

SCHEME FOR BBQS AT THE RACECOURSE REVIEW

Head of Service:	Jackie King, Chief Executive
Report Author	Phoebe Batchelor, Samantha Whitehead
Wards affected:	College Ward; Town Ward; Woodcote and Langley Vale Ward;
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1 – Map of Designated BBQ areas

Summary

To review the use of barbecues during 2025 race meetings and receive an application from Epsom Downs Racecourse for the use of barbecues at events throughout 2026.

Recommendation (s)

The Conservators are asked to:

- (1) Note the success of the Barbecue Scheme during 2025 race meetings.
- (2) Grant Epsom Downs Racecourse permission to allow the use of barbeques at race meetings throughout 2026, namely Ladies Day, The Derby and the August Bank Holiday race meetings.
- (3) Nominate and authorise the Clerk to the Conservators, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators, to consider and grant permission to any future continuation of the Barbecue Scheme, subject to no material issues or concerns having been raised during the preceding season.

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 Following the successful continuation of the barbecue scheme during 2025, it is proposed to grant permission to Epsom Downs Racecourse to follow the same protocol for 2026 race meetings.
- 1.2 The Barbecue Scheme has operated successfully for a number of years and has been approved annually by the Conservators without any issue. No substantive complaints, enforcement concerns or operational difficulties have been raised during this period, and the annual report has therefore become a procedural exercise rather than a necessary item for a decision.

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- 1.3 Delegating authority for the continued operation of the scheme to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair, will provide a more proportionate and efficient approach to governance while retaining appropriate oversight. This will also ensure that the Conservators remain involved should any material change or issues arise, at which point the matter can be referred back for consideration.

2 Background

- 2.1 At the March 2020 meeting of the Epsom and Walton Conservators, members agreed to a scheme for the use of barbecues at Ladies Day, The Derby and the August Bank Holiday race meetings.
- 2.2 Implementation of the scheme was delayed until 2022.
- 2.3 As racing continued as normal during 2025, the barbecue scheme continued, and dedicated barbecue areas were set-up in line with the map provided in the 2020 report and at appendix 1.
- 2.4 Both the Jockey Club and the Downskeepers monitored these areas during the race meeting with no concerns raised by either party.
- 2.5 Further to the success of last year's events, the Jockey Club would like to formally request permission from the Conservators to continue the scheme for the same race meetings in 2026, namely Ladies Day, The Derby and the August Bank Holiday.
- 2.6 There are no proposed amendments to the scheme outlined in 2020, the area will be kept in the same position and the same safety protocols will be followed.

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

- 3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1.1 None for this report.

- 3.2 Crime & Disorder

- 3.2.1 None for this report.

- 3.3 Safeguarding

- 3.3.1 None for this report.

- 3.4 Dependencies

- 3.4.1 None for this report.

- 3.5 Other

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3.5.1 None for this report.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 As in the previous year, the proposed scheme will require compliance checks to be undertaken by the Council to ensure the conditions of any permission are being met.
- 4.2 The Downskeepers have confirmed that minimal resources were necessary to carry out the compliance checks last year, and the team are adequately resourced to conduct the checks again next year, should permission be granted.
- 4.3 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** None for this report.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Downs are regulated by the Epsom & Walton Downs Regulation Act 1984. The purpose of the Act is to protect the Downs and put in place arrangements for its management.
- 5.2 Section 11 of the Act allows for the making of byelaws. The Conservators have made such byelaws, and the current set of byelaws were approved in accordance with the statutory process on the 24 September 2013.
- 5.3 The current byelaws, provide at byelaw 2(i) (g) the ability of the Conservators to grant consent to the lighting of fires on the Downs, “2. (i) A person shall not, without the consent of the Conservators, on the Downs: (g) camp or light fires”
- 5.4 If the Conservators agree to grant permission, subject to conditions, it is not to allow camp or light fires, but only to allow the use of barbecues. The proposed conditions along with the operating procedures of the Applicant provide the necessary reassurance that the impact of such activity on the grassland habitat will be managed.
- 5.5 The Conservators are empowered to determine their own governance arrangements, including the delegation of functions to officers. The proposed delegation to the Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair, represents an exercise of that authority and does not amend the statutory framework, byelaws or conditions governing the Barbecue Scheme.
- 5.6 Any substantive issues arising from the operation of the scheme will continue to be referred to the Conservators for determination.
- 5.7 The granting of any conditional permission does not set a precedent for other applications at the Racecourse. It does not permit any applications to be made anywhere else on the Downs.

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5.8 **Legal Officer's comments:** The legal comments have been set out above.

6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:

- Opportunity and Prosperity – supporting local business

6.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is not included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:**

6.3.1 There has been a global debate over the impact of charcoal barbecues on air pollution, however, the general feeling appears to be that if the charcoal being burnt is sustainably produced there is a carbon neutral impact on the environment.

6.3.2 The Jockey Club may want to consider this research in its code of conduct for use of the barbecue area and encourage visitors to purchase sustainably produced charcoal from coppiced English woodlands or made from other sustainable materials such as coconut shells, seed/crop husks or bamboo.

6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:**

6.4.1 The protocols set out in the March 2020 Barbecue Scheme ensures the barbecue area is professionally managed with an emphasis on community safety.

6.5 **Partnerships:**

6.5.1 This item supports the partnership between the Conservators and the Jockey Club.

6.6 **Local Government Reorganisation Implications:** None.

7 Background papers

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

Previous reports:

- [March 2020 – Scheme for Barbecues at the Racecourse](#)
- [January 2025 – Scheme for Barbecues at the Racecourse Review](#)

Other papers:

- None.