

**Minutes of the Meeting of the EPSOM AND WALTON DOWNS CONSULTATIVE
COMMITTEE held on 28 September 2015**

PRESENT -

Councillor Liz Frost (Chairman); Councillor Jean Steer, Hugh Craddock (British Horse Society) and Simon Durrant (Epsom Downs Racecourse)

In Attendance: Caroline Baldock (Epsom Equestrian Conservation Group), Richard Balsdon (College Ward Residents' Association), Teresa Cass (Woodcote Residents' Association), Andrew Cooper (Epsom Downs Racecourse), Bob Eberhard (Epsom and Ewell Cycle Action Group), David Lambert (Epsom Downs Model Aircraft Club), Nick Harrison (Tattenhams Residents' Association), Mark Harvey (Epsom Golf Club) and Conor Morrow (Lower Mole Countryside Management Service)

Absent: Alex Stewart (Epsom Downs Riders Protection Society) Nigel Whybrow (Training Grounds Management Board) and Angela Clifford (Epsom Civic Society)

Officers present: Frances Rutter (Clerk to the Conservators), Sam Beak (Downs Manager), Bob Harding (Head Downskeeper), Tim Richardson (Democratic Services Officer) and Samantha Whitehead (Streetcare Manager)

1 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Epsom and Walton Downs Consultative Committee held on 16 March 2015 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MEETING

The Committee received and noted a report providing updates on matters raised previously. The following items were noted:

- a) Car parking for events. It was noted that this was a matter which Officers were looking into, and that a written update would be circulated to the Committee following the meeting.
- b) Dog Control. The Committee was informed that the Streetcare Manager had received a copy of a report from the consultant Simon Jenkinson which had been commissioned by the Jockey Club regarding the issue of dog control on the Downs. Due to the receipt of the report shortly before the meeting, the Streetcare Manager had not yet had the opportunity to consider its contents.

The Committee was informed that the Training Grounds Management Board (TGMB) had proposed the introduction of new signs for the Downs with regard to dog walking. Proposed wording for the signs and example images illustrating their appearance were circulated at the meeting. The signs stated that in the interests of health and safety, all dogs must be on leads before noon. The signs also stated that after noon dogs could be walked off leads provided there were no horses present.

The Committee considered the proposed wording and design for the signs. It was noted that the Committee's views would be communicated to the Conservators, and the following matters were considered:

- i. Reference to Health & Safety. The British Horse Society Representative suggested that the wording "in the interest of Health & Safety" be reviewed, as it could be perceived as a generic excuse, rather than a specific reason for the request to keep dogs on leads.
- ii. Reference to "must". The British Horse Society Representative expressed concern that the sign stated that dogs "must" be on leads prior to noon, but that in his opinion the current Downs Byelaws did not enable the Conservators to require dog walkers to do so. The Clerk informed the Committee that this would be reviewed prior to its consideration by the Conservators.
- iii. Inclusion of "!" symbol. The Lower Mole Service Representative suggested that the sign should include an exclamation mark symbol similar to that used on the current signs, as this was a universal method for alerting users to an issue.
- iv. Enforcement of restrictions. The Streetcare Manager informed the Committee that enforcement of dog walking restrictions was currently only possible on the Downs under the Byelaws. If a Public Spaces Order was placed on the Downs, it would enable fixed penalty notices to be issued for offences relating to dog control, but enforcement of either powers would be challenging. The Committee noted that some local authorities and management bodies (such as the Wimbledon Putney Commons Conservators) employed civil enforcement officers for such purposes. The Streetcare Manager informed the meeting that feedback received from other local authorities which had implemented Dog Control or Public Spaces Orders had been that most very rarely enforced such powers, and that education of dog walkers had been more successful.
- v. Comparison with Newmarket Training areas. It was noted that Newmarket Racehorse Training centre did not have a Local Act of Parliament similar to the Downs, which enabled its management organisation to more easily control access by dog walkers. Its arrangements with the Downs were therefore not comparable.

Subject to the comments detailed above, the Committee expressed broad support for the proposed signs.

- c) Surface of Walton Road – satisfaction of Highways Authority to works. The Clerk informed the Committee that Surrey County Council would be contacted with regard to whether it was satisfied with the resurfacing works undertaken by the Training Grounds Management Board in 2014.
- d) Fixed-point photography of the Downs. The Streetcare Manager would look into the possibility of undertaking fixed-point photography monitoring of the Downs.
- e) Review of Hack Ride Markers on Epsom Golf Course. It was noted that this was an ongoing process and that some markers had already been renewed.
- f) Cars offered for sale on the Downs near Clear Height Stables. It was noted that Borough Council Officers had looked into the matter but had been unable to take enforcement action as the number of vehicles had not exceeded the legal limit. The Borough Council would continue to monitor the issue.

3 REPORT OF THE HEAD DOWNSKEEPER

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

4 ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE CONSERVATORS

The Committee received a report providing a summary of items of interest considered at the meetings of the Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators held on 15 April and 17 June 2015. The following items were noted:

- a) Pedestrian access to the Downs from Tattenham Corner Station. It was noted that pedestrian access to the Tattenham Corner Road crossing was difficult and dangerous when approaching from Tattenham Corner Station. The Committee's concern regarding the matter was noted, and the Committee was informed that the Vice-Chairman of the Conservators and Streetcare Manager would look into the matter.

5 ISSUES ARISING FROM THE DERBY RACE MEETING AND VIEWS ON FENCING ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee received a report inviting its views on the arrangements for the 2015 Derby Race meeting and fencing extensions granted by the Conservators. The following items were noted:

- a) Post Derby clean-up. The British Horse Society Representative expressed concerns that the post Derby clean-up had not improved over that undertaken in previous years, and that the issue of glass fragments being left following clean-up had been encountered again. The Racecourse Representative informed the Committee that due to the Derby's scale and number of attendees, it was incredibly difficult to locate and remove every piece of litter. The clean-up staff removed glass when identified, but it was not always a simple process to locate it. The Racecourse did not issue any

glass based vessels to customers at any locations, except in the hospitality areas of the stands. The possibility of creating a volunteers group to assist with the clean-up was suggested by the Epsom Equestrian Conservation Group's representative.

- b) Racecourse fencing extensions. The Clerk informed the Committee that the purpose of the Epsom and Walton Downs Regulation Act 1984 (the Act) was in a large part to protect the owner and racehorse training industry. The Act provided specific rights with regard to the erection and placement of fencing for horse racing purposes, and the Conservators had taken the view that they would consider applications for extensions to these periods favourably where appropriate. The Clerk had also received the views of the Council's Head of Legal on this matter and it concurred with her view. Whilst the Conservators had approved the fencing extension applications listed in the report, they had also declined other applications in the past.

The British Horse Society Representative informed the Committee that he did not agree with the view that the Conservators had powers under the Act or Byelaws to approve fencing extensions, and that in his opinion the Act provided specific periods which could not be extended. The British Horse Society Representative expressed that he felt that the use of Byelaw (4) (d) (i) to grant extensions was inappropriate and requested that these views be recorded in the Minutes of the meeting.

- c) Later running time of the Oaks and Derby Races. The Committee was informed that the feature race of both Ladies and Derby days (the Oaks and Derby respectively) had started at 4.30, 30 minutes later than in previous years. The last race of the day had therefore also been 20-25 minutes later on both days, but entertainment on the Downs (such as the fairground) had finished at its usual time, and therefore there had been no difference in time of crowds leaving. The new timing of races had been successful, and was likely to continue in future years.

6 ISSUES RAISED BY THE HACK RIDERS REPRESENTATIVES

The following items were raised by the British Horse Society Representative:

- a) Encroachment of the Golf Course on the hack area at 14th Tee. It was noted that the grass adjacent to the 14th Tee had been cut short by the Golf Club but was actually a hack ride. The Golf Club had acknowledged the difficulty which this created for hack riders using the area and it would be allowed to grow back to its previous length.
- b) Scrub encroachment on the hack area at the top of Rifle Butts Alley. It was noted that works in this area would be included in the Downskeepers' Winter Work Programme. The Winter Work Programme would be presented to the meeting of the Conservators on 7 October 2015.

- c) Hack Sand Track. It was noted that a verbal update on progress toward resolving management issues with the Hack Sand Track would be given at the next meeting of the Conservators, on 7 October 2015.

7 ISSUES RAISED FOR CONSIDERATION

No items for consideration were raised by representatives on the Committee.

8 DATE OF MEETINGS IN 2016

It was agreed that Officers would confirm the dates of meetings in 2016 following the meeting.

9 ITEMS FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE CONSERVATORS

The Committee felt that no items from the meeting would require verbal representation to the Conservators.

The meeting began at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.17 pm

COUNCILLOR LIZ FROST (CHAIRMAN)