

Minutes of the Meeting of the EPSOM AND WALTON DOWNS CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE held on 17 September 2018

PRESENT -

Councillor Liz Frost (Chairman); Hugh Craddock (British Horse Society) and Nigel Whybrow (Training Grounds Management Board).

In Attendance: Caroline Baldock (Epsom Equestrian Conservation Team), Richard Balsdon (College Ward Residents' Association), Bob Eberhard (Epsom and Ewell Cycle Action Group), Nick Harrison (Tattenhams Residents' Association), Margaret Hollins (Epsom Civic Society), David Lambert (Epsom Downs Model Aircraft Club) and Roger Marples (Epsom Downs Model Aircraft Club)

Absent: Councillor Jean Steer MBE, Simon Durrant (Epsom Downs Racecourse) and Alex Stewart (Epsom Downs Riders Protection Society) Andrew Cooper (Epsom Downs Racecourse), Steven McCormick (Woodcote Residents' Association), Conor Morrow (Lower Mole Countryside Management Service) and Stuart Walker (Epsom Golf Club)

Officers present: Amardip Healy (Chief Legal Officer), Sam Beak (Downs Manager), Samantha Whitehead (Streetcare Manager) and Tim Richardson (Democratic Services Officer)

1 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Epsom and Walton Downs Consultative Committee held on 12 March 2018 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following comment being noted:

- **Minute 14 c) Use of the Hatched area for hack riding.** The British Horse Society (BHS) Representative requested that it be noted that during consideration of this matter he had informed the Committee that some signposting on the edge of the hatched area was incorrect and was likely to be a cause of some incidents of encroachment upon the neighbouring gallops by hack riders.

2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MEETING

The Committee received a verbal update on items considered at the previous meeting. The following matters were noted:

- a) **Hack riding map for Downs users.** It was noted that production of this map was still in progress.

- b) **Condition of concrete posts adjacent to Racecourse.** No further update had been received.
- c) **Signposting/marker posts.** A report regarding signposting and marker posts for hack rides was part of a larger signposting project, and would be presented to a future meeting of the Conservators for consideration.
- d) **Scrub clearance at southern end of Rifle Butts Alley.** This work would be undertaken as part of the winter works programme.
- e) **Public consultation for parking on land in front of Derby Arms Public House.** The Committee was informed that responses to the public consultation including those from the members of the Consultative Committee had been considered by the Conservators. Following consideration of the consultation responses and committee report, the Conservators had granted conditional 1 year approval to the use of the area for parking. This included an approved management plan for use of the area.
- f) **Hack sand track, foot of Walton Downs.** The Chief Legal Officer informed the Committee that a substantive response had still not been received from the Horserace Betting Levy Board (HBLB) with regard to this matter, but that it would continue to be pursued. The matter was of heightened importance as the HBLB would soon cease to exist with its functions moving over to the Gambling Commission later this year/early next year.

The Epsom Equestrian Conservation Team Representative expressed concern at the condition of the track and it was noted that Officers would provide the contact email address for the HBLB following the meeting, to enable these concerns to be passed-on directly.

The BHS representative informed the Committee that he had written to Chris Grayling MP and Jeremy Wright MP, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport with regard to the condition of the Hack Sand Track. A response from the Secretary of State had informed that the transfer of liabilities from the HBLB to its successor bodies was being considered, and that the maintenance of the sand track would be included within this. The need for meetings between all parties to resolve the matter was recognised. The BHS representative informed the Committee that the HBLB had indicated that its preferred resolution to the issue would likely be to capitalise it, by making a one-off payment in exchange for limiting its future liabilities.

3 REPORT OF THE HEAD DOWNSKEEPER

The Committee received and noted the report of the Head Downskeeper.

4 ISSUES RAISED BY THE HACK RIDERS REPRESENTATIVES

Prior to the publication of the agenda for the meeting, the BHS Representative had requested that an item be included in relation to the Conservators' decision with regard to parking on land in front of the Derby Arms Public House. The Chief Legal Officer informed the Committee that this request had been declined, as the matter was within the remit of the Conservators, who had already decided on the application. The Committee was reminded that it did not possess the authority to call-in the decisions of the Conservators, or to challenge the decisions of the Conservators. The Chief Legal Officer emphasised to the Committee that business considered by it must fall within its terms of reference as set out in its Constitution.

The BHS Representative verbally requested further information regarding:

- Production of management plan for use of land in front of the Derby Arms Public House for parking.
- Use of the land in front of the Derby Arms Public House for parking prior to a Management Plan being agreed.

The Chief Legal Officer informed the Committee that the production and approval of the management plan was a matter for the Racecourse and Council Officers. Once the plan had been completed and agreed, the Chief Legal Officer was willing to provide a copy of it to members of the Committee for the purposes of enforcement if necessary.

The Chief Legal Officer informed the Committee that the BHS Representative had indicated in correspondence prior to the meeting that he was considering a judicial review of the Conservators decision. In view of this, and as the item was not within the Committee's Terms of Reference, it was not an issue for the Committee to consider.

5 ISSUES RAISED FOR CONSIDERATION

The following items were raised by representatives to the Committee:

- a) **Management of deer on the Downs.** Following a question from the College Ward Residents' Association Representative, the Committee was informed that there was not presently any management plan for control of deer on the Downs, as there was not any identified need for one.
- b) **Horse encroachment on the model aircraft area.** The Epsom Downs Model Aircraft Club (EDMAC) Representatives informed the meeting that an incident of a horse being walked across the model aircraft runway and control area had been recorded. Officers advised that any future such activity should be reported to the Downskeepers, who would be able to explain the areas available to the horse rider/walker. Copies of maps were to be offered to the EDMAC to hand out as when necessary.

- c) **Launch of rockets on the Downs.** The EDMAC Representatives informed the meeting that incidents of rockets being launched from the Downs had been witnessed by club members. Officers informed the Committee that the use of rockets on the Downs was prohibited under the Downs Byelaws, and that any future incidents should be reported to the Downskippers. A temporary Downs byelaw sign would be installed on the model aircraft peg-board, to assist in highlighting the prohibition. Here was a wider project to produce permanent byelaw signs.

6 ITEMS FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE CONSERVATORS

The Committee did not identify any items from the meeting which would require verbal representation to the Conservators.

7 DATE OF MEETINGS IN 2019

The Committee agreed that dates for its meetings would be identified and communicated following the meeting.

The meeting began at 6.24 pm and ended at 7.03 pm

COUNCILLOR LIZ FROST (CHAIRMAN)