



Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge

January 2019

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 is committed to representing our members and all legitimate users of the Downs and to support the Downs Committee and the City Council in the good governance of the Downs.

In November our members gathered at Redland Bowling club for the Annual General Meeting.

As dictated by our constitution the committee stood down and agreed to stand for re-election for the coming year. FODAG members appointed the new committee unopposed.

The formal part of the evening generated some lively debate and concluded with presentations from our two guest speakers.

Following an addition to our constitution members agreed to the creation of the role of Honorary President. This allowed the chair to propose that this title be offered to retiring chair Jack Penrose.

The Star Party planned for December was unable to take place due to heavy cloud cover.

A FODAG member has asked for support for a proposal to improve road safety provision at Stoke Road. This would include traffic calming measures and the construction of a traffic island located near to Café Retreat. FODAG recognises that crossing the road at this point can be hazardous particularly for older citizens and parents with pushchairs.

The Downs supervisor has indicated that there is some minor damage to the roof of the Haven shelter. FODAG members will investigate and if possible, repair the roof as part of our winter maintenance programme. Members have also been supporting the homeless lady that uses the shelter and over Christmas checked on her welfare and ensured she was adequately supplied.

Members continue with regular winter projects including deep litter clearance, goat monitoring and conservation projects.

As discussed at the November meeting FODAG will arrange for all members of the Downs Committee to receive electronic copies of our quarterly Newsletter.

Should any member of the Downs Committee be inclined to contribute an article for publication submissions would be most welcome.

FODAG member Paul Wood led a walk and talk to discover the source of the New Hotwell.

This year we are planning a Downs themed photographic competition. We are in discussion with AXA for the possible use of their office building for exhibiting submitted work.

During the coming year it is our intention to agree a set of outcomes which will more clearly define our role as an organisation. The intention is to consider how best to support the Downs Committee going forward and will take account of possible rapidly changing external factors.

Earlier in the month FODAG members gathered for a memorial service at [Clifton College Chapel](#). The service was to celebrate the life of our vice chair Richard Bland.

FODAG along with other groups that Richard was associated with will be considering a way to recognise the contribution Richard made, not just to the Downs but to the City.

FODAG has commented in support of the planning application for the Circular Road Café development but with some reservations. Members have raised concerns about overall design in relation to the status of the area, the choice of appropriate materials, security at night, opening hours and the safe operation of the upper deck.

As an organisation dedicated to the preservation of the Downs we are pleased to see that the William Hind listed drinking fountain is to be incorporated into the overall design

FODAG acknowledges the requirement to generate income to sustain future activities including the maintenance of the public toilet.

At the last meeting FODAG expressed concern that the listed urinal at Blackboy Hill had been closed and urged the Committee to reinstate this important facility as a matter of urgency.

Can the Committee confirm that there is still an intention to do so and if so when?

