

## **SUMMARY PREPARED FOR THE DOWNS COMMITTEE**

Notes of Events & Finance Sub Group Meeting - 10th July 2020

Members:

Ross Ancell - Merchant Venturer (Master and Chair)

Councillor Don Alexander

Jonathon Baker - Merchant Venturer

Peter Rilett – Merchant Venturer

Tim Ross – Merchant Venturer

Bristol City Council Officers:

Kevin Jay – Finance

Jeremy Livitt – Democratic Services

Ann-Marie Leighton – Events Officer

Ben Skuse – Grounds Supervisor

Jonathan James – Head of Parks

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for this meeting.

### **2. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 26th February 2020**

**RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Events and Finance Sub-Committee of 15th January 2020 be confirmed as a correct record of the discussion.**

## Matters Arising

The Committee raised the question of the release of reserves since the 2019/20 accounts were not in deficit and noting that this option was available to the Committee.

The Sub-Group noted the view of the Merchant Venturers that in accordance with the Downs Act, Bristol City Council was responsible for providing the necessary funding for provision of services on the Downs.

It was noted that the Downs Committee account was not closed, as they had not been approved by the Downs Committee, but that calculations for Bristol City Council accounts concerning the balance and the impact on the Downs account needed to be fixed within the next month, ideally.

## **3. Events Update**

Ann-Marie Leighton introduced this report and made the following comments:

- The Mayor had announced that no events would be taking place until at least August 2020 in terms of public safety
- Performing acts will legally be able to operate from 11th July 2020, including outdoor events such as tented circuses subject to social distancing and risk assessments
- More guidance had been received for hospitality. An Events and Festivals Working Group had been set up consisting of Ann-Marie Leighton, Melissa Inman and key local events professionals to transfer this guidance to Bristol
- Links were being provided to any advice that could help in any assessment and an accreditation system was being considered to confirm if an event was COVID-19 safe

## Funderworld

- This event had not been able to proceed earlier in the year. Whilst there was interest in holding the event later in the year, there was not yet any

proposal or suggested alternative dates. In addition, guidance had not yet been provided for roving funfairs

- Discussions had been held with the events organisers concerning limiting attendees on site to 30 people at a time
- The key issues were the timescale and potential clashes of sites with other proposed events

Other Sub-group members made the following comments and Ann-Marie Leighton responded as appropriate:

- September was the latest practical month in which to hold such an event. It was noted that this was still possible to achieve but was an extremely tight timescale
- There was already an agreement in place to operate the circus if possible so this would have to be given priority in the event of any clash

#### Students Union Event

The key staff involved had been furloughed and it remained uncertain if this event would proceed.

#### Race for Life

The event would take place on either 13th, 20th or 27th September on a Sunday. Details of the site fee were provided.

It was noted that, since this event was scheduled for a Sunday, football could operate alongside the Race for Life Event.

Decision: The event be approved for 27th September 2020 to give the maximum flexibility with other events.

#### **Action: Ann-Marie Leighton**

#### Circus

The organisers were keen to proceed. Recent guidance related to tented circuses. A draft risk assessment had been produced by the organisers and new

arrangements for seating had been provided. Details of the site fee were provided.

**Action: Ann-Marie Leighton to check details of the contract with the organisers and to produce a grid of all current proposed events including lead time and finances.**

#### Team Love

Tom Paine and Dave Harvey outlined their proposal to the Sub-Group and made the following points:

- The main issue for restaurants is the size and those areas that people can sit in. In particular for smaller organisations, the size of the kitchen was problematic
- The first phase involved two restaurants and two garden areas. It was hoped that there would be second and third phases.
- Overviews had been provided and as much initial preparation as was possible had taken place. This would form part of a bigger Safety Management Plan
- Tables and reservations would be made in advance
- Orders would either be made in advance or through another method to avoid contact with staff
- Measures will be put in place to isolate any individual who contracted COVID-19 without closing the site down. If the event was held in the area to the north of the Water Tower, it should enable a second and third opening
- Parking should be available along Ladies Mile. Discussions would take place with Ben Skuse and/or the Events Management Team
- The detailed timeline was presented to the Sub-Group. It was noted that there would be discussions with local residents commencing 20th August 2020 as had happened in the past. The announcement of the event would be made during the week commencing Monday 20th July

2020, reservations allowed from Friday 24th July 2020 and an open test run on 30th July. The event would open to the public on 31st July 2020.

- If support was provided at today's meeting, a premises licence would be submitted on Monday 13th July 2020
- This proposal was part of an attempt to support the Bristol Food Industry and community, as well as young people who were being disproportionately affected by this crisis
- A foundation and/or fund was being created to support this
- An advisory Board would be set up involving the charity sector and business sector
- The event would also focus on sourcing and sustainability and investigate the economic benefit that could be achieved.
- The organisation would work alongside Bristol One City and the Bristol Gold Standard. A proportion of the operating profit would be ring fenced for site hire
- Details of the site hire were provided
- If the proposal was approved, a weekly or monthly update would be provided to the Sub-Group.

In response to Sub-Group members' questions, Team Love made the following points:

- Whilst members' concerns about adopting a proportion of operating profit rather than a fixed fee were acknowledged, the organisation was operating with fixed costs and infrastructure
- Team Love would be happy to move to an alternative site provided it was the same size as the existing one
- An application would be made for a music licence – for background music to start with
- A lot of work had been carried out to develop skills and provide benefits for young people. The organisation was keen to work with existing

initiatives in employment, training and work experience. The event would provide work experience in a number of areas such as management, health and safety and event production. It was acknowledged that further detail was required to set out how training would be targeted to achieve this

- The event was considering the possibility of using the Meal Deal
- The event would run from 31st July 2020 through to 6th November 2020 – the latter date included the dismantling of the site
- Raised wood would be used in conjunction with coconut matting for public areas. It was noted that coconut matting might not be appropriate for later in the year. An assessment of this was required as part of the Management Plan
- A biofuel generator was used for small events. There would be environmental challenges in some areas such as public transport
- There was enough parking in place for Phase 1
- If there was a requirement that parking is on roads as opposed to the Downs this would not be a deal breaker. It was noted that parking could operate on roads for Phase 1 with an assessment for Phase 2 and 3 as to whether or not this was difficult

The Sub-Group made the following points:

- Whilst the concept should be supported, the need for a reasonable return was important since other organisations would also be eager to use this space for their own events. Pubs were struggling at the moment and this event might affect them
- Since Funderworld was unlikely to proceed, the Team Love proposal was likely to take place on the previously agreed site

#### **Decision:**

- (1) The proposal was supported in principle but the Sub-Group would prefer a fixed fee and clarification concerning the length of time for the event**

**(2) That negotiations continue between the events team and Team Love with a proposal to be brought back to selected members of the Sub-Group to confirm whether or not the proposal can be approved.**

**Action: Ann-Marie Leighton**

#### **4. Finance Update**

Kevin Jay introduced this report and made the following comments:

- There was a potential £120,000 deficit for 2020/2021
- Salaries awaited a settlement on the pay award
- Repairs and Maintenance and Grounds Maintenance Costs were the same as last year
- Details of key potential areas of income were noted

Members of the Sub-Group made the following comments:

- The Society of Merchant Venturers (SMV) saw no justification for Business rates being applied to the Downs Committee. It seemed to be based on the view that the Downs Committee was now a commercial organisation but this was a misconception since it was operating under the Downs Act exactly as it had previously
- The SMV considered that the rock fall recorded in 2019/20 accounts should be listed under Bristol City Council land not SMV land.  
Negotiations were required in this area

**Decision: the Events and Finance Sub-Group seeks clarification as to whether or not the Downs Committee has now been classified as a commercial organisation and if so believes that this has been wrongly applied. The Downs Finance Officer (Kevin Jay) is instructed not to release funds for the business rate charge until this issue has been clarified**

**Action: Kevin Jay/Jonathan James**