

AGENDA ITEM 13 – DOWNS MAINTENANCE REPORT

As we hit the Autumn and move into Winter the teams focus can finally move away from a very prolonged season of grass cutting and litter clearance. This allows for some of the maintenance jobs that have occurred over the Summer to be rectified. New bench installations, bench and litter bin repairs have all been carried out in recent weeks. Daily Goat monitoring and weekly pitch marking continues. The Bristol University intramural league football has now begun on Wednesday afternoons. We will now commence our 4th Winter with the Downs scrub management plan. This process of scrub removal ensures that we are halting the loss of limestone grassland areas of the Downs that are threatened by never ending encroachment.

On the 19th and 20th of October, Bridge Valley Rd and one lane (inbound) of the Portway were closed to traffic to allow for a team of industrial rope access technicians to safely bring down some large Sandstone blocks (up to 70 tonnes) that were displaced and at risk of falling onto the highway below. Members may be aware that unfortunately, due to the difficult nature of this work, the works did overrun slightly into Monday morning which caused a few network issues. At this stage in the process WSP geologists are happy that for now the imminent risk of rock fall potentially onto Bridge Valley Rd and the Portway has been removed. Further works have been scheduled for Jan/Feb whereby the build-up of fallen rocks in to the catch bund area need to be removed to maintain the effective function of the bund in protecting against further falls. After that and in the longer term a system of bolting and netting as seen in other parts of the gorge will have to be considered to manage the risk of this particular area of the Avon Gorge at the bottom of Bridge Valley Rd next to the traffic lights.

At some point overnight on October 9th we had a vehicle lose control and crash into a number of the wooden bollards at Sea Walls. I have arranged for Ashcroft's building services to replace the damaged bollards. The cost of this is circa £2000. This has come from the Downs cost code that this committee manages I do intend though via Bristol City Council insurance services and my police incident log number to make a claim against this persons insurance to recoup these costs.

With the exit of the Bristol Student Union Welcome Fair and the Circus from the Downs, that is it for 2019 events at the Downs. Both events did suffer from prolonged and at times intense downpours which rendered the ground waterlogged in places. Subsequently both events have caused quite a lot of damage to the ground in their egress. The process of getting those sites fit for events next year has already begun and will be ongoing across the Winter as conditions allow. Our aim is that when Funderworld arrive once more next Spring we will have usable and fit surfaces for them to come onto.

The two vacant positions within Bristol Parks which I have been reporting in recent months have now been filled. As of the 11th Nov Jon James has started as interim head of parks. As of Nov 1st Sarah Blazier has started as area manager (North) parks.

On Thursday 24th October I attended a residents meeting at Henleaze Library. The meeting was called for by local residents who are concerned about the proliferation of van dwelling on Parry's Lane slip road. Allied to this they are concerned about traveller encampments becoming common on the Downs in recent years. The associated anti-social behaviour and the length of time it can take for Bristol City Council to remove them from the land is also a concern for them. This committee is likely

to hear more from this going forward, particularly in terms of approval/or not of proposals to install target hardening in certain areas. This could include fencing, large boulders or long stretches of wooden bollards. I will bring forward any proposals to the committee as I get them.