewed focus on improving the quality of facilities for the Downs League to reflect the increased fees.
- (2) The new lighting proposal on Observatory Hill had been altered to remove the third unit which had been proposed for out in the open. By a show of hands the two other units were approved. It was reiterated however that it was the responsibility of the applicant to ensure correct planning permission.
RESOLVED: That the two lighting units proposed be approved as detailed in the proposal.
- (3) Funderworld had arrived on site for their annual event. In response to queries, it was confirmed that permission to advertise had not been granted and that an advance Advertising and Marketing



Plan would be agreed if the event took place in 2020. Councillor Abraham thanked officers for resolving issues regarding the advertising boards that had appeared.

- (4) Officers had investigated some unauthorised parking outside the Retreat Café. Some signage would be displayed and cycle lanes lines re-painted. It had been established that the Bristol Nordic walking group had been parking there to unload equipment and officers were investigating helping them with some storage options. Enforcement was also raised as an option.
- (5) Jonathon Baker offered his support to Council Officers to further explore a policy for those using the parks as a source of business.

Mandy Leivers presented her report of Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife project education programme updates (as included within the agenda papers. Mandy was thanked for her work and there were no further questions.

9. Sea Walls - Planning Sea Walls Café – Revised Application Including Re-Design of Rooftop Terrace

Jonathan Baker reported that the application to the planning committee had passed. The application had now been forwarded to the Secretary of State who had planned their site visit for September 2019. If successful, the build would take place over Winter and the premises would open in the Spring 2020. The Architect was putting together a brief for the tender process and a report would return to the July Committee meeting.

10 Planning Application - Proposed Pedestrian-Cycle Bridge over Bridge Valley Road near the Junction Bridge Valley Road - Ladies Mile - Clifton Down, Bristol

The Committee noted the report. It was also noted that:

1. The bridge would also require Secretary of State approval and consent of the Downs Committee as landowner.
2. The bridge would be privately funded, including as required for maintenance.
3. It was not a correct assertion to state that the bridge design had been developed in consultation with the Downs Committee as no decision had been taken by the Downs Committee to support the design.
4. At the appropriate time, a full report would be expected considering all available options and further discussion was not appropriate until that time.



11 Any Other Business

1. The Lord Mayor highlighted and the Downs Committee acknowledged that 2019 marked 25years since the assault of Marlon Thomas on the Downs at a fun fair.
2. The Suicide Prevention Team, a voluntary group, reported there activities to the Downs Committee. Three suicides had been prevented and countless people spoken to who were in need of support. The group were working to increase awareness of their organisation and sought an increased connection with the Downs Committee.
3. It was agreed that a site visit of the 'Leisure Loop' would take place on the afternoon of 20th May 2019. Further details would be provided to the Committee in due course.
4. Consideration was given to the toilets on the Downs joining the Community Toilet Scheme and therefore be included on the map of the City conveniences. Although supported in principle, it was highlighted that the expectation would be for efficient opening times. It was established that a small fee was provided to St. Michaels Care Home to provide that service and it would be checked whether the opening times were sufficient to be included within the Community Toilet Scheme. It was confirmed that toilets within the new café would be part of the Community Toilet Scheme.
ACTION: It was agreed that Councillors Abraham and Don Alexander along with Jonathan Baker would form a sub group to investigate further, led by Councillor Alexander.
5. Thanks were extended to the outgoing Lord Mayor for chairing and guiding the Downs Committee during the year and service to the City as a whole.

12 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for the 1st July 2019 at Merchants Hall.

Meeting ended at 3.00 pm

CHAIR _____





Downs Committee
Matters Arising Events & Finance Sub Group Meeting
22nd May 2019 at 2.00 pm

Below is a precis of matters that were discussed at the Events and Finance Sub-Group. Note that confidential items discussed within this group cannot be published. For Events, Maintenance and Finance updates see their respective reports in this pack.

Events Update Report

1. **Cycle Sunday:** the organisers had confirmed that this event would not be going ahead this year, but they hoped to organise an event in 2020;
2. **Freedom of Mind Fun Day:** the organisers had requested a date change which clashed with another event on The Downs and as a result the event had moved to an alternative site in Bristol;
3. **Post-Halloween Event:** the Sub-Committee agreed that this event would not be suitable due to the potential for ground damage during November.
4. **Foodies Festival:** the festival was a success and there had been no complaints from residents about noise, although the organisers had raised a concern about ground damage which had occurred as a result of the Funderworld event.
5. **Funderworld:** there had been an alleged racist incident that was the subject of a police and SARI (Support Against Racist Incidents) investigation and an accident which had been investigated by the Health and Safety Executive.
6. **Funfairs on The Downs:** the following response was agreed in relation to a press enquiry:
“Applications to host events on the Downs are scrutinised and assessed by the Downs Committee. For some time there has only been one operator of a funfair approved by the Committee and at present there are no plans to introduce a second funfair. Any previous bar on an organisation from applying to host an event could not be upheld under current rules and regulations however historic events are taken into consideration by the Committee when determining an event application.”
7. **Bristol Pride:** a fee had agreed with organisers.
8. **Lady Boys of Bangkok:** fee negotiations were ongoing.

9. **Rotary Event:** there had been no further information about this event and so it was assumed that the event would not be going ahead.
10. **Midnight Walk:** this event was the subject of negotiations and no fees had yet been agreed.
11. **Licensed Activities on The Downs:** The Sub-Committee noted that it was difficult to enforce a licensing fee for all users of The Downs but undertook to look into a complaint from a member of the public about individuals using The Downs for income generating activities without a licence.

Finance report

The full year finance report was received.

Other Issues

1. **Sea Walls Café Planning Application:** The Secretary of State would be attending a site visit in September.
2. **Football on The Downs:** negotiations were continuing with Bristol University and The Downs League in relation to fees and facilities for 2019/20.
3. **Zoo Parking Renegotiations:** the Sub-Committee were negotiating the details of entering into an agreement with Bristol Zoo to secure a substantial increase in licence fees for car parking with a greater tenure and a review mechanism in place.
4. **Cycling on Downs:** this would be the subject of a discussion at a future meeting of the Movement and Place Sub-Committee.

Downs Maintenance Report

High Summer on the Downs means two things, litter and grass. It makes up most of our time at this time of year and is a big task trying to keep both in check.

Since the last report Funderworld and Foodies Festival have been and gone. Both experienced largely dry fine weather so their impact on the ground was minimal as compared to last year. We now get some time to work on the Water Tower site as the events upcoming are on different parts of the Downs. Events ahead are the Lady Boys of Bangkok, Race for Life, Tough Mudder, Bristol Pride and the Downs Festival. I will continue working with event organisers of all five events to help ensure they get on and off smoothly.

I always like to point out to members and especially new members, at this time of year how lovely our wildflower meadows are looking. I recommend members take a look before they are cut in a few weeks from now.

The new ice cream concessionaire is operating. It is nice to have an ice cream provision at the Sea Walls that is not sat there pumping out diesel smoke all day. So that's a big improvement. Some members may be aware that the café retreat has new owners. I had a chance to meet with Nigel and Melanie and will continue to communicate regularly with them on many aspects of Downs life that may impact on them.

Speaking of the Café, with the addition of new No Parking signs we look to have curtailed the unofficial parking that was happening there previously. I will continue to monitor this as it represented a clear health and safety risk due to its proximity to a main cycle route.

Unfortunately we are still being subject to regular invasions by Travellers. Although our process for removal takes longer than most people are happy with and it is very frustrating to see more return a few weeks later, largely we are keeping on top of the situation between my team, Bristol City Council, and Bristol Waste Company. The biggest problem for us is the fly tipping that we have to dispose of when they leave. Notwithstanding the cost, this is very time consuming at a time of year when we are already very busy. Bristol City Council has begun to consider other options around a blanket Parks (citywide) or Downs wide injunction. This would make it illegal for travellers to come on but even then we would still be reliant on the police using their powers. As one of the sites within the city that currently suffers most from this problem I will keep the committee abreast of developments.

Within Bristol City Council Parks the area manager (North) post is currently vacant as John Williams has left his post. This position is one that line manages the post that I currently occupy so again I will keep the committee updated with any developments around any new appointment.

As the committee is well aware discussions around two proposed cycle provisions at the Downs are ongoing.

Summary of activities of the Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project education programme

From April to June we engaged with 6,878 people through the education programme. This included: seven guided walks, one course, a musical event for toddlers and a children's holiday event. Two of the guided walks were focussed on the trees of the Granny Downs, encouraging exploration of the new Granny Downs tree trail. Both walks were run in partnership with the Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge (FOD+AG), one of them as part of the Bristol Walk Fest.

During this period, we taught 167 University students and 533 school children (with two of the schools visiting the Downs for the first time).

The new Granny Downs Tree Trail was launched on the 12th April. It was a really successful event with 48 people attending including: the Lord Mayor; Downs Committee members; steering group members; FOD+AG Committee members; as well as representatives of OVO Energy (principal funders of the trail). The trail was dedicated to the memory of Richard Bland (who carried out the preliminary research for the trail) and his family joined us on the day for the launch event and the inaugural walk of the trail.

The Bristol Zoological Society Marketing Team issued press releases and a couple of journalists came to the launch event. This resulted in good coverage in local magazines and on-line. As a result, the trail has been incredibly popular with requests from the public to send copies of the trail to them. We've also been struggling to keep the dispensers at Café Retreat topped up, and the leaflets taken to the Tourist Information Centre for the Easter weekend had all been taken by the beginning of May. Boxes of the leaflets have been taken to the TIC and to the Central Library (for distribution to libraries across Bristol). Leaflets are also available from the University of Bristol Botanic Garden and the Clifton Suspension Bridge Visitor Centre.

From April to June we ran the first four 'Botany without Boundaries' project sessions with a group of older Asian women from an organisation called Dhek Bhal. This is an Audience Development Plan project that we are running in conjunction with Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, with funding from Arts Council England, as part of the Museum's Natural Selection exhibition. The sessions were:

- 1 - An introductory session at the Museum which was attended by 10 women, including two Dhek Bhal staff members who translated for us. After a talk about the wildlife and rare plants of the Avon Gorge and Downs, the group had a 'behind the scenes' tour of the museum where they saw antique botanical drawings, herbarium sheets and a range of botanical specimens. This was followed by a tour of the art collection, focusing on the depiction of plants in both paintings and sculpture.
- 2 - A tour of the University of Bristol Botanic Garden focusing on the rare plants of the Avon Gorge and Downs and on plants from South Asia. In the afternoon the group enjoyed a botanical drawing workshop with an artist, who showed the participants some of her own work before teaching them simple illustration techniques.
- 3 - A visit to the Clifton Suspension Bridge Visitor Centre, to see an exhibition of paintings and drawings of the rare plants of the Avon Gorge by artists from the Friends of the University of Bristol Botanic Garden.
- 4 - A guided walk to explore the meadows on the Downs and collect specimens of common plants. This was followed by a workshop to learn how to press plants for the creation herbarium sheets and for art projects.

In June we joined the Bristol Zoo Gardens' and the Wild Place Project's education teams to run activities in a tree-themed tent at Bristol Festival of Nature. In our section of the tent we focused on trees found on the Avon Gorge and Downs and promoted the Granny Downs Tree Trail. Visitors went on a 'mini tree trail' looking for pictures of trees that can be found on the Granny Downs and

identified them using the id dial provided. The tree names were written into a crossword puzzle grid. Once filled in this revealed the name of a very special tree - Bristol whitebeam - in a highlighted section of the grid. Having completed the trail and found the answer participants could meet a real Bristol whitebeam tree. Our section was very popular with 5,899 people visiting the tent over the weekend.

The new Avon Gorge & Downs Wildlife Project website was launched in early June. It was a huge piece of work (and there are still some sections which need writing and editing) but it is looking great. The website should encourage a wider range of people to discover, explore and enjoy the wildlife, geology and landscape of the Avon Gorge and Downs. The website redevelopment was partially funded through the grant from the OVO Foundation. You can see the new website at www.avongorge.org.uk

Downs Committee

Events Update - 6 June 2019

Updates

Cycle Sunday

The event organiser has confirmed that Cycle Sunday will not take place this year, though wishes to bring the event back in 2020.

Events that have passed in 2019

Funderworld

Incident – 13 April 2019

Police and SARI (Support Against Racist Incidents) are investigating an incident on 13 April 2019.

Incident – 24 April 2019

An injury was sustained by a man following a slip while stepping off a ride. The HSE have investigated this and no Improvement Notice or Prohibition Notice was served.

Our Safety Advisory Group will carry out a debrief with Funderworld in due course.

Foodies Festival

Took place 10-12th May.

Other

Ladyboys of Bangkok and Race for Life will have taken place, however the writing of the report is prior to these events.

Events taking place before the next full committee meeting

Tough Mudder 10k will be onsite from 4th-7th July

Set up date: 3rd to 4th July

Operating dates: 5th and 6th July

Breakdown Dates: 7th July

Bristol Pride will be onsite 10th-15th July

Set up date: 10th to 12th July

Operating dates: 13th July

Breakdown dates: 14th to 15th July

The Downs Concert will be onsite 23rd Aug-8th Sept

Set up date: 23rd to 30th Aug

Operating dates: 31st Aug to 1st Sept

Breakdown dates: 3rd to 8th Sept

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

Document is Restricted



The Downs

Actual Result 2018/19

The table below shows the summary Actual Result against Budget for 2018/19:

	2018/19 Full Year Budget £	2018/19 Full Year Actual £	
Income			
Total Income	268,559	360,111	
Expenditure			
Total Expenditure	-384,838	-412,144	
Income Less Expenditure	-116,279	-52,033	
Plus:			
Council Contribution	100,000	100,000	
Net Position	-16,279	47,967	Representing Downs generated surplus/(shortfall) against the relevant year's total saving (for 18/19 this is £162k)