

Minutes of the Meeting of the EPSOM AND WALTON DOWNS CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE held on 9 March 2016

PRESENT -

Councillor Liz Frost (Chairman); Simon Durrant (Epsom Downs Racecourse), Alex Stewart (Epsom Downs Riders Protection Society) and Nigel Whybrow (Training Grounds Management Board)

In Attendance: Caroline Baldock (Epsom Equestrian Conservation Group), Richard Balsdon (College Ward Residents' Association), Teresa Cass (Woodcote Residents' Association), Angela Clifford (Epsom Civic Society), Andrew Cooper (Epsom Downs Racecourse), Bob Eberhard (Epsom and Ewell Cycle Action Group), David Lambert (Epsom Downs Model Aircraft Club), Roger Marples (Epsom Downs Model Aircraft Club) and Conor Morrow (Lower Mole Countryside Management Service)

Absent: Councillor Jean Steer, Hugh Craddock (British Horse Society), Nick Harrison (Tattenhams Residents' Association) and Mark Harvey (Epsom Golf Club)

Officers present: Frances Rutter (Chief Executive) (Items 11 b) - 17 only), Sam Beak (Downs Manager), Bob Harding (Head Downskeeper), Tim Richardson (Democratic Services Officer), Samantha Whitehead (Streetcare Manager) and Simon Young (Head of Legal and Democratic Services) (Items 10 - 11 b) only)

10 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Epsom and Walton Downs Consultative Committee held on 28 September 2015 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

11 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. The Council's Head of Legal and Democratic Services provided the Committee with a summary of the legal situation regarding car parking on the land adjacent to the Derby Arms Public House which was designated as a Hack Area upon the Signed Map for the Epsom and Walton Downs Regulation Act 1984 (the Act), and coloured with yellow-hatching in the Deposited Map for the same Act.

The Committee was informed that there were provisions within the Act to enable the area to be utilised by the Racecourse for parking for racing events. The Act did not provide specific provisions to enable parking on the area for non-racing related events, but the Committee was informed that this did not mean that such use could not be permitted.

The Committee was informed that use of the area for car parking could be permitted by the Council if the use related to Section 17.2 of the Act, or by the Conservators under Byelaw 2(i)(f) for other uses.

The Epsom Downs Riders Protection Society representative requested that in future, requests for the use of the area for car parking be considered via the appropriate procedure prior to it taking place.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services informed the Committee that due to the location of the area (being adjacent to Derby Stables Road, Downs Road and the B290) not being ideal as a Hack Area, it could be argued that the impact of its occasional use for car parking had not been significant.

- b) Dog control. The Committee received an update on dog control on the Downs, following the Conservators' agreement that all dogs should be held on a lead whilst on the Downs prior to noon, daily. The Streetcare Manager informed the meeting that the new arrangements were working well.

Following a question from a representative, the Committee was informed that dogs were requested to be held on a lead prior to noon on Sundays (on which Training hours finished at 9.30am) to enable a more concise, simple to understand message to be made.

- c) Surface of Walton Road – satisfaction of Highways Authority to works. The Committee noted that the Highways Authority was satisfied with the works.
- d) Fixed-point photography for the Downs. The Committee noted that Officers hoped that a local camera club would be willing to undertake the photography.
- e) Access to Tattenham Corner Road crossing for pedestrians walking from Tattenham Corner Station. The Committee noted the comments of the Highways Authority, and that the recent works to reverse the railings, undertaken by the Racecourse had significantly improved access.
- f) Cars advertised for sale on the Downs. The Woodcote Residents' Association representative reported that cars containing 'for sale' signs were being parked on the Downs. It was further reported that there appeared to be a number of vehicles being parked on the Downs all day for the sole purpose of advertising. The Woodcote Resident's Association representative asked whether any action could be taken to restrict these

activities from happening. It was noted that the Downs Manager would discuss the matter with the Council's Planning Enforcement Officer.

- g) Hack Sand Track. The Epsom Downs Riders Protection Society representative noted that the Conservators had been due to receive a report regarding the Hack Sand Track at the foot of Walton Downs at their two most recent meetings, but that in both cases, the report had been postponed, and was now due for their meeting on 15 June 2016. The representative enquired whether the Hack Rider representatives could be involved in its content, due to the time which had elapsed since they had last held a meeting with officers regarding the matter.

The Chairman informed the Committee that the report had been delayed due to the volume of workload faced by Officers.

- h) Post Derby clean-up – number of skips utilised. The Epsom Civic Society representative informed the Committee that she had received enquiries from local residents as to whether less skips had been utilised for the 2015 Derby clean-up. Simon Durrant informed the Committee that these comments had been noted.

12 REPORT OF THE HEAD DOWNSKEEPER

The Committee received and noted the report of the Head Downskeeper. The following matters were discussed:

- a) Hack posts review. The Epsom Downs Riders Protection Society expressed his thanks for the improvements made to hack posts by the Downskeepers. It was noted that a meeting would be arranged with the Hack Rider Representatives to discuss 'no access' hack rider posts.
- b) Winter work programme – coppicing. The Lower Mole Countryside Management Service representative expressed his congratulations for the work undertaken to re-establish coppicing on the Downs, which had been very successful.
- c) Byelaw Boards for the Downs. Following a question, the Committee was informed that a sign audit for the Downs had been completed, and that further byelaw signs would be considered by Officers alongside this.

13 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 7 October 2015 and 20 January 2016. The following item was noted:

- a) Hatched Area at the foot of Walton Downs. The Epsom Downs Riders Protection Society representative requested that in future information be given as to why the Hatched Area was not suitable for hack riding, what

action was needed to make it suitable for hack riding, and who's responsibility it was to undertake such works.

14 THE QUEEN'S 90TH BIRTHDAY BEACON

The Committee received a report with information regarding a proposed beacon lighting ceremony and supporting event on Epsom Downs on 21 April 2016 to commemorate the Queen's 90th Birthday.

Officers anticipated that it would be a smaller-scale event than that held for the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2012 and that attendee numbers would be much lower. The Borough Council had purchased a commemorative gas-fuelled Beacon for the celebration, and this would be available for use at future events. The availability of public toilet facilities was being considered, and Officers would also speak to the Rubbing House and Derby Arms Public Houses regarding the matter.

It was noted that Epsom Golf Club had been consulted on the proposed event, and was happy with the proposal.

Following consideration of the report, the Committee didn't identify any suggestions or concerns regarding the proposed Beacon lighting ceremony on Epsom Downs on 21 April 2016.

15 ISSUES RAISED BY THE HACK RIDERS REPRESENTATIVES

No items were raised for consideration by the Hack Rider representatives.

16 ISSUES RAISED FOR CONSIDERATION

The following items were raised by representatives to the Committee:

- a) Planning permissions for advertising on the Downs. Following a question regarding the planning permissions granted to the Racecourse for advertising signs on the Downs, Simon Durrant informed the Committee that the Racecourse was able to use small advertising signs for its race day events. The Committee was informed that if signs were found on the Downs outside of these periods, they could be reported to the Racecourse for investigation and removal.
- b) Equestrian crossing of Downs Road near the horse margin. Following a question regarding whether an equestrian crossing would be installed on Downs Road, the Committee was informed that this location was within the District of Mole Valley, and outside the boundary of the Downs. It was also noted that transport infrastructure arrangements for the Woodland Trust's neighbouring Centenary Wood site were yet to be put in place, and that these would likely be the Highway Authority's priority for the area.
- c) Restoration of Chalk Downland – success of scrapes on the Downs. The Lower Mole Countryside Management Service representative informed

the Committee that scrapes undertaken last year had been successful in enabling kidney vetch to grow there. It was hoped that this would encourage a population of Small Blue butterflies to use the area to lay their eggs.

17 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 6.50 pm

COUNCILLOR LIZ FROST (CHAIRMAN)

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