

THE DOWNS COMMITTEE

Clifton and Durdham Downs (Bristol) Act 1861

Public Forum

Questions received from:

Robert Przemioslo – Questions 1 and 2

David Redgewell – Questions 1 and 2

Gordon Richardson – Questions 1 and 2

Statements received from:

Statement Number 1: Robert Westlake – Friends of Downs and Avon Gorge

Statement Number 2: Susan Carter – Downs for People

Statement Number 3: David Redgewell (Disability Equalities Forum Trustee + South West Transport Network) and Gordon Richardson (Bristol Disability Equalities Forum)

Questions from Dr Robert Przemioslo

Question 1: Why is the safety of the Downs being compromised by the non policing of Cars and joy riding both on the main body of grass and around the perimeter roads.

Usually on days when families with children would like to visit and enjoy the open spaces on the Downs there are gatherings or individual cars driven onto the grass despite adequate parking being available on perimeter roads. These cars park on the perimeter where people walk or jog or further in having to circumnavigate children causing them potential real harm. To one side of Ladies Mile is a particular favorite and extremely dangerous as these vehicles find their destination by passing through bushes and low visibility areas.

Surely this is illegal. Certainly dangerous to pedestrians, damaging to grass and completely unchallenged. The Downs itself is now a joy riders paradise and completely unpoliced.

Question 2: Why on the perimeter road are there multiple occupied vans and vehicles used as residences?

Questions 1 and 2 – David Redgewell

Question 1

What progress is being made?

By the Down committee to set up a trust to look at the provision of cafe public toilets and change rooms for sports men and women on the Down .

Has the merchant venture look at setting up with users groups and stakeholder a charitable trust .

Question 2

With the proposals by the Downs committee and the city and county of Bristol council.

Is the Downs committee looking at any events to celebrate the 650 years of the city and county of Bristol Royal charter.

With Destination west and other stakeholders, business and the city culture partnership.

Questions 1 and 2 – Gordon Richardson Disability Equalities Forum

Questions 1 .

We the Downs committee and the city and county of Bristol council.

What we would support car and coach park and proper control of parking on the Downs and reduction in view to the Downs as a major green space for Bristol with to the Avon Gorge.

Residents of the city and county of Bristol and Tourist to south west England

What provision is being made for disabled people with blue badges and people with reduce mobility.

Questions 2 .

If the Downs committee and Bristol city council is to bring in parking charges

Will the Downs committee work with the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority on the provision of improvement in public transport both on Bristol Temple meads and to seven Beach line railway with the station on metro west railway at Clifton Down and thre park and Ride station at Portway parkway

Bus service from long Ashton park and ride 505 stagecoach west bus service to the Downs and the Clifton suspension Bridge and Avon George.

And showcase bus route across the Down service 1 2 2a 3 4 T7 u1 .

With investment by the city region transport plan.

On the bus route from Stockwood Hengrove knowle Bristol Temple meads Cabot circus Bristol city centre park street Clifton Down station, metro west railway The Down Westbury on Trym Henbury/ Southmead and Cribbs causeway bus station which need a link to the Downs.

We would not like to see parking charge without a Green travel plan.

Gordon Richardson Bristol Disability Equalities Forum.



STATEMENT NUMBER 1

Public Forum Statement of the Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge.

June 2023

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

We remain committed to our core value to conserve and preserve for the benefit of all legitimate users of the Downs and to support the City Council and the Downs Committee in the good governance of the Downs.

The Friends of the Downs & Avon Gorge welcomes the Lord Mayor to his year in office as the Chair of the Downs committee. This year may be an important year for the Downs and we look forward to a productive and enduring year.

Earlier in the year FODAG identified a potential Health & Safety issue at the Goat Gully viewpoint. The terraced areas had become badly eroded and timbers severely damaged. In consultation with the Downs supervisor a suitable contractor was asked to quote for the repairs and a specification was agreed. The cost of the work is £2,800 and funding from a variety of sources has been secured. The planned work is due to go ahead in the next week or so.

FODAG have contacted the City Council's Public Rights of Way team {PROW} about the poor condition of the footpath and Victorian steps leading down through the goat gully to the Portway. PROW have assured us that the budget is there to carry out the improvements and will commence later this year or early next year.

The Downs Ambassadors continue with their regular patrols of the Downs and report items of interest or concern to a nominated coordinator.

FODAG members continue to raise concerns about anti-social behaviour across the Downs. The warmer weather has brought a proliferation of BBQ's, drivers parking on the Downs, boy racers and the regular reports related to the van and caravan dwellers.

Next month FODAG are organising an event called the Great Houses of the Downs. This will involve an evening guided walk learning about the people who have lived around and near the Downs in years gone by.

On July 5th we will be hosting a members social evening at the Downs Café. There will be a bar and light refreshments available and members of the Downs committee would be most welcome to join us.

It is the intention of the Friends group to hold a Recruitment Day. This will involve inviting members of the public to sign up for membership.

Our quarterly magazine is proving extremely popular with FODAG members to such an extent that we plan to increase its size. Our social media reach seems to be progressing and we are in the process of updating the Downs App.

In the next few weeks FODAG volunteers will be tackling the weeding of the flower beds located at the Thomas Memorial.

FODAG volunteer group leaders receive training organised by the City Council's Volunteer coordinator. This involves Health & Safety and includes preparing risk assessments.

Members may have noticed a large hole in the Haven shelter at the top of Whiteladies Road. FODAG takes a particular interest in the Haven as a few years ago we were involved in its repair and repainting. We will be looking at getting the repairs done before it gets any worse.

The Downs Advisory Panel held its first meeting on the 9th June and an update is detailed in a separate committee report.

Robert Westlake
Chair
Friends of the Downs & Avon Gorge

STATEMENT NUMBER 2 – SUSAN CARTER (DOWNS FOR PEOPLE)

Downs Committee meeting 12 June 2023

DOWNS FOR PEOPLE

For ever unenclosed, for all to enjoy.

Public forum statement: Committee composition and zoo car parks

1. *Downs for People* wishes to comment on:

- the composition of the Committee;
- the current use of the former zoo car park off Ladies Mile;
- the future use of the zoo's North car park.

Committee composition

2. Some continuity of Committee membership is helpful. We particularly welcome the Lord Mayor as chair because of his previous experience as a member. But changes in membership are desirable and a requirement of the Downs Act. This requires two councillors to stand down each year. Although the Act specifies a change in November, councillors have usually changed in May. From the invitation to this meeting and the Council's website, it appears that no changes are proposed this year. ***If this is correct, the mistake needs to be remedied. Two councillors will need to stand down.***

Ladies Mile car park

3. We have been saddened to see the site of the former zoo car park become a sea of impenetrable grass, with public access confined to paths of hard bare mud. Land on the other side of Ladies Mile is similarly inaccessible. Those wishing to play ball games, picnic or walk on flowery turf as they used to do here must now go elsewhere, often to less attractive sites closer to roads. See photos below.



North car park

4. The notes of the Events and Finance Sub-Group record that its chair, the Master of the Merchant Venturers, will liaise with *Downs for People* about the future of the North car park "to ensure full inclusivity". We cannot see that consulting only the Downs Advisory Panel and us will achieve this: interest in parking and the use of the Downs goes much wider. There should be full public

consultation. In *DfP's* view, the site should be restored to an amenity use. We will also be checking that the terms of the court order that brought our High Court challenge to an end are observed. ***The Committee will be in contempt of court and its members could go to prison if they provide parking for anyone other than those using the Downs.***

STATEMENT NUMBER 3 - David Redgewell Bristol Disability Equalities Forum Trustee + South West Transport Network and Gordon Richardson Bristol Disability Equalities Forum

We welcome the progress towards setting up an Advisory committee for the Downs committee.

We hope this will include Hard to reach groups in the city and county of Bristol and Bristol city Region.

Such as Black South West, Bristol Older People Forum Bristol LGBTQ community.

Bristol youth council Bristol Disability Equalities Forum. North Somerset Equalities Group Forums that include the inner city and working class Tourism

interests communities of Bristol and not just people who live near the Downs .

We welcome community participation in the Downs .

On facilities for residents and Tourist

We have not seen investment in the Downs facilities public toilets cafes and changes facilities for sports men and women.

There is a need to improve facilities for residents and tourists as compared to other west country parks Garden and open spaces these are very poor and in need of investment.

We hope that a charity can be set up like the situation in Cheltenham spa.

To invest in facilities for improvement to cafes Toilets and changing places and

And facilities for sports men and women changing rooms.

South Gloucestershire council has park friends groups in staple hill with page park and kingswood park

Where investment has been made in changing places cafes and toilets.

The society of merchants ventures has run many charities in Bristol city Region

So set up a charitable trust for investment in facilities in the Downs would be welcomed.

The Down Avon Gorge suspension Bridge and the observatory all need marketing with visit west .

Destination Bristol.

On parking policy on the Downs for cars and coaches we would welcome this happening but only as part of a green travel plan like the National Trust has on their estates

We have buses from long Ashton park and ride to the Downs and Clifton 505 stagecoach west from Long Ashton to Clifton village and the Downs and Southmead hospital bus station.

Service 2 2a from Stockwood .Hengrove, knowle, Bristol Temple meads station Broadmead shopping centre city centre park street Clifton Down stations on metro west railway Henleaze Southmead Brenty Henbury cribbs causeway bus and coach.

Service 3 4 Bristol Broadmead shopping centre city centre park street, Clifton Down railway station Downs Sea mills/ Stoke Bishop. Shirehampton Avonmouth Dock Lawrence Weston, Blaise castle estate, Henbury and Cribbs Causeway station

Should extend to Bristol Zoo Wild Place

Service 1 Broomhill Bristlington Arncliffe Bristol Temple Meads station.

Cabot Circus city centre park street Clifton Down station, Westbury, Henbury Cribbs Causeway bus station.

Should extend to Bristol Zoo Wild Place

All run by First Group PLC West of England Buses T7

Bristol bus and coach station Clifton Down station The Downs Westbury on Trym Cribbs Causeway bus station and Chepstow bus and coach station.

Trans Cymru Transport for Wales .

Newport Transport .

From Bristol Temple Meads Bristol Lawrence Hill Bristol Stapleton Road Montpellier Redland to Clifton Down station Sea Mills Shirehampton Portway Parkway Avonmouth Dock St Andrew Road and Severn Beach.

With the new station being opened by Network Rail Western First Group PLC Great Western Railway West of England Mayoral Combined Transport Authority Mayor Dan Norris and Bristol City Council Transport Executive Councillor Don Alexander.

Part of Metro West Railway and funded by the West of England Mayoral Combined Transport Authority Mayor Dan Norris.

The Downs needs investment to improve the residents and tourists experience.

We welcome the work alongside the facilities on the Down alongside the Zoo Gardens facilities.