

**EPSOM AND WALTON DOWNS CONSERVATORS
5 OCTOBER 2016**

REVIEW OF METAL DETECTING LICENCES ON EPSOM DOWNS

Report of the: Downs Manager
Contact: Sam Beak
Urgent Decision? No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:
Annexes/Appendices (attached): None
Other available papers (not attached): Minutes of the Conservators meeting held on 20 January 2016

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides a review of the number of metal detecting licences available for Epsom Downs.

<u>RECOMMENDATION (S)</u>	<i>Notes</i>
<p>(1) That the Conservators note a review of the number of metal detecting licenses available for Epsom Downs during 2016, and agree that the maximum number should remain at 25.</p> <p>(2) That the Conservators agree to review the fee for metal detecting licenses for the 2018 calendar year in October 2017.</p>	

1 Background

- 1.1 At the Conservators meeting on 17 October 2013, it was agreed to increase the annual charge of a metal detecting licence from £20 to £35. This reflected the fact that there had not been any increase for a number of years and the demand for permits remained high.
- 1.2 The number of available permits was capped at 20 and purchases were made on a first come first served basis.
- 1.3 Following the closure of the cash office in October 2015 a new on-line application and payment system was developed. This system went 'live' on Monday 4 January 2016.

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- 1.4 The licences were priced at £35 each and are valid until 31 December 2016. All 20 permits were purchased within 2 hours of being made available. If further licenses had been available, these would have been purchased also.
- 1.5 At their meeting on 20 January 2016, the Conservators considered the potential to increase the number of licenses from 20, and noted that whilst a large increase in the number of licenses would also increase concerns that the condition of the Downs could be damaged by inappropriate digging, a small increase would likely not create any problems. The Conservators considered that an increase of 5 licences would be appropriate, but should be reviewed in October 2016 to consider any issues which had arisen as a result.
- 1.6 After re-opening the system to allow a further 5 licenses to be purchased (making a total of 25), only 23 have been bought.
- 1.7 The Downskeeper have not reported any issues with the increase in the number of permits available. The mild weather has resulted in metal detectors regularly visiting the Downs in the last seven months but when approached they all had their permits with them and were not detecting on unauthorised land.
- 1.8 It is proposed that the number of Metal Detecting Licenses available should remain at 25 for future years.

2 Fees and Charges for Metal Detecting Licences in 2017- 2018

- 2.1 At their meeting on 20 January 2016, the Conservators decided to increase the annual charge of a metal detecting licence from £35 to £40 for the calendar year 2017.
- 2.2 It is proposed that the fee for 2018 – 2019 will be reviewed by the Conservators in October 2017.

3 Conclusion and Recommendations

The Conservators are requested to note the review following an increase in the number of metal detecting licences available for Epsom Downs. They are further asked to agree that the number of metal detecting licenses available remain at 25, and to next review the fee for the licenses in October 2017.