

The Derby Festival 2024 – Update for Conservators

The Epsom Derby 2023 was a hugely successful event, with world-class racing across both days, tens of thousands of fans safely experiencing the event on the ground and millions more at home. This was despite a number of specific challenges outside of our control that impacted the event, including train strikes limiting public transport access, FA Cup final moving The Derby start time and the high threat of protestors impacting the event. The safety and security operation was highly complex, and the cross-organisational response to the threat of Animal Rising was world-class in ensuring that the event ran without significant issues.

Epsom Derby 2024 planning has been underway since the last customer left on the 3rd June 2023, and since then there have been a couple of key personnel changes in the Epsom team. Tom Sammes has come in as the new General Manager and James Wilcox has come in as Operations Manager, bringing in a wealth of diverse experience to compliment the existing expertise and experience within the team.

The focus for Derby 2024 is to deliver a world-class event that meets the expectations of today's stakeholder, from owner to jockey to paying customer to fans on the Hill, whilst resetting the operation of the event to match the expected volume of visitors. The Betfred Derby start time will revert to its usual position at 4.30pm, and whilst we are monitoring the ongoing threat of protestors there is no specific intelligence indicating a threat similar to 2023 at this stage.

There are three main changes for 2024 to improve the experience across the event:

1. **Change of facility at The Winning Post (in Lonsdale Enclosure) from a seated hospitality structure to a more relaxed, 'Ticket+' experience.** This will be priced at c.£200pp and appeals to a younger customer looking to upgrade their experience from the typical grandstand ticket. The design of the facility will be more colourful than the previous white marquee to better showcase Racing's Greatest Carnival to fans on and off site.
2. **Change of post-event music location, from Hyperion Lawn to the front of the Grandstand beside the Administration Building.** This move is to improve the safety and experience of the fans who want to stay and watch the after-racing music as well as those fans wanting to leave site through the main gate.
3. **Closure of Footpath 51, the Tunnel under the track that runs from Tattenham Corner Road to The Hill.** This is a safety move to reduce the number of pedestrians crossing the roads near to the roundabout. Pedestrians wanting to access the Hill will be directed to the Rubbing House crossing and London Road crossing, reducing the congestion and potential risk of pedestrian and vehicle movement close to the racecourse entrance. This application will be submitted to the Council in Q1 2024.

The focus of the event build will as-ever be to minimise inconvenience to other users of the Downs whilst, at the same time, enabling the team to operate efficiently. This was broadly managed very well in 2023, however some issues were highlighted between the training community and some of the event contractors which have been discussed and action plans developed for 2024.

We are hugely excited about what's in store for the whole 2024 racing season, and in particular The Epsom Derby, and look forward to welcoming everyone in May/June this year.