

## **MATTERS RAISED FOR CONSIDERATION BY INVITED REPRESENTATIVES**

<b>Head of Service:</b>	Andrew Bircher, Head of Policy and Corporate Resources
<b>Wards affected:</b>	College Ward; Town Ward; Woodcote and Langley Vale Ward;
<b>Appendices (attached):</b>	None

### **Summary**

To discuss issues raised by representatives invited to attend the meeting of the Committee.

### **Recommendation (s)**

#### **The Committee is asked to:**

- (1) Consider the matters raised by invited representatives as set out in this report.**

## **1 Reason for Recommendation**

- 1.1 Section 4 of the Constitution of the Epsom and Walton Downs Consultative Committee sets out that a number of representatives will be invited to attend meetings of the Committee and may participate in the discussions (but not vote) on items. The Chair has agreed to permit invited representatives to raise matters within the terms of reference of the Committee and to be included on the agenda subject to the item being delivered to the Clerk at least 10 days before the next meeting of the Committee.
- 1.2 Accordingly, this report informs the Committee of matters raised for consideration by invited representatives for this meeting by Members of the Committee.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 The following issues have been requested:

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**Woodcote Epsom Residents' Society (WERS), Jane Clarke**

**1: Maintenance of the Downs**

There is a need for a better balance between mowing and cutting long grass with providing space for wildflowers and nature to help biodiversity and tackle pollution.

**Epsom Civic Society, Nick Lock and Epsom Equestrian Conservation Team,  
Caroline Baldock**

**2: Noticeboards content**

The information boards were mainly installed in the middle of 2022, and at the Consultative Committee in January, we were informed that the content inserts for these boards would be put in place by the end of the month, or in early February. However, the boards are still lacking in any actual information and are gradually deteriorating, with some now mainly notable for graffiti. This seems a shame when so much effort has gone into installing them. Please could we know why it has taken so long to procure the actual notices for the boards and when, realistically, we can expect to see them fully installed?

**3. Spoil heaps of training track material**

As the various training tracks have been refurbished, there has been a proliferation of spoil heaps of both old and new track material dumped in places around the Downs. The most common of these tend to be in the 7 Furlong car park, but there has been an unsightly set of spoil dumps behind the racecourse start for about 2 years now, and although the pile of old plastic railings that was dumped next to it was moved in the summer, the spoil itself is still there. In addition, a new spoil heap, somewhat neater, has appeared at the back of the triangle of grass south of the

If there is a need to keep this material rather than removing it completely from the Downs, could it be stored in the compound at the Warren with the tractors and other equipment? The risk of using the Downs as a place for storing training track material is that it could encourage encourage others to treat it as a dumping ground for other material as well...

**4. Incorrect Signage**

A new set of warning notices have also been installed. Although neat and well made, these additional signs do risk presenting a very cluttered appearance to the Downs, especially given the number of other notice boards that are already in place. The main entrance to the Downs on Old London Road now has 5 large

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boards on the verges and edge of the Downs-keepers hut car park before the point where the road crosses the racetrack, and 5 more on the other side. It is not obvious why a single board each side would not be sufficient for all the notices, plus possibly one for motorists advising when the crossing will be closed for the night and one temporary board each side for race day information.

Additionally, the new warning notice boards are sometimes confusingly worded and inconsistent with the other safety boards that are also in use.

The most obvious inconsistency is in setting out the times during which dogs may be walked on or off their leads: most of the new boards say unequivocally that dogs are to be kept on leads before 12 noon (and after 12 noon when horses are present). However, other older notices state that dogs are to be kept on leads “during race horse training times” and further notices again state that racehorse training times are “Monday to Saturday 6AM- 12 Noon & Sunday 8AM – 9.30AM”. Historically, the expectation that dogs will be kept on leads has been linked specifically to the risks when training is in progress, so many users of the Downs will assume that there is no need for a lead (as long as the dog is under control) after 9.30am on Sundays – and from observation that seems to be the case. However, those unfamiliar with the Downs may assume that, while there is supposed to be a restriction on Sunday mornings as well, it clearly is not enforced and therefore it does not really apply at any time. In the interests of clarity, therefore, the relevant new safety boards should at a minimum be re-worded to say that well-behaved dogs only need to be kept on leads during racehorse training hours – i.e. that the expectation does not apply after 9.30AM on Sundays. This could probably be achieved by screwing a small insert with wording into the corner of each safety notice.

As well as the wording on dog control, some of the new notices are also poorly located and have other ambiguous wording. For example, when a notice set well back and at the junction of several paths says that readers should not “walk, run, cycle or hack in the vicinity of this track”, it will not be clear to many where and when exactly these restrictions apply – which track and how close is a “vicinity”? This is especially the case when the notice has no time restrictions on operation, and is next to a public footpath where walking is clearly permitted. There are several examples of this and some photos below attempt to demonstrate this. It would be sensible to review whether the wording of the signs is sufficiently clear to lay users of the Downs, and that the signs are sited in a way that makes it obvious what they refer to.

The danger with putting up unclear and poorly sited signs is that they will just end up being ignored, which could worsen rather than improve the safety situation.

**Epsom Equestrian Conservation Team, Caroline Baldock**

## 5. Lark Nest

Fencing is needed in order to protect lark nests on Middle Hill - For over 5 years no fencing has been put up for the larks to nest behind, with the huge influx of dogs and humans their previously safe places to nest have gone.

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**6. Trees**

Please could 4 oak trees be properly planted on the margin of the gallop? They need to have proper protective surrounds and be a decent size. The one tree which was planted is not sufficient.

**7. Signs for Bridleways**

There are many signs for bridleways all over the downs which are misplaced.

**8. Crossing Lights for Farm Lane**

Will the agreed Crossing lights for Farm Lane be installed? Councillors both local and CC decided that there was a place for the lights to be installed. An engineer was sent out from the CC. Still nothing has been done.

**9. Dustbins**

The new bins have proved to be very difficult to empty and the doors don't close.

**10. Fencing on Grandstand Road**

The fencing along Grandstand Road is now in a terrible mess, with great gaps allowing access to the Downs. When is it going to be mended?

**Tattenham & Preston Residents' Association, Nick Harrison and Epsom Equestrian Conservation Team, Caroline Baldock**

**11. Public Toilets**

TPRA (Tattenham and Preston Residents Association) have asked that toilet facilities been reinstated somewhere on the Downs, following a number of incidents.

**12. Location of Ice Cream Van**

TPRA have had complaints about the location of the Ice Cream van. When it is busy children are standing in the roadway. This is not a very safe place for the purchasers to stand. Is there a possibility it could be moved to one of the car parks?

**College Ward Residents' Association, Richard Balsdon**

**13. Sycamore trees adjacent to the Bridle Path running alongside Longdown Lane South**

It would be helpful to discuss management and plans for Sycamore trees on the downs, specifically those adjacent to the bridle path running up onto the Downs parallel with Longdown Lane South, and the potential threat they pose to horses.

**14. Volunteer cleaning of Grandstand Road Carpark**

What plans do the Conservators have to recognise the tremendous job the guy, whoever he is, does every day, rain or shine?

**3 Risk Assessment**

Legal or other duties

3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

3.1.1 None.

3.2 Crime & Disorder

3.2.1 None.

3.3 Safeguarding

3.3.1 None.

3.4 Dependencies

3.4.1 None.

3.5 Other

3.5.1 None.

**4 Financial Implications**

4.1 None.

4.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** None for the purposes of this report.

**5 Legal Implications**

5.1 None.

5.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** None for the purposes of this report.

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**6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships**

- 6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** Not applicable.
- 6.2 **Service Plans:** Not applicable.
- 6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** None.
- 6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None.
- 6.5 **Partnerships:** None.

**7 Background papers**

- 7.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

**Previous reports:**

- None.

**Other papers:**

- [Constitution of the Epsom and Walton Downs Consultative Committee](#)