

**Minutes of the Meeting of the EPSOM AND WALTON DOWNS CONSERVATORS
held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 17 June 2024**

PRESENT -

Councillor Steven McCormick (Chair) (the Council), Councillor Christine Cleveland (the Council), Simon Durrant (Jockey Club Racecourses (the Company)), Councillor Liz Frost (the Council), Councillor Bernice Froud (the Council), Councillor Kim Spickett (the Council) and Councillor Clive Woodbridge (the Council)

In Attendance: Nigel Whybrow (Training Grounds Manager) (Epsom Downs Racecourse)

Absent: Tom Sammes (Jockey Club Racecourse (the Company)), Andrew Cooper (Jockey Club Racecourses (the Company)) and Simon Dow (Horserace Betting Levy Board (the Levy Board))

Officers present: Jackie King (Chief Executive), Brendan Bradley (Chief Finance Officer), Samantha Whitehead (Streetcare Manager), Sarah Clift (Senior Countryside Officer) and Phoebe Batchelor (Democratic Services Officer)

1 APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR

It was resolved that the Conservators appointed Councillor Steven McCormick as Chair to hold office until the first meeting of the Conservators held after the Annual meeting of the Borough Council in May 2025.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

It was resolved that the Conservators appointed Tom Sammes as Vice-Chair to hold office until the first meeting of the Conservators held after the Annual meeting of the Borough Council in May 2025.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the previous meetings of the Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators held on 22 January 2024 and 15 April 2024, and the Restricted Minutes of the meetings held on 16 January 2023 and 30 May 2023 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

4 MINUTES OF THE EPSOM AND WALTON DOWNS CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE, 25 MARCH 2024

The Conservators received the Minutes of the meetings of the Epsom and Walton Downs Consultative Committee held on the 25 March 2024.

Following consideration, the Conservators unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Receive and note the Minutes of the meetings of the Epsom and Walton Downs Consultative Committee held on 25 March 2024.**

5 DERBY UPDATE 2024

The Conservators received an update on this year's Derby Festival.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Visitor Numbers.** A Member of the Conservators queried whether numbers were down due to the weather, or whether advance ticket sales had already been lower than usual. The Representative from the Jockey Club responded to explain that ticket sales for the paid enclosures were slightly higher than in 2023, but the weather did affect the Hill and Family enclosure attendance. The Representative from TJC clarified that numbers have not returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- b) **Resident queries.** A Member of the Conservators raised that resident concerns and complaints regarding the anti-social behaviour in Langley Vale were being collated to be shared with the Chair and TJC prior to a meeting with relevant parties to ensure that prior investigating and preparation could take place. The Representative from TJC informed the Committee that they are keen to work together with the local community and neighbouring residents to ensure that concerns are heard and addressed. The Chair echoed the work going on to gather all questions and comments to distribute them ahead of time to the various parties attending the meeting. The Chair recognised that there is an element of continual improvement every year, to acknowledge and learn from lessons, that come up during the build-up and takedown of the Derby. The Chair expressed thanks to the Jockey Club for their efforts.
- c) **Intermediary relationship.** A Member of the Conservators asked if some of the issues mentioned in the report could have been addressed or avoided through the intermediary party. The Chair informed the Committee that there is an ongoing conversation with the Gypsy, Romany and Traveller community and recognised that there is work to be done to improve the situation.

Following consideration, the Conservators unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Note the update on the 2024 Derby from the Epsom Downs Racecourse**

6 FINAL ACCOUNTS 2023-24

The Conservators received a report seeking approval of the Conservators' final accounts for the financial year 2023/24.

Following consideration, the Conservators unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Receive the final accounts for 2023/24, subject to external audit.**
- (2) Approve the Annual Governance Statements as set out in section 1 of Appendix 3 to this report.**
- (3) Consider and approve the Accounting Statements as set out in section 2 of Appendix 3 to this report.**
- (4) Confirm that the arrangements for the internal audit as set out in this report are effective for auditing purposes.**
- (5) Authorise the Chair and Clerk to sign the Annual Governance Statement and the Accounting Statements on behalf of the Conservators.**

7 EPSOM DOWNS MODEL AIRCRAFT CLUB (EDMAC) MOBILITY IMPAIRED PARKING - ANNUAL REVIEW

The Conservators received a report detailing an annual review of the Epsom Downs Model Aircraft Club Mobility Impaired Parking Scheme on Epsom and Walton Downs.

The following matters were considered:

- a) Challenges or Difficulties.** A Member of the Conservators asked if Nigel Whybrow had heard of or experienced any issues that had impacted the training community on the Downs. Nigel confirmed that he had not experienced any difficulties or issues due to the parking arrangements.

Following consideration, the Conservators unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Note the success of the scheme and agree to extend the scheme for a further year.**

8 VENDING ON EPSOM AND WALTON DOWNS

The Conservators received a report discussing the feasibility of allowing vending on areas of Epsom and Walton Downs.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Declaration.** The Chair declared that they have been approached by a vendor regarding vending on the downs.
- b) **Street trading.** A Member of the Conservators asked if the Ice Cream Vendor vacates their current pitch, could another Ice Cream Van position themselves in the vacated pitch. The Streetcare Manager responded to inform the Conservators that due to the Ice Cream Vendor being moved from their current pitch due to health and safety concerns, the Council's Licensing department would not accept an application for the same site.
- c) **Timings.** A Member of the Conservators asked if the licences will only permit vendors to work at times when they would not interfere with the training of racehorses, meaning after 12pm. The Streetcare Manager informed the Conservators that some trainers and owners have mentioned they would like to be able to get food and drinks when they are there during training hours but confirmed that no decision would be made without speaking to the training community and nothing that would negatively affect the training of racehorses would be permitted. The Representative from the Jockey Club confirmed that there is a balance to be found, through driving increased owners to have their horses at Epsom, whilst being mindful and careful to not attract too many users to the downs. The Streetcare Manager stated that all proposals and applications would have to be considered very carefully on a case-by-case basis.
- d) **Car Park surface.** A Member of the Conservators raised that the surfacing in the car parks is very poor and there is a health and safety risk if people are carrying hot drinks and food over uneven ground, and expressed hope that any money made through this scheme could be put back into improving the surface in the car parks.
- e) **Tea Hut.** A Member of the Conservators raised an issue about the competition this would bring to existing establishments on the downs, namely the Tea Hut.
- f) **Litter.** A Member of the Conservators asked about the litter management for this scheme. The Chair responded to inform the Conservators that the litter handling would be factored into the agreement with Vendors. The Streetcare Manager explained that applications that acknowledge and address litter management and sustainability would be looked upon favourably.
- g) **Dogs.** A Member of the Conservators suggested that offering treats or dog friendly refreshment options would be a popular addition that would be welcomed by dog owners. The Chair noted the comments.
- h) **Toilets.** A Member of the Conservators raised that the lack of toilets on the downs would be an issue if there are going to be additional food and drink vendors for public use.

- i) **Sustainability.** A Member of the Conservators expressed that environmental factors should be considered throughout this pilot scheme, namely reusable cups, bio-degradable plates etc., so as to protect the downs.
- j) **Timeframe.** A Member of the Conservators asked when the pilot scheme would be commencing, highlighting the difficulties that could be faced if the scheme does not begin until the Autumn and continues through the Winter months, when weather conditions are worse, and footfall is less on the downs. The Chair responded to inform the Conservators that the intention is to allow some vendors to begin trading on the downs before the end of Summer.

Following consideration, the Conservators unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Agree to move the Soft Ice Cream vendor to the Downskeeper's Hut Car Park on the grounds of safety.**
- (2) **Agree to advertise for submissions from mobile catering operators to provide catering facilities on Epsom and Walton Downs in Top Car Park and View Point Car Park for a six-month trial period.**
- (3) **Agree to delegate the award of mobile catering contracts to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Conservators.**

The meeting began at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.39 pm

COUNCILLOR STEVEN MCCORMICK (CHAIR)