

18 January 2016

### **Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators take the lead in ensuring the safety of all users**

In a move designed to enhance safety for all users of the Epsom and Walton Downs, new measures related to dog walking are to be introduced from 25 January 2016.

Following several recent incidents of racehorses being chased by dogs, resulting in injuries to horses and riders, plus dog-on-dog attacks and various incidents due to the lack of control of dogs, the Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators, who manage the Downs, consider it important to take further steps to ensure a safe environment for members of the horseracing industry and the wider public, including dog walkers.

The new measures being introduced will see members of the public walking on the Downs before 12 noon asked to keep their dogs on leads. After this time, dogs may be off leads, providing they are under control and no horses are present.

The Downs are private land owned by Epsom Downs Racecourse and managed by the Conservators through an Act of Parliament.

The Conservators' principal obligations are to enable the training of the 150 racehorses and associated staff that currently use the gallops up until noon every day, to preserve the Downs in their natural state of beauty, to maintain the public's right of access and to ensure that the various users respect each other's rights and the Downs environment.

Liz Frost, Chairman of the Conservators said:

"We are so fortunate to live in this area. There is a rich history of horse racing and training on the Downs, and there is the added benefit of being allowed access to the Downs for walking amongst other activities. We cannot allow the minority, the inconsiderate individuals who do not control their dogs, put the access of the Downs by all at risk. We must ensure that we preserve and safeguard these facilities for future generations."

Nick Patton, Training Ground Manager for Jockey Club Estates who manage the gallops said:

"This wonderful landscape has been protected by the racing industry since 1640, Eclipse the most famous racehorse of all was trained in Epsom – The Downs are truly unique.

"However, acting for the landowner we must ensure the safety of all users. Therefore we ask the public to respect that the Downs is a place of work before 12 noon and to keep dogs on leads if accessing the Downs before this time. After this time dogs maybe walked off leads provided there are no horses nearby."

Anjali Healy, who walks her dogs on the Downs regularly, commented:

"The Downs are amazing we are so lucky to have them on our door step. I can see why these measures have been implemented as I have witnessed many near misses over the years."

Nick Patton can be contacted on 07584235817 and Epsom and Ewell Council on 01372 732000.

ENDS

**Notes to editors:**

1. Epsom and Walton Downs is popular for various activities and outdoor pursuits. Public access to the area for 'air and exercise', as long as this does not interfere with racehorse training and horseracing, is enshrined in an Act of Parliament.
2. Under the current by-laws, the public are required to ensure that dogs are under proper control and effectually restrained from causing annoyance to any person and from worrying or disturbing any animal.
3. Signs outlining the new requirements have been put in place.
4. Photo opportunities with users of The Downs can be arranged.
5. Epsom Downs Racecourse has been a venue for the sport of horse racing since the 17th Century, with the first running of the Oaks taking place in 1779 and the Derby a year later. Since that time the Investec Derby has developed into the World's Greatest Flat Race and is now part of the unique and vibrant Investec Derby Festival.

2015 saw eleven race days including the Investec Derby Festival, Live At the Races with Madness and the Bank Holiday London Gatwick Family Fun Day. More information is available at [www.epsomdowns.co.uk](http://www.epsomdowns.co.uk).

Epsom Downs Racecourse is part of The Jockey Club, which has been at the heart of British racing for more than 260 years. Today the largest commercial group in the sport, The Jockey Club runs the largest racecourse group in the UK by turnover (2014: £162.9m), courses (15) including those at Aintree, Cheltenham, Epsom Downs and Newmarket, attendances (2015: 1.95m), total prize money (2015: £43.9m), contribution to prize money (2015: £19.9m) and quality racing (Group and Graded races); more than 3,000 acres of world-class training grounds in Newmarket, Lambourn and Epsom Downs; The National Stud breeding enterprise and education provider; and the charity for racing's people in need, Racing Welfare. Governed by Royal Charter, every penny The Jockey Club makes it puts back into British racing. More information is available at [www.thejockeyclub.co.uk](http://www.thejockeyclub.co.uk).