

## **Downs Management Report – Downs Committee, 28<sup>th</sup> Feb 2023**

So, with the delay to this meeting from January, here we are at Springtime now !

Summing up the winter scrub works, the projects carried out this winter were as follows,

### **CLIFTON OBSERVATORY HILL**

Small compartment of self-seeded Ash and Sycamore growing out of a large patch of Bramble. Causing us increasing nuisance pruning issues plus acting as a litter trap. Also growing out and over the existing cliff top hedge line causing a tunnel effect. Removed in November, reinstatement back to grass ongoing, wide ranging views of the Avon Gorge and bridge restored.

### **DURDHAM DOWNS TREE AVENUE**

Members will be aware of the avenue of Beech trees that stretch across Durdham Down from Ladies Mile to Sneyd Park. Over a number of years scrub ground cover has started to build up beneath the canopies where mowing has been infrequent. Unchecked this scrub has begun to grow together into bigger compartments, and we are losing the visual effect and historic landscape characteristic of the avenue feature. Across this Winter we have removed all the scrub and small self-seeded trees to restore the far reaching sight lines and thus the important landscape feature of this part of the Downs.

### **CLIFTON DOWNS, BRIDGE RD**

Self-seeded Field Maple and Sycamore growing on top of the rock face approaching Clifton Suspension Bridge on Bridge Rd. Removed in January, preventing a maintenance issue for the pedestrian footpath below getting worse and opened up superb views of the bridge on the Clifton side that had been lost.

### **BRIDGE VALLEY RD**

The annual de vegetation of the rock slopes above the highway took place again this Winter. As usual across 3 consecutive Sundays in January and February. In addition to this, the road being closed allowed us the time and space to carry out some Evergreen Oak removal from an important patch of rock face housing a group of rare Whitebeams identified by resident Avon Gorge botanist Libby Houston.

### **TREE PLANTING**

In addition to the new trees planted into the spaces on the Downs where trees have died or have had to be taken down due to safety issues, my team carried out the planting requests from the Downs Committee that were suggested last year. A ring of 5 Field Maples have been planted at the end of the lead workings area of Clifton Down and a single English Oak has been planted on the Promenade in line with the other 2 commemorative Oaks in this area.

4 new memorial benches have been sold and installed this winter generating income.

Around December/January time Downs football suffered from a few cancellations due to waterlogging and frozen ground. We incorporated sand into the ground allied with chaining and spiking and with help from improved weather we seem to have got back on track now. Bristol University Intramural have returned in late January, so we'll work hard to provide pitches twice a week from here to the end of the season.

Preparations have been ongoing and are still ongoing up until the arrival of Funderworld onto the water tower site in March. Members will be well aware of the difficulties in getting this heavily damaged site fit for events. But due to our work I am happy to say that it's in a decent state and ready for events this year.

Ongoing daily duties around litter, Goats, locking and unlocking facilities etc carries on apace. My thanks to FODAG volunteers for Downs deep litter clearance sessions, dead hedge restorations and extra Goat monitoring provision over the Christmas period.

As we move into Spring and early Summer now, with the associated 5 ! BANK HOLIDAYS !! let's see what 2023 brings.