

Minutes of the Meeting of the EPSOM AND WALTON DOWNS CONSERVATORS held on 4 October 2017

PRESENT -

Councillor Liz Frost (Chairman); Simon Durrant (Epsom Downs Racecourse) (Vice-Chairman); Councillor Rekha Bansil, Andrew Cooper (Epsom Downs Racecourse), Councillor Robert Foote, Nigel Whybrow (Epsom Downs Racecourse) and Councillor Clive Woodbridge.

In Attendance: Conor Morrow (Lower Mole Countryside Management Service)

Absent: Councillor Lucie Dallen, Simon Dow (Horserace Betting Levy Board) and Councillor Jan Mason

Officers present: Kathryn Beldon (Chief Executive), Richard Appiah-Ampofo (Accountant), Sam Beak (Downs Manager), Brendan Bradley (Chief Accountant), Bob Harding (Head Downskeeper), Samantha Whitehead (Streetcare Manager) and Tim Richardson (Democratic Services Officer)

12 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators held on 17 July 2017 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

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

An update on items considered by the Epsom and Walton Downs Training Grounds Management Board had been published as a supplement to the agenda for the meeting.

The report provided updates on the following matters: the Trainers' Open Day, improvements to the Queen's Stand equestrian crossing, Cedar Point stables, the hatched area at the foot of Walton Downs and the number of race horses/winners on the Downs. The Conservators received and noted the report.

14 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS AND OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

The Conservators received a report providing an update on issues raised at previous meetings. The report provided updates on the following matters: review of fees for metal detecting licenses and memorial policy fees. The report

proposed that the fees for these items would not be increased in the 2018/19 financial year, and be reviewed in October 2018. The Conservators received and noted the report.

15 REPORT OF THE HEAD DOWNSKEEPER

The Conservators received a report of the Head Downskeeper updating them upon recent issues and activities on the Downs. The following matter was considered:

- a) **Staffing:** The Conservators were informed that the Downskeepers were currently fully staffed.

16 MID-YEAR BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Conservators received a report advising them of income and expenditure in 2017/18 as at 31 August 2017, and seeking guidance on the preparation of the budget and precept for 2018/19. An updated Risk Register for the Downs for 2017/18 was also presented.

The Chief Accountant updated the Conservators on the external auditor's review of the 2016-17 accounts, which had been received following publication of the agenda. The auditor had reported that the 2016-17 accounts provided a true and fair view, but had recommended changes to ensure due process is followed in approving the accounts, namely:

- a) **Receipt of final accounts by the Conservators.** The auditor had noted that the meeting of the Conservators on 14 June 2017 had been rescheduled, and that as a result, the Conservators had not received their final accounts until their meeting of 17 July 2017. The auditor highlighted the requirement that the Conservators receive and consider their final accounts before the end of June annually, and recommended that if the June meeting be rescheduled again in the future, it be moved to a date before the end of that month.

The Conservators noted that it was proposed to increase precept contributions by 2.0% in order to achieve a balanced budget in 2018/19. The Conservators were informed that there was a forecast £4,271 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 31 August 2017;
- (2) to support the proposed 2.0% increase in precept contributions for 2018-19, for consideration at their meeting in January 2018;
- (3) to note the 2017/18 Risk Register for the Downs.

17 PROPOSED EVENTS ON EPSOM & WALTON DOWNS

The Conservators received a report setting out the details of event applications received for the Downs. The following matters were considered:

- a) **Review of suggested limits for events.** The Conservators noted that the suggested limits for events on the Downs had not been reviewed since they had originally been set, several years ago. Officers were requested to present a review of event limits to a future meeting, for consideration.
- b) **Limit on number of participants for Memory Walk.** The Conservators noted that the application for the Alzheimer's Society memory walk proposed a maximum number of 4,000 participants. The Conservators expressed concern that this number could potentially cause damage to the condition of the ground on the Downs, and considered that it should be limited to a maximum of 2,000 participants. The Conservators requested that the impact of the event be reviewed following it being held, prior to consideration of future applications.

Following consideration, the Conservators:

- (1) Decided to:
 - **Approve** the Mole Valley Orienteering Club orienteering event on Sunday 22 October 2017;
 - **Approve** the Downs Young Athletes Cross Country League on Sundays 5 November, 3 December 2017, 18 February, 4 March 2018;
 - **Approve** the Surrey Cross Country League on Saturday 11 November 2017;
 - **Approve** the Epsom College cross country run on Thursday 23 November 2017;
 - **Approve** the Royal Pigeon Racing Association pigeon racing liberation events on various dates from March to October 2018;
 - **Approve** the First Stride Events Ltd 5k and 10k summer series events on Sundays 25 March, 12 August, 4 November 2018;
 - **Approve** the North Cheam Baptist Church Easter Sunday Service on Sunday 1 April 2018;
 - **Approve** the Rotary Club of Banstead sponsored walk on Sunday 6 May 2018;
 - **Approve** the Round the Borough Bike on Sunday 13 May 2018;
 - **Approve** the Cancer Research UK: Race For Life on Sunday 24 June 2018;

- **Approve** the Round the Borough Hike on Saturday 8 September 2018;
 - **Approve** the Alzheimer's Society memory walk on Sunday 23 September 2018, subject to it being limited to a maximum of 2,000 participants.
- (1) Note the calendar of events for 2018/19.
 - (2) Agree that the existing fees and charges for events on the Downs would remain unchanged for the 2018/19 financial year, and to carry out a review of them in October 2018.
 - (3) Note the fees and charges to be applied to each event.

18 MINUTES OF THE EPSOM AND WALTON DOWNS CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The Conservators received and noted a report presenting the Minutes of the Epsom and Walton Downs Consultative Committee held on 18 September 2017. The report had been published as a supplement to the main agenda document.

The following matter was considered:

- a) **Condition of hack sand track, foot of Walton Downs.** The Conservators considered whether to send a letter to local stables to inform hack riders of the poor condition of the track, and explain that its maintenance was the responsibility of the Horse Race Betting Levy Board.

Members expressed concern that such a letter could give riders an incorrect expectation that the Conservators might undertake works to the track, or imply that they had maintenance responsibility for it, despite that not being the case. It was noted that the condition of the track had continued to deteriorate since it had last been considered. It was also noted that representatives of the hack riding community were already aware of its condition.

Following consideration of this, the Conservators decided not to write to local stables regarding the issue until there was further news regarding its maintenance that could be reported.

19 OUTSTANDING REFERENCES

The Conservators received and noted the position of their outstanding references.

20 DATES OF MEETINGS IN 2018

The Conservators noted that the dates of their normal meetings to be held in 2018 were as follows:

- Monday 22 January 2018 at 18.00 hours

- Monday 16 April 2018 at 18.00 hours
- Monday 18 June 2018 at 18.00 hours
- Monday 8 October 2018 at 18.00 hours

The meeting began at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.38 pm

COUNCILLOR LIZ FROST (CHAIRMAN)

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