

Ashdown Forest Commoner Conservator Election

7:30 p.m. 2nd March 2018, Nutley Village Hall

Susan McAll – Personal Statement

I live in Parrock Lane, Upper Hartfield. I enjoy walking and horse riding on the Forest and am on the committee of the Ashdown Forest Riding Association.

I am a solicitor, heading up the compliance department of an international bank in the City. At a time when East Sussex County Council is looking to reduce funding and change the governance of the Forest, my professional experience, love of the Forest and willingness to gain a detailed insight into the legal, commercial and practical issues hopefully make me an ideal candidate to become a Commoner Conservator.

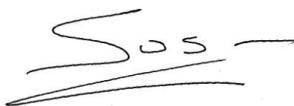
At a well attended public meeting in Nutley in May 2016 to discuss the Board's proposal to transfer the Forest into a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee, their presentation concluded by saying "We will communicate progress going forward through the use of a variety of methods: Website, Email groups, Parish Council Liaison, Social media" but there has been minimal information published and usually when the Conservators discuss Governance it has been "in confidential session".

What changes would I like to see?

- More communications to Commoners. I'm also keen to encourage greater communication between Commoners, to enable information and ideas to be shared.
- Ensure that the interests of Commoners are fully represented in any discussions on Governance.
- Encourage a different approach by East Sussex County Council. Rather than appointing their own Councillors to the Board, ESCC should work with the Forest management team to identify the skills and experience required by Board members and advertise for, and recruit, volunteers with relevant expertise.
- The Board taking up the many offers of assistance from Commoners and local residents who have offered their specialist skills in areas such as fund raising, charity management, commercial lending, legal advice, IT, conservation etc.
- Commoners get little benefit in return for their annual rate. We need to identify opportunities that provide mutual benefit to the management of the Forest and to Commoners, for example helping those wanting logs for fuel to work together to arrange cutting, processing, seasoning, storage and distribution in the most effective way.
- Encouraging the return of grazing by livestock is seen as an important part of managing the Forest. We need to ensure that the location of grazing doesn't detract from the enjoyment of the Forest by walkers and horse riders, and make it as easy as possible for those Commoners with livestock to be able to exercise their grazing rights.

If you'd like your interests to be represented by someone able to make a constructive contribution to the Conservators and articulate an independent perspective when appropriate, please vote for me.

Thank you,



Susan McAll
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