



# ASHDOWN FOREST

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2016 - 2020

(With progress April 15 – March 16)

The Conservators of Ashdown Forest

The Ashdown Forest Centre

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*“The challenges involved in these tasks are considerable. I am grateful for the efforts of staff, volunteers, the Friends and Board members for their help in making progress this year and look forward to their continuing support.”*

***Roy Galley, Chairman of the Board of Conservators***

**2015/16 was a very successful year on the Forest:**

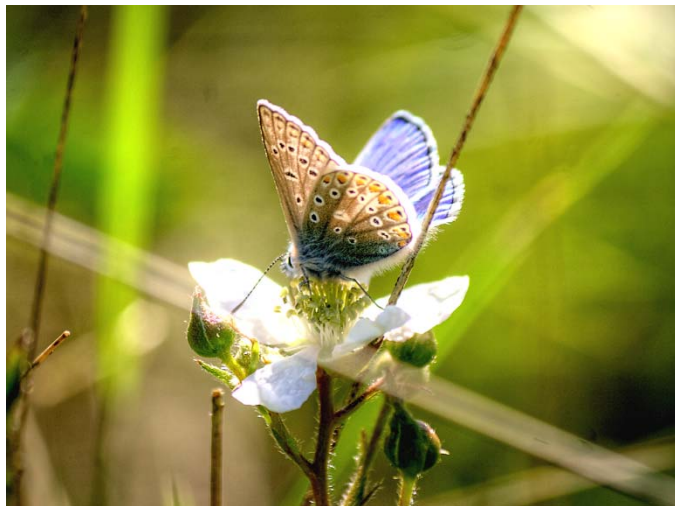
- We agreed a 10 Year Funding programme, Countryside Stewardship, with Natural England. This almost doubles funding through this source and makes us a Million Pound undertaking
- To justify this funding we must meet many targets and challenges. As a result we have put together a Five Year Conservation Plan
- We have begun a major review of our Governance

**Our Strategic Plan for 2016/17 follows on from these achievements:**

- We will implement and monitor closely the Conservation Plan
- We will complete the Governance Review and communicate openly as this progresses
- We will manage our finances carefully and professionally
- We will start to look at possible fund raising opportunities
- We will ensure the day to day management of the Forest progresses efficiently and that our exemplary Education and Volunteer projects thrive

Originally a deer hunting forest in Norman times, Ashdown Forest is now one of the largest free public access spaces in the South East. It is a great place for walking and enjoying spectacular views over the Sussex countryside and is known the world over as the 'home' of Winnie-the-Pooh.

The Forest is at the heart of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and has national and international protection because of its wildlife. Nearly two thirds of its 6500 acres (2500 hectares) are heathland, amounting to 2.5% of the UK's extent of this rare habitat.



Subsequent legislation that affects the management of the Forest includes The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the 1992 EC Habitats Directive, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000, the Commons Act 2006, The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006, the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2012. This extensive legislation relates mostly to protection of wildlife but also to the duties of local authorities regarding biodiversity and to the status of Common Land in the modern age.



## CONSERVATION:

The format of this section has been changed to reflect the new system of project codes introduced as part of our Countryside Stewardship scheme. However, for this period of transition, the report also refers to activities carried out in the final year of Higher Level Stewardship.

Strategic Priority: Heathland Management			
Lead Officer – Conservation Officer			
Goals	Strategies	Elements to measure	Progress – Apr 15 –Mar 16 <i>(Strategic Plan 2013 – 2016)</i>
Result 1.1 - Scrub control limits the spread of Gorse and scrub in heathland areas and prevents reversion to secondary woodland	1. Manage gorse scrub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of gorse managed</li> </ul>	<p>No known changes in the extent of this habitat during the reporting period. A small increase in number of units achieving 'Favourable' condition since previous survey. 190ha, or close to 10%, of the heathland is now classed as Favourable according to the latest Natural England assessment.</p> <p>Better coordination of work meant that fencing on the Forest was in place earlier than previous years, meaning that the heath was grazed for longer. Grazing has generally been successful according to monitoring carried out by the Grazing Officer. Our livestock continue to do well, and bring in a modest income. The invisible grazing trial was only partly successful, but there has since been a great deal of progress made, with a new supplier of equipment and a collaborative project with Surrey Wildlife Trust to design improved collars.</p> <p>Limited controlled burning was carried out due to the weather. Bracken mowing was completed as usual, as were winter scrub control contracts.</p>
	2. Wild fire risk and plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wild fire plan produced/updated</li> </ul>	
	3. Birch, oak, willow and Scots pine control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of scrub managed</li> </ul>	
	4. Remove Rhododendron, Gaultheria and American black cherry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of invasive non-native species managed</li> </ul>	
Result 1.2 - Bracken is managed to reduce its extent and dominance in heathland and prevent soil fertility increase	5. Bracken control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of bracken managed</li> </ul>	
	6. Provide / maintain livestock control structures (invisible)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Length of fence installed/ maintained</li> </ul>	
Result 1.3 - Grazing by domestic stock prevents scrub encroachment and promotes biodiversity	7. Provide / maintain livestock control structures (visible)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Length of fence installed/ maintained</li> </ul>	
	8. Husband grazing stock, cattle - Conservator's herd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff time</li> </ul>	
	9. Husband grazing stock, cattle - Commoner / non-commoner graziers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff time</li> </ul>	
	10. Husband grazing stock, cattle - Commoners' herd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff time</li> </ul>	
	11. Husband grazing stock, sheep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff time</li> <li>Facility in place</li> </ul>	

<p>Result 1.4 - Heather management maintains a balance of age classes and limits increase in soil fertility</p> <p>Result 1.5 - Grass heath management maintains an open diverse sward</p> <p>Result 1.6 - Removal of invasive woodland restores heathland in priority areas</p>	<p>12. Husband grazing stock, ponies</p> <p>13. Provide / improve / develop livestock welfare facility</p> <p>14. Manage heather</p> <p>15. Manage grassland by summer or winter mowing</p> <p>16. Removal of invasive woodland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area of heather managed</li> <li>• Area of grassland managed</li> <li>• Area of woodland removed</li> </ul>	<p>Threats dealt with as they arise, e.g. planning applications, pollution incidents.</p>
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<b>Strategic Priority: Woodland Management</b> <b>Lead Officer – Conservation Officer</b>			
Goals	Strategies	Elements to measure	Progress – Apr 15 –Mar 16 <i>(Strategic Plan 2013 – 2016)</i>
<p>Result 2.1 Non-native species in woodland are controlled</p> <p>Result 2.2 Woodland management by commoners leads to thinning and increased dead wood microhabitat</p> <p>Result 2.3 Ride mowing maintains fire breaks and the woodland edge microhabitat</p> <p>Result 2.4 Control of deer numbers through an annual deer cull</p>	<p>17. Remove Rhododendron by cutting and spraying</p> <p>18. Remove Turkey oak</p> <p>19. Remove Japanese knotweed by cutting and spraying</p> <p>20. Create glades by selective group felling</p> <p>21. Annual mowing of woodland rides</p> <p>22. Manage species, mammal – Deer Project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area of Rhododendron treated</li> <li>• Number of trees removed</li> <li>• Staff time</li> <li>• Area thinned</li> <li>• Length of ride mown</li> <li>• Number of deer culled</li> </ul>	<p>The bulk of woodland management is carried out by Commoners, under the direction of Chase Rangers. 110 wood permits were issued, generating £2728. Some coppicing was carried out in house to provide firewood for the Visitor Centre.</p> <p>Woodland funding under Countryside Stewardship was negotiated, but restricted to Rhododendron control and employment of a Deer Project officer for the next 5 years. It was felt that further woodland management would be fruitless until the deer problem is reduced.</p> <p>Programme of control ongoing for Rhododendron, Gaultheria, two species of Balsam and Japanese knotweed Small-scale culling on the Forest has also commenced.</p>

Strategic Priority: Landscape and Historic Environment Lead Officer – Conservation Officer			
Goals	Strategies	Elements to measure	Progress – Apr 15 –Mar 16 <i>(Strategic Plan 2013 – 2016)</i>
<p>Result 3.1 Management of the “Clumps” to maintain their presence in the landscape</p> <p>Result 3.2 Management of priority archaeological features in the landscape</p>	<p>23. Clump management</p> <p>24. Manage cultural features, archaeological general</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff time</li> <li>• Staff time</li> </ul>	<p>Greater liaison with the County Archaeologist, Historic England and Natural England’s archaeology team this year, to agree the programme of work included under Countryside Stewardship.</p>

Strategic Priority: Ponds and Streams Lead Officer – Conservation Officer			
Goals	Strategies	Elements to measure	New Strategic Priority 2016 onwards
<p>Result 4.1 Ponds will be created as a water source for grazing animals</p> <p>Result 4.2 Ponds managed to protect their vulnerable wildlife and contribute to the Forest landscape</p>	<p>25. Manage habitat, open water / rivers, by excavation</p> <p>26. Manage habitat, open water / rivers, clearing/dredging/re-profiling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of ponds created</li> <li>• Number of ponds managed</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>New Strategic Priority</i></b></p>

**Strategic Priority: Monitoring, Recording and Evaluation**

**Lead Officer – Conservation Officer**

Goals	Strategies	Elements to measure	New Strategic Priority 2016 onwards
<p>Monitoring and recording of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Forest species</li> <li>• Work undertaken</li> <li>• Effects of management</li> <li>• Compliance with the requirements of Countryside Stewardship</li> </ul>	<p>Project 1. Deer monitoring</p> <p>Project 2. Small mammal surveys</p> <p>Project 3. Bird surveys</p> <p>Project 4. Amphibian Monitoring</p> <p>Project 5. Reptile Monitoring</p> <p>Project 6. Invertebrate Monitoring</p> <p>Project 7. Land Cover Monitoring</p> <p>Project 8. Tree Regeneration</p> <p>Project 9. Annual species counts</p> <p>Project 10. Valley Mire Monitoring</p> <p>Project 11. Bryophyte Monitoring</p> <p>Project 12. Invasive Plant mapping and monitoring</p> <p>Project 13. Woodland tree regeneration and flora</p> <p>Project 14. Fire recording and investigation</p> <p>Project 15. Dogs and visitor survey</p>	<p>As per Chapter 7 of the Five Year Plan</p> <p><a href="http://www.ashdownforest.org/home/docs/AshdownForestConservationManagementPlan2016-2020_Final.pdf">http://www.ashdownforest.org/home/docs/AshdownForestConservationManagementPlan2016-2020_Final.pdf</a></p>	<p><b><i>New Strategic Priority</i></b></p>

<b>Strategic Priority: Future Funding for Heathland Management</b>			
<b>Lead Officer – Conservation Officer</b>			
<b>Goals</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Elements to measure</b>	<b>Progress – Apr 15 –Mar 16 (Strategic Plan 2013 – 2016)</b>
Identify post-Higher Level Stewardship funding opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with Natural England</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applications made and funding awarded</li> </ul>	Application put together, submitted and was successful.

<b>Strategic Priority: Understand implication to Forest of the Local Authorities Strategic Access and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS)</b>			
<b>Lead Officer – Director</b>			
<b>Goals</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Elements to measure</b>	<b>Progress – Apr 15 –Mar 16 (Strategic Plan 2013 – 2016)</b>
Implement projects proposed by Ashdown Forest and approved by Local Authorities (LAs)	<p>‘Every Dog Matters’ Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bird Monitoring</li> <li>• Education and Information Programme</li> <li>• Visitor Management and monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As per individual project proposals</li> </ul>	Project proposals agreed by LAs and SAMMS Agreement signed in December 2015. Funding to be released in 2016.

<b>Strategic Priority: Maintenance of Key Species Data</b>			
<b>Lead Officer – Conservation Officer</b>			
<b>Goals</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Elements to measure</b>	<b>Progress – Apr 15 –Mar 16 (Strategic Plan 2013 – 2016)</b>
An up to date comprehensive species database for the Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define key species</li> <li>• Regular monitoring of species in accordance with protocols</li> <li>• Regular detailed Forest vegetation mapping</li> <li>• Liaise with Local Records Centres and specialist groups e.g. Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre, Ashdown Forest Bird Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number/s of key species</li> <li>• Extent of relevant habitats</li> </ul>	Birds continue to be monitored by Ashdown Bird Group; other notable species monitored by Rangers/Conservation Officer/volunteers. Closer links were established this year with Sussex Biodiversity records Centre, with several joint meetings to discuss improved species recording. New vegetation mapping being undertaken by consultants as part of Wealden Nitrogen monitoring contract. First year’s results now received.



## FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSE:

Strategic Priority: Financial Management and Reporting			
Lead Officer - Financer Officer			
Goals	Strategies	Elements to measure	Progress – Annual Review 2015/16
Ensure fiscal discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure Financial Regulations are adhered to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfactory audit reports (Internal and external)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfactory audit reports received for 2014/15. No issues arising from external report.</li> <li>Minor improvements suggested from internal audit review.</li> </ul>
Maintain quality and clarity of financial reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evolve reporting structures in the financial year 2016/17 in order to provide effective reporting for Countryside Stewardship programme.</li> <li>Regular presentation of reports to appropriate stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback from stakeholders</li> </ul>	Financial reports maintained at improved (2014/15) level.
Effective budget setting process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To build on foundation created by evolved financial reports</li> <li>Timely receipt of incoming data to create the budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting timescales for approvals required</li> <li>Production of a budget that is transparent, comprehensible and relevant</li> </ul>	Budget setting process incurred delays due to transition caused by new major funding. External deadlines met.
Produce a full Annual Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collation, production, distribution of report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder feedback</li> </ul>	2014/15 Annual Report produced
Explore funding options and provide support to individual committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisational Funding Strategy to be developed following Governance review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring new sources of funding</li> </ul>	Countryside Stewardship, SAMMs and funding secured. Education programme agreed and funded. Currently no overall Funding Strategy.
Maintain key finance related relationships including East Sussex County Council, Wealden District Council, Natural England and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain open lines of communication.</li> <li>Regular meetings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner feedback</li> <li>Regular meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular formal meetings with ESCC, WDC and NE – all actively supportive and recommendations for grant levels to be maintained.</li> <li>WDC increased grant contribution.</li> </ul>

Review use of external accounting contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure cost-effective use of external support with a view to eliminating support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial savings</li> <li>All finance work undertaken in-house</li> </ul>	Standalone Finance Officer role in place; external support required for short term.
Review of best value provided for brought-in services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procurement review in conjunction with Clerk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial savings</li> </ul>	New goal 2016/17

**Strategic Priority: Governance**  
**Lead Officer: Clerk**

Goals	Strategies	Elements to measure	Progress – Annual Review 2015/16
Maintain appropriate and up to date Standing Orders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly review of Standing Orders ensuring best practice and organisational efficiency</li> <li>Clear hierarchy for decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adherence to practice</li> </ul>	Standing Orders updated to differentiate role and responsibilities of Finance Officer and Clerk.
Ensure a consistent and timely reporting style to Board and Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uniformity though use of documents, templates and version control</li> <li>Clear and concise documentation</li> <li>Maintain open lines of communication</li> <li>Catalogue original/filed documents</li> <li>Signing out/in process for borrowed documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compliance</li> </ul>	Planning framework in place to ensure punctual collation, production, distribution and delivery of meeting documentation both in hard copy and electronically.
Create a clear, concise and accurate record keeping system/document repository	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and catalogue important documents and collate securely both physically and electronically</li> <li>Date stamping of all received correspondence</li> <li>Scanning of relevant documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compliance with copyright and data protection</li> <li>Clear and easily accessible filing system</li> <li>Documents/evidence in place</li> <li>Accurate record keeping</li> </ul>	Version control and document labelling protocol in use for all generated and updated documents.  Use of website and social media to promote communications and share documentation.
Ensure identifiable evidence of land ownership, trust deed and legal status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and catalogue important documents and collate securely both physically</li> <li>Timetable of monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents in place and any gaps identified</li> <li>Compliance</li> <li>Review as appropriate</li> </ul>	Electronic cataloguing of significant documents. Constructive relationships established with members of the Legal and Estates Team at ESCC.
Have all employee and organisational policies in place,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness of new legislation</li> <li>Templates and toolkits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents in place and any gaps identified</li> <li>Compliance</li> </ul>	Policies agreed in the last year: - Shared Parental Leave - Updated Staff Handbook

ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and data protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk Assessments</li> <li>• Redaction of sensitive data and personally identifiable information (PII)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review as appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Updated Pensions policy</li> <li>Request to Forest Recreation Grounds to submit proof of Public Liability Insurance as a matter of policy.</li> </ul>
Maintain appropriate and up to date H&S risk management toolkit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Templates and toolkits</li> <li>• Risk Assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance</li> <li>• Review as appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NFU led Health and Safety Assessment carried out, report received; Action Plan developed around recommendations.</li> <li>Restrictive insurance policy endorsements removed (e.g. tree felling at height) to allow staff more flexibility.</li> </ul>
Bye-Law Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Record and maintain all evidence in relation to breaches and anticipate and manage trends in breaches where applicable</li> <li>• Awareness of new legislation</li> <li>• Increase publicity; consider interaction with other sources (partners, local businesses)</li> <li>• Positive relationship with DEFRA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management Information</li> <li>• Compliance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worked with British Model Flying Association to raise concern over Drone usage on the Forest. BMFA have published Forest Bye-laws on their website.</li> <li>Bye-Law fine increase to 'Sliding Scale 2' formalised.</li> </ul>

Strategic Priority: Human Resources			
Lead Officer - Director			
Goals	Strategies	Elements to measure	Progress – Annual Review 2015/16
Establish and implement a Human Resources Working Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standing Orders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terms of reference and resolution of issues</li> </ul>	Sub group of FGP set up to resolve specific issues. Staffing issues a standing item on FGP Agenda.
<p>Ensure a well-motivated and effective staff</p> <p>Ensure a well-motivated volunteer team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appraisal Process (annual and six month reviews)</li> <li>• Training and Development Plan</li> <li>• Review organisational structure and resources</li> <li>• Succession Planning</li> <li>• Investing in Volunteering accreditation</li> <li>• HR Working Group convened as necessary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appraisal paperwork</li> <li>• Organisational and individual training undertaken</li> <li>• Feedback from staff and volunteers</li> <li>• Feedback from partners on organisational effectiveness</li> </ul>	All appraisals undertaken. Training and Development Plan in place. Clerk/Finance Officer role split in recent recruitment. Feedback obtained regularly on an informal basis. Six volunteer events per annum. Nomination put forward for Queens Award for Volunteers. Informal feedback received from partners; other options (e.g. Survey Monkey) being investigated.

**Strategic Priority: Maintaining and managing organisational infrastructure**  
**Lead Officer - Clerk**

Goals	Strategies	Elements to measure	Progress – Annual Review 2015/16
Have an effective communications and IT system in place	Focus on business process improvement, efficiency and value for money <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Continuity Plan</li> <li>• Drive efficiency, productivity and operating costs</li> <li>• Consider system constraints</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best value</li> <li>• Organisational challenges that may affect capabilities</li> <li>• Cost savings</li> </ul>	Examination of existing systems with a view to integrating IT and telecoms services to provide greater security, efficiency and support.
Manage the Forest Centre site (to its full potential) within budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on business process improvement, efficiency and value for money</li> <li>• Annual review of maintenance and utility contracts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best value</li> <li>• Organisational efficiency</li> <li>• Cost savings</li> </ul>	New heating and hot water system installed. Insurance review carried out and policy savings achieved. Utility contracts to be reviewed in 2016
Effectively regulate fees for commercial and other licence activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor trends and review quarterly</li> <li>• Create programme of publicity in relation to charges, fees and licences</li> <li>• Review charges of similar organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers of permits issued</li> <li>• Number of licences issued</li> <li>• Frequency of permits/licences requested</li> </ul>	Recent review of Dog Walking licences and Filming licences undertaken with new fees and process improvement recommendations.
Organisational Document Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed audit trails</li> <li>• File security/ Network security</li> <li>• Data Protection</li> <li>• Conversion of files to PDF</li> <li>• Document versioning</li> <li>• Redaction of sensitive data and personally identifiable information (PII)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear and easily accessible filing system</li> <li>• Organisational efficiency</li> <li>• Accurate record keeping</li> </ul>	All circulated documents (originating from the office) to be PDF'd. Version control and document labelling introduced. Sensitive documents password protected. Network drive permissioning reviewed.

## ROADS, PLANNING AND AMENITY:

Strategic Priority: To protect the Forest from encroachment and misuse			
Lead Officer - Clerk			
Goals	Strategies	Elements to measure	Progress – Annual Review 2015/16
Effective enforcement of the Bye-laws and in so doing reduce the number of encroachments and speed up their resolution.	<p>Record and maintain all evidence in relation to breaches and anticipate and manage trends in breaches where applicable.</p> <p>Conduct regular boundary walks of known properties of concern, maintaining photographic evidence.</p> <p>Engage with offenders at an early stage and educate them on Forest habitat management and the consequences of their actions.</p> <p>Publicise common repeat breaches in Ashdown Forest Life brochure. Appeal for information/ witnesses through social media for serious Bye-law breaches (e.g. dog attacks on Forest herd).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of breaches raised</li> <li>• Numbers of repeat offences (<i>same individual committing same offence</i>)</li> <li>• Number of prosecutions</li> <li>• Number of resolutions</li> <li>• Time from reporting of breach to resolution</li> <li>• Number of breaches passed to ESCC for comment and action</li> <li>• Common breaches</li> </ul>	<p>Bye-law fine increase now aligned to Standard Scale 2 (not exceeding £500).</p> <p>Data now captured in Management Information Database.</p> <p>Overview of breaches and trends in breaches will be available going forward and allow for improved time and resource management.</p> <p>Fees, charges and penalties on website.</p>
Effectively regulate commercial and other activities ensuring compliance with Bye-laws.	<p>Create programme of publicity in relation to charges and penalties, fees and licences required for use of Forest,</p> <p>Monitoring of advertised activities and number of permits and licences issued.</p> <p>Review commercial activities of other similar organisations (i.e. Malvern Hills) and be aware of new trends (such as Hover boards and Drones) and applicable legislation.</p> <p>Actively review and seek the removal of videos/photography taken of the Forest without licence and uploaded on media sharing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers of permits issued</li> <li>• Number of licences issued</li> <li>• Number of breaches relating to non-compliance of commercial activity</li> <li>• Frequency of permits issued</li> </ul>	<p>Licence and Permit data now captured in Management Information Database.</p> <p>Commercial activity fee-structure under review.</p>



<p>To ensure timely and appropriate comments on any planning application affecting the Forest.</p>	<p>websites.</p> <p>Clear understanding of Local Authority planning policy to ensure objections and comments made on applications affecting the Forest are directly relevant to the proposal.</p> <p>Respond within timescale outlined in planning policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of planning applications responded to</li> <li>• Number of proposals approved and rejected by Local Authorities</li> </ul>	<p>Some concern highlighted in relation to the wording for planning comments by WDC.</p> <p>Ensuring compliance with planning comments in accordance with SAMMS and SANGS strategies.</p>
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<b>Strategic Priority: To promote understanding of the Forest as an amenity and to ensure effective Visitor Management</b> <b>Lead Officer - Director</b>			
Goals	Strategies	Elements to measure	Progress – Annual Review 2015/16
<p>Promote understanding of the Forest as an amenity allowing for quiet enjoyment by walkers, dog owners, horse riders and other visitors.</p> <p>Promote understanding of heathland conservation and management.</p>	<p>Develop Communication Plan for internal resources (website, printed literature, e-service) and external (event, exhibition and programme management).</p> <p>Build Programme of Relationship management – Commoners, Friends, Residents, Volunteers, Parish Councils, local groups and organisations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of events / activities / meetings/forums put on, directly and indirectly</li> <li>• Number of participants attending</li> <li>• Visitor Management Strategy developed by March 2015</li> <li>• Visitor experience feedback</li> </ul>	<p>Communication Plan in place: individual plans in place for Invisible Fencing, Summer Grazing and Code of Conduct.</p> <p>2 Parish Liaison Panels (6 Parishes); 2 Volunteer Networks (80 attendees); 3 Presentations; 2 Tourism Association meetings; 1 dog Walkers Forum; 2 Ashdown Forest Riding Associations meetings.</p>
<p>Develop a Visitor Management Strategy including promoting the Forest Centre as a facility that will increase the footfall from existing Forest visitors.</p>	<p>Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) visitor survey to be undertaken by WDC.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of visitors to Forest Centre, others TBA as part of the Strategy feedback from stakeholders &amp; numbers of volunteers recruited, trained and retained</li> <li>• Feedback from Ashdown Forest Tourism Association (AFRA)</li> </ul>	<p>Visitor data to Forest Centre now captured in Management Information Database.</p> <p>Visitor Management Strategy under ongoing review and will be progressed alongside WDC Visitor Survey and Forest Centre Development.</p>

**Strategic Priority: To promote understanding of the Forest as an amenity and to ensure effective Visitor Management**

**Lead Officer - Director**

Goals	Strategies	Elements to measure	Progress – Annual Review 2015/16
Support and work with the Society of Friends.	Grant request process.  Regular programme of meetings and sharing of objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding requests presented and agreed</li> </ul>	Grant for Education Project offered and accepted. 3 Friends Liaison meetings and 1 AGM. Joint programme of events being developed for 2015.

**Strategic Priority: To develop the Ashdown Forest in-house education and Community offer**

**Lead Officer: Director**

Goals	Strategies	Elements to measure	Progress – Annual Review 2015/16
Extend education and community programme for schools, adults, 'special' interest groups and local communities.	Countryside Stewardship Work with Local Authorities Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS). Friends Funding strategy .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback from Schools</li> <li>Feedback from partners</li> <li>Measure value of work undertaken</li> <li>Numbers of organisations engaged</li> </ul>	Grant funding received from Friends for 2 year Education Programme from September 2014 – July 2016. Countryside Stewardship grant applied for 2016 for 5 years. Every Dog Matters Training, Sheep Proof your Dog provided twice a year.  South View Close continues to work with us on a weekly basis.
Extend partnerships, building on the successful working with the Probation Service and East Sussex County Council (South View Close).	Partnership with Probation Service and other relevant organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback from partners</li> <li>Measure value of work undertaken</li> <li>Numbers of organisations engaged</li> </ul>	Contract in place with Probation Service for targeted work tasks.

**Strategic Priority: To develop the Ashdown Forest in-house education and Community offer**

**Lead Officer: Director**

Goals	Strategies	Elements to measure	Progress – Annual Review 2015/16
Acquire land, when it becomes available, within the Ancient pale not in ownership of Trust.	Maintain positive relationships with Landowners and Friends and periodically review online property portals and auctions for land sales.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of Acres/hectares acquired</li> </ul>	Ongoing/no recent acquisitions

## FOREST CENTRE DEVELOPMENT:

Strategic Priority: To achieve a fully developed and refurbished Forest Centre. Lead Officer: Director			
Goals	Strategies	Elements to measure	Progress – Annual Review 2015/16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify all costs associated with formal fundraising activities</li> <li>Secure funding to implement works as appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>Forest Centre Project agreed by Board and structures to implement in place.</p> <p>Commission appropriate professionals including Quantity Surveyors and Architects.</p> <p>Relationship management with supporters, funding bodies, partners and local communities.</p> <p>Relationship management with landowners and Society of Friends</p>	<p>Project development milestones reached.</p> <p>Funding achieved for 3 development projects within the overall Forest Centre development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two Planning Permissions granted – 1 activated.</li> <li>Grants received from Ashdown Forest Trust, Ashdown Forest Conservation Trust and Low Carbon Workspaces for: Installation of Solar Panels Insulation and Double Glazing (Education Barn)</li> <li>Feed in Tariff application successful.</li> <li>Assessments undertaken of Power and Sewage supplies and conditions – projects to upgrade in place</li> </ul>

### Conservation References:

Achieving Favourable Condition: A Management Plan in support of Countryside Stewardship 2016-2020

### Finance and General Purposes References:

Standing Orders and Financial Regulations; Roads, Planning and Amenities Committee objectives; Finance and General Purposes Committee objectives

### Roads, Planning and Amenities Reference:

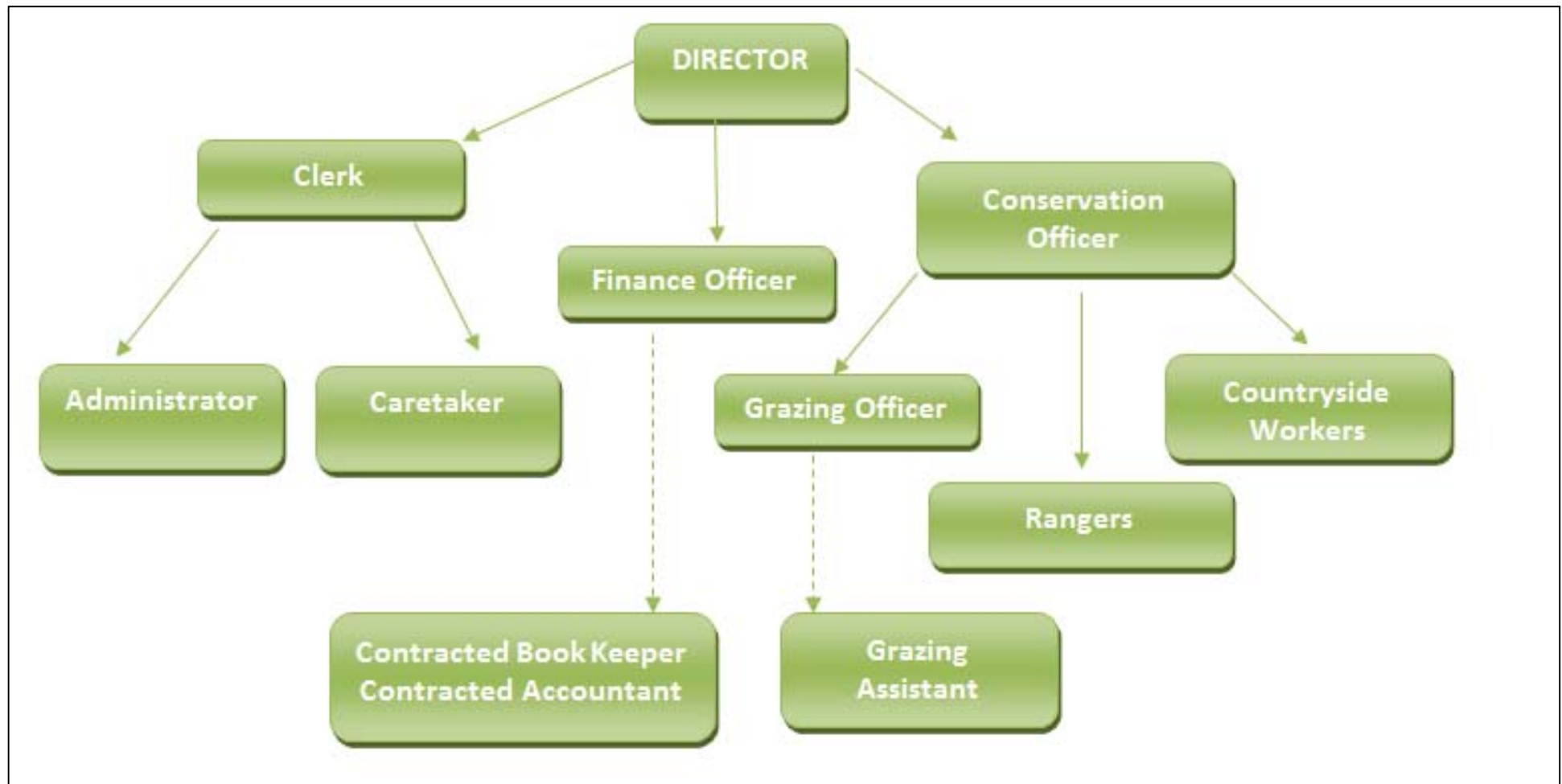
Ashdown Forest Act 1974; Ashdown Forest Bye-Laws; SAMMS; Higher Level Stewardship; Volunteer Policy; Conservation Committee Objectives

### Forest Centre Development References:

Forest Centre Development Committee objectives



ASHDOWN FOREST STAFF:



## CONSERVATORS:

Cllr J Barnes, **Appt ESCC**

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Cllr C Belsey, **Representing AF Trust**

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Mr J A Francis, **Elected 2010**

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Mr R Galley, **Elected 2008**

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Mr PJ Glyn, **Elected 2014**

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Cllr C Hardy, **Appt WDC**

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Cllr P Holloway, **Appt WDC**

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Mr AG Reid, **Appt ESCC**

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Mr C Smith **Elected 2016**

Brickyard Farm  
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Mr JW Spicer, **Elected 2011**

Spinningdale  
Sandy Lane  
Coleman's Hatch, Hartfield TN7 4ER  
[spicer608@btinternet.com](mailto:spicer608@btinternet.com)

### BOARD MEETINGS 2016/17

**2016:** 21 March; 13 June; 5 September; 21 November

**2017:** 13 March

**All Meetings usually commence at 2.00 pm.**

Cllr R Stogdon, **Appt ESCC**

Laurel Tree Farm  
Boars Head  
Crowborough, TN6 3HD  
[cldr.richard.stogdon@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:cldr.richard.stogdon@eastsussex.gov.uk)

Cllr Mrs R St Pierre, **Appt ESCC**

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Cllr L Keeley, **Appt ESC**

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Cllr S Tidy, **Appt ESCC**

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High Hurstwood  
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Cllr FWJ Whetstone, **Appt ESCC**

Bassetts Manor  
Hartfield, TN7 4LA  
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The Chairman, Vice Chairman of the Board and the Director are ex-officio members of all Committees



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**Conservation:**

*J Francis (Chairman), PJ Glyn (Vice Chairman)*

MJ Cooper, C Hardy, L Keeley, C Smith and R St Pierre

Co-opted: K Cole (Ecologist ESCC), J Harding (Forestry Commission), L Hutchby (NE), C Johnson (Archaeologist ESCC), Dr N Mawdsley.

2016: 11 January; 14 March; 20 June; 3 October

2017: 9 January

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**Roads, Planning & Amenities:**

*JW Spicer (Chairman), C Hardy (Vice Chairman)*

J Barnes, M Cooper, P Holloway and R Stogdon

Co-opted: Chase Ranger as required

2016: 1 February; 11 April; 11 July; 17 October

2017: 30 January

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**Finance & General Purposes:**

*A Reid (Chairman), R Stogdon (Vice Chairman)*

J Barnes, J Francis, R Galley, JW Spicer, C Smith, S Tidy and F Whetstone.

2016: 29 February; 6 June; 8 August; 7 November

2017: 27 February

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**Forest Centre Development Committee:**

*S Tidy (Chairman), J Francis (Vice Chairman)*

J Barnes, R Galley and F Whetstone.

Co-opted: I Hurst.

2016: 25 January; 25 April; 25 July; 24 October

2017: 6 February

Commoners - 4 March 2016 7.30 Nutley Village Hall

Public/Residents - 12 July 2016 7.30 Forest Centre

Past and historical minutes can be found at  
[www.ashdownforest.org](http://www.ashdownforest.org)

**STAFF****Director**

Ms P Buesnel

**Clerk to the Conservators**

Mrs K Dirs

**Finance Officer**

Mrs L Meehan

**Office Administrator**

Mrs C Bain

**Conservation Officer**

Mr S Alton

**Grazing Officer**

Ms C FitzGerald

**Grazing Assistant**

Mr J Wallis

**Rangers**

Mr R Allum                      South Chase

Mr M Payne                     West Chase

Mr C J Sutton                  East Chase

Mr M Yates                     North Chase

**Countryside Workers**

Mr C Lutman

Mr A Payne

Mr T Simon

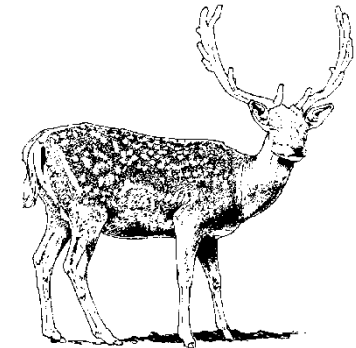
**Caretaker**

Mr J Ridley

**Duty Ranger** 01342 822846

**THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS  
OF  
ASHDOWN FOREST**

**2016 / 2017**



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Wych Cross  
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**Director: Ms P Buesnel**

**Chairman: Cllr R Stogdon**

**Vice Chairman: Cllr S Tidy**

