

THE DOWNS COMMITTEE

Clifton and Durdham Downs (Bristol) Act 1861

Reply to Jeremy Livitt

To : Members of the
Downs Committee

E-mail jeremy.livitt@bristol.gov.uk
Date Friday, 11 September 2020

The Lord Mayor and 6 City Councillors

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

The Master and 6 Merchant Venturers

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

Dear Member,

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **Downs Committee** to be held **at 2.00pm on Monday 21st September 2020 as a remote zoom meeting.**

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

Yours sincerely,

JL

Jeremy Livitt

Democratic Services Section

3rd Floor Deanery Wing
City Hall PO Box 3399
College Green,
Bristol BS39FS
Sat nav BS15TR

Website

www.bristol.gov.uk

Agenda

1. **Welcome and Introductions (Pages 5 - 6)**
2. **Apologies for absence**
3. **Action Tracker (Page 7)**
4. **Minutes of last meeting held on Monday 29th June 2020 (Pages 8 - 15)**
5. **Declarations of interest**

To note any Declarations of Interest raised by Councillors.

6. **Public Forum (Pages 16 - 21)**

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 18th September 2020.**

Anyone who wishes to present their public forum statement at the zoom meeting must register their interest by giving at least two clear working days' notice prior to the meeting **by 2pm on Thursday 17th September 2020.**

PLEASE NOTE THAT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE NEW STANDING ORDERS AGREED BY BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL, YOU MUST SUBMIT A STATEMENT TO ACCOMPANY YOUR REGISTER TO SPEAK.

7. **Matters Arising From Events and Finance Sub Groups**

To consider matters arising from meetings of the Events and Finance Sub-Group

- a) **Events and Finance Sub-Group - 10th July 2020 (Pages 22 - 28)**
- b) **Events and Finance Sub-Group - 9th September 2020 - TO FOLLOW**

8. **Downs Maintenance Report (Ben Skuse) (Page 29)**
9. **Events Report (Amanda Sharpe) (Pages 30 - 31)**

10. Finance Update (Kevin Jay) (Page 32)

11. Petition for a Playground on the Downs - Councillor Carla Denyer (Pages 33 - 34)

This item has been added to the agenda with the agreement of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee.

Councillor Carla Denyer has submitted a statement and will be in attendance for this item at the full Committee to present this item and answer any Committee Member's questions.

Full details of the petition can be found at this link below:

<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/downsplayground>

12. Leisure Loop - Vicki Cracknell/Fin McNab - Update Report (Page 35)

13. Any Other Business

This item will include discussion requests from the Students Union and the Downs Football League relating to **Downs Committee Football Matches** to be introduced by Jonathon Baker (Merchant Venturers).

The Students Union have requested that in the event that matches are called off due to public health reasons (e.g. Covid19), these will be rescheduled for a Saturday or Sunday within the season and where this is not possible, the matches will be refunded. They are requesting a reduction in their annual fee arising from this situation,

In addition, the Downs Football League have requested that they receive a reduction in their annual fee for 2019/20 due to being unable to finish the season due to COVID-19.

14. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is the Annual Meeting of the Committee and is scheduled to be held at 2pm on Monday 16th November 2020.

Jeremy Livitt, Democratic Services Officer

Email: jeremy.livitt@bristol.gov.uk or democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk

Public Information Sheet

Inspection of Papers - Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

You can find papers for all our meetings on our website at <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/council-meetings>

Covid-19: changes to how we hold public meetings

Following changes to government rules, we will use video conferencing to hold all public meetings, including Cabinet, Full Council, regulatory meetings (where planning and licensing decisions are made) and scrutiny.

Councillors will take decisions remotely and the meetings will be broadcast live on YouTube.

Members of the public who wish to present their public forum in person during the video conference must register their interest by giving at least two clear working days' notice to Democratic Services of the request. To take part in the meeting, you will be required to register for a Zoom account, so that Democratic Services is able to match your named Zoom account to your public forum submission, and send you the password protected link and the instructions required to join the Zoom meeting to make your statement or ask your supplementary question(s).

As part of our security arrangements, please note that we will not permit access to the meeting if your Zoom credentials do not match your public forum submission credentials. This is in the interests of helping to ensure a safe meeting environment for all attending or observing proceedings via a live broadcast.

Please note: Members of the public will only be invited into the meeting for the duration of their submission and then be removed to permit the next public forum participant to speak.

Changes to Public Forum

Members of the public may make a written statement, ask a question or present a petition to most meetings. Your statement or question will be sent to the Committee Members and will be published on the Council's website before the meeting. Please send it to democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk. The following requirements apply:

- The statement is received no later than **12.00 noon on the working day before the meeting** and is about a matter which is the responsibility of the committee concerned.
- The question is received no later than **5pm three clear working days before the meeting**.
- Any statement submitted should be no longer than one side of A4 paper. For copyright reasons, we are unable to reproduce or publish newspaper or magazine articles that may be attached to statements.
- **Your intention to attend the meeting must be received no later than two clear working days in advance. The meeting agenda will clearly state the relevant public forum deadlines.**



By participating in public forum business, we will assume that you have consented to your name and the details of your submission being recorded and circulated to the Committee, published on the website and within the minutes. Your statement or question will also be made available to the public via publication on the Council's website and may be provided upon request in response to Freedom of Information Act requests in the future.

We will try to remove personal and identifiable information. However, because of time constraints we cannot guarantee this, and you may therefore wish to consider if your statement contains information that you would prefer not to be in the public domain. Other committee papers may be placed on the council's website and information within them may be searchable on the internet.

During the meeting:

- Public Forum is normally one of the first items on the agenda, although statements and petitions that relate to specific items on the agenda may be taken just before the item concerned.
- There will be no debate on statements or petitions.
- Public Forum will be circulated to the Committee members prior to the meeting and published on the website.
- If you have arranged with Democratic Services to attend the meeting to present your statement or ask a question(s), you should log into Zoom and use the meeting link provided which will admit you to the waiting room.
- The Chair will call each submission in turn and you will be invited into the meeting. When you are invited to speak, please make sure that your presentation focuses on the key issues that you would like Members to consider. This will have the greatest impact.
- Your time allocation may have to be strictly limited if there are a lot of submissions. **This may be as short as one minute, and you may need to be muted if you exceed your allotted time.**
- If there are a large number of submissions on one matter, a representative may be requested to speak on the group's behalf.
- If you do not attend the meeting at which your public forum submission is being taken your statement will be noted by Members.

For further information about procedure rules please refer to our Constitution <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/how-council-decisions-are-made/constitution>

Webcasting/ Recording of meetings

Members of the public attending meetings or taking part in Public forum are advised that all virtual public meetings including Full Council and Cabinet meetings are now broadcast live via the council's [webcasting pages](#). The whole of the meeting will be broadcast (except where there are confidential or exempt items).

Other formats and languages and assistance for those with hearing impairment

You can get committee papers in other formats (e.g. large print, audio tape, braille etc) or in community languages by contacting the Democratic Services Officer. Please give as much notice as possible. We cannot guarantee re-formatting or translation of papers before the date of a particular meeting.



Agenda Item 3

ACTION TRACKER – DOWNS COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Item and Decision	Person Taking Action	Deadline for Completion	Date Action Taken
29/06/20	Minutes of Scheduled Downs Committee – Monday 27 th January 2020 – Minute Relating to Downs Café (Agenda Item 15) – Change Working to Reflect that the matter is referred to the Secretary of State	Jeremy Livitt	Next Scheduled Meeting – Monday 21 st September 2020	15 th July 2020
29/06/20	Matter Arising from Minutes - A4018 Project	James Coleman	Report deferred until 21 st September 2020. E-Mail subsequently sent to all Committee members on behalf of James Coleman confirming a further delay due to COVID-19. A report will come back to Committee at a future date.	
29/06/20	Future Parks Project Consultation – report to come back to a future meeting	Jonathan James	As Appropriate – To Come Back to Monday 16 th November 2020 meeting	
29/06/20	Leisure Loop: Resolved (unanimously) that the Committee supports public consultation on the proposed scheme.	Vicky Cracknell/ Johnny Wood	As Appropriate – report back to next scheduled meeting – Monday 21 st September 2020	
29/06/20	Enforcement of Byelaws - Clerk to write to Committee Members to request suggestions concerning issues requiring byelaws or concerning enforcement of existing byelaws and refer to the Lord Mayor to set up a Task and Finish Group	Jeremy Livitt	As Soon As Possible	Committee Members E-Mailed 30 th June 2020
29/06/20	Delegations – Sub-Groups – Movement and Place Sub-Group is abolished – All remaining appointments for 2020 cancelled	Jeremy Livitt	Immediately	Meetings cancelled – 1 st July 2020

Minutes of the Downs Committee

29 June 2020 at 11.00 am



Members Present:-

Councillor Jos Clark (Chair), Ross Ancell (Vice-Chair), Councillor Kye Dudd, Councillor Peter Abraham, Councillor Donald Alexander, Councillor Barry Clark, Councillor Christopher Davies, Councillor Paula O'Rourke, Jonathon Baker, Gillian Camm, Simon Cooper, Mary Prior, Peter Rilett and Tim Ross

Officers in Attendance:-

Jeremy Livitt, Kevin Jay, Amanda Sharpe, Richard Goldthorpe and Jonathan James

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed all parties to the remote zoom meeting.

2. Membership - Councillor Representatives

The Committee noted that, at the Annual Council meeting on Thursday 21st May 2020, it was agreed that all existing Councillor Representation on Outside Bodies continues for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

3. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Ben Skuse (Downs Maintenance Manager) and Hayley Ash (Jonathan James Head of Parks attending in her place).

4. Action Tracker

The Committee noted the Action Tracker for the Downs Committee and that all actions either had been completed or were being reported back to this meeting.

5. Minutes of Previous Meetings

The Committee noted the minutes from the meetings at Monday 20th January 2020 and Monday 27th January 2020.



6. Special Downs Committee Meeting - Monday 20th January 2020

The minutes of this meeting were approved as a correct record.

7. Scheduled Downs Committee Meeting - Monday 27th January 2020

The minutes of this meeting were approved as a correct record subject to the replacement of the reference to the original Planning Application under Agenda Item 15 and its replacement with a reference to the Secretary of State. **Action: Jeremy Livitt**

8. Declarations of interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

9. Public Forum and Public Participation

The Committee received Public Forum Statements from the following:

Robert Westlake – Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge
Susan Carter – Downs for People (including a request to speak)
Alan Morris – Bristol Walking Alliance
Stephen Leyland
Alison Bromilow, Chairman – Redland and Cotham Amenities Society

Susan Carter made the following comments in addressing the Committee:

- Contrary to a recent radio interview from Councillor Don Alexander, there had been no written report that she had seen concerning the car parking licence on the Downs
- The Downs Committee was a public meeting and operated as a statutory body. It also should be subject to the Freedom of Information Act
- The Committee needed to have proper regard to the original purpose of the Downs Act to provide an area of open green space for the people of Bristol. In her view, the provision of car parking on the Downs was contrary to this
- Car parking on the Downs does not prevent car parking taking place near the zoo
- The number of hours permitted for parking on the Downs each year had not always been 60 hours. It had varied in the past



10 Matters Arising From the Events and Finance Group - Wednesday 26th February 2020

The matters arising from the Events and Finance Sub-Group on 26th February 2020 were noted.

11 Matters Arising From the Movement and Place Sub-Group - Wednesday 26th February 2020

The matters arising from the Movement and Place Sub-Group on 26th February 2020 were noted.

12 Future Parks Project Consultation

Jonathan James (Head of Parks) introduced this report and made the following comments:

- The Bristol Future Parks Project operated to Rethink, Invest and Regenerate in parks across the city
- This project was intended to be a step change in the way parks operated in future
- A partnership would be formed across different sectors improving health and wellbeing for all users
- It was intended to encourage greater use and accessibility and create different funding models
- Funding was a collaborative venture involving the National Trust, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, together with the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government
- The Future Parks Accelerator Programme operated across 80 different Local Authorities in the UK. This was a fast and agile programme for 2 years which had already run for 6 months
- Since parks were not statutory, they had been hit hard by austerity with funding reduced from 6 Million to 2 Million. Attempts were being made to reverse this trend and obtain greater equity of funding. Officers were looking at different commercial opportunities.
- Officers were working with communities organisations and businesses to find a sustainable solution to maintain and improve health and wellbeing for all
- The project had various cross cutting themes including communities, health and wellbeing, biodiversity and nature, enterprise
- A dedicated team had been set up to deliver change by supporting citizens, communities and small organisations to enable them to be part of this change
- The project would secure expert advice to explore new ways of income generation and business opportunities and also invite expressions of interest
- The timeline had been reviewed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and as a result the marketing campaign would not be taking place until February and March 2021 with community events taking place in the meantime
- A pilot project would be taking place between September and December 2020
- Expressions of interest were being sought for any proposed changes in parks and green spaces

In response to questions from Committee Members, the Head of Parks made the following comments:



- A presentation at the National Trust which had recently been attended by some Committee Members was part of the same project. Similarly, the work being carried out by Charlie Bennett, Bristol and Bath Parks Foundation, was also connected to this. The project would look at parks and green spaces across the whole city and consider if there were any commercial opportunities available. Colleagues from Public Health would also be involved and would be subject to a budget. A better idea of the likely opportunities could be made once expressions of interest had been received
- The issue of officer time and capacity would be a challenge. Evaluation and discussions with organisations would be taking place. Support from the Downs Committee would be appreciated
- Any expressions of interest in the Downs would require the involvement of the Site Permissions Team. There could be an issue with capacity due to the limited numbers of staff
- There would be opportunities with income generation requiring close work with communities where needed. The criteria for this would be assessed. It was important not to stifle innovation. There may be opportunities in catering, ice cream van and theatre. As in other parts of the country, work would take place with groups such as the National Trust to develop any new ideas
- No assessment would be made for each individual park of the likely financial opportunities as some would be honeypot sites. The wealth could be spread across the entire estate with an aspiration to get income back to previous levels
- There was no commitment for the Committee for any of the opportunities that arose. Any income generated on the Downs would remain within it
- The process would enable the Downs Committee to be signposted to any external organisation that provided an opportunity to be further investigated

Committee Members made the following comments:

- Whilst this Parks initiative should be welcomed, the Downs Committee had its own initiative and had achieved financial break even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Third party funding would also be welcomed
- An inclusion of the Downs Committee at an early stage in the process was very helpful. The Committee could examine expressions of interest on a case by case basis and was using an existing process. There was no commitment. It could be helpful in bringing to the Committee's attention to something that it had not previously thought of.

The Head of Parks confirmed that a pilot scheme would be operating for the next few months and would test decision-making as well as obtaining clarity on funding arrangements.

ACTION: Head of Parks to bring a report back to a future meeting.

13 Leisure Loop (Vicky Cracknell and Johnny Wood)

Vicky Cracknell and Johnny Wood gave a presentation to the Committee and made the following points:



- Following the decision to approve the Leisure Loop in principle at the meeting on 20th January 2020, a route change had been made at Ivywell Road
- Traffic calming measures were required. These could include a 20mph zone along Circular Road
- The proposed surface was as used by the National Trust in their multi-user trails on 10 of their properties throughout the country
- The Ashton Park Link had been created following work between Greenways and Cycleways by Jon Grimshaw and now provided an example of how a construction could fit into the landscape
- A very productive meeting had taken place with Richard Goldthorpe on 26th January 2020 and had provided an insight into developing traffic calming measures on the Circular Road. Whilst this did not require planning permission, it would require a Traffic Regulation Order. The paths would require a Planning Application
- Funding had now been identified through Greenways and Cycleways carrying out work on their routes
- Public consultation would be required to assess local support for a Downs Loop. Discussions were needed with communities, stakeholders and the wider city. The Committee's support was requested prior to doing this.

In response to questions from the Committee, Vicky Cracknell made the following comments:

- The Downs was now busier as more children were cycling on the grass during COVID-19, particularly along the route from Stoke Road to the Sea Walls
- The very early period of the pandemic gave a good example of how the proposed leisure loop could work
- Self-binding aggregate would be used to construct the loop as had been used for the Ashton Park Link. Consultation would be carried out to assess different options for this. However, one option would be to widen the existing path along Ivywell Road and colour it as required with variation along different sections of the loop as required
- Streets 3 would be used to carry out the consultation. Due to COVID-19, there was likely to be less face-to-face work and greater use of a time-limited online survey through the local media and magazines. Consideration would also be given as to how to consult those without access to the internet or smart phones. One approach for these groups of people would be to provide a phone number contact and then send a questionnaire by stamped addressed envelope or conduct a phone interview. Any gaps in the range of stakeholders would be identified at this stage
- The current focus remained on the development phase and obtaining planning permission. Once this was achieved, discussions would take place with large funding bodies such as British Cycling (who operated a scheme called Places To Ride) and Sports England. However, it was acknowledged that some funds were on hold due to COVID-19. It had been made clear that this was not a Bristol City Council project and that therefore BCC would not be funding it
- The key point of the scheme would be to help more people get access to the Downs and therefore the consultation would take this into account. 30% of households in Bristol do not own a car. Provision of greater interpretation and guidance was also important along with making the Downs a welcoming place for people to arrive at by bus



The Committee noted that, since it had supported the scheme in principle, it was reasonable to support the proposed consultation.

Resolved (unanimously) that the Committee supports public consultation on the proposed scheme.

Action: Vicky Cracknell and Johnny Wood (Cycle Sunday)

14 Downs Maintenance Report (Ben Skuse)

The Committee noted that Ben Skuse had given his apologies for the meeting and would respond to any questions by the Committee separately outside of the meeting.

Members of the Committee thanked Ben for the hard work he had done maintaining the Downs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

15 Events Report (Amanda Sharpe)

Amanda Sharpe introduced this report and made the following comments:

- There had been no events held on the Downs so far in 2020
- All events previously scheduled for July 2020 had been cancelled and none were currently scheduled for August 2020
- Whilst there were two proposed meetings in Late September 2020 (Student Union Welcome Event on 27th September 2020 and Downs Circus on 25th September 2020), these would only proceed subject to adherence to Government guidance on social distancing to enable them to proceed
- The events team would consult with events organisers when restrictions were eased including proposals for any further events on the Downs in Autumn
- Further detail would be provided at the forthcoming Events and Finance Sub-Group on 10th July 2020

The Committee noted this report.

16 Finance Update (Kevin Jay)

Kevin Jay introduced this report and made the following comments:

- Details of the outturn for 2019/20 were set out
- Income was £350,000 with expenditure of £420,000. There was a small deficit which was covered by previous surpluses



- Details of the 2020/21 projections were set out. The measures caused by the introduction of COVID-19 had made a significant impact. The current estimated deficit of £124,000 was subject to change. Further discussions would take place at the Events and Finance Sub Group on how to improve during the year this projected deficit

The Committee noted this report.

17 Enforcement of Byelaws

The clerk advised the Committee that this matter had previously been referred by the Movement and Place Sub-Group for discussion to the Downs Committee in March 2020 but this meeting had been cancelled and therefore it had been deferred to this meeting.

The Committee also noted that Bristol City Council's Legal Section had been approached to confirm if they would be able to carry out some work in this area but had indicated they would require a formal instruction from the Committee with greater detail and would request a charge for this service.

The Vice-Chair and Master (Ross Ancell) drew attention to the criticism the Committee received due to illegal van parking and also waste and barbecues left by some Downs users, including those in illegal encampments. In addition, there were problems with anti social littering on the Downs.

The Committee noted that the public frequently did not understand the mechanisms that were used in enforcing byelaws.

During the discussion, it was noted that the Movement and Place Sub-Group was proposed to be abolished in a later report on the agenda. Therefore, it was suggested that Committee members submit any issues of concern requiring byelaws or relating to the enforcement of existing byelaws. This could then be discussed in more detail at a Task and Finish Group and report back to the main Downs Committee at a future date.

It was agreed that this group would consist of Councillors and Merchant Venturer Representatives to be decided.

Action: Clerk to write to Committee Members to request suggestions concerning issues requiring byelaws or concerning enforcement of existing byelaws and refer to the Lord Mayor to set up a Task and Finish Group.



18 Delegations - Sub-Groups (Jeremy Livitt)

The Clerk introduced this report. He explained that, since most of the work of the Movement and Place Sub-Group concerning the A4018 and Leisure loop was now completed, it was proposed that this Sub-Group is formally abolished. The Events and Finance Sub-Group would remain unchanged.

Councillor Peter Abraham moved, seconded by Councillor Barry Clark and upon being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED – that the Movement and Place Sub-Group is abolished.

Action: Jeremy Livitt

19 Any Other Business

Zoo Car Parking Contract

The Committee received an update on the situation concerning the zoo car parking contract.

20 Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held at 2pm on Monday 21st September 2020.

Meeting ended at 12.30 pm

CHAIR _____



Public Forum Downs Committee 21st September 2020 at 2pm



Councillors: Lord Mayor – Councillor Jos Clark (Chair), Peter Abraham, Donald Alexander, Barry Clark, Christopher Davies, Kye Dudd and Paula O’Rourke

Merchant Venturers: Master – Ross Ancell (Vice Chair), Jonathon Baker, Gillian Camm, Simon Cooper, Mary Prior, Peter Rilett, Tim Ross

Copies Also To: Amanda Sharpe, Melanie Inman, Ben Skuse, Kevin Jay, Tasneem Malik (Merchant Venturers)

S next to the name of the person making the statement indicates that they have also registered to speak.

Statements	
Statement	Name – Capital S in bold next to the Speaker’s Name indicates a request to speak
1	S Councillor Steve Smith – Byelaws
2	S Dr Paul Main – Clifton and Hotwells Improvement Society – Request for the Erection of an Information Board to explain the Draper Monuments on Christchurch Green, Clifton
3	S Downs Cycle Plans – Richard Hensey
4	
5	



STATEMENT NUMBER 1

I have had complaints from residents in my ward about breaches of the Downs Byelaws, especially on busy weekends, such as vehicles being parked on the grass, tents erected and disposable barbecues used. There seems to be no enforcement activity to support the byelaws, leading to a false impression that such behaviour is acceptable. While nobody wants to see the Downs become a “police state”, it seems that in order for people to respect the byelaws which make them a welcoming place for everybody, some enforcement activity for the worst offenders is necessary.

I would be very grateful if the committee could review and clarify who is responsible for enforcement, and investigate how all stakeholders can work together to ensure that the byelaws are respected and adhered to. I would be pleased to support this work in any way that I can.

Thanks,

Steve Smith,

Councillor for Westbury-on-Trym and Henleaze.

STATEMENT NUMBER 2

The Clifton and Hotwells Improvement Society (CHIS) are interested in erecting a lectern type information board to explain the importance and history of the Sir William Draper limestone monuments, the 79th Regiment cenotaph and the Pitt Obelisk, on Christchurch Green, Clifton.

The cenotaph is of great historic significance, as it is reputed to be the first public war memorial in the UK. People are always looking at the monuments trying to work out what they are. As you know the inscriptions on the slate panels are very difficult to read.

We have been given some family money to provide a memorial for Mr Roger Feneley who was a well known and eminent surgeon in Bristol. He lived nearby in Clifton and he and wife loved this part of the Downs. The family have agreed to the above suggestion.

We envisage that the information board would be similar in size, shape and design to those near the Observatory.

Please can the Committee give its agreement to this proposal.

Peter Insole, Bristol City Council Principal Historic Environment Officer, is supportive of this idea.

If there is any money left over we are also interested in helping with some conservation work of the monuments.

I am also waiting to hear back from Christina Raddon, Bristol City Council Senior Building Surveyor, about what conservation work is possible.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Paul G N Main,

On behalf of the CHIS Committee

STATEMENT NUMBER 3

Date: 03 September 2020

“Cycle Sunday” Plans for The Downs

Dear Committee,

In the August 2020 edition of The Bristol Nine” magazine we are encouraged to get involved on this subject.

I have already commented briefly on the subject in my letter to the A4018 Improvements Team on 15 February 2019, para 4.but I welcome the opportunity to comment in greater detail.

I have walked the proposed routes on the Downs a few weeks ago, and I am totally opposed to the proposed changes for the following reasons:-

A. I do not accept that there is “unmet demand” for more cycling routes or improved cycling routes on the Downs, a claim frequently made by Cycle Sunday. Cycle Sunday has achieved huge changes already in and around Bristol and I just wish they would leave our precious Downs alone and untouched.

B. The proposals, if implemented, will attract “the wrong type of cyclists”. The natural paths already on the Downs are quite adequate for the leisurely cyclist riding at a modest pace and taking in the views. These plans would very much encourage the “speedsters”, lycra clad racers riding multi-gear thin sports type bikes, no doubt with intimidating dark goggles etc. The claim by CS that the plans would encourage less motor traffic to the Downs is nonsense – quite the opposite as these types of cyclists put their bikes on their cars and drive to selected routes. Very soon word would spread that if one wants a really fast unobstructed 3 mile route head for the Downs.

C. The Downs is not A PARK, and it is very important that it must never be seen as such. The quickest and most effective way to destroy the uniqueness of the Downs is to convert them to a Park.

D. Cycle Sunday seem to hold extraordinary influence and prominence with Bristol City Council and this really needs to be addressed. Walkers and motorists and the general public seem to be treated as “also rans”. This is all just wrong and very undemocratic.

E. If the Downs Committee is determined to implement these proposals, and, as said, I am totally opposed, I trust they may take the following points into consideration please:-

Should the tarmac drives planned be placed where the current natural paths are they would seriously impact the whole appearance of the Downs as the current paths are several metres inset from the trees lining the Downs by the main roads. So walkers

would have to walk through the trees, and some meters again over grass, and again over the new cycle paths, to gain access to the Downs proper. This of course brings the danger of being hit by riders going too fast. This is particularly the case in respect of the route along Saville Road, Rockleaze, down to the Circular Road at Seawalls.

I see no reason at all for any additional paths at Ladies Mile, or along Westbury Road.

I assume all trees currently in place will remain untouched.

The proposed plans, if implemented, will require significant track signage and probably road signage, and in total would be the first move towards turning the Downs into yet another Bristol Park, a playground for cycling speedsters, a very real danger to walkers with families and pets. The advantage that walkers enjoy over cyclists at present is that the natural paths do not encourage fast/reckless cycling.

I ask you all to please reflect on the heritage of the Downs; it needs to remain where, at a push, one could imagine sheep grazing. It has, over the past twenty years, become a very busy and active place, far removed from the original intension of providing a quiet rural space close to the city of Bristol for relaxation. That was the original intention and vision, and we all should be a little modest and a little humble, and value what we have been given by our thoughtful and caring forbears, and do what we can (which frankly amounts to interfering with it as little as possible) to maintain that vision.

The wonderful Downs, so close to the busy city, should surely be a place primarily of quiet solitude, a place to relax and enjoy the magnificent views – it should not be seen as primarily a place to exercise. It simply cannot be both.

Thank you,

Yours Sincerely,

Richard Hensey

c.c. for info: Councillor Steve Smith, by e mail.

SUMMARY PREPARED FOR THE DOWNS COMMITTEE

Notes of Events & Finance Sub Group Meeting - 10th July 2020

Members:

Ross Ancell - Merchant Venturer (Master and Chair)

Councillor Don Alexander

Jonathon Baker - Merchant Venturer

Peter Rilett – Merchant Venturer

Tim Ross – Merchant Venturer

Bristol City Council Officers:

Kevin Jay – Finance

Jeremy Livitt – Democratic Services

Ann-Marie Leighton – Events Officer

Ben Skuse – Grounds Supervisor

Jonathan James – Head of Parks

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for this meeting.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 26th February 2020

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Events and Finance Sub-Committee of 15th January 2020 be confirmed as a correct record of the discussion.

Matters Arising

The Committee raised the question of the release of reserves since the 2019/20 accounts were not in deficit and noting that this option was available to the Committee.

The Sub-Group noted the view of the Merchant Venturers that in accordance with the Downs Act, Bristol City Council was responsible for providing the necessary funding for provision of services on the Downs.

It was noted that the Downs Committee account was not closed, as they had not been approved by the Downs Committee, but that calculations for Bristol City Council accounts concerning the balance and the impact on the Downs account needed to be fixed within the next month, ideally.

3. Events Update

Ann-Marie Leighton introduced this report and made the following comments:

- The Mayor had announced that no events would be taking place until at least August 2020 in terms of public safety
- Performing acts will legally be able to operate from 11th July 2020, including outdoor events such as tented circuses subject to social distancing and risk assessments
- More guidance had been received for hospitality. An Events and Festivals Working Group had been set up consisting of Ann-Marie Leighton, Melissa Inman and key local events professionals to transfer this guidance to Bristol
- Links were being provided to any advice that could help in any assessment and an accreditation system was being considered to confirm if an event was COVID-19 safe

Funderworld

- This event had not been able to proceed earlier in the year. Whilst there was interest in holding the event later in the year, there was not yet any

proposal or suggested alternative dates. In addition, guidance had not yet been provided for roving funfairs

- Discussions had been held with the events organisers concerning limiting attendees on site to 30 people at a time
- The key issues were the timescale and potential clashes of sites with other proposed events

Other Sub-group members made the following comments and Ann-Marie Leighton responded as appropriate:

- September was the latest practical month in which to hold such an event. It was noted that this was still possible to achieve but was an extremely tight timescale
- There was already an agreement in place to operate the circus if possible so this would have to be given priority in the event of any clash

Students Union Event

The key staff involved had been furloughed and it remained uncertain if this event would proceed.

Race for Life

The event would take place on either 13th, 20th or 27th September on a Sunday. Details of the site fee were provided.

It was noted that, since this event was scheduled for a Sunday, football could operate alongside the Race for Life Event.

Decision: The event be approved for 27th September 2020 to give the maximum flexibility with other events.

Action: Ann-Marie Leighton

Circus

The organisers were keen to proceed. Recent guidance related to tented circuses. A draft risk assessment had been produced by the organisers and new

arrangements for seating had been provided. Details of the site fee were provided.

Action: Ann-Marie Leighton to check details of the contract with the organisers and to produce a grid of all current proposed events including lead time and finances.

Team Love

Tom Paine and Dave Harvey outlined their proposal to the Sub-Group and made the following points:

- The main issue for restaurants is the size and those areas that people can sit in. In particular for smaller organisations, the size of the kitchen was problematic
- The first phase involved two restaurants and two garden areas. It was hoped that there would be second and third phases.
- Overviews had been provided and as much initial preparation as was possible had taken place. This would form part of a bigger Safety Management Plan
- Tables and reservations would be made in advance
- Orders would either be made in advance or through another method to avoid contact with staff
- Measures will be put in place to isolate any individual who contracted COVID-19 without closing the site down. If the event was held in the area to the north of the Water Tower, it should enable a second and third opening
- Parking should be available along Ladies Mile. Discussions would take place with Ben Skuse and/or the Events Management Team
- The detailed timeline was presented to the Sub-Group. It was noted that there would be discussions with local residents commencing 20th August 2020 as had happened in the past. The announcement of the event would be made during the week commencing Monday 20th July

2020, reservations allowed from Friday 24th July 2020 and an open test run on 30th July. The event would open to the public on 31st July 2020.

- If support was provided at today's meeting, a premises licence would be submitted on Monday 13th July 2020
- This proposal was part of an attempt to support the Bristol Food Industry and community, as well as young people who were being disproportionately affected by this crisis
- A foundation and/or fund was being created to support this
- An advisory Board would be set up involving the charity sector and business sector
- The event would also focus on sourcing and sustainability and investigate the economic benefit that could be achieved.
- The organisation would work alongside Bristol One City and the Bristol Gold Standard. A proportion of the operating profit would be ring fenced for site hire
- Details of the site hire were provided
- If the proposal was approved, a weekly or monthly update would be provided to the Sub-Group.

In response to Sub-Group members' questions, Team Love made the following points:

- Whilst members' concerns about adopting a proportion of operating profit rather than a fixed fee were acknowledged, the organisation was operating with fixed costs and infrastructure
- Team Love would be happy to move to an alternative site provided it was the same size as the existing one
- An application would be made for a music licence – for background music to start with
- A lot of work had been carried out to develop skills and provide benefits for young people. The organisation was keen to work with existing

initiatives in employment, training and work experience. The event would provide work experience in a number of areas such as management, health and safety and event production. It was acknowledged that further detail was required to set out how training would be targeted to achieve this

- The event was considering the possibility of using the Meal Deal
- The event would run from 31st July 2020 through to 6th November 2020 – the latter date included the dismantling of the site
- Raised wood would be used in conjunction with coconut matting for public areas. It was noted that coconut matting might not be appropriate for later in the year. An assessment of this was required as part of the Management Plan
- A biofuel generator was used for small events. There would be environmental challenges in some areas such as public transport
- There was enough parking in place for Phase 1
- If there was a requirement that parking is on roads as opposed to the Downs this would not be a deal breaker. It was noted that parking could operate on roads for Phase 1 with an assessment for Phase 2 and 3 as to whether or not this was difficult

The Sub-Group made the following points:

- Whilst the concept should be supported, the need for a reasonable return was important since other organisations would also be eager to use this space for their own events. Pubs were struggling at the moment and this event might affect them
- Since Funderworld was unlikely to proceed, the Team Love proposal was likely to take place on the previously agreed site

Decision:

(1) The proposal was supported in principle but the Sub-Group would prefer a fixed fee and clarification concerning the length of time for the event

(2) That negotiations continue between the events team and Team Love with a proposal to be brought back to selected members of the Sub-Group to confirm whether or not the proposal can be approved.

Action: Ann-Marie Leighton

4. Finance Update

Kevin Jay introduced this report and made the following comments:

- There was a potential £120,000 deficit for 2020/2021
- Salaries awaited a settlement on the pay award
- Repairs and Maintenance and Grounds Maintenance Costs were the same as last year
- Details of key potential areas of income were noted

Members of the Sub-Group made the following comments:

- The Society of Merchant Venturers (SMV) saw no justification for Business rates being applied to the Downs Committee. It seemed to be based on the view that the Downs Committee was now a commercial organisation but this was a misconception since it was operating under the Downs Act exactly as it had previously
- The SMV considered that the rock fall recorded in 2019/20 accounts should be listed under Bristol City Council land not SMV land. Negotiations were required in this area

Decision: the Events and Finance Sub-Group seeks clarification as to whether or not the Downs Committee has now been classified as a commercial organisation and if so believes that this has been wrongly applied. The Downs Finance Officer (Kevin Jay) is instructed not to release funds for the business rate charge until this issue has been clarified

Action: Kevin Jay/Jonathan James

If the first part of the Summer was very much defined by Coronavirus government lockdowns and guidance, the second part of the Summer has somewhat returned to normal. The intense crowds of people that we experienced in May and June have abated and things have been relatively calm recently, (modified car meets notwithstanding !!)

Daily duties have largely followed the regular Summertime regime of a clear up of the Downs to then enable grass cutting activities to proceed. Daily Goat checks continue and they seem in fine fettle at this time. Across the Summer many more people have found their way into the enclosure for a look and therefore our daily checks have been more important than ever. We have suffered some damage to a portion of the enclosure fence line, mainly caused by people continually wanting to access the cliff tops to sit and admire the view. We have had to carry out more litter picking inside the enclosure than ever before this Summer. There will be some extra costs associated to this fence line repair works and I will report these to the finance and events sub group.

Despite still not really knowing what Downs football will look like this year, we have had to make our usual preparations in terms of football pitch provision. We have initial marked 25 pitches back onto the Downs to be ready for when the season begins. I would say that the football pitches are going to be in very good shape this season. Halting football in March allowed us to carry out re-seeding much earlier in the year. Allied to the continual heavy rain and sunshine that we are experiencing in late August early September, the grass coverage on the surfaces should be excellent for play.

High winds in the same late August period has seen the team have to carry out a number of emergency chainsaw jobs as trees and pieces of trees have blown down in many places across the Downs. There has been quite a lot of clearing up to do which you would not really expect in the Summer.

Along with a return to football, another sign of a potential return to normality has been the return of events to the Downs. Team Loves Breaking Bread seems to have gone well and we are expecting the Circus in its usual slot in October. I will be interested to see the ground when Team Love leave site after Breaking Bread, Given the length of time that they have been on site some element of grounds repair is inevitable. I will be assessing that with them when we carry out post event inspections in early October.

Finally it has been nice for myself and the team to hear the many positive comments about the upkeep of the Downs during this period. In particular people commenting through the prism of the current Covid situation. People realising that it has been super important to have a well-kept extensive green resource nearby to allow for them and their families to escape the pressures of living with this pandemic for a time. It is not always easy given the amount of people who have come this Summer and there have been problems at times but we are not alone in the big daily clear up. Many members of the public are also contributing to this now. It makes quite a big statement I believe, for people to see members of the public picking up litter, it sets an example that might make people think about how much they bring to the Downs, consuming it all and no doubt having a great time, but unfortunately then believing that it is ok to just get up and leave it all here.

Let's see what next summer brings!

Ben Skuse 28th August 20

Downs Committee – 21st September 2020 Events Update

1. Events that have taken place since last Downs Committee meeting:

Breaking Bread:

The only event that has taken place on the Downs since the last meeting is the Breaking Bread pop up restaurants and bar.

This set up and started in late July and response overall has been very positive with some very good local media coverage. The restaurants were fully booked for August and bookings for September were opened up in early August as demand was so high.

Prior to opening consultation was carried out with nearby residents groups: Clifton Down Community Association, Westbury Park Community Association, Sneyd Park Residents Association, Friends of the Downs & Avon Gorge and Clifton & Hotwells Improvement Society. The organisers also carried out online residents meetings in the first couple of weeks of the project. The main concerns were regarding potential noise, traffic management and waste. To date the organisers have received no complaints from local residents on these issues. Residents have been given the contact details of the organisers so they can get in touch with them direct if they have any concerns.

The organisers are hoping to be able to carry on throughout September and October but would need to make adjustments to the site if they are to continue operating for this length of time.

2. Upcoming events:

Downs Circus:

This is year 2 of the contract with Tony Hopkins Entertainments and they are planning to bring Circus Montini to the Downs this year. They plan to the public from 22nd September – 11th October. They are hoping to include acts from the Bristol circus community in the show subject to their availability.

The capacity in the big top will be reduced to approximately 390 (from 1,000) in order to observe current social distancing requirements. Approximately 90% of their bookings are usually online so this will enable them to obtain the necessary track & trace details. They are also planning to have enhanced stewarding, more toilets and hand sanitisers available. They will have a member of staff appointed as 'Covid Officer' who will be responsible for implementing the necessary changes relating to Covid-19 and ensuring the Circus meets the 'Good to Go' industry standard.

3. 2021 Events:

We received requests from the following events to return to the Downs in 2021:

Funderworld	late March – mid April 2021
Foodies Festival	May 2021
Race for Life	June 2021
Bristol Pride	July 2021
The Downs Festival	September 2021
Student Union Welcome	September 2021



The Downs

Outturn Forecast 2020/21

The latest full year outturn forecast for 2020/21 is as follows:

2020-21 Overall Income and Expenditure Summary

	Full Year Budget £	Forecast Outturn (as at 27.8.20) £	Variance £	
<u>Income</u>				
Total Income	350,260	280,922	(69,338)	Deficit
<u>Expenditure</u>				
Total Expenditure	(350,260)	(408,225)	(57,965)	Overspend
FINAL NET OUTTURN	0	(127,303)	(127,303)	Representing Downs generated net surplus/(deficit)

Based on current information, there is a significant forecast deficit for 2020-21. This is subject to change but is due to the Coronavirus pandemic causing uncertainty within the events and hospitality sector. The deficit will be met from prior year underspends.

Dear Downs Committee,

I present this petition to you signed by 738 [may increase by date of meeting] people, most of whom live within a short walk of the Downs, in and around my ward of Clifton Down.

This petition calls on the Downs Committee to yield the land to build a new children's playground on the Downs, preferably near the Water Tower and Cafe on Stoke Road.

Why is this petition important?

There is no public play equipment in Clifton Down ward (the area around Whiteladies Road).

There is an excellent set of play equipment at the other end of the Downs, near the Suspension Bridge. However, this is 1.5 miles from the top of Whiteladies Road, which is too far for most young children to walk. There is another playground in neighbouring Redland ward, but this is only within toddler walking distance for some parts of the ward, and is not served by any local bus routes.

Clifton Down is a densely populated ward with a high proportion of flats. Therefore, despite being privileged in many other ways, a lot of residents do not have a private garden.

Demonstrating demand

Parents in Clifton Down ward wrote to me as their local councillor to ask for a new playground. I contacted Councillor Paula O'Rourke, my party's representative on the Downs Committee. She advised me that the committee would consider it, but would need to see that there is sufficient demand.

I hope you agree that the number of signatures on this petition demonstrates that demand. The following indicative calculation illustrates this. Suppose:

- Only around half of signatories have children (the others, like me, may have signed the petition because they know about the demand from neighbours, nephews and nieces, etc) [$738 / 2 = 369$]
- Signatories that do have children have on average two. [$369 \times 2 = 738$ children]
- Each signatory with children would visit the playground 1 or 2 times per week (1.5 on average) [$738 \times 1.5 = 1107$ visits]
- Each signatory family would spend on average 30 minutes at the playground per visit [$1107 \times 0.5 = 554$ child-hours per week = 79 child-hours per day]

Vision

My vision is for a modest, well-designed children's playground, similar to the one near the Suspension Bridge, preferably located near the water tower and café on Stoke Road. I fully understand and agree that the majority of the Downs should remain unenclosed and available for use by everyone. I believe that a small playground in this location will enhance the Downs as a valuable resource for all people of Bristol, by providing something for younger families to do.

I believe that this proposal would knit in very well with other proposals currently being considered for the Downs, including the Downs Loop, the new café, the renovated changing rooms, and I hope other facilities such as bike rental and improved public toilets. These would combine to make the Downs a more enjoyable and stimulating place to visit for a wider variety of Bristol's residents. I also believe that this proposal is fully in line with the Place and Movement Framework.



The existing Clifton Suspension Bridge Playground

What next

This petition calls on the Downs Committee to *yield the land* to build a new children's playground on the Downs, preferably near the Water Tower and Cafe on Stoke Road. It leaves the details of the proposals to be decided by the Downs committee if it wishes. The petition does not ask for funding from Downs Committee, at least at this stage.

I, and the petition signatories, are open to suggestions to funding. How was the existing playground near the Suspension Bridge funded? As the proposed new playground would be similar in size and purpose, could it be funded in same way?

So what I'm looking for from you today is:

1. A decision to support the construction of a new playground on the Downs in principle, subject to detailed design and funding being secured.
2. An expression of willingness to work with me and others on the design and funding.

Many thanks for reading this statement. I am happy to answer any questions.

11th September 2020

Dear Downs Committee,

Re: Downs Loop Public Consultation

We hope that you have all had a good summer and been able to enjoy some holiday time away despite all the restrictions. We are writing to update you on the public consultation which has been running since the 10th August. We are looking forward to presenting our interim findings at the next Downs Committee meeting on the 21st September.

The consultation has three elements.

1. A consultation website with information about the proposal and an online survey. www.thedownslloop.com
2. Information boards next to the Downs Café. The boards are hung up each day by the café staff.
3. Walk rounds of the Downs Loop with key stakeholders. These have so far included: FODAG, Bristol Walking Alliance, Clifton and Hotwells Improvement Society, Stoke Bishop and Sea Mills Forum, Sneyd Park Residents' Association, Bristol Ageing Better, Buggy Fit. We are also talking to the Bristol Ramblers, WECIL (West of England Centre for Inclusive Living) and the Bristol Disability Equality Forum about potential walks/zoom meetings.

Media coverage has been great and has included Bristol 24/7, Bristol Post (Live), Radio Bristol (both weekday and weekend breakfast shows), and community magazines including Henleaze and Westbury Voice (double page spread), BS6+8, Bishopston Voice and Bishopston Matters.

We have had a really good response with 3,656 visits to our webpage and 375 responses to the online survey. There is a wide range in the ages of respondents and 25 people with a disability have already filled in the survey. We will continue to promote the consultation through September.

Interim survey results (please note the consultation period runs to the end of September so these figures will slightly alter as survey responses continue to come in):

- 81% of survey respondents disagree that the current paths around the Downs are suitable for all users.
- 75% of survey respondents felt the current paths were not smooth or even and 68% that they are not wide enough.
- 95% of respondents agreed that the proposals would improve access for people using wheelchairs or mobility aids.
- 91% of respondents agreed that the proposals would improve access for children learning to cycle and less confident adults on bikes.
- 97% of respondents agree that the proposed zebra crossing across Stoke Road will make it easier to cross in this location.

As well as the quantitative data, there are two open-ended questions on the survey. Some themes are emerging in these questions and we will give feedback on those on the 21st September. We will also share feedback from our stakeholder walks. A consultation report will then follow by email in October. Fin McNab from Streets Reimagined will come to the full committee Zoom meeting on the 21st September. We have contracted him to set up and run the public consultation for us.

Next steps: We would like to proceed to making a planning application when we have fully evaluated the public consultation. We hope that the committee will give consent for that next stage when we meet with you on Zoom on the 21st September.

Many thanks,

Vicki Cracknell and Jonny Wood