

THE DOWNS COMMITTEE

Clifton and Durdham Downs (Bristol) Act 1861

To : Members of the
Downs Committee

Replyto:
Oliver
Harrison

Telephone
01173526162
E-mail
oliver.harris
on@bristol.g
ov.uk
Date

Friday, 6 November 2020

The Lord Mayor and 6 City Councillors

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

The Master and 6 Merchant Venturers

Gillian Camm (Vice-Chair) Jonathon Baker
Simon Cooper Peter Rilett

Dear Member,

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **Downs Committee** to be held at **2.00 pm on Monday, 16th November, 2020 as a remote zoom meeting.**

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

Yours sincerely,
Oliver Harrison
Clerk to the Committee

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**
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Membership for 2020/21 (Report of the Clerk to the Committee) (Pages 4 - 6)**
- 4. Chairing Arrangements (Report of the Clerk to the Committee) (Pages 7 - 8)**
- 5. Retiring Members (Report of the Clerk to the Committee) (Page 9)**
- 6. Dates and Times of Future Meetings - 2021 (Report of the Clerk to the Committee) (Page 10)**
- 7. Delegations (Report of the Clerk to the Committee) (Pages 11 - 12)**
- 8. Action Tracker (Pages 13 - 14)**
- 9. Minutes of last meeting held on Monday 21st September 2021 (Pages 15 - 20)**
- 10. Summary of the Events and Finance Sub-Group held on 28th October 2020 (Pages 21 - 26)**
- 11. Declarations of interest**

To note any Declarations of Interest raised by Councillors.

12. Public Forum

To consider items of Public Forum sent to the Downs Committee. Interested parties can submit a written statement of approximately one side of A4 to the Downs Committee by sending it to Democratic Services **by no later than 12pm on Friday 13th November 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 12th November 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.

13. Downs Maintenance Report (Ben Skuse) (Pages 27 - 28)

14. Events Report (Amanda Sharpe) (Pages 29 - 30)

15. Finance Update (Kevin Jay) (Page 31)

16. Vehicle Dwellers on the Downs (Mark Sperduty)

(Report to Follow)

17. Christchurch Green Wildflower Beds (Page 32)

18. Any Other Business

19. Date of Next Meeting

Subject to approval earlier in the meeting, the next Downs Committee meeting is scheduled to be held **at 2pm on Monday 25th January 2021 as a remote zoom meeting.**

20. Exempt Item: Bridge Road Toilet Block (Pages 33 - 49)

Oliver Harrison, Democratic Services Officer
Email: or democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk
Phone: (0117) 3526162

Downs Committee 16 November 2020

Membership of Downs Committee

Report of the Clerk to the Downs Committee

Purpose of Report

1. To report the names of persons appointed to serve on the Downs Committee.

Background

2. The City Council, as previously reported on 29th June 2020, re-appointed the following members (in addition to the Lord Mayor Councillor Jos Clark) to serve on the Downs Committee for the 2020/21 municipal year:

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

However, following confirmation from the Deputy Monitoring Officer, the Downs Committee's Councillor membership will need to change for November 2020 to May 2021 to comply with the requirements of the Downs Act which supersedes this decision.

Following consultation with Party Group Whips, the following Councillors have been replaced on the Downs Committee with the Councillors indicated for the above period:

Councillor Peter Abraham replaced by Councillor Steve Smith

Labour Councillor to be confirmed

3. The Society of Merchant Venturers Charter Day Elections took place on 10th November 2020 to decide the Membership of Downs Committee until November 2021.

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

Gillian Camm – Master
Jonathon Baker
Mike Bothamley
Simon Cooper
David Freed
David Powell
Peter Rilett

Recommendation: that the membership be noted

Downs Committee

16 November 2020

Confirmation of Chairing Arrangements

Report of the Clerk to the Downs Committee

Purpose of Report

1. To confirm, for information, the arrangements for chairing for November 2020 to November 2021.

Background

2. Under the provisions of Section 10 of the Clifton and Durdham Down (Bristol) Act 1861, the Lord Mayor of Bristol City Council is Chair of the Committee.

The Vice-Chair of the Committee is the Master of the Society of Merchant Venturers and will assume the Chair at Downs Committee meetings in the Lord Mayor's absence. The Lord Mayor is currently Councillor Jos Clark (until May 2021)

3. At their Charter Day Elections on 10th November 2020, the Merchant Venturers appointed Gillian Camm as the Master of the Downs Committee for the ensuing year.

Recommended: that the appointment of the Master for November 2020 to November 2021 be noted.

Downs Committee

16th November 2020

Retiring Members of the Committee

Report of the Clerk to the Downs Committee

1. To note the retiring Merchant Venturer and Councillor members of the Committee: Ross Ancell, Tim Ross and Mary Prior (Merchant Venturers), Peter Abraham and Labour Councillor to be confirmed (Councillor Representatives) and to note that a letter of thanks for past services will be sent by the Clerk to the Committee on the Downs Committee's behalf.

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

Downs Committee

16 November 2020

Dates and Times of Meetings

Report of the Clerk to the Downs Committee

Purpose of Report

1. To approve the dates and times for meetings of the Downs Committee for 2021.

Background

2. The following dates are proposed for 2021. Venues are indicated but are subject to Health and Safety Assessments to ensure appropriate social distancing is maintained. Remote zoom meetings can be held if required:

Monday 25 January 2021 - 2pm at City Hall

Monday 22 March 2021 – 2pm at City Hall

Monday 28 June 2021 - 11am at Merchants Hall followed by lunch and a bus tour of the Downs

Monday 20 September 2021 – 2pm at City Hall

Monday 15 November 2021 - 2pm at City Hall

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

Downs Committee 16th November 2020

Delegations

Report of the Clerk to the Downs Committee

Purpose of Report

- (1) To request that the Committee re-appoints the Events and Finance Sub-Group for November 2020 to November 2021
- (2) To request that the Committee agrees to continue to set up Task and Finish Groups as required for other areas of work

Events and Finance Sub-Group

The Events and Finance Sub-Group was re-established at the Annual Committee meeting on Monday 18th November 2019 and re-confirmed on Monday 29th June 2020.

It is proposed that the Events and Finance Sub-Group continues to operate as at present i.e. with 4 Councillor and 4 Merchant Venturer Representatives and the Master acting as Chair.

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

Society of Merchant Venturers (SMV)

Gillian Camm (Chair) – Master and Merchant Venturer – replacing Ross Ancell

Jonathon Baker – Merchant Venturer

Peter Rilett – Merchant Venturer

Vacancy (replacement needed for Tim Ross) – Merchant Venturer

The Committee is requested to agree that David Powell replaces Tim Ross to fill this vacancy.

Councillors (Appointed Until May 2021)

To be confirmed following Councillor Membership changes for November 2020

Councillor Peter Abraham (to be replaced by Councillor Steve Smith)

Labour Councillor TBC

Councillor Barry Clark

Councillor Paula O'Rourke

The Committee is requested to agree Councillor Membership

Task and Finish Groups

The Committee approved the use of Task and Finish Groups as necessary for other areas of work at its meeting on Monday 29th June 2020.

The Committee can set up a Task and Finish Group each time it is required with a size, membership and duration dependent on the need in each case.

This group would have instructions to report back to the main Committee to make the final decision.

Recommendation

- (1) That the Committee re-establishes the Events and Finance Sub-Group as indicated above
- (2) That the Committee agrees to set up Task and Finish Groups as necessary for other areas of work as indicated above

Agenda Item 8

ACTION TRACKER – DOWNS COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Item and Decision	Person Taking Action	Deadline for Completion	Date Action Taken
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. James Coleman has confirmed that the report is not yet ready to come back to Committee as of 19 th October 2020	
29/06/20	Future Parks Project Consultation – report to come back to a future meeting	Jonathan James	To Come Back to Monday 16 th November 2020 meeting	Jonathan James has written to the Committee to advise that due to a reduction in the funding and number of sites in the project the Downs will now no longer be included
21/09/20	Petition for a Playground on the Downs – Councillor Carla Denyer	Jeremy Livitt to send an e-mail to Councillor Carla Denyer	That the Committee expresses its willingness to work with Councillor Carla Denyer and others on the design, funding and location of a new playground on the Downs.	E-Mail Sent to Carla Denyer on 23 rd September 2020 confirming the Committee's decision

21/09/20	Leisure Loop – Update Report	Vicki Cracknell	that permission is granted for Cycle Sunday to submit a Planning Application for their proposed scheme.	E-Mail sent to Vicki Cracknell on 23 rd September 2020 confirming the Committee's decision
21/09/20	Any Other Business - Downs Football – Requests Concerning Costs	Jonathon Baker	<p>(1) that the Downs Football League receives a rebate for the remainder of its matches in 2019/20 that it is unable to pay due to COVID-19</p> <p>(2) That the Student Union Inter Mural League and Downs League receive a clause in their contracts stating that "In the event of the COVID-19 pandemic continuing, they will no longer be charged for days that they are unable to play for 2020/21 football season"</p>	

Minutes of the Downs Committee

21 September 2020 at 2.00 pm



Members Present:-

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

Officers in Attendance:-

Ben Skuse, Jeremy Livitt, Kevin Jay, Amanda Sharpe and Peter Insole

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed all parties to the meeting and asked them to introduce themselves.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Peter Rilett and Gillian Camm.

3. Action Tracker

The Committee noted the Action Tracker. The Clerk drew the Committee's attention to the following:

- A4018 – James Coleman is now leading the work on this project and will update the Committee at a future meeting
- Future Parks Consultation - a report back on this issue was scheduled for the next meeting on Monday 16th November 2020

4. Minutes of last meeting held on Monday 29th June 2020

The minutes of this meeting were approved as a correct record (moved by Councillor Jos Clark, seconded by Mary Prior).

5. Declarations of interest

There were no Declarations of Interest from Councillors.



6. Public Forum

The Committee received Public Forum Statements from the following (speakers indicated by an S as appropriate):

S Councillor Steve Smith – Byelaws

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

S Richard Hensey – Downs Cycle Plans

Robert Westlake – FODAG

Thomas Hathway – Proposed Playground S

Merche Clark – Proposed Playground Rupert

Stuart-Baker – Proposed Playground

Peter Insole, Bristol City Council Archaeological explained to the Committee that he was supportive of the proposed scheme from Dr Paul Main subject to appropriate agreement on maintenance by the Downs Maintenance Manager.

7. Events and Finance Sub-Group - 10th July 2020

The Committee noted the summary of this meeting.

8. Events and Finance Sub-Group - 9th September 2020

The Committee noted the summary of these minutes.

9. Downs Maintenance Report (Ben Skuse)

Ben Skuse introduced this report and made the following comments:

- Following the difficulties with intense crowds and increased litter in the early days of lockdown, the situation had become more normal and the clear up was continuing
- The goats were doing well and there were more in the enclosure. However, there were increased problems with them climbing over the cliff tops to eat food that had resulted in a lot of damage to the fencing. The resultant extra costs had been reported to the Events and Finance Sub-Group
- The Downs Football League season was ready to start following an extended period of rest. The situation concerning Inter Mural Football remained unclear
- Circus Montini had recently arrived to join Breaking Bread on the Downs – This had been an abnormal and busy year



- There had been an increase in the members of the public using litter pickers to help pick up litter. As this became more widely practiced, it might help to remind people that it is unacceptable to leave litter

The Committee expressed their thanks to the Parks Maintenance Staff for their continuing hard work.

10 Events Report (Amanda Sharpe)

Amanda Sharpe introduced this report and made the following comments:

- Breaking Bread was the only event in operation since the last Committee meeting
- It had been extremely successful in its first month. Whilst there had been some initial concern expressed by residents, there had been no complaints. The contact details of organisers were available to make complaints if required
- The feasibility of continuing into the winter was being re-examined following the recent Government advice
- The Circus would commence on 11th October with a reduced capacity from 1,000 to 390 people
- The Safety Advisory Group were satisfied that the event met the required criteria to operate. The Circus had appointed a COVID officer to ensure health and safety requirements were met
- There were a number of requests from returning events to operate in 2021. An assessment on the viability of these would be subject to the future situation concerning COVID-19

The Committee noted that Breaking Bread was working well and wished it well as part of the hospitality sector's recovery from the effects of COVID-19.

11 Finance Update (Kevin Jay)

Kevin Jay introduced this report and made the following comments:

- The forecast for 2020/21 was indicated
- There was an estimated deficit of £127,000 mainly due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic

12 Petition for a Playground on the Downs - Councillor Carla Denyer

Councillor Carla Denyer introduced this petition and made the following comments:

- 771 people had signed this petition
- The petition requested that a portion of land is yielded to provide a new playground. There was no public play equipment on Clifton Down
- The number of peoples supporting the petition provided evidence of demand



- The proposed playground would knit in well with the proposed leisure loop, the new Downs Café and the toilet improvements
- There was not yet any detail on the size required or what the playground would look like pending the Downs Committee giving an in principle decision to support it
- The playground could be set back from the road as required
- Discussions were taking place with the future parks project concerning possible sources of funding

Committee members and officers made the following comments:

- The proposal should be supported in principle at this stage subject to provision of more detail and subject to the current financial situation that the Downs Committee was facing
- The principle of a facility for young people on the Downs in this area should be supported. There had been previous discussions in Stoke Bishop about provision of a playground with the support of Trinity College but these had been unsuccessful
- The playground needed to be in an area where young people could play safely
- Important issues to resolve were maintenance, facility safety and compatibility
- An additional playground in the area would add another element of work in terms of grass cutting, including trimming around the fence line and the potential for water forming under the slide. However, there would be no tree risk on this site. It would be helpful if any proposed playground was situated some distance from the road
- The existing playground had been provided for through a specific budget that the Downs Committee used to hold. This equipment tended to have a limited life so a lot work would be needed on maintenance
- The construction of a playground should be supported in principle subject to detailed design and confirmation of funding arrangements

Councillor Paula O'Rourke moved, seconded by Councillor Don Alexander and upon being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED (10 for, 0 against – unanimous of those present) - that the Committee expresses its willingness to work with Councillor Carla Denyer and others on the design, funding and location of a new playground on the Downs.

13 Leisure Loop - Vicki Cracknell/Fin McNab - Update Report

The Committee received an update report from Vicki Cracknell (Cycle Sunday) and Finlay McNab (Streets Reimagined) on this proposed scheme.

Finlay McNab gave a presentation on the findings of the ongoing consultation and responded to members' questions as follows:

- Details of the Downs Loop Community Engagement Study were provided



- Interim findings of the consultation were given
- The study had been research-based (rather than a PR exercise) and was inclusive
- Stakeholder mapping had involved various groups such as walking focus groups
- A display board had been erected on the café from 7th August 2020
- There had been extensive publicity via Bristol 24/7 Post Live and community organisations
- The consultation process was ongoing
- There had been more than 5,200 visitors during the consultation period and 601 surveys. There were 36 people with disabilities
- 82% did not agree that paths were suitable – they were not smooth, even or wide enough
- A number of people with children indicated that they did not currently cycle with them due to fear of traffic and a lack of suitable facilities
- 89% indicated that the proposed loop would improve the situation, 92% of wheelchair users indicated that it would improve the situation for them and 94% of
- A lot of respondents felt that the proposals would improve safety and provide a calmer environment and would be safer for vulnerable users
- In terms of the proposal for segregated paths, respondents felt that this was an option for a wetter day. However, many people thought that it should be more ambitious
- A common theme amongst the various walking groups was that the 20 mph speed limit should be extended
- Most people felt the proposals struck the correct balance between different aspirations
- Responses at this stage in the consultation process were higher than for previous consultations. As many further responses as possible were sought. The high level of responses provided confidence that the themes were widely shared
- Analysis would be carried out on responses from people in other parts of the city
- Rachel Aldred at Waltham Forest had carried out a great deal of analysis on this area of work
- The consultation would finish on 30th September 2020. Subject to a similar level of support being demonstrated in the remaining period for the proposals, Cycle Sunday would like to proceed with the scheme

Vicki Cracknell responded to Committee Members' questions as follows:

- There had been a significant increase in people taking up cycling. The provision of accessible paths along the Downs would help support a future conversation on the development of roads

The Committee expressed support for the scheme but noted that a lot of detail would be required at the planning stage.

Councillor Don Alexander moved, seconded by Councillor Paula O'Rourke and upon being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED (10 for, 0 against – unanimous of those present) – that permission is granted for Cycle Sunday to submit a Planning Application for their proposed scheme.



14 Any Other Business

Downs Football – Requests Concerning Costs

Jonathon Baker advised the Committee of the following requests concerning costs that had been received:

- (1) Students Union – a COVID-19 clause stating that the Downs Committee will not charge for days allocated to play which do not take place
- (2) Downs League – that, since for the first time since 1905 the league had not finished a season, its fee is reduced accordingly. Whilst payment for those matches that had already taken place had been made, they requested that payment for the remainder totalling £11,000 could be waived

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

RESOLVED (10 for, 0 against unanimously):

- (1) that the Downs Football League receives a rebate for the remainder of its matches in 2019/20 that it is unable to pay due to COVID-19**
- (2) That the Student Union Inter Mural League and Downs League receive a clause in their contracts stating that “In the event of the COVID-19 pandemic continuing, they will no longer be charged for days that they are unable to play for 2020/21 football season”**

Action: Jonathon Baker

There were no other items of business for discussion.

15 Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting as the Annual General Meeting of the Downs Committee and would be held at 2pm on Monday 16th November 2020.

Meeting ended at 3.40 pm

CHAIR _____



Downs Committee Summary of Events & Finance Sub-Group Meeting Wednesday 28th October 2020

Members:

Ross Ancell - Merchant Venturer (Master and Chair)
Councillor Peter Abraham
Jonathon Baker - Merchant Venturer
Councillor Barry Clark
Peter Rilett – Merchant Venturer
Tim Ross – Merchant Venturer

Bristol City Council Officers:

Amanda Sharpe – Events Officer, Bristol City Council
Jonathan James – Head of Parks, Bristol City Council
Jeremy Livitt – Democratic Services Officer, Bristol City Council

Observer

Gillian Camm – Merchant Venturer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Don Alexander and Councillor Paula O'Rourke and from Ben Skuse (Downs Maintenance Manager) and Kevin Jay (Finance Team, BCC).

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 26th February 2020

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Events and Finance Sub-Committee of 9th September 2020 be confirmed as a correct record of the discussion.

Matters Arising

Car Parking on the Downs – Tim Ross provided an update on the Downs Committee's defence of the Judicial Review from Downs for People.

Payment of the Car Parking Contract – It was agreed that details of the outstanding payments should be provided by Bristol City Council's Finance Team to enable Peter Rilett and Councillor Peter Abraham to discuss with the zoo the potential deferment of the existing payment for the zoo car parking contract.

3. Events Update

Breaking Bread

Tom Paine (Breaking Bread) attended the meeting to report on the situation concerning this event and provide details of future suggestions for it in 2021.

Tom Paine made the following points:

- Breaking Bread would not be able to continue any longer in 2020 due to the limitations of the weather, ongoing maintenance issues and the uncertainty caused by the worsening of the situation in Bristol from the increase in cases in COVID 19
- He thanked members for all their support for this project
- The overwhelming response from customers and members of the public had been positive
- The event had employed a lot of staff directly and indirectly
- The 2020 event had provided a very solid model which provided food and entertainment, including jazz and acoustic music, singer/songwriters as well as comedians and entertainers
- Members noted details of a draft proposal for the event in 2021 starting in March/April including a provisional site map
- A full licence application would be submitted in due course and would be subject to consultation with stakeholders.
- It was hoped that the 2021 event could be paired with the one city economy plan

In response to members' questions, Tom Paine made the following comments:

- Whilst one person had raised concerns about the event's impact on surrounding restaurants and cafes near the Downs, there had been no direct complaints from any nearby restaurants
- The event organisers were erring on the side of caution for next year. In view of the need to ensure all such events maintained proper social distancing and complied with necessary health and safety requirements, high capacity events would be very challenging to operate in 2021. In addition, since it took approximately 6 months to plan such events, this was a further difficulty for large events

Amanda Sharpe made the following additional comments:

- If this event took place in 2021, it would be part of a very different programme to previous years due to the ongoing situation with COVID-19

- If Breaking Bread was held on this site at the proposed time, it would have implications for Funderworld if that event took place next year. It was noted that Funderworld had been unable to hold a COVID secure event in 2020
- The Showground site was a possible alternative option for Breaking Bread in 2021 subject to other events from previous years such as the Foodies Festival. Comparisons of income and practicality for these events would need to be made

Members made the following additional comments:

- Comments from local residents had been entirely positive. Holding this event in 2021 would be important to make people feel comfortable about visiting restaurants and cafes in future, particularly if the existing restrictions continued into next year
- There would need to be a fresh look at events on the Downs in 2021. An event such as this was a good idea but could be hosted on another site if that provided greater flexibility, particularly if the Breaking Bread event lasted for a number of months
- The Foodies Festival could be requested to discuss with Breaking Bread the possibility of combining their events for the time being

Amanda Sharpe provided an update on other events for 2021:

- Until late Spring 2021, it would not be possible to resume normal event activities on the Downs
- Mass music festivals such as Team Love and Pride were unlikely to be held for the foreseeable future due to the ongoing COVID restrictions and the long lead in time needed to plan for such festivals (ie 6 months)

Circus

- Following an agreed extension, the Downs Circus had operated at less than half capacity. This event had reduced audiences during weekdays but attendances were much higher at weekends.
- 2021 was the final year for the Circus being provided under the existing contract

Amanda Sharpe indicated that she would speak to the Safety Advisory Group and report back on their findings for this event.

Members agreed that the SAG needed a de-brief with the Circus before the event could be approved for 2021.

Pride and Bristol Downs Festival

Analysis was required of the viability of these events to take place in 2021 and also of the fee structure.

March for Men

- This was a proposed one day event for early March 2021 for Prostate Cancer Research that had taken previously taken place at Blaise.
- Since it was a charity event, there was a proposed reduced fee

Comedy Garden

- This event had previously been held at Queen Square.
- A comedy event had previously been held there in September with appropriate seating arrangements and had been very successful
- It attracted a mixed and well-behaved audience
- The event included national and international comedy performers with food

Outdoor Cinema – 5th to 8th August 2021

This event had operated successfully elsewhere in the city.

Smoke and Fire Festival

- This was a proposed new event for the city which had operated elsewhere for the last three to four years
- Officers were concerned about the operation of a barbecue event on the Downs which usually generated a lot of mess and would have a greater impact on a grass site
- This was also proposed to be a large-scale event involving 15,000 to 18,000 people

Wedding Photos

- This event would involve birds of prey
- Whilst there was no Event Management Plan required, a risk assessment and insurance documents would need to be provided

Any large events would require a bond which the Parks team would arrange with the organisers.

Investigations had been made to assess whether a theatre show could be provided on the Downs. However, this was not practical at the moment. Arts organisations had been approached but had expressed a huge reluctance to operate such an event at the moment.

Members made the following comments:

- Smoke and Fire – the proposed date clashed with the Foodies Festival and involved a large barbecue. Since under existing byelaws these were banned on the Downs, this needed to be considered carefully as it could create a lot of damage. An alternative park might be a better option for this proposed event
- Fees – these needed to reflect the fact that events on the Downs normally attracted a premium, notwithstanding that due to the restrictions caused by COVID, these would be slightly
- It was noted that there were many existing organisations which operated on the Downs and were not currently required to pay a fee for doing so. Officers should make investigations into whether a fee could be obtained from them which could help fund an additional post on the Downs, equivalent to the former Downs Ranger post.

Action:

- (1) That a Breaking Bread event for 2021 be approved in principle subject to negotiations on the issues indicated above**
- (2) That it is noted that no mass event is likely to be able to take place on the Downs for the foreseeable future due to COVID-19 restrictions and the timescale involved in setting up such an event**
- (3) That agreement be made in principle for the March for Men, Comedy Garden and Outdoor Cinema events at the proposed fees and terms set out above**
- (4) That agreement is made for the proposed Wedding Photos to take place with no fee but subject to the above conditions**
- (5) That due to concerns about it being a Barbecue event which could cause ground damage to grass and which was not permitted under the existing Downs byelaws, the proposed Smoke and Fire Event is not granted permission**

Amanda Sharpe to take the above action

4. Finance Update

In the absence of Kevin Jay, no comments were made on this report. It was noted that he was available to respond separately to any questions from Sub-Group members by e-mail.

5 Any Other Business

It was noted that this was the last meeting of the Sub-Group that Tim Ross would be attending. Tim was thanked for the work he had carried out in his role over the last few years.

Members of the Sub-Group also thanked Ross Ancell who would be standing down as Master after this meeting.

6 Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of this Sub-Group had not yet been fixed but subject to approval of 2021 Downs Committee dates at the AGM on 16th November 2021, it had been provisionally scheduled for 2pm on Wednesday 13th January 2021.

The meeting ended at 3.30pm

REPORT OF THE DOWNS MAINTENANCE MANAGER

Autumn has arrived with some high rainfall periods recently and we are back to managing ground conditions and worrying about where we can and can't go without causing too much damage or getting stuck!

Daily duties continue pertaining to the goats and litter. As we start to have two matches of football per week now the weekly pitch mark becomes a must do and football pitch maintenance activities become ever more important to maintain a decent playing surface. Tractor mounted chaining and spiking activities will be carried out as required across the winter and we plan to add some sand to help with drainage.

As mentioned Bristol University are back playing on a Wednesday afternoon now. They have adjusted their KO times to ensure that they are all free of the pitch by the time my team arrive to dismantle the kit and they, like Bristol Downs league, are using anti-bacterial spray liberally on balls and posts etc., pre, during and post-match.

For now both football seasons are going well. As with everything else right now we'll watch this space for changes and keep being flexible in our thinking.

So having firmly parked the grass maintenance for another season now, we pick up the Downs scrub management plan for a sixth winter. For this year I have identified the heavily scrubbed area between our depot and Worrall Rd. We have not done anything in this area so far and there are plenty of examples where we are losing grassland areas to scrub. The aim will be to open up areas to a regular mowing regime again next summer and holding back and halting the non-stop encroachment onto the limestone grassland habitat that the plan tries to maintain.

In this period we intend to install 4 new bins and 3 memorial benches have been bought. The bins will replace some of our oldest stock that are in need of replacement. The new bins will be installed on the same spot. They will be situated largely in the area between Sea Walls and Birdwatchers and one on Observatory Hill.

Leaf collecting on the Promenade area will commence once all the leaves have blown down. And similarly as the leaves fall and accumulate we will keep footpaths clear in this Autumn period.

The popularity of having a memorial bench at the Downs never seems to abate, and as mentioned 3 will be installed this winter, bringing in a revenue of £2,400.

We will, once again this winter try to keep the Giraffes at Wildplace in Evergreen Oak. This species (tree !) has taken over large parts of the zoo banks and other parts of the Downs over the years. It is not a native species to the UK and due to nature of the way it grows and spreads can negatively impact the limestone grassland habitat that we try to protect at the Downs. As such we identify trees to remove and Wildplace staff come and take it away to feed Giraffes over the winter months. The evergreen nature of this Oak meaning it has foliage throughout the winter.

The Circus Montini has left site after a short extension. Due to the work that goes on throughout the year to manage this area to be fit for events the site held up really well. I had good communication throughout with the organiser about the ground conditions and they managed to get off in dry conditions and the site will require minimal work to recover.

Breaking bread should be free of site around November 13th. Again I have been in regular dialogue with Team Love during the period that they have been at the Downs. The extended duration and the nature of the water tower site into the Autumn will inevitably means a process of ground work that

will start as soon as they leave and end with the first event on that site next year. We will work with the conditions and our expertise to provide a site fit for next years programme of events at the Downs, whatever that might be.

Downs Committee –16th November 2020

Events Update

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

Breaking Bread:

The project started in late July and organisers have had just over 3 months of successful trading. They have decided to close as of November 8th due to the deteriorating weather conditions and difficulties in maintaining the venues and the site at this time of year. The potential threat of Covid breakouts in Bristol have also been taken into consideration in reaching this decision.

The project has proved very popular in the city and has provided employment in the local hospitality and events industries during a very difficult time. The organisers would like to thank the Downs Committee for their support in enabling the project to go ahead. They have taken a proposal to the Downs (Events & Finance) sub-group to re-start the project in 2021.

Downs Circus:

This is year 2 of the contract with Tony Hopkins Entertainments who brought Circus Montini to the Downs from 23rd September until 18th October. Capacity in the big top had to be reduced significantly from 1,000 to 390 in order to observe social distancing requirements. The circus was initially due to finish on 11th October but following cancellation of their booking in Bath (due to flooding); the Downs (Events & Finance) sub-group permitted them to stay on for a further week. As they had to operate at greatly reduced capacity due to Covid, this supported them in generating a further week of ticket sales.

3. 2021 Events:

As reported at the last meeting, we've received a number of requests for events wanting 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

We've also received requests for new events wanting to operate on the Downs in 2021; Breaking Bread, March for Men, the Comedy Garden and Adventure Cinema.

The events programme for 2021 is still being considered by the Events & Finance Sub-Group and at this stage, final dates and fees have not been agreed.



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 23.10.20) £	Variance £	
<u>Income</u>				
Total Income	350,260	268,316	(81,944)	Deficit
<u>Expenditure</u>				
Total Expenditure	(350,260)	(558,119)	(207,859)	Overspend
FINAL NET OUTTURN	0	(289,803)	(289,803)	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 and an estimate of potential legal costs associated with the defence of a Judicial Review. The deficit will be met from prior year underspends. The 2019-20 accounts are still to be formally approved.



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

Document is Restricted

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

Document is Restricted

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

Document is Restricted