

**Minutes of the Meeting of the EPSOM AND WALTON DOWNS CONSERVATORS
held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 22 June 2026**

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)) and Councillor Clive Woodbridge (the Council)

Absent: Simon Dow (Horserace Betting Levy Board (the Levy Board)), Councillor Liz Frost (the Council), Councillor Bernice Froud (the Council) and Councillor Kim Spickett (the Council)

Officers present: Jackie King (Chief Executive), Sue Emmons (Chief Accountant), Samantha Whitehead (Interim Assistant Head of Service & Streetcare Manager) 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 31st of March 2027.

2 APPOINTMENT OF THE VICE CHAIR

It was resolved that the Conservators appointed Jim Allen as Vice-Chair to hold office until the 31st of March 2027.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators held on 26 January 2026 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

4 MINUTES OF THE EPSOM AND WALTON DOWNS CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE, 16 MARCH 2026

The Conservators received the Minutes of the meeting of the Epsom and Walton Downs Consultative Committee held on 16 March 2026.

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 16 March 2026.**

5 FINAL ACCOUNTS 2025/26

The Conservators received a report seeking approval of the final accounts for the financial year 2025/26.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Balance.** A Member of the Conservators queried why the interest on balances is higher than forecast. The Chief Accountant explained that an average interest rate is assumed when the budget is set, for the year 2025/26, it was expected to be averaging about 4%, and slightly higher was achieved. She also explained if there is less expenditure and more income, then there is a higher cash balance on which interest is being earned.

Following consideration, the Conservators unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Receive the final accounts for 2025/26, 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.**

6 DERBY UPDATE 2026

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

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Derby Festival.** The Chair of the Conservators commented on the significant steps to reinvigorate the Derby Festival and expressed appreciation for the clear effort put in by the Jockey Club in rejuvenating and regenerating the Derby Festival for many years to come.
- b) **Ladies' Day.** A Member of the Conservators expressed their thanks for a positive experience on the Friday of the Derby Festival. They commented

that it would be beneficial to have more ladies' toilets if possible. These comments were noted by the Vice Chair.

- c) **Royal Visit.** A Member of the Conservators asked if it would be possible to have more publicity leading up to the Derby Festival regarding the attendance of the King and Queen. The Vice Chair explained that it could not have been announced earlier due to security concerns.
- d) **Racing.** A Member of the Conservators commented that the positive changes were evident and echoed in the press, and this will be reflected in people coming back next year.

Following consideration, the Conservators unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Note the update on the 2026 Derby from the Epsom Downs Racecourse.**

7 REVIEW OF CURRENT GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Conservators received a report asking them to consider whether any changes may be required to the Epsom and Walton Downs Regulation Act 1984 to ensure the continued effective governance, management, and operation of Epsom and Walton Downs following Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council is due to be dissolved on 31 March 2027, with the new East Surrey Council assuming responsibilities and services from 1 April 2027.

The report invited Conservators to initiate early discussions on whether amendments or clarifications to the Act, or associated governance arrangements, may be required to support a smooth transition and continuity of function.

The followings matters were considered:

- a) **The Act.** A Member of the Conservators raised that following rereading the 1984 Act, there is an argument that the new six 'council' representatives appointed to the Conservators should be from across all of East Surrey as East Surrey Council will be paying 60% of the precept to the Conservators budget. However, they stressed the importance set out in the Act that the council appointed Conservators should have a strong local link understanding of the area and community. They explained that therefore, the 6 council appointed Conservators, following the dissolution of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, should be drawn from the 5 Epsom and Ewell East Surrey Council Wards, or neighbouring wards of the Downs from Mole Valley and Reigate and Banstead. The Member explained that the issue with opening up the Conservators appointments to all councillors in East Surrey could result in a situation where Conservators have no knowledge or interest in Epsom Racing Industry.

- b) **Clerk to the Conservators.** A Member of the Conservators raised that there is a potential issue with the Clerk to the Conservators position transferring from the Chief Executive of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council to the Chief Executive of East Surrey Council. The issue being that the workload and complexities of the CEX of East Surrey Council will be far greater and the individual will potentially be much further removed from Epsom and Ewell and an understanding and involvement with the Downs and racing industry. The Member suggested that the Clerk to the Conservators could instead be someone nominated by East Surrey Council, either an employee of ESC or somebody with a local interest and connection, who can ensure communications between relevant stakeholders throughout the year.
- c) **Racecourses.** A Member of the Conservators expressed support for the comments about limiting the council appointed Conservators by location and area, as there are other racecourse within the East Surrey area, namely Sandown, and Epsom and Ewell Councillors would not partake in decision making or management of those racecourses.
- The Chair proposed that recommendation 3 was amended so a Working Group Meeting could take place to enable Conservators not present to participate in and further discuss potentially relevant changes and clarifications to the Act.

Recommendation 3 amended wording, 'Discuss any proposed additions, amendments, or clarifications at a Working Group Meeting, for review by the Chair and Clerk. Proposal to then be shared for comment to East Surrey Shadow Councillors representing Epsom and Ewell Wards, to then be recommended to Full Council and submitted to Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) for consideration.'

This proposal was seconded by the Vice Chair.

The Conservators unanimously agreed the amendment to recommendation 3.

Following consideration, the Conservators unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Consider the potential implications of LGR changes for the governance and operation of the Conservators under the Epsom and Walton Downs Regulation Act 1984.**
- (2) **Identify any areas within the Act, or associated governance arrangements, that may require amendment, clarification, or further review.**
- (3) **Discuss any proposed additions, amendments, or clarifications at a Working Group Meeting, for review by the Chair and Clerk. Proposal to then be shared for comment to East Surrey Shadow Councillors representing Epsom and Ewell Wards, to then be recommended to**

Full Council and submitted to Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) for consideration.

8 REPAIR AND RENEWALS REVIEW

To inform the Conservators of the current position of the Working Balance and Repairs and Renewals Reserve, report on recent and planned improvement works across Epsom and Walton Downs and seek approval to allocate funding towards the resurfacing of the Viewpoint Car Park.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Procurement process.** A Member of the Conservators asked for clarification on the procurement process for work of this nature. The Assistant Head of Service – Streetcare explained that it would need to go through a procurement process and advice would need to be sought from the procurement team as this project would hit one of the higher tier thresholds. She explained the work would be advertised and follow a full and proper procurement process.
- b) **Increased income.** A Member of the Conservators asked if there would be a further income benefit for the licensed vendor in the car park, following the improvement works. The Assistant Head of Service – Streetcare explained that the estimates for income from mobile vendors has been conservative, so there is potentially room for increased income going forwards. The Member raised it would be great to resurface all the car parks. The Chair agreed but explained that there are not sufficient funds to resurface multiple car parks at this stage.
- c) **Safety improvements.** A Member of the Conservators raised that it could be beneficial to combat anti-social behaviour that occurs in the View Point Car Park, by adding a barrier or CCTV, when the resurfacing works are carried out. The Chair commented that Surrey Police could be consulted to get their thoughts on possible additional items to help reduce anti-social behaviour issues in the car park. He informed Conservators that he would raise it with the Borough Commander and the Community Safety Partnership. He also raised that there is a discussion to be had about whether the car parks introduce charges for their use in the future.
- d) **Price.** The Vice Chair queried whether the budgeted amount for the project will be enough. He highlighted that it would need to be done to a high standard as large vehicles use the car park. The Assistant Head of Service – Streetcare informed Conservators that they are reasonably confident it can be achieved within the allotted budget and explained that a similar project had been completed at Nonsuch Park and was done to a high standard, which is still in a good condition years down the line. She explained that the project will go out to a procurement exercise and the price of goods and materials can fluctuate but the team will see what can be achieved with the allotted budget.

Following consideration, the Conservators unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Note the current position of the Working Balance and Repairs and Renewals Reserve.**
- (2) Note the recent and planned expenditure on improvements to Epsom and Waltons Downs.**
- (3) Approve expenditure of £75,000 to fund resurfacing works to the Viewpoint Car Park, Grandstand Road.**

The meeting began at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.42 pm

COUNCILLOR STEVEN MCCORMICK (CHAIR)