

Minutes of the first meeting of Ashdown Forest Deer Group

1000, 19 July 2006, Ashdown Forest Centre, Wych Cross, Forest Row, East Sussex

Present: Rodney Ash (Firearms Manager, Sussex Police), Colin Booty (RSPCA), Neil Brookes (BDS), Jamie Cordery (Deer Initiative), Dave Duncan (MoD), Brian Ellis (Firearms Officer, Sussex Police), Jochen Langbein (Deer Initiative), Fred Marshall (Conservators of Ashdown Forest), Alan Morriss (Pippingford), Hew Prendergast (Conservators of Ashdown Forest; minute taker), John Sully (Rystwood Estate Ltd, Forest Row), Kim Wheeler-Mallows (MoD)

It was agreed that the minutes would summarise discussions, not detail them.

1) The group's name, area, constituency, objectives etc.

i) Name of the group

Ashdown Area Deer Group.

ii) Area covered by the Group

East and West Sussex only, in the area bounded by the A264 in the north (East Grinstead to Tunbridge Wells road), the A267 in the east (Tunbridge Wells to the junction with the A272 near Hadlow Down), the A272 in the south (from near Hadlow Down to Haywards Heath) and the B2028 in the west (Haywards Heath to Turners Hill).

iii) Constituency

The Group will have a small core comprising those organisations present, with at least two people representing local interests, and calling on other individuals when required. East Sussex County Council should be represented (Graeme Lake has been invited to the meeting but no response was received).

iv) Aims and objectives

Aim: provide a forum on deer in the Ashdown area

Objectives: 1) reduce the number of deer Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) in the area
2) ensure the welfare of a healthy, local deer population

v) Chairmanship

It was agreed that Hew would be Chairman and that all members of the Group will share administrative tasks, such as minute-taking.

It was further agreed that a brief description of how and why the Group has come into existence should be produced, circulated for comment and amendment and then put on the Conservators' website.

2) Next steps

i) Deer data

The importance of establishing baseline data on the total deer kill in the area (RTCs and culls) was agreed. Neil will put out a questionnaire through the BDS to establish the

number of deer being culled in the area and John will contact BASC to do the same. The data will be collated before the next meeting.

The Conservators keep and will provide data on local RTCs. They will obtain data from Wealden District Council who also deal with RTCs.

ii) Landowners

By the next meeting, Jamie will identify local landowners through asking the Forestry Commission about who has Woodland Grant Schemes. Fred Marshall will help. The next meeting of the Group will discuss how to approach landowners on deer issues.

iii) RTCs

At the next meeting Jochen will present an assessment of those mitigation measures against RTCs that might be applicable to the area. He will also present data on RTCs from the whole of the Group area. Rodney will bring data on 350 RTCs involving deer and will contact Jochen about going through the Police database.

iv) Underpass, fencing

Alan will look at the feasibility and costings of fencing part of the A22 and of an underpass below it.

v) Traffic speed

Hew will present recent findings for traffic speed on Forest roads gathered by Ashdown Forest Villages Road Partnership.

3) Date of next meeting

Tuesday 19 September, 1400, at the Forest Centre.

The meeting finished at 1620.