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Downs payment from EU for Epsom

18 October 2022

The Mayor of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, **Councillor Clive Woodbridge**, has officially unveiled the first phase of an exciting programme of improvements on **Epsom & Walton Dow**ns.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) secured a grant of £132,000 from the **European Agricultural Fund** for Rural Development to support the rural economy by encouraging visitors. The EAFRD grant was boosted by a further £18,000 from **The Jockey Club** and £20,000 from the **Epsom & Walton Downs Conservato**rs.

Image: Simon Durrant Jockey Club, Cllr Liz Frost (RA Woocote and Chair Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators and Mayor Clive Woodbridge unveiling
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The improvements, which includes new benches, bins, picnic tables, waymarkers, information boards and counting posts, have been three years in the planning and began earlier this year after funding was secured.

The new infrastructure will enhance the visitor experience and allow tourists and residents to enjoy the panoramic views, discover the role of the Downs in the Borough's equestrian history and learn about the unique flora and fauna of the area. It also improves safety for both visitors and the horses by directing people away from training grounds.

The benches, bins, counting posts, picnic tables and waymarkers are now in place, and the information boards will be completed in the coming weeks. Further developments such as a brass rubbing trail are also planned for the future.

Councillor **Liz Frost**, Chair of the Epsom & Walton Downs Conservators, stated "I am delighted to see the improvements being made to this much-loved part of our Borough. We had three aims at the start of this project; to increase rural tourism; to improve safety for visitors and for both the horses and staff involved in racehorse training on the Downs; and to educate people about the area. I think this initiative will help us to achieve those goals. I love the nods to our equestrian history on the benches and bins. The information boards will be a great asset in sharing the unique history and ecosystem of the area with visitors, and the counting posts will be able to tell the difference between walkers, cyclists and riders, so we can tailor facilities in the future. We hope that visitors to the Downs will enjoy these new resources."

Simon Durrant, General Manager at Epsom Downs Racecourse, said, "The contribution to improving the Epsom & Walton Downs is something The Jockey Club is very passionate about. The work being carried out contributes to preserving the history of the area, along with improving the experience of all visitors, be that walkers, riders or cyclists. We look forward to the continued development throughout the next phase of improvements."

While open to the public, the Downs is privately owned by The Jockey Club and managed by the Epsom & Walton Downs Conservators. Membership of the Conservators is prescribed by the Epsom & Walton Downs Regulation Act 1984, and is made up of Borough councillors, The Jockey Club and the **Betting Levy Board**.

The Council is committed to supporting the Conservators in maintaining the Downs.

The Council was able to secure the EAFRD funding before the UK becomes ineligible for such grants following Brexit.

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