Minutes of the 2016 AGM held at the Redland Bowling Club

on Wednesday 16 November at 7.00 pm.

The chair welcomed 50 people, and introduced the existing and prospective committee members.

**Apologies**. Jenny Week, Janice Marsh, Brenda Lalonde, Jane Roberts, Pat Milligan Ben Skuse.

**Minutes.** The acting secretary read out the minutes of the 2015 AGM which were adopted as correct.

**Treasurer’s Report.** The acting treasurer, Robin Haward explained that the grave illness of the Treasurer, Roger Garrett, had forced his resignation, and as a result the books had not been checked by the examiner. He announced that there was a sum of £4931.82 in the bank account and £2058.22 in an investment account with the Skipton building Society. He recommended that the Examiner David Powell be re-appointed. This report and recommendation were accepted nem con.

**Chairman’s Report.** The Chairman then read the report of the activities of the previous year, and his thoughts about future plans looking at legacy structures on the Downs, and the idea of establishing a user’s Forum.

**Committee Elections.** The existing committee, and two new members, Bob Bell and Rachel Hemming-Bray were proposed by Susan Carter and seconded by Jill Penrose, and elected nem con.

**Coffee interval.** A lively interval followed in which the display of activities was examined and a variety of discussions held.

**Speakers.** The three speakers were then introduced, Tim Ross, Master of the Merchant Venturers, Councillor Clare Campion-Smith, and Jane Memmot, Director of the University Botanic Garden. Each spoke for about ten minutes about their involvement with the Downs. Themes that became apparent were the complexity of the compromises that the variety of uses of the Downs involved; the value of the space for health and education; the subtle balance between public money (260 K) and commercial use (£200K); the need for greater financial transparency.

Questions from the audience were then put to the panel. Concern was expressed about both the Pop Concert and the proposal for a Burger van at sea Walls, and it was made clear that the aim of the Friends was to help and influence the Downs Committee, and not to work to support or oppose particular schemes. Questions covered the scrub management plan, the support for tourism, the relations of pedestrians and cyclists, the effectiveness of the bye-laws, the work of the goats in the Gully and the possibility of pedestrian access along the foot of the gorge. Members of the audience added their understanding of areas such as litter collection, and Francis Greenacre stressed the significance of the city consultation which closes on January 5th It is vital that members Google Bristol city corporate strategy consultation and give their views on the city’s plans

The acting secretary gave a vote of thanks to the speakers and the meeting closed at 9.15pm