

**Minutes of the Meeting of the EPSOM AND WALTON DOWNS CONSERVATORS  
held on 22 May 2020**

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**PRESENT -**

Councillor Liz Frost (the Council) (Chairman); Simon Durrant (Jockey Club Racecourses (the Company)) (Vice-Chairman); Andrew Cooper (Jockey Club Racecourses (the Company)), Simon Dow (Horserace Betting Levy Board (the Levy Board)), Councillor Bernice Froud (the Council), Councillor Jan Mason (the Council), Councillor Steven McCormick (the Council), Councillor Lucie McIntyre (the Council), Stephen Wallis (Jockey Club Racecourses (the Company)) and Councillor Clive Woodbridge (the Council).

In Attendance: Kathryn Beldon, Amardip Healy, Samantha Whitehead, Sarah Keeble and Tim Richardson

**24 OPENING AND CLOSURE OF CAR PARKS ON THE DOWNS**

The Conservators received a report requesting consideration of whether the car parks on the Downs should now open to the public. The Conservators were asked to agree a scheme of delegation for the opening and closing of the Car Parks managed by the Council on their behalf in cases of emergency or urgency.

All car parks on the Downs were currently closed in response to the Covid-19 virus situation and Government's restrictions on travel away from home, which aimed to limit the spread of the virus.

The Conservators received a presentation from Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Chief Legal Officer detailing the car parking facilities on the Downs, changes to Government guidance and the effect of the verge parking on the Downs. The presentation highlighted the options available to the Conservators with regard to car parking on the Downs.

**The following matters were considered:**

- a) **Safety.** Members spoke about the safety of the public and other Downs users, with particular reference to the Racehorse Trainers. Members highlighted the importance of the Downs as a Racehorse training environment, and need to prioritise use for racehorse training between the hours of 06.15-noon.

- b) **Signage.** Members spoke about the possibility of providing additional temporary signage to inform visitors of the use of the Downs by Racehorses in training, given that visitors to the Downs may not be familiar with the area. It was noted that there were already a number of signs for that purpose on the Downs, in accordance with a scheme previously agreed by the Conservators. The Conservators had previously expressed a wish to avoid a proliferation of signs on the Downs.

The Chairman informed the Conservators that this matter was not included on the agenda for the meeting and was not for consideration at this time.

- c) **Options for reopening of car parks.** The Conservators considered the options available for the reopening of car parks on the Downs. A preference for the reopening of all available car parks with the exception of the Top Car Park (also known as the Mile post car park) was expressed. It was noted that there was a potential to temporarily open a section of the Upper Tattenham Enclosure to increase capacity, if the Top Car Park remained closed. Epsom Downs Racecourse and Council Officers would investigate this possibility.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

**That the Conservators agreed with 8 Members voting in favour, 1 abstention and the Chairman not voting, to:**

- (1) **To note the effect of Covid-19 on the support services provided by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council;**
- (2) **To note the letter from TGMB (Annex 2 to the report) and consider their request in relation to the availability of public car parking (Annex 1 to the report) on the Downs;**
- (3) **Agreed the opening of all the car parks referred to in paragraph 1.2 of the report, to the public with the exception of the Old London Road Car Park known as the Top Car Park on the Plan at Annex 1 of the report, which will remain closed. The Conservators noted that this decision did not include the Hyperion car park, which would also remain closed in accordance with a previous decision of the Conservators.**

**That the Conservators agreed with 8 Members voting in favour, 1 voting against and the Chairman not voting, to:**

- (4) **Approve the following delegation to the Clerk to the Conservators:**
  - (i) **The Clerk to the Conservators, or their nominated deputy is empowered to take all necessary decisions in cases of emergency or urgency in relation to the opening or closing of any or all of the car parks on the Downs managed by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.**

- (ii) **For the purposes of this delegation, emergency and urgency have the ordinary dictionary meaning of the words and may imply consideration of health and safety, legal and financial risk or that the interests of the Conservators may be compromised. In the absence of the Clerk to the Conservators, the nominated deputy will exercise emergency or urgency powers in the same way.**
- (iii) **In deciding whether or not to exercise the emergency or urgency delegation, the Clerk to the Conservators, or nominated deputy, should consider whether to consult the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Conservators and have regard to their views if consulted.**
- (iv) **The Clerk to the Conservators shall always be entitled to refer matters for a decision to a meeting of the Conservators where it is considered by the Clerk expedient to do so.**

*Councillor Clive Woodbridge requested that it be Minuted that with regard to decision (4) (iii) above, he felt that the Clerk should consult the Chairman and Vice Chairman in all circumstances.*

*The meeting began at 6.30 pm and ended at 7.21 pm*

COUNCILLOR LIZ FROST (CHAIRMAN)