

Downs Committee
Events & Finance Sub-Group Meeting Minutes
31st Aug 2022

Members:

David Freed (Chair)
Cllr Steve Smith
Cllr Jos Clark
Peter Rillett
Johnathan Baker
Patrick Despard

Officers:

Kevin Jay – Finance Officer
Ben Skuse – Grounds Supervisor
Stefan Edwards – Events Officer
Amy Rodwell – Democratic Services

Apologies:

Cllr Kye Dudd
Cllr Katy Grant

1. Minutes of previous meeting held on 8th June 2022

The Chair introduced the item and asked Members if they had any comments on the minutes of the previous meeting.

There was a discussion around outstanding actions from the previous meeting and the following points were noted:

- North Car Park lease – Action to be carried forwards. **ACTION: Democratic Services Officer to provide an update on the Lease on the North Car Park to members of the Sub-Group.**
- Charging for commercial operations on the Downs – The Downs supervisor provided a brief update on the work to date and the administration’s position on this topic citywide. He advised that the Parks Planning and Development Advisor had more information on commercial operations and would seek an update ahead of the next meeting. **ACTION: Grounds Supervisor to request an update on charges for commercial operations on the Downs and report back to the Sub-Committee at the next meeting.**

Resolved; That the minutes of the previous meeting on 8th June 2022 be approved as a correct record.

2. Finance update

The Finance Officer introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- The report shows the Downs forecast up to period 4 for the year 22/23.

- Additional columns had been added at the request of the Downs Committee to show the outturn for previous years, 20/21 and 21/22.
- Cleaning costs remain high.

Discussion points:

- There was a discussion around the high cleaning costs which were mostly as a result of having to pay staff overtime to work on weekends. The Finance Officer noted that there wasn't enough money in the budget to cover salaries for cleaning costs which had resulted in pressure on the budget.
- Members discussed the North Car Park and asked for more information on the charges for the Remainder of the lease. It was noted that there was already an action for the Democratic Services Officer to locate the car park lease so therefore, the Sub-Committee would subsequently have that information once shared.
- The Finance Officer noted that the totals relating to legal costs could be found in the report however, he was not able to report on legal officer time. This level of detail was hard to obtain as each officer was allocated multiple cases.
- There was a discussion around income relating to car parking charges and it was noted that Downs Committee colleagues would look at use of the North Car park including legal implications at the end of the Zoo's lease as part of a possible Task & Finish Group on section 4 of the Work Plan. It was noted that car parking charges apply at Ashton Court and Members asked for more information around the finances for this site. **ACTION: Grounds Supervisor to share the financial information relating parking charges at Ashton Court with the Sub-Committee.**
- It was noted that the possible income that could be generated from the car parking charges would depend on the access to parking on the nearby roads.
- Members discussed accessibility of the route from the car park to the Downs.
- There was a discussion around vehicle encampments and related policies as this was a regular occurrence on the Downs. It was noted that this was a criminal offence and people would usually move on when trespassing notices were issued.

3. Events update

The Events Officer introduced the report and gave a brief overview. Discussion points as follows:

- Members were provided with an update on the incident at the Adventure Cinema involving antisocial behaviour which resulted in the event organisers cancelling the remaining screenings.
- Event organisers advised at the event debrief that they hadn't contacted the Police as they thought their presence would make things worse visibly. Also, they thought they could handle the situation as antisocial behaviour had occurred at a previous location and was under control.
- It was noted that Forwards Festival had been invoiced and were due to pay ahead of the event.
- The Sub-Committee noted that the timely collection of funds for events was important and urged that event organisers are chased if they have not paid before the commencement of their events.
- It was noted that one of the Born Free Exhibition items had been stolen which organisers were concerned about.

- It was noted that Pride went well although one of the TV screens needed to be moved which was noted for next year.
- There was a discussion around the Suicide Prevention Charity and Members raised the need to check if volunteers are qualified to give advice.
- It was noted that Foodies Festival went well although there was some confusion around the site location when sorting the initial plans.

4. Maintenance update

The Grounds Supervisor gave a brief overview and advised that this report is usually presented at the Downs Committee public meetings where more detail would be provided.

5. AOB

An updated was provided on the issue around the local resident who had installed a private gravel driveway on what was thought to be Downs Committee owned land without permission. It was noted that this was currently being reviewed by the Property Team within Legal Services and once the ownership had been established, there would be a recommendation from the Sub-Committee to the Downs Committee to agree the instruction of Legal Services to resolve.

The Chair noted that a citizen had asked the Downs Committee if the funds raised from the sale of their book that had recently launched to go towards the improvement of the Stoke Road Toilets, which was to be discussed at the next Downs Committee meeting on 19th September 2022.

Close 3:35pm