

Minutes of the Meeting of the EPSOM AND WALTON DOWNS CONSERVATORS held on 5 October 2016

PRESENT -

Councillor Liz Frost (Chairman); Andrew Cooper (Epsom Downs Racecourse) (Vice-Chairman); Councillor Rekha Bansil, Councillor Lucie Dallen, Simon Dow (Horserace Betting Levy Board), Simon Durrant (Epsom Downs Racecourse), Councillor Robert Foote (Items 11 - 21 only), Councillor Jan Mason, Nigel Whybrow (Epsom Downs Racecourse) and Councillor Clive Woodbridge.

Officers present: Sam Beak (Downs Manager), Tim Richardson (Democratic Services Officer) and Simon Young (Head of Legal and Democratic Services)

10 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators held on 15 June 2016 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

11 ITEMS OF INTEREST DISCUSSED BY THE TRAINING GROUNDS MANAGEMENT BOARD (TGMB)

The Conservators received a verbal report providing updates on items considered by the Epsom and Walton Downs Training Grounds Management Board (TGMB). The following matters were considered:

- a) Hatched Area at the foot of Walton Downs. The TGMB had created a task group, which was considering the issues affecting the Hatched Area.
- b) Dog walking signs. The TGMB had agreed with the proposed change of dog walking signs on the Downs to request that dogs be held on leads until 9.30am on Sundays, to reflect racehorse training hours. It had been noted that signs placed on some routes onto the Downs had been stolen, and would be replaced with laminated notices.
- c) Extension of the Polytrack. Trainers had welcomed the extension of Polytrack. As the extended length was too long for some younger horses, a walk-in at 5 furlongs had also been added.
- d) Demolition of stables at Cedar Lodge. The TGMB had welcomed the decision to refuse planning permission for the demolition of stables at Cedar Lodge. The Board had expressed that in its view there was a lack of stable facilities in the area.

- e) Vision for Epsom and Walton Downs Training. The TGMB was in the process of producing a 'vision' plan for Epsom and Walton Downs Training Grounds, to promote and market it as a training facility.
- f) Congratulations to Laura Mongan for St Leger success. The TGMB had expressed its congratulations to Laura Mongan for winning the St Leger on 10 September with the Epsom trained Harbour Law.

12 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS AND OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

- a) Hack Sand Track, foot of Walton Downs. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services had written to the Horserace Betting Levy Board to state that the Conservators did not accept responsibility for the hack sand track at the foot of Walton Downs. No response to this had been received. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services would write to the Board again, and send the correspondence via recorded delivery.
- b) Post Derby review. The Conservators noted that a meeting between the Chairman, Clerk, Surrey Police Borough Inspector and General Manager of Epsom Downs Racecourse had been held to consider the matters which had arisen from the 2016 Derby. The Conservators noted the actions proposed as a result of that meeting.

13 REPORT OF THE HEAD DOWNSKEEPER

The Downs Manager provided the Committee with a verbal report. The following matters were discussed:

- a) Reported antisocial behaviour. The Conservators were informed that there had been a number of incidents of antisocial behaviour reported on the Downs, including an attempted break-in of the Downskeeper's Hut.
- b) Staffing issues. The Conservators were informed that two members of the Downskeeper staff were currently on long term sick leave. Downskeeper Ashley Critcher was acting as the interim Head Downskeeper, and the Council's Ranger service were assisting with evening duties. This arrangement enabled the Downskeepers to maintain their presence during the hours of racehorse training.

The Conservators expressed their best wishes to the Downskeepers who were on sick leave, and wished them a speedy recovery. The Conservators also expressed their thanks to the other Downskeepers for their efforts to ensure that the service continued despite the reduced capacity, and to the Council's Rangers and Racecourse staff for all their assistance and support.

The Conservators requested officers to continue to monitor the situation, and consider the use of agency or temporary staff to assist if necessary.

- c) Closing times for car park gates. The Conservators noted that a suggestion had been raised at the meeting of the Epsom and Walton Downs Consultative Committee held on 26 September that car park gates should be shut at dusk, rather than the current timings of 5pm/9pm (see Minute no 15 for further information). The Conservators noted that the car parks gates would be locked at 5pm from Saturday 8 October.

14 MID-YEAR BUDGET MONITORING

The Conservators received a report advising it of income and expenditure in 2016/17 as at 30 September 2016, and seeking guidance on the preparation of the budget and precept for 2017/18. An updated Risk Register for the Downs, for 2016/17 was also presented.

The Conservators noted that it was proposed to increase precept contributions by 2.3% in order to achieve a balanced budget in 2017/18. The Conservators were informed that there was a forecast £7,607 use of the working balance in the current year.

Following consideration, the Conservators agreed:

- (1) to note the mid-year income and expenditure position as at 30 September 2016;
- (2) to support the proposed 2.3% increase in precept contributions for 2017-18, for consideration at their meeting in January 2016;
- (3) to note the 2016/17 Risk Register for the Downs, subject to an amendment to the "Further Action/Mitigation action" for risk EWDC5 as follows:

"Advice being given by Legal & Democratic Services on Key issues.

Clarity on responsibility for the Hack Sand Track has been clarified and the **Horse Race Betting Levy Board** are responsible for the cost of repairs."

(amendment highlighted in bold and underlined text above).

15 PROPOSED EVENTS ON THE DOWNS

The Committee received a report providing details of requested events on the Downs. All of the proposed events had been held on the Downs in previous years, and the Downskeepers had not reported any concerns with regard to them being held again.

Following consideration, the Conservators:

- (1) Approved the following events to be held on the Downs:

- Downs Young Athletes Cross Country League (Sundays 6 Nov, 4 Dec 2016, 19 Feb, 12 Mar 2017)
 - The 26.2 Road Runners Club Cross Country Run (Saturday 12 November 2016)
 - The 78th Pioneer Run for Veteran Motorcycles (Sunday 19 March 2017)
 - North Cheam Baptist Church Easter Sunday Service (Sunday 16 April 2017)
 - Rotary Club of Banstead Sponsored Walk (Sunday 7 May 2017)
 - Round the Borough Bike (Sunday 14 May 2017)
 - Cancer Research UK: Race For Life (Sunday 25 June 2017)
 - Round the Borough Hike (Saturday 2 September 2017)
- (2) noted the Calendar of Events for 2016/17.
- (3) noted the fees and charges to be applied to each event subject to the event being approved.

16 ICE CREAM VENDING ON THE DOWNS

The Conservators received a report presenting a request from an ice cream vendor for approval to trade on Epsom Downs.

The Conservators were informed that the vendor had operated an ice cream van from the Downs for many years but without a licence. The request for approval to trade on the Downs was made to the Conservators in tandem with the vendor's application for a licence from the Borough Council, to regularise the arrangements.

It was noted that the vendor would operate from one of two locations on the Downs. These were on the road near the Hyperion and Top car parks.

Concern was expressed that the vending of ice creams could obstruct certain activities undertaken to prepare for race meetings, and that it could also lead to an increase in litter on the Downs. It was noted that these matters could be considered by the Council when placing conditions on the vendor's licence.

It was noted that a licence issued by the Council would be valid for one year and that the Conservators could review any conditions placed on it prior to a new licence being issued if they so wished.

Following consideration, the Conservators:

- (1) Approved a request from Mr Perkins to trade on Epsom Downs subject to approval from Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Licencing Department and the following conditions:
 - a) The conditions set out in paragraphs 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 of the report, namely:

That the times allowed be 12.00 – 20.00 or closure of the Downs, whichever is the earlier;

That there should be no use of 'musical chimes' whilst on the Downs;

That no vending should take place on any race day held by Epsom Downs Racecourse;

That the areas permitted for trading be restricted to those identified in Annexe 1 to the report.
 - b) That the vendor will comply with all reasonable directions from Epsom Downs Racecourse staff with regard to hours and location of trading.
- (2) Agreed to request the Council's Licensing officers consider the inclusion of a condition requiring the vendor to provide a bin for litter when operating on the Downs.
- (3) Noted and agreed the two locations from where the vendor may sell ice-cream from his van, as defined on Annexe 1 to the report.

17 REVIEW OF METAL DETECTING LICENSES ON THE DOWNS

The Conservators received a report providing a review of metal detecting licences available for Epsom Downs.

Following consideration, the Conservators agreed:

- (1) To note the review of the number of metal detecting licences available for Epsom Downs during 2016, and agreed that the maximum number should remain at 25.
- (2) To review the fee for metal detecting licenses for the 2018 calendar year in October 2017.

18 MEMORIAL POLICY FOR THE DOWNS

The Conservators received a report presenting a Memorial Policy for Epsom and Walton Downs. It was noted that an amended Annexe 3 to the report (fees for memorial bird and bat boxes) had been published as a supplement to the agenda, and replaced that originally contained within it.

The Conservators considered the Policy and noted that the proposed design of memorial benches did not include a back. Officers informed the Conservators

that this design of bench had been selected to best fit the nature of the Downs' environment, and was also used at Nonsuch Park. It was also proposed that memorial plaques would not be permitted on the benches, in keeping with the natural environment of the Downs. The sponsor of each bench would be shown its location and invited to attend its installation on the Downs.

The proposed charge of £300 for installation of a bench was considered, and the Conservators were informed that this would cover all costs incurred. The one-off charge for sponsoring a bench would be reviewed annually to reflect any increases in costs. It was noted that the period of sponsorship for a memorial bench would be 10 years.

A maximum number of 12 benches would be permitted on the Downs, at locations agreed with the Downskeepers and detailed in the terms and conditions of sponsorship. The Downs Manager informed the Conservators that a high demand for benches was not currently anticipated. It was noted that a party had expressed an interest in sponsoring a bench in 2015, and that they would be contacted to enquire whether they would still wish to do so.

Following this consideration, the Conservators:

- (1) Approved the Memorial Policy for the Downs, terms and conditions of sponsoring a memorial bench on Epsom and Walton Downs and the fees for memorials on Epsom and Walton Downs.
- (2) Agreed to review the Memorial Policy and fees and charges in October 2017.

19 MINUTES OF THE EPSOM AND WALTON DOWNS CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The Conservators received and noted the draft Minutes of the meeting of the Epsom and Walton Downs Consultative Committee held on 26 September 2016. The following item was considered:

- a) Minute 6 e) - Parking in Derby Stables Road. The Chairman informed the Conservators that she had suggested to the Consultative Committee member who had raised this issue that they may wish to propose it directly to the Surrey County Council Local Committee for Epsom and Ewell, as the processes involved with the Conservators' consideration of the matter would mean that any decision by the Conservators to do so would take a far greater time.

20 OUTSTANDING REFERENCES

The Conservators received and noted the position of their outstanding references. The following matter was considered;

- (1) Signposting of the Downs. The Conservators noted that this reference related to the potential for a future review of byelaw information boards on the Downs.

21 DATES OF MEETINGS IN 2017

The Conservators agreed the dates of their meetings to be held in 2017, as follows:

- Wednesday 18 January 2017 at 18.00 hours
- Wednesday 19 April 2017 at 18.00 hours
- Wednesday 14 June 2017 at 18.00 hours
- Wednesday 4 October 2017 at 18.00 hours

The meeting began at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.15 pm

COUNCILLOR LIZ FROST (CHAIRMAN)

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