

Downs Management Report – Downs Committee 19th September 2022

Ben Skuse, Area Parks Supervisor

2 heatwave periods accompanied by little to no rainfall saw the Downs change from green to brown very quickly after June's meeting.

Throughout these periods duties continued largely as normal, albeit at times the team adjusted their working hours starting earlier and finishing earlier to escape the hottest part of the day. Grass growth during this time virtually stopped.

Since the last meeting we have had 25 brass Lion sculptures put on the Downs at Sea Walls. 24 now, as unfortunately one was stolen. Also, disappointingly one of our events, Adventure Cinema had to be cancelled due to safety concerns relating to nearby travellers. We have had 2 occasions where travellers have accessed the Downs since the June meeting. On both occasions the team worked hard to clear up the site as soon as the travellers departed.

Members who visit the Downs regularly may notice that several visible gaps in both tree lines and canopy cover have appeared recently. This is the result of the beginning of widescale removal of the diseased Ash trees from the Downs. This work was carried out by the citywide tree contractors. Where gaps are on tree lines and avenues replacement spots have been put online for members of the public to sponsor trees.

We have had a successful hay cut which we had to bring forward due to the perceived risk of fires. During the hot period we had 2 situations whereby grass fires were set and the fire brigade had to attend. One of which was on the Sea Walls and within the site plan for Forwards. Thankfully the ground was not badly damaged, and we were able to sort it out satisfactorily before Forwards arrival.

As ever in August the main job is to re mark onto the ground our 25 football pitches for the upcoming BUSU and BDL seasons, commencing on Sept 10th.

As we move back to Autumn, we'll be continuing to carry out works as defined in the Downs scrub management plan for our 8th year.

Events still to come:

Bristol University student welcome fair

Circus Montini