



## **Report of the Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge.**

**January 24<sup>th</sup> 2022**

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

We remain committed to our core values to represent fairly all legitimate users of the Downs and to support the City Council and the Downs Committee in the good governance of the Downs.

The recent activities of the Friends group have been somewhat hampered by recent Covid related restrictions, particularly our ability hold meetings. Our AGM was cancelled but we have been able to complete the formal requirements of the organisation including confirming that current committee members who will serve for a further year. The FODAG committee has been further strengthened by the addition of two new committee members.

The restrictions have not completely halted all our activities. Important practical tasks have been undertaken or are underway. Throughout the winter up to twenty volunteers have regularly turned out to remove deep seated litter from less accessible areas of the Downs. The weekend goat monitoring continues and important work to complete the 'dead hedges' along Circular Road has been undertaken.

With the Downs Education Officer, the Downs supervisor and FODAG volunteers we led a party of Nordic walkers around the Downs to look at different areas of interest.

We have additional projects planned as the winter weather recedes.

FODAG representatives have attended consultation meetings to contribute and comment on proposals from Team Love on their aspirations for future Downs events. We have also met with the developers to raise concerns about

the old St. Christopher's school site. We acknowledge that strictly speaking the location is not part of the Downs but as near neighbours there is the potential for a negative impact, particularly the height of buildings, additional traffic, and removal of significant numbers of trees. We will be commenting on the Planning application.

FODAG notes and supports the renewal of the application for the demolition of the old Seawalls toilet block and the construction of the proposed café/public toilets. We hope that that this long-awaited initiative can become a reality sooner or later.

FODAG volunteers are planning to approach local stores and National supermarket chains to lobby for a change in policy regarding the sale of portable barbecue units.

Numerous FODAG members have expressed support for the Downs committee's promised Strategic Review. The question often asked is when will the Review be published? We would hope that progress can be made before the Lord Mayors tenure as Chair of the Downs committee expires.

As an organisation FODAG constantly keeps our own operation under review. To that end we will be conducting our own review of our current Action Plan. The intention is to ensure we remain relevant and up to date.

Robert Westlake.

Chairman

Robert Westlake

