

Sex circus set to sue council

By David Harrison

CONTROVERSIAL French circus Archaos may sue Bristol City Council for the estimated £25,000 it has lost by being banned from performing on The Downs.

The circus announced today that it WILL be coming to Bristol after all — on privately owned land at the junction of Bath Road and Stockwood Lane, Brislington.

It will open on September 11 for a fortnight, thanks to the generosity of circus owner Gerry Cottle, who has given up his own lease on the land.

But Archaos, who have played to an estimated 120,000 people across Britain this summer, are still furious at the way the council has treated them.

"We consider the council acted very improperly," said producer Adrian Evans at a Bristol press conference today.

He revealed Archaos had paid for the city's

assistant arts director, Charles Bowden, to fly to Paris to see the show.

Mr Bowden then wrote to the circus saying the Downs committee would be happy to host the show, adding: "The committee see this visit as a prestigious event in the city's cultural calendar."

But reports of sex and violence among the acts led the committee to ban the show, despite Mr Bowden's favourable report and a further visit to see performances.

Mr Evans said today he had contacted lawyers and it was possible that legal action would be taken against the council.

"I find it extraordinary that people prefer to believe an article in The Sun than a first

hand report from a city council officer," he said. "They quite clearly panicked in the committee room rather than taking advice from someone who had actually seen the show".

Mr Evans said Archaos had received "tremendous support" from Bristolians angered at being denied a chance to see the show. So many other cities had asked to fill the cancelled Bristol dates, a new tour was being arranged next year to take them all in.

"Such a small minority of Bristol said no to us," he added. "We are eager that the people of the city should be able to make up their own minds."



Adrian Evans