

THE DOWNS COMMITTEE

Clifton and Durdham Downs (Bristol) Act 1861

Reply to Jeremy Livitt

To : Members of the
Downs Committee

Telephone 0117 9223758
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Date Friday, 8 November 2019

The Lord Mayor and 6 City Councillors

The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor Councillor Jos Clark
(Chair)

Councillor Kye Dudd	Councillor Peter Abraham
Councillor Donald Alexander	Councillor Barry Clark
Councillor Christopher Davies	Councillor Paula O'Rourke

The Master and 6 Merchant Venturers

Ross Ancell (Vice-Chair)	Jonathon Baker
Gillian Camm	Simon Cooper
Peter Rillett	Mary Prior
	Tim Ross

Dear Member,

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **Downs Committee** to be held at **2.00 pm on Monday, 18th November, 2019 at The Writing Room - City Hall, College Green, Bristol, BS1 5TR.**

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

Yours sincerely,

Jeremy Livitt

Jeremy Livitt

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Agenda

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
2. **Apologies for absence**
3. **Membership for 2019/20 (Pages 4 - 5)**
4. **Chairing Arrangements (Pages 6 - 7)**
5. **Retiring Members (Page 8)**
6. **Dates and Times of Upcoming Meetings (Page 9)**
7. **Delegations (Pages 10 - 12)**
8. **Minutes of last meeting (Pages 13 - 19)**

The Committee is requested to approve the minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 23rd September 2019.

9. **Declarations of interest**

To note and Declarations of Interest raised by Councillors.

10. **Public Forum (Pages 20 - 22)**

To consider items of Public Forum sent to the Downs Committee. Interested parties can submit a written statement of approximately one side A4 to the Downs Committee by sending it to Democratic Services **by no later than 12pm on Friday 15th November 2019.**

A statement from the Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge is attached.

11. **Matters Arising from the Events and Finance Sub-Group - Wednesday 30th October 2019 (Pages 23 - 24)**

The Committee is requested to note a summary of the items discussed at the 30th October 2019 meeting of the Events and Finance Sub-Group.

12. Matters Arising from the Movement and Place Sub-Group - Wednesday 6th November 2019 - Summary Notes, Recommendations and Reports From The Meeting - TO FOLLOW

The Committee is requested to note the summary of the discussion at the Movement and Place Sub-Group on Wednesday 6th November 2019 and recommendations arising from it, including the reports for each of these items. **TO FOLLOW**

13. Downs Maintenance Update (Ben Skuse) (Pages 25 - 26)

14. Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project Update (Mandy Leivers and Simon Garrett) (Page 27)

15. Events Report (Amanda Sharpe) (Pages 28 - 29)

This report includes the Film Report from Natalie Moore.

16. Finance Update - Budget and Forecast 2019/20 (Kevin Jay) (Page 30)

17. Any Other Business

18. Date of Next Meeting

Subject to approval earlier in the meeting, the next meeting is scheduled to be held at 2pm on Monday 27th January 2019 in a Committee Room, City Hall, College Green, Bristol.

Jeremy Livitt, Democratic Services Officer

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Downs Committee 18 November 2019

Membership of Downs Committee (Annual Report of the Strategic Director Resources)

Purpose of Report

1. To report the names of persons appointed to serve on the Downs Committee for 2019/20 Downs year.

Background

2. The City Council, as previously reported, has appointed the following members (in addition to the Lord Mayor Councillor Jos Clark) to serve on the Downs Committee for the 2019/20 municipal year:

Councillor Peter Abraham
Councillor Donald Alexander
Councillor Barry Clark
Councillor Chris Davies
Councillor Kye Dudd
Councillor Paula O'Rourke

3. The Society of Merchant Venturers Charter Day Elections took place on 9 November 2019 to decide the Membership of Downs Committee for the ensuing year.

The Membership of Master and 6 Merchant Venturers was decided as follows:

Ross Ancell – Master

Jonathon Baker
Gillian Camm
Simon Cooper
Mary Prior
Peter Rilett
Tim Ross

Recommendation: that the membership be noted

Downs Committee

18 November 2019

Confirmation of Chairing Arrangements (Annual Report of the Strategic Director Business Change)

Purpose of Report

1. To confirm, for information, the arrangements for chairing of the 2019/20 Downs year.

Background

2. Under the provisions of Section 10 of the Clifton and Durdham Down (Bristol) Act 1861, the Lord Mayor is Chair of the Committee but, in her absence, the Master of the Society of Merchant Venturers assumes the Chair. The Lord Mayor is currently Councillor Jos Clark (until May 2020)
3. At their Charter Day Elections on 9th November 2019, the Merchant Venturers appointed Ross Ancell as the Master of the Downs Committee for the ensuing year.

Recommended: that the appointment of the Master for 2019/20 be noted.

Downs Committee

18 November 2019

Retiring Members of the Committee (Annual Report of the Strategic Director Resources)

1. To note the retiring Merchant Venturer members of the Committee: Tony Kenny and Francis Greenacre, and to note that a letter of thanks for past services will be sent by the Democratic Services Officer on behalf of the Committee.

Recommended: that the retirement of Merchant Venturer members of the Committee be noted and a letter thanking them for past services to the Downs Committee be sent.

Downs Committee

18 November 2019

Dates and Times of Meetings (Annual Report of the Strategic Director Resources)

Purpose of Report

1. To approve the dates and times for meetings of the Downs Committee for 2020.

Background

2. The following dates are proposed for 2020.

Monday 27 January 2020 at 2.00pm

Monday 30 March 2020 at 2.00pm

Monday 29 June 2020 at 11.00am (Merchants Hall)

Monday 21 September 2020 at 2.00 pm

Monday 16 November 2020 at 2.00 pm (AGM)

Recommend: that the Downs Committee meet on the above dates.

Downs Committee 18 November 2019

Delegations (as agreed by the Downs Committee) (Annual Report of the Strategic Director Resources)

Purpose of Report

To approve delegations for 2019/20

Events on the Downs

(1) Events and Finance Sub Group

The Committee is asked to confirm the arrangements for the Events and Finance Sub Group which will make decisions regarding major events and perform detailed analysis of financial matters. The Sub Group is delegated powers to decide on major events should this be necessary between meetings of the Downs Committee. All decisions will be reported to the Downs Committee. The Group also has the power to make recommendations to the Committee.

The Sub Group Membership will comprise the Master, 4 Councillors and 3 Merchant Venturers. It is recommended that the Master acts as the Chair for the Sub-Group.

The current membership of this Sub-Group is as follows:

Ross Ancell (Master and Chair)

Jonathon Baker – Merchant Venturer

Tim Ross – Merchant Venturer

Vacancy – Merchant Venturer (Peter Rilett is nominated by the Merchant Venturers as a replacement for Francis Greenacre)

Councillor Peter Abraham

Councillor Don Alexander

Councillor Barry Clark

Councillor Paula O'Rourke

(2) Other Events

Decisions on the use of the Downs for other events or any other decisions that are required between meetings of the Downs Committee shall be made by the Lord Mayor and the Master of the Society of Merchant Venturers or their respective nominated representatives. These will be reported to the Downs Committee.

Place and Movement on the Downs

Movement and Place Sub-Group

The Committee is asked to confirm the arrangements for the Movement and Place Sub-Group which deals with discusses all issues relating to place and movement on the Downs including the Place and Movement Framework. This Sub-Group can make recommendations to the Downs Committee as appropriate.

The Sub-Group membership will comprise 3 Councillors and 3 Merchant Venturers. It is proposed that the Sub-Group elects a chair for the 2019/20 Year Group at its first meeting following the Annual General Meeting of the Downs Committee.

The current membership of this Sub-Group is as follows:

Jonathon Baker – Merchant Venturer
Tim Ross – Merchant Venturer
Vacancy – Merchant Venturer
Councillor Peter Abraham
Councillor Don Alexander
Councillor Paula O'Rourke

Catering Concessions on the Downs

Matters relating to catering concessions (between meetings of the Downs Committee) to be decided by the Master of the Society of Merchant Venturers and the Lord Mayor.

Minor Maintenance and Access Matters

The Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods be authorised to enter into agreements in relation to minor maintenance and temporary access matters.

Bristol City Council Minutes of the Downs Committee

23 September 2019 at 2.00 pm



Members Present:-

Councillors: Councillor Jos Clark (Chair), Councillor Peter Abraham, Councillor Donald Alexander, Councillor Christopher Davies, Councillor Paula O'Rourke, Councillor Mike Langley, Antony Kenny, Ross Ancell, Jonathon Baker, Simon Cooper, Francis Greenacre, Mary Prior and Tim Ross

Officers in Attendance:- Simon Garrett, Mandy Leivers, Steven Riley, Amanda Sharpe, Ben Skuse, Sam Wilcock.

1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and introductions were made.

Councillor Abraham paid tribute to Francis Greenacre who was attending his last meeting of the Downs Committee. He was thanked for his valuable knowledge and service to the Committee over many years and the Committee wished him well for the future.

2. Apologies and introductions

Apologies were received from Councillor Kye Dudd.

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the 1st July 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

4. Declarations of interest

There were none.

5. Public Forum



The following statements were received:

1. FODAG Update on activities
2. Charlie August Public Listings for Downs Events
3. Downs for People Zoo Parking
4. Bristol Tree Forum Richard Bland Memorial Woodland
5. Bristol Naturalists' Society Richard Bland Memorial Woodland

Those who submitted statement numbers 3, 4 and 5 were in attendance.

All the statements were noted.

6. Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project Update (Mandy Leivers and Simon Garrett)

Mandy Leivers presented her report to update members on the activities hosted by the Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project since the last meeting.

Simon Garrett of Bristol Zoo addressed the Committee and asked the Downs Committee to contribute increased funds towards the salaries of both the Education Manager and Education Officer in order to provide stability to the project. The commitment would be £27,000 p.a. ongoing. The commitment would enable there to be an application for a £250,000 grant for a three-year expansion of the project through the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Additionally, a one off award of £10,000 as a contribution towards the salary of the bid writer was requested.

It was highlighted that the bid would be of benefit the Downs as a whole as it would develop the work of the project, the offer of the Downs and improvements in features such as signage.

It was confirmed that the Events and Finance Sub Group had discussed and approved the proposals. The Committee were asked to vote by show of hands and it was agreed unanimously that:

RESOLVED – that

- (1) Downs Committee contribute to the Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project £27,000 p.a. commencing in the current financial year 2019-2020 (plus an annual increment of 2%)**
- (2) Downs Committee contribute a one of award of £10,000 to the Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project towards the salary of the bid writer.**

7. Downs Maintenance Report (Ben Skuse)

Ben Skuse presented the report which had been circulated within the agenda papers.



There had been reported erosion of the grass by the observatory due to vehicular access to the site for deliveries and improvements to the building. This was also a recognised health and safety risk to the public. The lessor had proposed that once the installation of the two lighting units by the observatory (as approved by the Downs Committee in April) was completed, vehicular access to the site would be curtailed by way of installation of a drop bollard at his expense.

It was suggested that both points of access to the site should also be monitored and consideration also given to a second bollard for the other access point.

It was:

RESOLVED that permission be granted for installation of a lockable bollard to restrict vehicular access.

Ben brought the Committees attention to a proposal for a 'Memorial Woodland' on the Downs. The planting would be in memorial to Richard Bland who had been an active member of several environmental societies including the Bristol Tree Forum and Bristol Naturalists Society. Statements in support of the planting had been noted earlier in the meeting. Mr Bland had

Members of the Committee paid tribute to Mr Bland, who sadly passed away in December 2018, and drew attention to the Granny Trail on the Downs which had been dedicated to Mr. Bland. There was some concern regarding the proposal and Members asked that it be presented to the Movement and Place Sub Group for recommendation to the Downs Committee if appropriate. **(ACTION: SW to add to agenda of Movement and Place Sub Group in October)**

The Committee then considered a proposal from FODAG contained within their statement. It was suggested that FODAG become active in the management and reinvigoration of flower bedding on the Downs. This would be in partnership with Parks Officers and it was hoped that beds could be planted by next Spring. The Committee agreed to this proposal and Ben agreed to liaise with FODAG. **(ACTION: BS to liaise with FODAG)**

8. Events Update (Amanda Sharpe)

Amanda Sharpe presented the report circulated within the agenda papers. In response to comments the following points were highlighted:

- The Bristol University Fayre event was now on site. There had been a reduction in the number of days onsite following a request from the Events and Finance Sub Group. Officers would visit to assess the site layout and build.
- Members of the Committee had visited the Downs Festival event and considered it well managed and successful. It had been confirmed that sound levels were set to an industry standard for metropolitan parks across the Country. Letters received regarding noise levels would receive a response to their concerns. **(ACTION: AS to respond in consultation with the Lord Mayor and**



Master). A professional sound contractor would compile a post event report which would be circulated to Members of the Committee. **(ACTION: AS/SW to circulate)**

- With reference to the public forum statement no.2, it was confirmed that the events held on the Downs were highly likely to be listed on the internet via various search engines and event websites. Members of the public could be referred to the Downs Committee minutes and reports from Spring each year which would provide details of events to be held during the Summer **(ACTION: SW to contact public forum participant with information).**

9. Finance Update (Kevin Jay)

The officer presented the report as included within the agenda papers. It was confirmed that there had been no Bristol City Council contribution to the Downs Committee during the current financial year.

10 Matters Arising From the Events and Finance Group

The matters arising report from the Events and Finance Sub Group meeting was considered. It was noted that recommendations regarding the Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project had been agreed.

With reference to the need for a tractor for the Parks Department to efficiently maintain the Downs, the Sub Group had made further enquiries of the Finance Officer and an update would be provided to the next Sub Group meeting in October.

11 Matters Arising from the Movement and Place Group

It was reported that an additional meeting of the Movement and Place Sub Group had taken place to facilitate further discussions regarding the Leisure Loop proposal. A traffic survey was required and once complete, the matter would return to the Downs Committee.

12 Cycling Provision A4018 (Steven Riley)

Steven Riley outlined the presentation to the Committee as included within the agenda papers. The following points were reiterated:

- The path would be located on Downs land the other side of the trees along Westbury Road.
- It was proposed that cyclists would be directed to the current pathway and pedestrians to the new path. Signs would feature, however use would be difficult to enforce.
- The material to be used would be hard surface such as gravel or limescale tread but had not been determined yet.
- Any impact on the wildflower meadow would be as limited as possible.
- Consultation during Feb/March 2019 had not presented a clear view from the public regarding the proposals.



- The planning application could include the completion of the 'Severn Sisters Loop' as a possibility for the future.

In response the following supporting comments were raised;

- As the Council had declared a climate emergency and aimed for carbon neutrality, as people's habits changed there was a need for additional cycling provision.
- There were improved health benefits of increased cycling within the city.
- The resulting walkway on the 'Downs side' of the trees would create a haven for pedestrians and prams and open up the route to more leisure cycling.
- People were already using the path on the other side of the trees as a 'desire line'. To protect it with an appropriate material was in the best interests of the ground.
- The proposals were part of the programme of mitigations for the A4018 following developments at Patchway/Cribbs Causeway. The added cycling provision would ease congestion pressure on Westbury, Henbury and the edge of Stoke Bishop. The funding would come via the project to alleviate the effects of that development.

There was concern regarding the robustness of the surface to withstand the access and egress of heavy goods vehicles and cars driving onto the Downs for events. In response to this the officer confirmed that the HGV access point would not be affected, but the surface would be designed to assist vehicular access to the car parks.

It was suggested that it was premature to pinpoint mitigation for that stretch of road when problems could be more prevalent on Falcondale Road and further to the north of the City.

Members were unsure that the loss of green space could be justified when there was already a wide footpath for shared use along the stretch identified. It was suggested that the money be used to improve and reinvigorate the current path rather than creating another at a detriment to green space.

The following comments were made with regards to the already established cycle path on Saville Road/ Stoke Hill;

- The clear route for pedestrians and cycles from the top of Blackboy Hill was to the already established wide public footpath and cycle way.
- The access points to the existing space and path could be improved to create a better shared cycle way with an improved surface.
- It was highlighted that cyclists varied in why and how they preferred to cycle. The proposed option may appeal more to the commuter however improvements to the current path would likely benefit the average leisure cyclist. One was not more important than the other.
- Bristol Cycling campaign data had established that the preference amongst cyclists was the most direct route from A to B, which supported the proposed route for commuters.
- The existing route was not easy to use or access so was not popular with commuters. The bus stops and degraded surface meant it was not well used.



Officers considered the original proposals to be a better solution that would reach more people and increase the numbers of cyclists along the route. To upgrade the current path would likely not appeal to cyclist commuters.

It was clarified that the officers were asking the Downs Committee for permission in principle so that the path would be included within the planning permission sought. The Downs Committee as landowners were being asked their permission to yield the land to the scheme.

Officers confirmed that before planning permission was sought, the Downs Committee (via the Movement and Place Sub Group and main committee) would be consulted on details such as exact materials for the path.

The following motion was proposed and seconded:

“That the Committee

1. Give landowner approval in principle and the permission that will yield the land as outlined within the proposals and maps presented.
2. Such permission in principle would be subject to subsequent approval of the details which would be outlined within the planning permission.
3. Detail should be taken to the M&P or full Committee as appropriate before planning permission is sought.”

Upon being put to the vote, six members voted for, and six against. The Lord Mayor abstained from the vote. No decision was made.

The following motion was then proposed and seconded:

“That the vote be postponed pending further investigation of the existing land potential of the existing cycle route if resurfaced, improved and extended.

That further investigations and reasons why that could not happen should be brought back to the next meeting of the Downs Committee. The matter would then be revisited.”

Upon being put to the vote, ten members voted for and one against. There were two abstentions.

Therefore it was RESOLVED:

That the vote be postponed pending further investigation of the existing land potential of the existing cycle route if resurfaced, improved and extended.

That further investigations and reasons why that could not happen should be brought back to the next meeting of the Downs Committee. The matter would then be revisited.

13 Any Other Business



It was confirmed that the meeting was the last with the current Master of the Merchant Venturers, Tony Kenny was thanked for his work for the Downs Committee and wished well for the future.

14 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place on Monday 18th November at 2pm in City Hall.

Meeting ended at 4.00 pm

CHAIR _____





Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge

18 November 2019.

FOD+AG welcomes the opportunity to update the Downs committee on our most recent activities and some of the events planned for the coming weeks.

FOD+AG remains committed to its core values to represent legitimate users of the Downs and to support the City Council the Downs Committee and the operational team in the good governance of the Downs and Avon Gorge.

In early October FODAG welcomed fifty plus members and guests to the launch of a display of Downs and Avon Gorge photographs. Images submitted were of an incredibly high standard and following the launch were presented to a wider audience to be viewed at the AXA building.

FODAG working jointly with the Downs & Avon Gorge Biodiversity Education Manager have been involved with numerous events, walks and talks to several disparate groups and have more planned for the coming months including the winter star party.

Our winter maintenance programmes are now underway. Regular activities undertaken will include, goat monitoring and monthly deep litter clearance from the less accessible areas of the Downs. For the nimble footed we plan to remove deep seated litter from areas of the Gorge.

Conservation work which will target the Iron Age Fort as well as regular planned scrub clearance projects plus refurbishment of the dead hedges.

FODAG will also be investigating the possibility of corporate work days to further facilitate these important projects.

We will again look to carry out winter maintenance tasks on the Victorian steps.

At the end of last month FODAG reported to the Downs supervisor that lead had been stripped from the roof of the Haven shelter. FODAG volunteers are working with Ben to effect repairs.

At the September meeting the Downs Committees endorsed a joint FODAG and Redland & Cotham Amenity Society proposal to replant the fallow beds at the Thomas Memorial with an alternative perennial planting scheme. Working with the Downs supervisor and the City Councils Nursery manager plants suitable for the location have been agreed and an order placed. Planting is planned to be carried out in spring 2020.

Volunteers overseen by the Downs Supervisor will carry out the planting and attend to the ongoing maintenance requirements.

FODAG continues to receive regular questions from our members, local residents and the general public about the numbers of unauthorised encampments around the Downs in recent years and the proliferation of van dwellers on the Downs highways.

Main concerns include, disregard for the byelaws, slow response from the responsible agencies, abuse of current parking restrictions, environmental issues, anti-social behaviour, waste of scarce resource and the apparent inequitable application of the law.

FODAG urges the Downs Committee to work with stakeholders to explore all avenues and support initiatives that can bring about an improvement in this currently undesirable situation.

Robert Westlake

Chair

Friends of the Downs & Avon Gorge

Matters Arising From the Events and Finance Sub-Group - Wednesday 30th October 2019

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

Budget and Forecast 2019/20 and 2020/21

The budget and forecast for 2019/20 and 2020/21 were noted. It was noted that arrangements for provision of the tractor had been made.

Events Update Report

Team Love

Tony Kenny advised that he had recently met with Team Love to discuss next year's event. They were looking at ways to reduce costs. Since they were unable to save on production costs, they could only do this by saving on the artist's line-up. A further special meeting may need to take place with them to discuss this issue further.

Bristol Students Union Welcome Event

It was noted that previous discussions concerning income from this event had been made through the Student Union rather than the University. However, it was acknowledged that the Site Inspections Team had been unhappy about damage to the site from this event.

Pride

Amanda Sharpe advised that she would be meeting Pride on 13th November 2019 to assess how the event had operated in 2019 and what would be required for 2020. It was noted that the leadership of the event was currently changing and that a handover would be taking place shortly.

It was agreed that analysis was required concerning all events on the Downs to produce a timetable for each event which sets out the following for each:

Dates and Start and Finish Times

Different Rates

Any Proposed Changes Each Year

Marketing Arrangements for Each Event

Final Deal Agreed In Each Case

Action: Amanda Sharpe to produce

Price offers for future events which take place on a regular basis were agreed by the Sub-Group.

Action: Amanda Sharpe to contact organisers accordingly.

Any Other Business

Planning Inspectorate

It was noted that the decision on the café would be announced in November 2019.

Changing Rooms

Bristol Water – It was noted that there had been a recent change in management. There were constraints in terms of both health and safety as well as the decreasing number of teams playing.

Thanks To the Chair

It was noted that this was the last meeting of the Sub-Group that the Chair, Tony Kenny, would be attending.

Tony Kenny was thanked for the work he had put in to help making this Sub-Group work over the past year.

Provision of Lunch for Management and Place Sub-Group in 2020

It was agreed that lunch would not be provided but that M and P Sub Group meetings in 2020 should finish at 1.45pm and 2020 Events and Finance Sub-Group meetings start at 2.15pm (not 2pm as originally agreed) to allow time for members to get their own lunch. Action: Jeremy Livitt (to confirm new times of meetings).

AGENDA ITEM 13 – DOWNS MAINTENANCE REPORT

As we hit the Autumn and move into Winter the teams focus can finally move away from a very prolonged season of grass cutting and litter clearance. This allows for some of the maintenance jobs that have occurred over the Summer to be rectified. New bench installations, bench and litter bin repairs have all been carried out in recent weeks. Daily Goat monitoring and weekly pitch marking continues. The Bristol University intramural league football has now begun on Wednesday afternoons. We will now commence our 4th Winter with the Downs scrub management plan. This process of scrub removal ensures that we are halting the loss of limestone grassland areas of the Downs that are threatened by never ending encroachment.

On the 19th and 20th of October, Bridge Valley Rd and one lane (inbound) of the Portway were closed to traffic to allow for a team of industrial rope access technicians to safely bring down some large Sandstone blocks (up to 70 tonnes) that were displaced and at risk of falling onto the highway below. Members may be aware that unfortunately, due to the difficult nature of this work, the works did overrun slightly into Monday morning which caused a few network issues. At this stage in the process WSP geologists are happy that for now the imminent risk of rock fall potentially onto Bridge Valley Rd and the Portway has been removed. Further works have been scheduled for Jan/Feb whereby the build-up of fallen rocks in to the catch bund area need to be removed to maintain the effective function of the bund in protecting against further falls. After that and in the longer term a system of bolting and netting as seen in other parts of the gorge will have to be considered to manage the risk of this particular area of the Avon Gorge at the bottom of Bridge Valley Rd next to the traffic lights.

At some point overnight on October 9th we had a vehicle lose control and crash into a number of the wooden bollards at Sea Walls. I have arranged for Ashcroft's building services to replace the damaged bollards. The cost of this is circa £2000. This has come from the Downs cost code that this committee manages I do intend though via Bristol City Council insurance services and my police incident log number to make a claim against this persons insurance to recoup these costs.

With the exit of the Bristol Student Union Welcome Fair and the Circus from the Downs, that is it for 2019 events at the Downs. Both events did suffer from prolonged and at times intense downpours which rendered the ground waterlogged in places. Subsequently both events have caused quite a lot of damage to the ground in their egress. The process of getting those sites fit for events next year has already begun and will be ongoing across the Winter as conditions allow. Our aim is that when Funderworld arrive once more next Spring we will have usable and fit surfaces for them to come onto.

The two vacant positions within Bristol Parks which I have been reporting in recent months have now been filled. As of the 11th Nov Jon James has started as interim head of parks. As of Nov 1st Sarah Blazier has started as area manager (North) parks.

On Thursday 24th October I attended a residents meeting at Henleaze Library. The meeting was called for by local residents who are concerned about the proliferation of van dwelling on Parry's Lane slip road. Allied to this they are concerned about traveller encampments becoming common on the Downs in recent years. The associated anti-social behaviour and the length of time it can take for Bristol City Council to remove them from the land is also a concern for them. This committee is likely

to hear more from this going forward, particularly in terms of approval/or not of proposals to install target hardening in certain areas. This could include fencing, large boulders or long stretches of wooden bollards. I will bring forward any proposals to the committee as I get them.

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

From late September to mid-November we engaged with 549 people through the education programme. We deliberately limited the number of autumn events and education sessions this year, to give us time to work towards the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) bid.

As part of the events programme we ran: four guided walks (Trees of the Granny Downs, Fantastic fungal foray, and two Trees in winter walks); two talks (Fascinating fungi and author Stephen Moss gave a talk on wrens); an autumnal bird identification course, and a Creepy creatures children's half-term event. Before the end of the year we will also be running a 'Willow reindeer' course (fully booked) and a 'Christmas star party' (run in conjunction with Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge).

We ran seven education sessions for 209 school children. Following their trip, Horfield primary school posted two comments on our Facebook page, "*Year 2 had a glorious morning learning about the Bristol whitebeam tree that is unique to our city. They created an amazing natural piece of art and topped the morning off by creating local animals out of clay and other natural resources*". And, "Thank you for a truly excellent morning. We learned so much and had great fun!"

At the other end of the education spectrum, we took 23 first year students on the UWE Foundation Degree in Integrated Wildlife Conservation on a guided tour of the Avon Gorge and Downs, as part of their induction. We also had neighbouring stalls with the Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge at the University of Bristol Students' Union 'Welcome Fair' on the Downs. This event is a great opportunity for us to promote the wildlife of the Avon Gorge and Downs, the work of the project and explain about our volunteering programme. During the day we talked to 101 students and three of them have applied to volunteer with us.

As part of our 'Your Downs' initiative we co-led a guided walk for the Man Alive! group, from Knowle West, with the Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge.

We have continued to develop the new project website - www.avongorge.org.uk. More educational, downloadable 'Activity of the month' resources have been created for the 'Kids Zone' and month-by-month guides to the wildlife have been produced for the Downs Diary section.

There have been numerous planning meetings for NLHF bid. We have also met with Avon Wildlife Trust and the Friends of Troopers Hill to find out about their successful Lottery bids. At the end of October, some of the officers involved in planning the bid met with our National Lottery case officer at their regional office in Exeter. It became apparent that the volume of work needed to prepare the bid is significantly more than we anticipated, so we have agreed to aim for the March deadline instead of submitting on the 19th November, as originally planned.

Mandy attended a meeting at Merchants Hall to discuss next year's Downs Commoners' Grazing Event. She will be planning the educational element of the day in conjunction with staff from Badminton School.

The Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project education officer's contract came to an end and she left at the end of October.

Downs Committee – 18th November 2019

Events Update

Events that have taken place since last Downs Committee meeting:

Bristol University Student Union Welcome event – took place on 27th September, organisers were off site on 2nd October. A pre-event ‘spot check’ was carried out by the Site Permissions team on 25th September – there were some issues regarding ground protection that need to be addressed for future events.

Continental Circus Berlin – were on site from 23rd September with shows running from 25th September – 13th October. Feedback from Event Champions who are due to visit the Circus as ‘mystery shoppers’ will be presented at the meeting.

Upcoming events:

There are no further events scheduled on the Downs for 2019.

Proposed events for 2020 are as follows:

Funderworld:	Provisional dates 16 th March (set up). Open to public from Friday 27 th March - Sunday 19 th April. Off site by Friday 24 th April.
Ladyboys of Bangkok:	Provisional dates 5 th – 13 th June 2020
Race for Life:	27 th – 28 th June
Pride:	11 th July 2020
Downs Festival:	Dates to be confirmed – a meeting is being held with the organisers on 30 th October and a subsequent report will be made to Committee.
Circus:	Late September 2020
Foodies Festival:	Date and location to be confirmed.

Film Officer's Report

Income from Film Office for Downs

Good Spaces £175.00

October Films £75



The Downs

Budget and Forecast 2019/20

The full year budget and latest forecast for 2019/20 is confirmed as follows:

TABLE 1 - Overall Income and Expenditure Summary

	2019/20 Full Year Budget £	2019/20 Full Year Forecast (as at 30/9/19) £	2019/20 Variance £	
<u>Income</u>				
Total Income	350,260	404,236	53,976	Surplus
<u>Expenditure</u>				
Total Expenditure	(350,260)	(435,795)	(85,535)	Overspend
Net Position	0	(31,559)	(31,559)	Representing Downs generated net surplus/(deficit)