

Minutes of the
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST

1930, Wednesday 15 May 2008

Ashdown Forest Centre

Present Mr J. Barnes, Mr M. Cooper, Mr L. Gillham, Mr. P. Glyn, Dr H. Prendergast, Mr R. Thornely-Taylor.

The meeting discussed two main items: 1) unfinished business from the RPA Committee concerning amendments of the draft *Strategic Forest Plan* as a result of the last round of stakeholder meetings and 2) a course of action regarding Mr Stenhouse.

1) The proposed topics for discussion were handed out.

Under *Roads and Planning*

Add action of asking ESCC for a) further speed reductions on Forest roads (mentioned 2x) and b) looking into making single tracks with passing places (mentioned 2x).

a) It was agreed that it was highly likely that the Police would oppose any further reduction in the speed limit, that the *Plan* should mention seeking their support for enforcing the current speed limits, and that the Police should be asked for further PCSO involvement in this. Dr Prendergast said that this could be done through the Ashdown Villages Road Safety Partnership.

b) Mr Gillham said that narrowing of the C3 in the grazing area was sought, unsuccessfully, at the time of the installation of the fencing. While nothing should be added to the *Plan*, it was agreed that it would be worth asking ESCC about the possibility of installing passing places on one of the smallest roads on the Forest, between Newbridge and Chuck Hatch. Seeking the view of the parish council (Hartfield) and any local residents association would be the first step.

ii) Refine section on mitigation measures (re. development) in light of recent Mid Sussex DC meeting and planned one with WDC.

Dr Prendergast said that, as a result of a recent meeting of Mid Sussex District Council discussing the impact of EU Habitat Regulations on Special Protection Areas such as the Forest, a change in this section of the *Plan* (Objective 2.5) would be needed. He added that he is due to have a meeting next week to discuss Wealden District Council's position. It was agreed that an update would be useful.

Under *Access and recreation*

a) Add action of looking into zoning of the Forest (mentioned 2x).

It was agreed that the *Plan* should mention the Board's exploration of zoning in order to protect sensitive wildlife (e.g. breeding birds) and sites (e.g. ponds) and to create wilder areas with reduced recreational pressure. Such an effect could be done subtly, for example through path/ride diversions and the management of vegetation.

ii) Add action of meeting with mountain bikers to hear their case (biking mentioned 4x).

It was acknowledged that a decision had already been made on the future of biking. It was agreed that the *Plan* should state that the damage they cause is an increment to other damage. While horses cause damage, the licence fees for riding cover the costs of repairs.

2) Mr Glyn reported that Mr Stenhouse is seeking to have a further meeting with NE. He was anxious lest such a meeting lead to driving a wedge between NE and the Board, especially the Conservation Committee. Dr Prendergast said that he thought it no problem for Mr Stenhouse to talk to NE about HLS matters generically, and as a member of the public, but that any discussion of Forest management should be a matter for the Board only. It was agreed that Mr Barnes would write to NE to advise them that, on Forest matters, they should deal with the Board and not with individuals.

The meeting ended at 2100.

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