

So, members, just about at the finish of the 2024 Summer period, heading now into Autumn.

As ever the summer period generates a lot of work. A lot of hard work litter picking, emptying bins, and towing waste trailers to the transfer station. But we have made it through once more! As a team we do generally breathe a sigh of relief and look ahead to days that are not so dominated by clearing up in all its forms!. In amongst all of the daily clearing up we have found some time to keep the grass mown also. But increasingly the old picture of lots of mowing and some litter is flipping to lots of litter and some grass mowing. But as a team working in a public space we can do no more than to react to what is happening and react to how the public is using a space, even if it is sometimes negative usage.

Unfortunately, this 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the Summer has been made even more problematic by the frequent presence of the GRT community at the Downs. We are still dealing with the aftermath of our last encampment in terms of green waste that was dumped. As a result of the many cash in hand garden jobs offered to our occupants whilst they were here. I would love householders to ask themselves the question “where will all of that green waste removed from my garden be taken? “. Because the answer very clearly is it will be dumped in a public space of recreation. Thus, having a negative impact on people’s ability to enjoy a green space amenity. Not to mention the Flora and Fauna present in that green space.

So we have been busy!  
Since the last report to members, we have had

Ladyboys of Bangkok  
Bristol Race for Life  
Bristol Pride  
Funderworld Summer  
Feast on it  
Massive Attack  
Forwards  
Bristol University student welcome fair

Very obviously a lot of event activity in a 14 week period. This generates a lot of workload, both in this period and throughout the rest of the year also to ensure the sites are fit for purpose. We have just the circus now and that will complete 2024 events programme at the Downs.

All of this is fitted in around our daily goat monitoring and facilities unlocking and locking. The 2024 annual haycut has also been carried and went well. Apart from one the bales spontaneously combusting and needing fire brigade attendance !. Throughout August as well we mark back onto the ground the lines for the 25 football pitches that we’ll use in the 24/25 season. Bristol Downs League have begun their season. Bristol University SU are scheduled to begin on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

As we look ahead to Autumn and Winter work programming, maintenance pruning of shrubs and trees within the old zoo car park area looms large. A piece of work that until this Autumn has never been in our work programming. Not since about 1940 or something anyway !. So we will have resources in there for a period of time probably pre-Christmas. This will ensure that whatever the plans may be for the longer term use of this area we are maintaining it to keep it viable for any number of potential eventualities !.

Thanks as ever to FODAG volunteers and community payback teams. Also thanks if you are one of the growing numbers of the public who take it upon themselves to help us keep this wonderful space that is the Downs looking wonderful. Despite the many obvious challenges to this at the moment it is great to see, and myself and the team really appreciate your efforts.

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