APPLICATION FOR USE OF BARBEQUES ON THE HILL – EPSOM DOWNS RACECOURSE

Submitted by: Simon Durrant, General Manger, Epsom Downs Racecourse

OUTLINE

During the racing season the racecourse permits vehicles to park on the Hill for three fixtures, Ladies Day, Derby Day and Bank Holiday Monday in August. It is for these three days only that the racecourse exercises its rights of its Premises Licence and permits the sale of alcohol and other related forms of entertainment.

During these days and for a number of years prior to 2012, many visitors were able to enjoy picnics, including barbeques, whilst watching the races. However, post 2013, the Conservators were keen to impose a restriction on visitors having Barbeques due to potential Health & Safety implications and as result of this request, the Jockey Club, working in conjunction with the Conservators and Downs Keepers have curtailed the use of private barbeques. The change in 2013 was one of interpretation, in that prior to that and for as can be remembered the byelaw regarding fires had been interpreted as NOT covering barbeques.

The racecourse is aware that the Conservators have in more recent years interpreted the 1984 Epsom & Walton Downs Regulation Act clause relating to the lighting of fires to include Barbeques. Previous to this, barbeques were unrestricted on the Downs during racedays and although we occasionally had issues with smoke coming across the course, this was managed effectively.

Bylaw 11-(1)g states that

The Conservators may subject to the provisions of this Act make byelaws for the prevention of nuisances, for the preservation of order, for the prevention of damage to the land or anything thereon or therein, and for securing that persons resorting thereto will so behave themselves as to avoid undue interference with the enjoyment of the Downs by other persons and, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, such byelaws may be made for any of the following purposes:-

(g) for prohibiting or regulating camping or sleeping on the Downs or the lighting of fires thereon.

However, it has become apparent that the restrictions that are now in place are having a detrimental effect on our visitor numbers, in particular during the Investec Derby Festival and this can be seen by aerial photographs that are taken annually. The racecourse would therefore like to re-introduce the ability to enjoy a barbecue during these three race days and believe that the most pragmatic way forward is to allow them if they are:
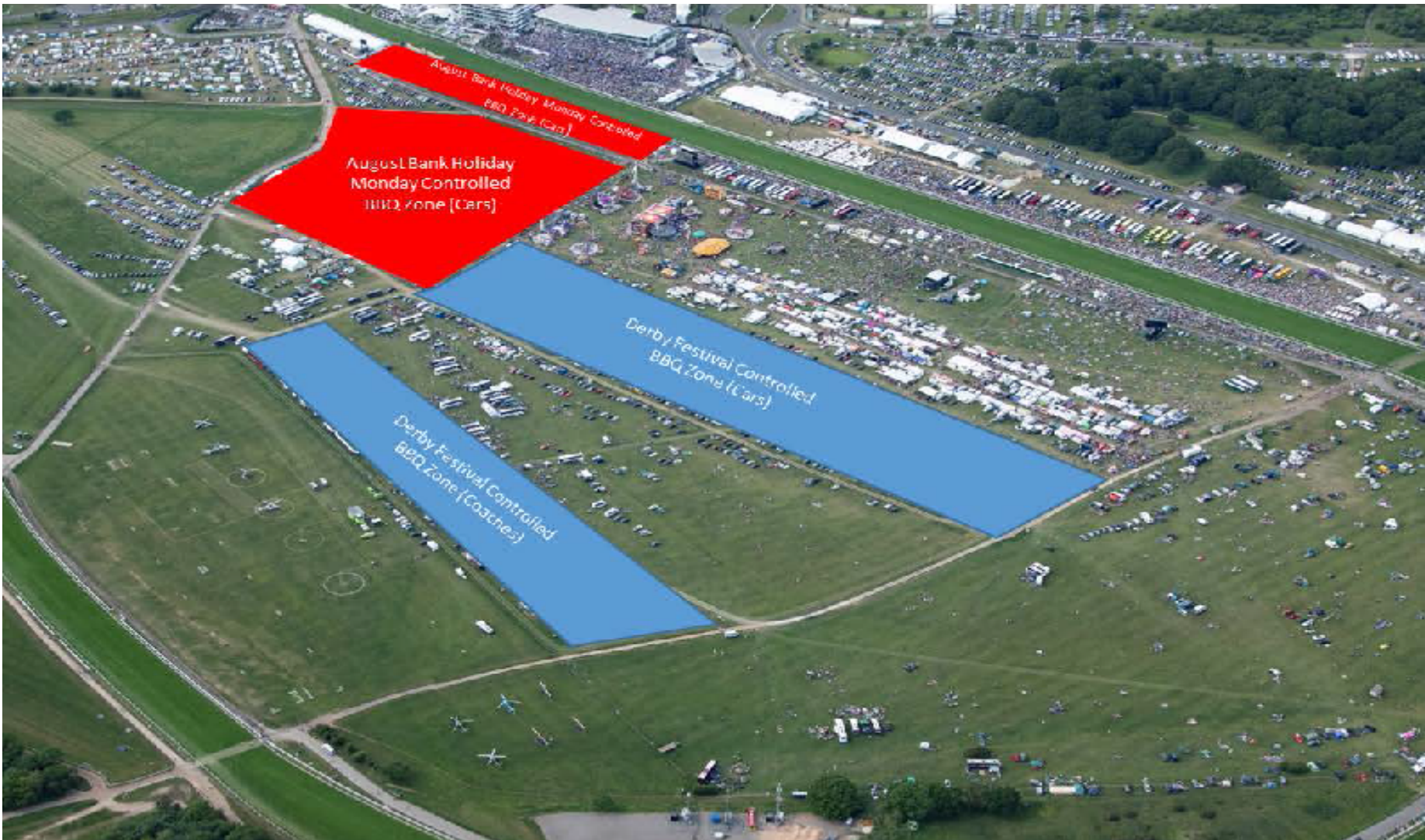
i.   accompanied by the necessary health and safety documentation (applicable to larger group parties).   Customers will be provided both in advance of the event and on the day(s) itself a flyer similar to that shown at the end of this report – providing safety advice and warning of potential hazards.

ii. to provide our own control measures on the Hill, including mobile teams with necessary fire fighting equipment and the staff employed having received the appropriate training and be able to talk to our customers ensuring the safe use (and disposal) of barbeques. During the Derby Festival there is already a considerable amount of control measures in place, including comprehensive CCTV surveillance, mobile stewarding patrols, a large police presence and fire brigade attendance.

iii. Creation of barbeque "zones" that are suitable stewarded and clearly identifiable through signage/flags. These areas will be controlled through the use of barriers / fencing so as to create a safe area for barbeques and providing suitable means of disposing of waste (including charcoals) at the end of the event.

iv. are not sat directly on the Downs so as to burn the grass. Barbeques will only be permitted if they are raised off of the ground, through the use of legs or suitable stand.

We request that the Conservators consider this and endorse our future approach for the three days in the year that we "open" the Hill and the evening meetings when we allow vehicles to park along the rail in the Lonsdale enclosure.

Plan

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