

THE DOWNS COMMITTEE

Clifton and Durdham Downs (Bristol) Act 1861

Downs Committee Meeting
23rd January 2017 at 2.00 pm
City Hall

Present:

BCC -

Lord Mayor Councillor Jeff Lovell (Chair)

Councillor Peter Abraham

Councillor Donald Alexander

Councillor Nicola Beech

Councillor Barry Clark

Merchant Venturers -

Cullum McAlpine – Master

Jonathon Baker

Anthony Brown

Francis Greenacre

Charles Griffiths

James McArthur

Tim Ross

Also in attendance -

Gemma Dando – Neighbourhoods

Sarah Tyler – Parks

Melissa Inman- Events

Victoria Holden – Site Permissions

Ben Skuse – Downs Maintenance

Beck Belfin – Parks Development

Norman Cornthwaite – Democratic Services

Mandy Leivers – Avon Gorge and Downs Biodiversity Education Officer

Robert Westlake – Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge (FOD+AG)

Bryan Carroll – Bristol Zoo

Tom Hedges – Bristol Zoo

14. Apologies

There were none.

15. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Resolved – that the Minutes be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

16. Declarations of Interest

None were received.

17. Public Forum

The following Statements were received and noted:

1. Richard Bland – Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Programme
2. M R Andrews – Music Event
3. Michael Andrews – Music Event
4. Kean Seager – Music Event
5. Carol Coles – Music Event
6. Vince and Mary Watts – Music Event
7. Nik Beatty – Music Event
8. Stephanie French – Music Event
9. Steve Small – Music Event
10. Chris Lewis – Music Event
11. Pat Arnold – Music Event
12. 12. Ken Edwards – Music Event
13. David Redgewell – Public Transport
14. Allan Moore – Music Event

A copy of the Statements is contained in the Minute Book.

18. Finance Report

Gemma Dando introduced the report and summarised it for everyone. She confirmed that there are examples of self-financing parks and other open spaces. A lot of work was required on the project and consultation would take place on the proposals that emerge. Concerns were expressed about the lack of information in the report and timescales involved in formulating proposals for savings. It was noted that the Council would set its Budget in February and that the Medium Term Financial Plan would be agreed in June. It was noted that the Downs is a City Wide resource and that that any proposals concerning its finances should be consulted upon City Wide.

It was agreed that the word “status” should be removed from the third recommendation in the report as this may cause confusion – the status of the Downs is set by the 1861 Act.

Resolved – (1) that the contents of the report be noted;

- (2) that an additional finance meeting to discuss the contents of this report be arranged; and**
- (3) that a report on the Downs Committee be presented to the next meeting in April including a suggestion of an operating framework and potential reduction in meetings.**

19. Downs Management and Events Report

Victoria Holden, Melissa Inman and Sarah Tyler introduced the report and summarised it for everyone.

It was noted that revised Fees and Charges have been agreed with effect from 1st April 2017. When setting Fees and Charges for any events there is a need to be mindful of what the market will bear. The Events Team is well aware of the Downs Committee's wish to maximise income from all events especially one as large as the Music Event applied for by Team Love.

It was noted that the Sea Walls is the best location for the Music Event as the drainage is good and there is less disruption to residents.

Although concerns were raised about noise levels at the Music Event that took place in September 2016, it was noted that the permitted level of 70 db's had not been exceeded during the Event. It was suggested that the possibility of reducing the noise level to 65db's be explored with Team Love and this was agreed.

Councillor Abraham raised a number of concerns about the Events Sub Group's recommendation to approve the application - including the applicant being in attendance at the Meeting on 21st December 2016, noise levels, the location of the Event, the image it projects of the Downs and the disruption caused before and after the Event - and felt that the Committee should reject the application. It was noted however that although Councillor Abraham had attended the Meeting of the Events Sub Group on 21st December 2016, he had not made these concerns known at the Meeting.

It was noted that the number of letters of support for last year's event from local residents exceeded the number of letters of protest from local residents about the event.

The Committee, whilst noting the concerns of the residents, accepted the recommendation of the Events Sub Group. The Committee was satisfied that the Sea Walls is the most appropriate location for the Event, that the prescribed noise levels were not exceeded at last year's event (but was happy to explore the possibility of the level being reduced to 65 db's), noted that acoustic adjustments would be made to benefit the residents of Seawalls Road and that there was a lot of support for the event. The Committee also noted that any permission it gives for the event is subject to the applicants obtaining a Licence from the Licensing Authority.

Resolved – (1) Event (see 3c): that permission to be given for the 2017 Team Love proposed music concert at The Downs Sea Walls location subject to a site fee and date being agreed - as recommended by the Events Sub Group (Appendix A), and the possibility of reducing the noise level to 65dbs being explored with Team Love; (Councillor Abraham voted against this resolution);

and

(2) Management Plan (see 4d): that the plan be circulated to the management plan sub group for comment before being sent to full Downs Committee in April for approval to then go to public consultation.

20. Bristol Zoo Gardens – Use of Land Off Ladies Mile

Bryan Carroll and Tom Hedges introduced this report and summarised it for everyone.

It was noted that the extension of parking on the Downs from 4 to 5 hours brought it in line with RPZ around the Zoo.

Resolved – that the report be noted.

21. Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project Annual Report 2016

Becky Belfin introduced the report and summarised it for everyone.

Mandy Leivers summarised the main achievements of the Education Programme.

Resolved – that the report be noted.

22. Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge (FOD+AG)

Robert Westlake introduced the report and summarised it for everyone.

Resolved – that the report be noted.

23. Next Meeting

Monday 10th April 2017 at 2.00 pm in City Hall.

Meeting ended at 4.30 pm.

(Chair)