

Downs Committee - 14th November 2022

Events Update

1. Events that have taken place since last Downs Committee

We have reached the end of the 2022 season, so no new events have taken place on the Downs since my last update.

2. Upcoming Events – 2023

The following events have expressed their intention to return to the Downs in 2022 (subject to site permissions). Note: these are the dates the events are 'live' there will be build and break period either side of each event. We have lost one food, one cinema and one comedy event from last years' schedule. The site permissions team are attempting to source appropriate replacement events wherever possible.

March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October
Funderworld 31 st March – 1 st May Water tower							
			Race for Life 25 th June Circular Road				
				Pride 8 th July Parrys Lane			
						Forwards 2 nd – 3 rd Sept Circular Road	
						Student Union event 22 nd Sept Parrys Lane	
						Circus 28 th September – 15 th October (provisional dates) Parrys Lane	

3. Complaints relating to events on the downs

There have been no additional complaints through the official council complaints system relating to events on the downs since my last report. We continue to be mindful of resident feedback when planning events on the downs.

4. Request for events team to look at ways to enhance the use of the Downs specifically for smaller events.

The site permissions team are in the process of revising their application process, with changes coming into effect for events in 2024. A key area of focus for this work is removing barriers for new event organisers and making it easier for smaller events to apply. This process will happen across the city, so should make it easier for small and community events to take place in all green spaces, including the Downs.

When event organisers apply to run an event in the city, they are asked to select their preferred locations. There is a need to offer a balanced programme of events across the city's parks and open spaces and sometimes there are capacity, scheduling or logistical issues preventing a location from being offered. However, wherever possible the site permissions team aim to give organisers one of their preferred sites. In order to attract more small events, it would be beneficial to proactively promote the Downs to potential new event organisers. The site permissions team have digital resources relating to the process and specifically about the Downs, which can be shared with the committee and Downs Ranger when they are in role.

Several good suggestions for events emerged from the recent stakeholder consultation and from the Events & Finance subgroup. In particular, the following events should be considered for the Downs. Many of these events would have positive social value, whilst being very low impact in terms of disruption to the grounds and nearby residents.

- A flower / plant / garden show
- Wider variety of sports, wellbeing and cycling events
- Outdoor theatre
- Events focussed on education, such as a literature or history events
- More events aimed at children & families
- More events focussed on nature conservation and wildlife
- A more regular small food festival / monthly pop-up food & drink or farmers' market.

The existing relationship with Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife project delivers an excellent series of small educational events each year. This programme of events should be supported by the Downs Ranger and further developed in future years.