



Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge.

September 2018

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

FOD+AG remains committed to its core values to represent legitimate users of the Downs and to support the City Council and the Downs committee in the good governance of the Downs.

FOD+AG has had a busy late summer with a comprehensive range of events and activities.

At the start of September FOD+AG members were on hand to man the FOD+AG stand in support of the Bee and Pollination Festival held at the Botanic Gardens.

Earlier this month Ben Skuse and FOD+AG member Martin Collins hosted an informative evening to discuss the history, progress and the future of the goat project in the Gully.

FOD+AG were also on hand with volunteers at Cycling Sunday on the 16<sup>th</sup>

Later this week we will be hosting one of our ever popular FODAG Social evenings. The event which is at Café Retreat will kick off with a walk and talk led by Francis Creenacre.

Throughout the summer months FOD+AG have led numerous Downs related walks and talks as well as supporting Mandy with her frequent activities.

This summer we introduced a painting and drawing event on the Downs. With trained artists on hand to assist this proved to be an extremely popular activity and is a project we are looking to develop.

Later this year we will be again attending the Freshers Fair with our display stand. We hope to gain support and increase membership from within the student community.

Once a month FOD+AG volunteers organise Conservation Sundays. These events tackle an agreed beneficial project.

Deep litter cleaning parties will once again be out and about this winter on the Downs removing rubbish from some of the less accessible areas.

Other key events planned include the Downs Star Party with experts on hand to observe the night sky.

A full list of all our events and activities are available on our website ***www.fodag-bristol.weebly.com*** We are also on Facebook and Instagram.

FOD+AG members frequently refer to us on matters of concern. Most recently we have received inquiries regarding the proliferation of assorted camper vans and caravans pitched up along Parry's Lane. Whilst remaining conscious of the plight of the homeless it does appear that little is being done to resolve the situation. One suggestion is that if the five-hour parking restriction was extended to all parts of the Downs then penalties could be applied.

Similarly, we field questions regarding the recent activities of travellers on the Downs who seem to come and go with impunity and extend their legal entitlement to the limit.

Concerns are raised about the cost to the overburdened taxpayers in following the legal process only to see it flouted with a quick return to another location.

FOD+AG members have indicated mixed support for the proposed Seawalls café and toilet proposal. Some are supportive in that the development will be an asset to the Downs and will sustain the future cost of toilet provision. Others have expressed views that the development is an unacceptable intrusion into this iconic landscape and falls short of the original proposal previously identified in the Downs Management Plans for a purpose-built visitor centre.