

# EPSOM AND WALTON DOWNS CONSERVATORS

Monday 3 November 2025 at 6.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall

Online access to this meeting is available on YouTube: [Link to online broadcast](#)

The members listed below are summoned to attend the Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators meeting, on the day and at the time and place stated, to consider the business set out in this agenda.

## Committee Members

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 Dow, Horserace Betting Levy Board (the Levy Board)  
Simon Durrant, Jockey Club Racecourses (the Company)  
Councillor Liz Frost, the Council  
Councillor Bernice Froud, the Council  
Councillor Kim Spickett, the Council  
Councillor Clive Woodbridge, the Council

Yours sincerely



Clerk to the Conservators

For further information, please contact [democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk) or tel: 01372 732000

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- Do not re-enter the building until told that it is safe to do so.

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### **Exclusion of the Press and the Public**

There are no matters scheduled to be discussed at this meeting that would appear to disclose confidential or exempt information under the provisions Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). Should any such matters arise during the course of discussion of the below items or should the Chair agree to discuss any other such matters on the grounds of urgency, the Committee may wish to resolve to exclude the press and public by virtue of the private nature of the business to be transacted.

### **Questions and statements from the Public**

Questions and statements from the public are not permitted at meetings of this Committee. [Annex 4.2](#) of the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Operating Framework sets out which Committees are able to receive public questions and statements, and the procedure for doing so.

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## **AGENDA**

### **1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 5 - 14)**

The Conservators are asked to confirm as a true record the Minutes of the Conservators' Meeting held on 23 June 2025 (attached) and to authorise the Chair to sign them.

### **2. DATES OF MEETINGS IN 2026 (Pages 15 - 18)**

The Conservators are requested to agree the dates of their normal meetings to be held in 2026.

### **3. MID-YEAR BUDGET MONITORING REPORT (Pages 19 - 28)**

This item reports on the income and expenditure position as at 31 August 2025 and seeks guidance on the preparation of the budget and precept for 2026/27.

### **4. ASSESS VIABILITY OF REROUTING THE HORSE WALK AT THE 6-FURLONG SHOOT (Pages 29 - 36)**

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

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**Minutes of the Meeting of the EPSOM AND WALTON DOWNS CONSERVATORS  
held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 23 June 2025**

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**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 Dow (Horserace Betting Levy Board (the Levy Board)), Councillor Liz Frost (the Council), Councillor Bernice Froud (the Council), Councillor Kim Spickett (the Council) and Councillor Clive Woodbridge (the Council)

Absent: Simon Durrant (Jockey Club Racecourses (the Company))

Officers present: Jackie King (Chief Executive), Sue Emmons (Chief Accountant), Samantha Whitehead (Interim Assistant Head of Service - Streetcare), Sarah Clift (Senior Countryside Officer) (for agenda items 5 to 9) and Phoebe Batchelor (Democratic Services Officer)

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**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 2026.

**2 APPOINTMENT OF THE VICE CHAIR**

It was resolved that the Conservators appointed Jim Allen as Vice-Chair to hold office until the first meeting of the Conservators held after the Annual meeting of the Borough Council in May 2026.

**3 TOILETS ON THE DOWNS**

The Chair made a verbal update to the Committee regarding toilets on the Downs.

The Chair declared that they had received a letter from the College Ward Residents' Association regarding reinstating toilets on the Downs.

The Chair confirmed that the item remained on the Epsom and Walton Downs Action Tracker and would be progressed and discussed in more detail if funding could be identified.

The Chair reiterated that it was not merely cost that resulted in the toilets being removed from the Downs, but it was also prevalent anti-social behaviour which contributed to the decision to demolish the toilet block.

A Member of the Conservators raised that when the old block was demolished, there were costed proposals that were considered by Conservators, but were significantly out of budget. The Member stated that unless significant funding can be identified, the project would need to remain as something the Conservators would like to do, rather than something they are able to do.

## 4 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators held on 27 January 2025 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

## 5 MINUTES OF THE EPSOM AND WALTON DOWNS CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE, 24 MARCH 2025

The Conservators received the Minutes of the meeting of the Epsom and Walton Downs Consultative Committee held on 24 March 2025.

Following consideration, the Conservators unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Receive and note the Minutes of the meeting of the Epsom and Walton Downs Consultative Committee held on the 24 March 2025.**

## 6 DERBY UPDATE 2025

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

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Derby Update.** The Vice Chair commented that operationally the Derby Festival was successful. He explained that the weather was unfortunate over the festival period, but he had observed everything from the build-up the de-rig and is hoping to try and streamline these processes next year. The Vice Chair reported that the travellers camp caused very few issues. He acknowledged the issue prior to the festival, regarding arriving early and parking on Old London Road and steps have been taken to ensure the same does not happen next year. The Vice Chair highlighted that there were only four arrests across the 34,000 attendees. He informed the Conservators that there had sadly been no royal attendance this year, which does affect the event, however the racing was brilliant. The Vice Chair explained that Epsom Racecourse are currently undergoing an extensive strategy review, of almost every aspect of the Derby, and will be creating a 5-year strategy to revive to Epsom Derby Festival.
- b) **Thanks.** The Chair acknowledged that there were several meetings with residents in Langley Vale and significant efforts by several stakeholders, notably the PSPO that came through Crime and Disorder committee, so

huge thanks to that Committee and the Police as their efforts did make a difference. The Chair continued to thank the Council's Public Protection Manager and team for the CCTV installation. that went on – thanks to Oliver and team. The Chair expressed thanks to the Police, the Downskeepers, and Sam Whitehead for all the work in ensuring the event ran smoothly. The Chair also thanked the Jockey Club for all the effort they put in to make the Derby a successful and safe event. Several Conservators echoed the thanks of the Chair and highlighted how smooth and wonderful an experience it was attending the Derby Festival.

- c) **Security risks.** A Member of the Conservators raised an issue that a resident had mentioned about security around the roundabout behind the Grandstand and if the Jockey Club have considered the potential security risks if someone tried to attack the event. The Vice Chair responded to explain that all potential security risks are considered and discussions take place with the police about potential incidents prior to the Derby event. The Vice Chair acknowledged that this was a major concern during this year's security briefings and the police advised the racecourse all the way through. The Vice Chair thanked the Member for raising the concern.
- d) **Trespass Incident.** A Member of the Conservators S Dow asked if the trespass incident that occurred the week before the Derby has been attributed to the presence of travellers in the area. The Vice Chair stated that to his knowledge the unauthorised encampment that arrived were purely people who wanted to come early to move onto the travellers' camp on the Downs and as soon as the camp opened, they moved straight on there. The Vice Chair explained they tried to avoid this situation of early arrivals on the Downs but acknowledged there wasn't a lot that could be done. He explained that the Jockey Club will be banking the edges of the area to try and ensure that the same situation does not happen again next year. The Vice Chair also expressed a wish to have a better relationship with the people that organise the travellers camp on the day. The Member expressed that they were concerned about the track trespass incident and highlighted a specific concern about damage to the track prior to the Derby event. The Vice Chair explained that when the incident happened, it was quickly stopped, and that it is suspected to have been locals, not those staying in the travellers' camp. The Vice Chair informed Conservators that they were aware of what needed to be done to avoid a similar incident happening next year.

Following consideration, the Conservators unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Note the update on the 2025 Derby from the Epsom Downs Racecourse**

## 7 FINAL ACCOUNTS 2024/25

The Conservators received a report seeking approval of the Conservators' final accounts for the financial year 2024/25.

Following consideration, the Conservators unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Receive the final accounts for 2024/25, subject to external audit.**
- (2) **Consider and 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) **Nominate and authorise the Chair and Clerk to sign the Annual Governance Statement and the Accounting Statements on behalf of the Conservators.**

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

The Conservators received an annual review of the Epsom Downs Model Aircraft Club (EDMAC) Mobility Impaired Parking Scheme on Epsom and Walton Downs and a request for permission for the scheme to be granted on a permanent basis.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Model Aircraft development.** A Member of the Conservators raised concerns about the potential evolution of Model Aircrafts, to become more drone-like, and potentially interfere with the training of racehorses. This concern made them hesitant to give permanent permission to EDMAC. The Chair informed Conservators that the recommendation could be amended if needed. The Chair suggested that a question could be raised to EDMAC at Epsom and Walton Downs Consultative Committee.
- b) **Report recommendation.** A Member of the Conservators raised that the recommendation could be amended to say, 'subject to there being no serious concerns raised with the Council', as this adds a helpful proviso if issues are raised and allows Conservators to deal with them quickly. The Chair raised that the recommendation could be changed to give permission for another year but not permanently, so the report comes again to Conservators next June.
- c) **No issues.** A Member of the Conservators pointed out that this parking arrangement has been proposed to be granted permanently because there have been no issues or complaints since the inception of the scheme. Another Member echoed this comment.
- d) **Suspend.** A Member of the Conservators asked if an issue did arise, do the Conservators have the power to suspend without notice. The Chair



informed the Committee he would take the question away and ask legal officers. The Chair explained that EDMAC have been very positive users of the Downs and have not caused any problems but always work productively with other users of the Downs.

- e) **Report.** A Member of the Conservators highlighted that paragraph 1.4 of the report sets out that 'it is proposed the scheme is granted on a permanent basis, with the caveat that it will return to be reviewed by Conservators if any issues arise,' which covers the Conservators if any problems do arise and need addressing. The Assistant Head of Service – Streetcare assured Conservators that if any issue was to arise with any stakeholders, they would be informed and the problem addressed immediately.
- Councillor Frost proposed that the wording in paragraph 1.4 was added to the end of recommendation 2. This would mean recommendation 2 would read as ***'Grant permission for the Epsom Downs Model Aircraft Club Mobility Impaired Parking Scheme on a permanent basis, with the caveat that it will return to be reviewed by Conservators if any issues arise.'***

Councillor Spickett seconded the motion.

Conservators agreed (7 for and 1 abstention) in favour of the amendment to the recommendation.

Following consideration, the Conservators unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Note the success of the scheme.**
- (2) **Grant permission for the Epsom Downs Model Aircraft Club Mobility Impaired Parking Scheme on a permanent basis, with the caveat that it will return to be reviewed by Conservators if any issues arise.**

## 9 VENDING ON THE DOWNS - UPDATE

The Conservators received a report on the Vending on the Downs pilot scheme.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Trading Hours.** A Member of Conservators asked for clarification as to what the trading hours will be for the catering van in the Mile Post Car Park. The Assistant Head of Service – Streetcare explained that the vendor was planning on starting from 8am. The Member explained they were interested in knowing the closure time, due to the location, closure of London Road, and security risks. The Assistant Head of Service – Streetcare explained that the catering van would close in line with the London Road gate and wouldn't be trading any later than that. The Member raised that this could mean the catering van is trading as late as 9pm on a summers evening. The Assistant Head of Service – Streetcare confirmed that as true. The Member expressed that this was of concern to

the security of the racecourse. This concern was echoed by another Member. The Chair and Assistant Head of Service – Streetcare informed Conservators that this is a pilot scheme and if any changes need to be made, they can be quickly.

- b) **Concern.** A Member of Conservators expressed that they are hesitant to encourage people onto the Downs, into and around the Mile Post Car Park, towards the closing time of the London Road Gate. The Chair noted the comments and assured Members that these concerns would be raised with the vendor. The Assistant Head of Service – Streetcare explained that a risk assessment has also been conducted, to ensure the vendors safety, due to the remote location and chance of anti-social behaviour.
- c) **Licenced Trading Hours.** A Member of the Conservators queried if the licence would have maximum hours of trading and specify and earliest and latest time the vendor would be permitted to trade. The Member raised that if the licence does not currently include this, then perhaps it could be included that the licence timing will be subject to discussion with Conservators involved in the training industry. The Assistant Head of Service – Streetcare explained that so far, the hours had been flexible and the vendor in the viewpoint car park conducts her trade purely in the morning and early afternoon.
- Councillor Frost proposed that an additional sentence was added to recommendation two.

‘(2) Receive an update on the proposed start date of the Tiger Lily Bus Company at the Mile Post Car Park. ***The licence for the Tiger Lily Bus Company at the Mile Post Car Park should include and give consideration to the hours of trading, following discussions with the Jockey Club and Training Grounds Management Board and the final decision and recommendation should be made in consultation with the Chair, Clerk to the Conservators and Assistant Head of Service - Streetcare.***’

Simon Dow seconded the amendment to recommendation two.

The Conservators agreed (7 FOR, 1 ABSTAINING) in favour of the proposed addition.

Following consideration, the Conservators unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Note the success of the Chill and Grill Mobile Catering Unit stationed at the View Point Car Park and agree to extend the licence for a further twelve-month period.**
- (2) **Receive an update on the proposed start date of the Tiger Lily Bus Company at the Mile Post Car Park. The licence for the Tiger Lily Bus Company at the Mile Post Car Park should include and give consideration to the hours of trading, following discussions with the Jockey Club and Training Grounds Management Board and the final**

**decision and recommendation should be made in consultation with the Chair, Clerk to the Conservators and Assistant Head of Service - Streetcare.**

**(3) Note the new position of the Ice Cream Van.**

**10 FEASIBILITY STUDY TO REINTRODUCE GRAZING TO JUNIPER HILL**

The Conservators received a report exploring the feasibility of reintroducing grazing to Juniper Hill.

The grassland of Juniper Hill bears special attention as it has been considered to be the best of its type in Surrey. It is regarded by the Epsom and Ewell Local Biodiversity Action Plan working group as a top priority to conserve and enhance.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Animal welfare.** A Member of the Conservators asked who would look after the animals. The Senior Countryside Officer explained that this can be explored if Conservators agree they are happy, in principle, for grazing to be reintroduced on the downs. The Senior Countryside Officer stated that she would be looking for volunteers to help and is hoping to drum up support from local people. She explained that Epsom Common is very successful grazed, and volunteers check on the livestock every day. She acknowledged that there would be a need for some staff to overlook the site and organise, support, and manage volunteers and explained that further discussions regarding staff resource need to take place. She highlighted that staff would need to be on hand to react in case of vandalism or other issues.
- b) **Number of sheep.** A Member of the Conservators asked how many sheep would be used for grazing. The Senior Countryside Officer explained that there are two options, either two or three sheep grazing constantly or you have more sheep over a shorter period of time, grazing for specific period.
- c) **Sheep rustling.** A Member of the Conservators raised concerns about sheep rustling. The Member highlighted that there is a concern with having predominantly volunteers dealing with the site in case of emergencies. The Senior Countryside Officer explained that the volunteers would walk the fence line every day and check it is electrified and check the condition of the animals, the water supply etc. and raise any issues for a member of staff to deal with. The Senior Countryside Officer informed the Conservators that they had discussed sheep grazing with Jenny Price, who runs the Langley Vale Woodland Trust. The Langley Vale Woodland Trust use Michael Jelly's sheep for grazing. They have not experienced issues of sheep rustling. The Senior Countryside Officer explained that Michael Jelly's sheep could also be used for grazing on Juniper Hill, and then as part of that arrangement, Michael would be on

hand straight away if there are any issues and he would also support the day-to-day jobs and maintenance.

- d) **Hiring Sheep.** A Member of the Conservators queried why sheep would be hired rather than bought and asked what the cost difference is. The Senior Countryside Officer explained that the sheep can be bought but that brings in another level of responsibility and things to consider. She also explained that she would be look at and costing different options to compare and bring back to Conservators for their comments and approval.
- e) **Biodiversity benefits.** A Member of the Conservators expressed their support for the project and explained the importance of yellow ants in further benefitting the plants and how the sheep help to aid the yellow ants. The Chair noted the comments.
- f) **Site Visit.** A Member of the Conservators raised that a site visit would be helpful to understand the site and be shown how it would impact that area. The Chair confirmed that a site visit will be arranged for Conservators.
- g) **CIL funding.** A Member of the Conservators suggested that CIL funding might be an option for the project and particularly to fund the fencing. The Member highlighted that the most robust fencing possible within the funding constraints, would be best.
- h) **Local Government Reorganisation.** A Member of the Conservators raised that it would be prudent to start discussions with relevant groups and stakeholders regarding the transitions that will take place over the next few years as Local Government in Surrey changes substantially. The Clerk to the Conservators explained that the current arrangement and any agreements will need to be revisited with the new authority, and it is assumed that any new authority will step in where Epsom and Ewell Borough Council currently sit on the Conservators. The Clerk made clear that we do not currently know what will happen and await further direction and input from Central Government. The Chair commented that hopefully a new authority would also take over the Council's Habitat Management Plan for the Downs.
- i) **Previous grazing.** A Member of the Conservators asked why grazing on the Downs was stopped in the past. The Assistant Head of Service – Streetcare explained that it was due to an outbreak of blue tongue which affected the sheep. She explained that the project was never picked back up after the sheep were removed from the Downs.
- j) **Geology.** A Member of the Conservators raised that if Epsom and Ewell become part of a unitary, under the three unitary option, the districts involved share a geology, which is important to understand and acknowledge.
- k) **Sheep escaping.** The Vice Chair expressed that the most important concern from a racecourse and training ground perspective is sheep

escaping and getting onto the gallop, so the more robust the fencing is, the better.

- l) **Fencing options.** The Senior Countryside Officer explained that permanent fencing would be the most robust option and set out that it would be best to add a permanent fence on either side of the footpath and bridlepath that goes through the middle of the site, so there is no issue with horse gates or people getting into the livestock enclosure. The Senior Countryside Officer explained that if Conservators agree down the line that grazing will not be constant and instead will only take place for a specific period, then the central fencing could be temporary and could be removed when there are no sheep grazing. She explained that permanent fencing is more expensive than temporary fencing.
- The Chair proposed that the Conservators agree that permanent fencing should be used to secure the livestock, as a decision is requested in recommendation 2.

Simon Dow seconded the proposal.

The Conservators unanimously agreed to decide that permanent fencing should be used to secure the livestock.

Following consideration, the Conservators unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Agree in principle to reintroduce grazing to Juniper Hill, subject to a further report presented to the Conservators at their January 2026 meeting which will include detailed capital and revenue expenditure requirements and funding options.**
- (2) **Decide if permanent or temporary fencing should be used to secure livestock.**

*The meeting began at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.14 pm*

COUNCILLOR STEVEN MCCORMICK (CHAIR)

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## **DATES OF MEETINGS IN 2026**

<b>Head of Service:</b>	Piero Ionta, Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer
<b>Report Author</b>	Phoebe Batchelor
<b>Wards affected:</b>	College Ward; Town Ward; Woodcote and Langley Vale Ward;
<b>Appendices (attached):</b>	None

### **Summary**

The Conservators are requested to agree the dates of their normal meetings to be held in 2026.

### **Recommendation (s)**

**The Conservators are asked 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 2 November 2026 at 18.00 hours**

## **1 Reason for Recommendation**

- 1.1 It is necessary to set dates for meetings of the Conservators for the forthcoming year to enable business to be processed.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Conservators agree to hold their normal meetings evenly across the year and the dates within the recommendation are the dates which follow the normal pattern for meetings.

## **3 Risk Assessment**

Legal or other duties

- 3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

3.1.1 None.

3.2 Crime & Disorder

3.2.1 None.

3.3 Safeguarding

3.3.1 None.

3.4 Dependencies

3.4.1 None.

3.5 Other

3.5.1 None.

#### 4 Financial Implications

4.1 The June and January meetings are needed to enable the conservators to approve the 2025/26 final accounts within statutory deadlines and to set a 2026/27 budget ahead of the new financial year.

4.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** None for the purposes of this report.

#### 5 Legal Implications

5.1 **Legal Officer's comments:** None for the purposes of this report.

#### 6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The Council's Key Priorities are not relevant to this matter.

6.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is not included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** None.

6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None.

6.5 **Partnerships:** None.

6.6 **Local Government Reorganisation Implications:** None.

#### 7 Background papers

7.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

**Previous reports:**



- None.

**Other papers:**

- None.

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## MID-YEAR BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

<b>Head of Service:</b>	Cagdas Canbolat, Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer)
<b>Report Author</b>	Oana Merla, Accountant
<b>Wards affected:</b>	College Ward; Town Ward; Woodcote and Langley Vale Ward;
<b>Appendices (attached):</b>	Appendix 1 – 2025/26 Mid-Year Monitoring Appendix 2 – 2024/25 External Audit Report

### Summary

This item reports on the income and expenditure position as at 31 August 2025 and seeks guidance on the preparation of the budget and precept for 2026/27.

### Recommendation (s)

**The Conservators are asked 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.**

## 1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 To make the Epsom & Walton Downs Conservators (EWDC) aware of the mid-year (Q2) financial position for 2025/26 and seek guidance on the provisional budget estimates for 2026/27.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 The Conservators' budget for 2025/26 was agreed at the meeting of 27 January 2025.
- 2.2 The budget monitoring statement at Appendix 1 shows income and expenditure from 01 April 2025 and provides a forecast outturn position for 2025/26, in the standard accounts format for EWDC.

- 2.3 Net expenditure for 2025/26 is forecast at £496,118 which would result in a favourable variance of £4,637 against the budget of £500,755. This is mainly due to £5,135 increase in catering licence income, £890 increase to Derby Travellers Caravan Site cost, £426 decrease in external audit fee, and £34 other net increase
- 2.4 The working balance stood at £63,421 at 31 March 2025. The projected £4,637 surplus, and the addition of a £7,599 budgeted contribution to reserves, would increase the working balance to £75,657.

### **3 Budget Estimates 2026/27**

- 3.1 The final column of Appendix 1 provides an indicative budget position for 2026/27. This indicative budget has been prepared ahead of the Council finalising its service estimates and the figures are provisional. Based on the indicative budget, an overall 3% increase in precepts would be required to set a balanced budget for next year.
- 3.2 The main provisional changes from 2026/27 are:
  - 3.2.1 Staffing budgets have been increased by an indicative 3%, although this is for EWDC planning purposes only while pay deal negotiations for 2026/27 remain ongoing.
  - 3.2.2 Fees and charges income budgets have been increased by 3%.
  - 3.2.3 The budgeted contribution to the working balance has increased from £7,599 to £13,743, in order to ensure a balanced budget.
  - 3.2.4 The majority of other running budgets have been inflated by 3% to reflect overall inflation where necessary.
- 3.3 The indicative budget provides a useful basis to identify the main issues that should be addressed in the budget report in January 2026. It enables early consideration of the recommended precepts for 2026/27 and any options the Conservators would like to have included in the budget report.
- 3.4 An increase in each preceptor's contribution of 3% would create a balanced budget which incorporates an annual contribution of £13,743 to replenish the working balance.
- 3.5 Inflation is currently at 3.8% (August 2025 consumer price index) although inflation is forecast to decrease later in the year. The Government's current inflation target is 2%

### **4 Audit of the Accounts 2024/25**

- 4.1 The external auditors, PKF Littlejohn LLP, have completed the audit of the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025.

- 4.2 The auditors have signed off the audit certificate. The auditors concluded their opinion that the information in Section 1 and 2 of the 2024/25 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) is in accordance with Proper Practices and no matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.
- 4.3 The accounts and audit documents were published on 26 September 2025 on the Council's website in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requirement to do so by 30 September. The external auditor's report is attached at Appendix 2.

## **5 Risk Assessment**

### Legal or other duties

#### 5.1 Equality Impact Assessment

- 5.1.1 None arising from the contents of this report.

#### 5.2 Crime & Disorder

- 5.2.1 None arising from the contents of this report.

#### 5.3 Safeguarding

- 5.3.1 None arising from the contents of this report.

#### 5.4 Dependencies

- 5.4.1 None arising from the contents of this report.

#### 5.5 Other

- 5.5.1 The Conservators maintain a separate strategic risk register.
- 5.5.2 The Conservators hold a working balance and a Repairs and Renewals Fund reserve, to mitigate the risk of unexpected expenditure. Any withdrawals from the working balance will need to be carefully assessed, to ensure sufficient funds are retained in reserves to cover unexpected expenditure and maintain a stable level of contribution from preceptors.

## **6 Repairs & Renewals Fund**

- 6.1 The Conservators' Repairs & Renewals Fund has a projected balance of £25,287. This is a reserve held to cover unexpected costs of replacing vehicles, equipment and building repairs.
  - 6.1.1 The indicative 2026/27 budget includes a provision of £2,000 to replenish the Repairs & Renewals Fund annually.

## 7 Financial Implications

- 7.1 Precept contributions are met by the Borough Council (60%), Epsom Racecourse (30%), and the Training Board (10%).
- 7.2 In reserves, the Conservators hold the working balance, which has a projected, uncommitted balance of £75,657 at 31 March 2026. In addition, the Repairs and Renewals Fund will hold a projected balance of £25,287.
- 7.3 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** The Conservators are asked to provide guidance on the indicative budget for 2026/27. Based on this guidance, a final draft budget will be brought back to Conservators for approval in January 2026

## 8 Legal Implications

- 8.1 **Legal Officer's comments:** None for the purposes of this report.

## 9 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 9.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:
- Effective Council
  - Green & Vibrant
- 9.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 9.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** None.
- 9.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None.
- 9.5 **Partnerships:** The Jockey Club, Training Board and Epsom and Ewell Borough Council are represented by Members on the Conservators Committee.
- 9.6 **Local Government Reorganisation Implications:** The impact of LGR on the operations of the Epsom & Walton Downs Conservators is yet to be quantified. Once the outcome of the LGR submission to government is known, work will commence to understand the impact and how the responsibilities will be transferred to the new authority

## 10 Background papers

- 10.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

### **Previous reports:**

- Budget 2025/26 – 27 January 2025

- Final Accounts 2024-25 – 23 June 2025

**Other papers:**

- None.

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<u>2024/25</u> <u>Outturn</u>	<u>EWDC Mid-Year Budget Monitoring 2025/26</u>	<u>2025/26</u> <u>Budget</u>	<u>Actuals to</u> <u>31.08.2025</u>	<u>2025/26</u> <u>Forecast</u> <u>Outturn</u>	<u>2025/26</u> <u>Forecast</u> <u>Variance</u>	<u>2026/27</u> <u>Indicative</u> <u>Budget based</u> <u>on 3% precept</u> <u>increase</u>
£		£	£	£	£	£
	<b><u>Grounds Maintenance</u></b>					
88	Maintenance of Grounds	227	234	234	7	235
2,328	Car Park Repairs	3,543	0	3,543	0	3,650
15,773	Tree Maintenance Schedule	13,699	0	13,699	0	14,110
5,117	Fuel	10,825	1,639	10,825	0	10,825
1,187	Spot hire of vehicles	1,223	0	1,223	0	1,260
3,545	Transport Insurance recharge	3,651	478	3,651	0	3,760
0	Chemicals for weed control	458	334	458	0	475
34,480	Transport fleet recharge	35,514	0	35,514	0	36,580
4,151	Internal trade waste fees	4,084	0	4,084	0	4,210
<b>66,670</b>	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>73,224</b>	<b>2,685</b>	<b>73,231</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>75,105</b>
	<b><u>Keepers Hut</u></b>					
3,355	Engineering and fabric recharges	3,389	1,429	3,429	40	3,590
0	Building and M&E maintenance	1,226	0	1,226	0	1,265
1,526	Electricity	3,785	0	3,785	0	3,900
908	Business Rates	1,061	973	973	-88	1,005
326	Water dispenser costs	330	181	330	0	340
170	TV Licence	175	175	175	0	180
0	General office expenses	103	0	103	0	105
1,145	Insurance recharges	1,179	0	1,179	0	1,215
<b>7,429</b>	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>11,248</b>	<b>2,757</b>	<b>11,200</b>	<b>-48</b>	<b>11,600</b>
	<b><u>Central Expenses</u></b>					
28,000	Additional pension contribution	28,000	0	28,000	0	28,000
3,096	Budgeted contribution to Repairs & Renewals Fund	2,000	0	2,000	0	2,000
706	Clothing & uniforms	700	336	700	0	725
7,000	Budgeted contribution to Working Balance	7,599	0	7,599	0	13,743
1,308	External Audit	1,686	0	1,260	-426	1,638
988	Miscellaneous expenses	1,165	193	1,165	0	1,165
358	General office expenses	1,125	0	1,125	0	1,125
23,727	VAT payments	26,504	0	26,504	0	27,132
314,735	Operational Services Recharge EWDC	324,177	0	324,177	0	333,902
23,540	Management Costs Recharge	24,246	0	24,246	0	24,973
1,420	Insurance	1,463	0	1,463	0	1,507
590	Internal audit	608	0	608	0	626
<b>405,468</b>	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>419,273</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>418,847</b>	<b>-426</b>	<b>436,536</b>
	<b><u>Derby Travellers Caravan Site</u></b>					
5,120	Contract Payments	4,640	0	5,530	890	5,700
<b>5,120</b>	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>4,640</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,530</b>	<b>890</b>	<b>5,700</b>
<b>484,686</b>	<b>Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>508,385</b>	<b>5,971</b>	<b>508,808</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>528,941</b>

<u>2024/25</u> <u>Outturn</u>	<u>EWDC Mid-Year Budget Monitoring 2025/26</u>	<u>2025/26</u> <u>Budget</u>	<u>Actuals to</u> <u>31.08.2025</u>	<u>2025/26</u> <u>Forecast</u> <u>Outturn</u>	<u>2025/26</u> <u>Forecast</u> <u>Variance</u>	<u>2026/27</u> <u>Indicative</u> <u>Budget based</u> <u>on 3% precept</u> <u>increase</u>
£		£	£	£	£	£
	<b>Income:</b>					
-5,915	Hire charges	-2,900	-1,045	-2,900	0	-2,985
0	Catering licences	-1,345	-1,860	-6,480	-5,135	-6,674
-3,562	Interest on Balances	-2,060	0	-2,060	0	-2,130
-1,150	Misc. income	-1,325	-1,250	-1,250	75	-1,375
<b>-10,627</b>	<b>Gross Income</b>	<b>-7,630</b>	<b>-4,155</b>	<b>-12,690</b>	<b>-5,060</b>	<b>-13,164</b>
<b>474,059</b>	<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>500,755</b>	<b>1,816</b>	<b>496,118</b>	<b>-4,637</b>	<b>515,777</b>
	<b>Precepts:</b>					
-291,700	Borough Council	-300,450	-300,450	-300,450	0	-309,463
-48,620	Training Board	-50,080	-50,080	-50,080	0	-51,583
-145,850	Epsom Racecourse	-150,225	-150,225	-150,225	0	-154,731
<b>-486,170</b>		<b>-500,755</b>	<b>-500,755</b>	<b>-500,755</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-515,777</b>
<b>-12,111</b>	<b>Surplus (-) / Deficit in Year</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-498,939</b>	<b>-4,637</b>	<b>-4,637</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>44,310</b>	<b>Working Balance brought forward 1 April</b>			<b>63,421</b>		<b>75,657</b>
7,000	Add budgeted in year contribution to working balance			7,599		13,743
0	Add agreed transfer from R&R fund			0		0
12,111	Surplus/deficit for the year			4,637		0
<b>63,421</b>	<b>Forecast Working Balance carried forward 31 March</b>			<b>75,657</b>		<b>89,400</b>
<b>20,191</b>	<b>Repairs &amp; Renewals Balance brought forward 1 April</b>			<b>23,287</b>		<b>25,287</b>
1,096	Add Interest in year contribution to R&R Fund			0		0
2,000	Contributions To (+) / Transfer from (-) R&R Fund			2,000		2,000
<b>23,287</b>	<b>Forecast Repairs &amp; Renewals Balance carried forward 31 March</b>			<b>25,287</b>		<b>27,287</b>

## Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2024/25

## Agenda Item 3 Appendix 2

In respect of **Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators – OT0018**

### 1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2025; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

### 2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2024/25

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

None.

### 3 External auditor certificate 2024/25

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

External Auditor Name

**PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP**

External Auditor Signature

*PKF Littlejohn LLP*

Date

10/09/2025

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

<b>Head of Service:</b>	Jackie King, Chief Executive
<b>Report Author</b>	Samantha Whitehead, Interim Assistant Head of Service - Streetcare
<b>Wards affected:</b>	College Ward; Town Ward; Woodcote and Langley Vale Ward;
<b>Appendices (attached):</b>	<b>Appendix 1</b> - Proposed Re-routing of Path across Racecourse 6 Furlongs Start Chute – Walton Downs

### **Summary**

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

### **Recommendation (s)**

**The Conservators are asked 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.**

## **1 Reason for Recommendation**

- 1.1 The current path across the 6 furlongs start chute has deteriorated due to historic build-up of material and continuous wear, resulting in an uneven surface that poses a safety risk to racehorses entering the starting stalls. A new path will ensure equine safety and an enhanced presentation of the racecourse in line with modern standards.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 For many years a permissive path/horse walk has crossed the 6 furlongs start chute on Walton Downs. This path provides a route used regularly by racehorses returning from morning exercise on the Polytrack. Over time, the surface of this crossing has deteriorated significantly due to material build-up and weathering, resulting in an increasingly uneven and unstable area.

- 2.2 This deterioration has raised safety concerns for horses and riders, particularly when the horses are approaching the starting stalls during race meetings. The Clerk to the Course has reviewed the operational impact of the current crossing arrangement and, in consultation with stakeholders, has proposed rerouting the path to a more suitable location behind the chute to ensure continued access while improving safety and presentation standards.

### 3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

#### 3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

3.1.1 None.

#### 3.2 Crime & Disorder

3.2.1 None.

#### 3.3 Safeguarding

3.3.1 None.

#### 3.4 Dependencies

3.4.1 None.

#### 3.5 Other

3.5.1 None.

### 4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications for the Conservators arising from this proposal. All costs associated with the closure of the existing crossing and the construction, levelling and establishment of the new rerouted path will be met in full by The Jockey Club. There is no requirement for funding, ongoing maintenance liabilities or resource allocation from the Conservators in relation to these works.

- 4.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** The financial implications are set out in the body of the report.

### 5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Conservators' responsibilities in relation to the management of the Downs are set out in the Epsom and Walton Downs Regulation Act 1984, which places a statutory duty upon the Conservators to preserve the Downs for the purposes of horse training, hack riding and public enjoyment, while ensuring the proper conduct of racing and associated operations.

- 5.2 A signed map accompanying the Act identifies a track in the vicinity of the 6 furlongs start chute, though it is recorded without formal legal status as a public right of way. The track presently used as a permissive route across the chute has not been formally established as a statutory track and is not recognised as such.
- 5.3 The proposal therefore does not diminish any public right, nor does it interfere with an established legal route protected under the Act.
- 5.4 Under Section 4 – Rights of access and user interests, the Conservators must have regard to members of the public having right of access for air and exercise on foot over the Downs, Provided that nothing in this section shall authorise any interference with the training by the Company, the Levy Board or the Owner or their lessees or licences of horses on any part of the Downs or with any part of the Downs or with any other rights conferred upon the Company, the Levy Board or the Owner by this Act, or with the use of the Downs for events permitted by the Conservators under sub-section (2) of section 10.
- 5.5 Section 10 of the Act – preserving the natural beauty and managing the Downs, also supports the realignment of the track because it enhances safety and presentation of the Downs.
- 5.6 The proposal is therefore consistent with the Conservators' duty to facilitate access while also safeguarding the safety and the proper management of racing activities, which are equally protected under the Act.
- 5.7 Under the Conservators' power to regulate access in the interests of safety and efficient running of race meetings, the realignment of the path to a safer and more suitable location is considered lawful.
- 5.8 No formal variation to any statutory map is required as the rerouting relates to a permissive track rather than a designated rights of way.
- 5.9 The provision of the Act includes section 17. This is expressed in the sidenote to be "For the protection of the Company". The "Company" is in effect the Racecourse operator.
  - 5.9.1 Section 17 states: "Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act or in any byelaws made under this Act the Company may hold meetings on the Downs and-
  - 5.9.2 S17 (15) for the preservation, improvement, repair and maintenance of the Race Course and the area adjacent thereto.....the Company may execute with the approval of the Conservators (such approval not to be unreasonably withheld) works of drainage raising or levelling and for the purposes dig and take chalk, soil, turf and other materials,.....

5.9.3 Under S17(15) it is clear that the company may do works and the consent of the Conservators is required but the Conservators do not have unrestricted discretion as to whether to give or refuse consent – S17(15) is clear that consent is “not unreasonably withheld”. There would have to be a very good reason for then refusing consent would be unreasonable.

5.10 **Legal Officer’s comments:** As set out in the report.

## 6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

6.1 **Council’s Key Priorities:** Not relevant to this report.

6.2 **Service Plans:** Not relevant to this report.

6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** None.

6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None.

6.5 **Partnerships:** This proposal embodies the spirit of partnership working between The Jockey Club, the Training Grounds Management Board and the Epsom & Walton Downs Conservators.

6.6 **Local Government Reorganisation Implications:** None

## 7 Background papers

7.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

### **Previous reports:**

- None.

### **Other papers:**

- None.



## Proposed Re-routing of Path across Racecourse 6 Furlongs Start Chute – Walton Downs

The 6 Furlongs Start at Epsom Racecourse has for many years had a path/horsewalk bisect the chute that creates the Start, shortly before the point at which racehorses enter the Starting Stalls. There is a small area of grass behind it, then plastic railings to create the back of the chute.

This path is in regular use at present by horses in training having completed their exercise on the bottom, 9 furlong AWT, as part of their route to home.



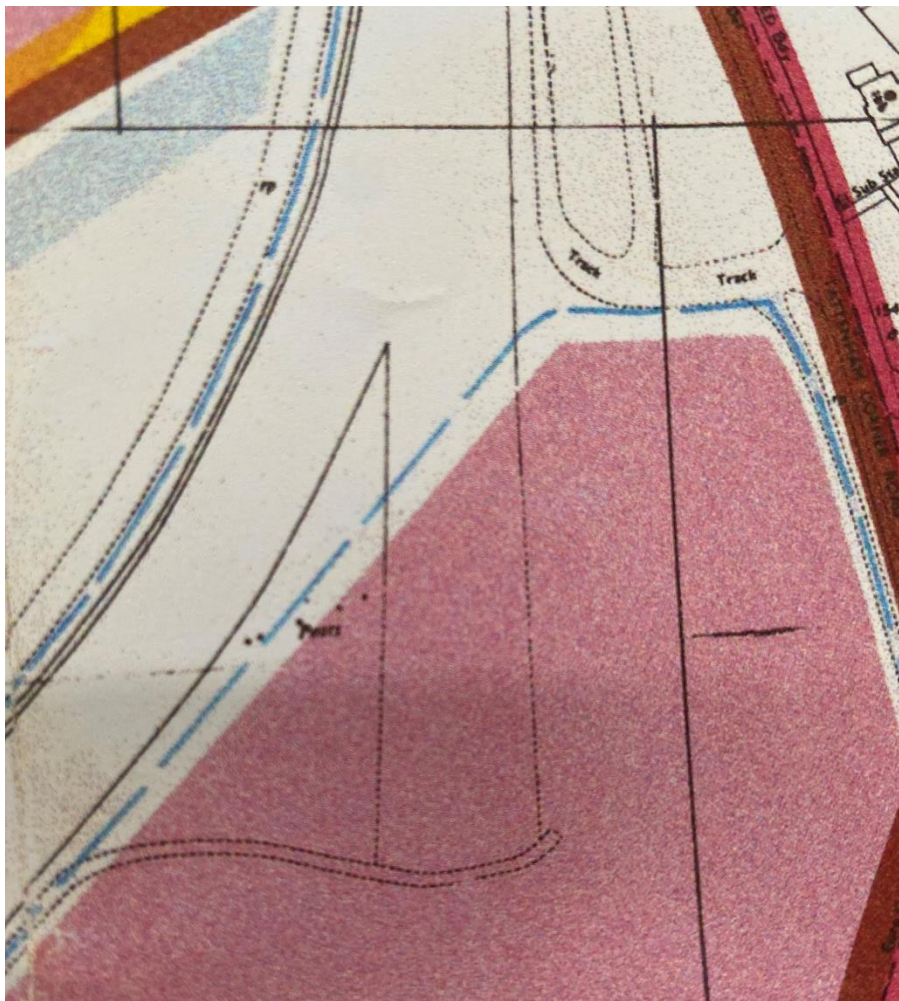
The build up over many years of debris and material has left the ground in that area increasingly very rough and uneven, and is beginning to cause issues with horses becoming unbalanced when entering the Starting stalls before a race. It is also unsightly and unbecoming of modern racecourse presentational standards.

The Racecourse seeks approval for the permanent closing up of this crossing point, its levelling, and for the instatement of a fully and permanent grass surface. This will prove much safer and acceptable for the running of 6 Furlongs race going forwards.

The Racecourse would propose, at its own expense, to create a new path/horsewalk of similar width immediately behind the current extent of the chute, which would rejoin the current main path at its western (Walton Downs) side. This path then forms, as it does now, part of the exit for horses in training from the 7 furlong Polytrack AWT at the top of Walton Downs.

Anecdotally, some trainers are already using the route proposed behind the chute, currently grass, due to the uneven nature of the track across the chute.

In terms of the legal position, the signed map of the 1984 Epsom and Walton Downs Regulation Act shows a track, without status, immediately behind the full extent of the chute, but does show a Hack Ride in this area some 100 yards further down the chute - in the direction of Tattenham Corner. To the Racecourse's knowledge, a track at this point has not existed in living memory, nor should its inception be encouraged. Any Hacks in this vicinity during authorised hours currently make use of the crossing across the start chute being discussed, and going forward would equally be allowed to make use of the new proposed route behind the chute.

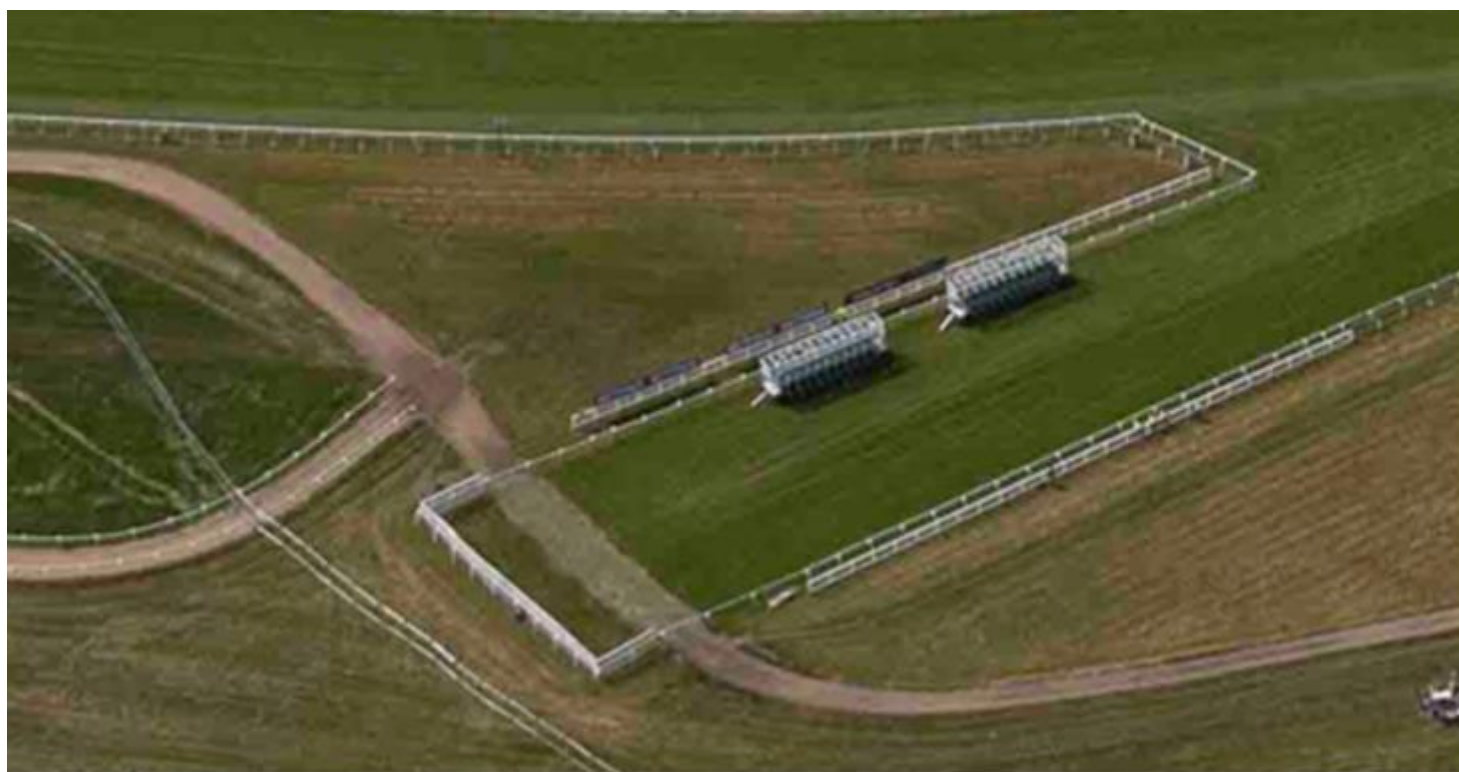


The proposal to reroute the path was discussed at a recent TGMB meeting, where those trainers present had no objection to the proposal, and agreed that it would be a benefit to the starts of 6 furlong races. TGMB as a body gave its approval.









Current Raceday arrangements – grass clippings deployed to 'blind' the crossing