

Downs Maintenance Report

High Summer on the Downs means two things, litter and grass. It makes up most of our time at this time of year and is a big task trying to keep both in check.

Since the last report Funderworld and Foodies Festival have been and gone. Both experienced largely dry fine weather so their impact on the ground was minimal as compared to last year. We now get some time to work on the Water Tower site as the events upcoming are on different parts of the Downs. Events ahead are the Lady Boys of Bangkok, Race for Life, Tough Mudder, Bristol Pride and the Downs Festival. I will continue working with event organisers of all five events to help ensure they get on and off smoothly.

I always like to point out to members and especially new members, at this time of year how lovely our wildflower meadows are looking. I recommend members take a look before they are cut in a few weeks from now.

The new ice cream concessionaire is operating. It is nice to have an ice cream provision at the Sea Walls that is not sat there pumping out diesel smoke all day. So that's a big improvement. Some members may be aware that the café retreat has new owners. I had a chance to meet with Nigel and Melanie and will continue to communicate regularly with them on many aspects of Downs life that may impact on them.

Speaking of the Café, with the addition of new No Parking signs we look to have curtailed the unofficial parking that was happening there previously. I will continue to monitor this as it represented a clear health and safety risk due to its proximity to a main cycle route.

Unfortunately we are still being subject to regular invasions by Travellers. Although our process for removal takes longer than most people are happy with and it is very frustrating to see more return a few weeks later, largely we are keeping on top of the situation between my team, Bristol City Council, and Bristol Waste Company. The biggest problem for us is the fly tipping that we have to dispose of when they leave. Notwithstanding the cost, this is very time consuming at a time of year when we are already very busy. Bristol City Council has begun to consider other options around a blanket Parks (citywide) or Downs wide injunction. This would make it illegal for travellers to come on but even then we would still be reliant on the police using their powers. As one of the sites within the city that currently suffers most from this problem I will keep the committee abreast of developments.

Within Bristol City Council Parks the area manager (North) post is currently vacant as John Williams has left his post. This position is one that line manages the post that I currently occupy so again I will keep the committee updated with any developments around any new appointment.

As the committee is well aware discussions around two proposed cycle provisions at the Downs are ongoing.