

**Minutes of the Meeting of the EPSOM AND WALTON DOWNS CONSERVATORS
held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 3 November 2025**

PRESENT -

Councillor Steven McCormick (the Council) (Chair); Jim Allen (Jockey Club Racecourses (the Company)) (Vice-Chair); Councillor Christine Cleveland (the Council), Andrew Cooper (Jockey Club Racecourses (the Company)), 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)

Absent: Simon Dow (Horserace Betting Levy Board (the Levy Board))

Officers present: Jackie King (Chief Executive), Sue Emmons (Chief Accountant) and Phoebe Batchelor (Democratic Services Officer)

11 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators held on 23 June 2025 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

12 DATES OF MEETINGS IN 2026

The Conservators received a report requesting they agree the dates of their normal meetings to be held in 2026.

The following matters were considered:

- Councillor Froud proposed that the Monday the 2nd of November 2026 meeting is moved to be held on Monday the 9th of November 2026 instead. This is to avoid the meeting clashing with the Residents' Association Group Meeting.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Spickett.

The Conservators unanimously agreed the change to the meeting date and recommendation (1c).

- a) **Apologies.** Councillor Frost raised that they are unable to attend the Conservators meeting scheduled for Monday the 22nd of June 2026.

Following consideration, the Conservators unanimously resolved to:

(1) Agree to hold their normal meetings in 2026 on the following dates:

(a) Monday 26 January 2026 at 18.00 hours

(b) Monday 22 June 2026 at 18.00 hours

(c) Monday 9 November 2026 at 18.00 hours

13 MID-YEAR BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Conservators received a report on the income and expenditure position as at 31 August 2025 and seeking guidance on the preparation of the budget and precept for 2026/27.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Grounds Maintenance.** A Member of the Conservators asked about the rise in fuel costs in the budget compared to last year. The Member queried why the cost had been raised and why it is projected to stay at the higher amount for the 2026/27 budget, when the actual amount spent on fuel is much lower as it stands currently. The Chief Accountant explained that there are fuel cards used for the machinery and the Assistant Head of Services – Streetcare will look at and consider which machines and vehicles have been used to ensure the appropriate fuel amount is charged. She continued to explain that the figures are provided as an indication from the Council's Waste and Transport Manager, as he manages all of the Council's vehicles, and may err on the side of caution to keep in mind potential fluctuations in fuel prices. The Chief Accountant agreed to take the query away and speak to the relevant officers to learn if that figure could be lowered.
- b) **General Office Expenses.** A Member of the Conservators asked about the Keepers' Hut General Office Expenses. The Member highlighted that nothing was spent last year and asked what this money was for and whether it is necessary and what justification there is for setting the budget at a much higher figure than has been spent in recent years. The Chief Accountant informed the Conservators that they would raise this query with the Assistant Head of Services – Streetcare to determine what these funds are for and garner a justification as to why they are needed.
- c) **Consultative Committee.** The Chair raised that there had been discussions at the E&WD Consultative Committee about potentially adding a new budget line for new litter bins on the Downs. The Chair stated that there is a new income stream for the Conservators thanks to the vending on the downs scheme which could be used to provide some improvements on the downs.

Following consideration, the Conservators unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Note the mid-year (Q2) income and expenditure position;**
- (2) **Provide guidance on the preparation of the budget for 2026/27;**
- (3) **Note the conclusion of the 2024/25 external audit of the accounts.**

14 ASSESS VIABILITY OF REROUTING THE HORSE WALK AT THE 6-FURLONG SHOOT

The Conservators received a proposal from The Jockey Club to re-route the path across the 6 furlongs start chute on Walton Downs.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Completion of Works.** A Member of the Conservators asked if there was anything that could be done or pressure that could be applied to ensure that the works are completed ahead of the 2026 Derby Festival. Andrew Cooper informed the Conservators that the works will cost roughly £15k and the Jockey Club are currently in the midst of a budgetary process which will hopefully conclude soon and confirm that the relevant funds are available to have the works completed ahead of the 2026 Derby Festival. He confirmed that they are hopeful and committed to the works being completed prior to the Derby.
- b) **Longevity of solution.** A Member of the Conservators queried if the solution proposed will be a long-term or permanent solution. Andrew Cooper confirmed that it is planned to be a permanent and long-lasting solution to the situation. He raised that there will be ongoing maintenance which will be covered.
- c) **Communications.** The Chair highlighted the importance of communicating the works and change to members and invited representatives of the Consultative Committee and other users of the downs. The Chair informed Conservators that this item has been through the Training Grounds Management Board already.
- d) **Aesthetics.** A Member of the Conservators raised that the aesthetics of the Downs is important, and the proposed works will be a positive change. Andrew Cooper confirmed that the shoot will look tidier when it is properly railed off.
- e) **Epsom Racecourse.** The Vice Chair stated that the visual and physical improvements are paramount to raising the status and reputation of Epsom Racecourse. He explained it is an important feature of the racecourse that the Jockey Club would like to improve on, alongside other areas in the coming years.

Following consideration, the Conservators unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Approve the permanent closure of the existing path/horse-walk across the 6 furlongs start chute and create a new rerouted path to the rear of the start chute as detailed in Appendix 1.**

The meeting began at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.26 pm

COUNCILLOR STEVEN MCCORMICK (CHAIR)