

Minutes of the Meeting of the EPSOM AND WALTON DOWNS CONSERVATORS held on 27 January 2020

PRESENT -

Councillor Liz Frost (the Council) (Chairman); Simon Durrant (Jockey Club Racecourses (the Company)) (Vice-Chairman); Simon Dow (Horserace Betting Levy Board (the Levy Board)), Councillor Jan Mason (the Council), Councillor Steven McCormick (the Council), Stephen Wallis (Jockey Club Racecourses (the Company)) and Councillor Clive Woodbridge (the Council).

In Attendance: Conor Morrow (Lower Mole Countryside Management Service)

Absent: Andrew Cooper (Jockey Club Racecourses (the Company)), Councillor Bernice Froud (the Council) and Councillor Lucie McIntyre (the Council)

Officers present: Kathryn Beldon (Chief Executive), Brendan Bradley (Chief Accountant), Sandra Dessent (Committee Administrator) and Gillian McTaggart (Head of Policy, Performance & Governance)

17 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meetings of the Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators held on 28 October and 25 November 2019 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

18 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

The Conservators received the Strategic Risk Register and accompanying report which detailed risks, mitigations, responsibility and action required to manage the identified risks.

The Strategic Risk Register was compiled following a workshop to identify potential risks and ensure that they are appropriately recorded, remedied and reported.

In light of recently reported health and safety incidents involving the death of two horses the Conservators discussed the significance of Surrey County Council reviewing potential traffic safety measures and enhanced signage or traffic speed measures with a view to improving safety.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

The Conservators;

- (1) Approved the completed Strategic Risk Register**
- (2) Authorised the Clerk to the Conservators to confirm the adequacy of the insurance and health and safety arrangements having sought confirmation from the Jockey Club and TGMB on their arrangements**
- (3) Authorised the Clerk of the Conservators to campaign for potential safety measures in light of recent incidents**

19 BUDGET 2020/21

The Conservators received a report seeking approval for the 2020/21 budget and the recommended precepts on the constituent bodies.

It was reported that a £3,000 overspend was forecasted for 2019/20 which was due in the main to costs associated with the new cleaning/maintenance contracts for buildings on the Downs. However in the context of the overall budget of £407,000 it represented less than 1% of the budget and could be met by the Conservators working balance reserve.

Regarding the proposed 2020/21 budget Officers explained the background and rationalisation for the proposed 7.7% increase in precept based on continuing to provide the full range of services.

It was recognised that the proposed increase would be challenging for the Conservators and to that end Officers suggested potential saving options as detailed below for discussion:

Option A – Remove budget for project work. The recommended budget for 2020/21 included a sum of £4,200 for ad-hoc project work, which provided a resource for service improvements. Removing this budget could save £4,200 per annum in the short term. However, there was a risk that should the Conservators wish to reapply for EAFRD funding or undertake other project work, funding would have to be identified from reserves or future budgets.

Option B – A review of fees and charges. It was acknowledged that there was scope to review fees and charges to increase income from events on the Downs. However, the risk was that should fees and charges be increased by too much, some events may not continue to be held on the Downs, with an adverse impact on overall income levels. The Conservators generate circa £6,000 per annum from hire charges on the Downs.

Option C – Downskeepers' Hut. Undertake a review on the increased cost of cleaning and maintenance of the Hut, as a result of changes to contracts. The cleaning and maintenance contract costs £6,060 per annum.

In addition to the options outlined in the report a further option was suggested as follows:

Option D – Tattenham Corner Conveniences. Explore the savings that could be made by reducing the expenditure on the Tattenham Corner conveniences.

The Jockey Club Racecourses and the Levy Board representatives advised that a more affordable level of increase to precepts would be between 3-4%.

Following consideration it was resolved:

The Conservators;

- (1) Noted the latest income and expenditure position for 2019/20.**
- (2) Did not approve the recommended budget for 2020/21 as set out in Annex 1 to the report, and agreed a way forward as set out in (3) of this Minute below.**
- (3) Considered the savings options at paragraph 3.6 of the report and advised that Options A, B, C and D as set out in this Minute should be taken forward by officers for further review and the findings brought before the Conservators for consideration at a future committee meeting.**
- (4) Did not approve the delegation of authority to the Treasurer to agree the final budget and precept for 2020/21.**

20 EPSOM DOWNS RACING SEASON 2020

The Conservators received a report detailing dates for race meetings in 2020 and the following requests for consideration:

- Application for Evening and Sunday race meetings
- Application for temporary suspension of Footpath 50 (over the period of the Derby)
- Applications for racing-related fencing
- Application for extension of Upper Tattenham Enclosure fencing period (between Monday 18 May until Thursday 21 May)
- Application for extension of the Lonsdale Enclosure fencing period (Monday 18 May to Thursday 21 May; Wednesday 17 June and Monday 10 August to Saturday 16 August)

Following consideration the Conservators:

- (1) Noted the dates of the 2020 racing season for Epsom Downs detailed in paragraph 1.1 of the report and granted consent for the following meetings in accordance with section 14 of the Epsom & Walton Downs Regulation Act 1984:**

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- **Thursday 2 July (evening)**
 - **Thursday 9 July (evening)**
 - **Thursday 16 July (evening)**
 - **Thursday 30 July (evening)**
 - **Sunday 27 September**
- (2) **Noted that Epsom Downs Racecourse had applied to Surrey County for the temporary suspension of Footpath 50 as detailed in section 3 of the report.**
- (3) **Agreed an application from Epsom Downs Racecourse for consent under the Bylaw 2 (i) (a) to bring forward the start of the fencing period for the Upper Tattenham Enclosure and Lonsdale Enclosure for the Derby Festival on 18 May 2020.**
- (4) **Agreed an application from Epsom Downs Racecourse for consent under the Byelaw 2 (i) (a) to extend the fencing period for the Lonsdale Enclosure to enable fencing to remain in place on 17 June and between the dates 10 – 16 August 2020.**

The meeting began at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.55 pm

COUNCILLOR LIZ FROST (CHAIRMAN)