



Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Conservators of Ashdown Forest
Monday 19 June 2017 at 14.00
Ashdown Forest Centre

Present: Cllr R Stogdon (Chairman), Cllr S Tidy (Vice Chairman), Mr A Reid, Mr M Cooper, Cllr M Ensor, Cllr P Holloway, Mr J Francis, Mr R Galley, Mr P Glyn, Cllr C Hardy and Mr C Smith.

Cllr F Whetstone arrived for item 16/17.

In attendance: Mrs P Buesnel (Director) Mrs K Dirs (Clerk) Mrs L Meehan (Finance Officer).

Minutes were taken by Mr J Clow.

There were no members of the public present.

Item	Action
12/17 Apologies.	
There were apologies from Mr J Spicer, Cllr R O’Keeffe, Cllr J Barnes and Mrs R St Pierre	
13/17 Welcome to new Board Members	
Cllr R O’Keeffe and Mrs R St Pierre sent their apologies	
14/17 Declarations of any interest by Members of a Personal or Prejudicial Nature	
There were none	
15/17 To approve the minutes of the Board meeting of 13 March 2017, and matters arising	
The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy. The minutes were duly received and were approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6.	
<i>15.01/17 Matters arising</i> Mr Galley reiterated the importance of the Board considering the Wealden Local Plan and requested it be discussed in detail at the next Roads, Planning and Amenities Committee.	KD
16/17 To receive the minutes of the Conservation Committee meeting of 3 April 2017	
The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy. Mr Glyn requested an amendment to item 15/17 in the April 2017 minutes. The item will be referred to the next Conservation Committee meeting in July before the minutes are approved.	KD
<i>16.1/17 Matters arising minute 15.2/17</i> Mr Francis reported that in order to accelerate the Grazing Base proposal the Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Conservation Working Party. The Committee agreed to accept professional legal advice from Batcheller Monkhouse, who will negotiate on behalf of the Board.	
<i>16.2/17 Matters arising minute 15.3/17</i> Mr Francis reported that Footprint Ecology were being considered to oversee a public consultation process for fencing. Mr Galley enquired whether the Conservation Working Party were following Standing Orders. Mr Glyn confirmed the Conservation Working Party are following Standing Orders by providing justification for selecting Footprint Ecology and had a paper trail; he further explained that there were very few people with the expertise to advise the Conservators. Mr Galley enquired about a detailed grazing plan and advised that there should be no preconceptions over grazing until after the public consultation process.	PG
<i>16.3/17 Matters arising minute 19/17</i> Mr Francis reported a successful meeting with Nigel Hannam from the Wealden District Council on Nitrogen Deposition. The Conservation Working Party is currently formulating a proposal to Wealden District Council to ascertain funding for some of the conservation work on the Forest.	PG

	<p>16.3/17 <i>Matters arising minute 14.5/17</i> Cllr Ensor enquired about the legality of Gorse Burning. Mr Glyn agreed to email Cllr Ensor with the Natural England rules and legislation. Mr Galley questioned whether the Conservators were doing enough to control Gorse on the Forest. Mr Glyn confirmed he had discussed the problem with Footprint Ecology and noted that increased Nitrogen deposition aids Gorse seed germination and that cutting Gorse is not the only answer.</p>	PG
17/17	The Roads, Planning & Amenities Committee meeting of 24 April 2017	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy. The minutes were duly received and approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6.</p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy. Following item 17.3/17 and amendment to the minutes was requested which will be referred to the next Roads, Planning and Amenities Committee in July before the minutes are approved.</p> <p>The Board entered confidential session</p> <p>The Board left confidential session</p>	KD
18/17	The Forest Centre Development Committee of 08 May 2017	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy. The minutes were duly received and approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6.</p> <p><i>18.1/17 Matters arising minute 19/17</i> Cllr Tidy expressed the Boards' gratitude to the Ashdown Forest Conservation Trust for funding the Sewage Treatment Works and Wood Store. The Wood Store is now in place and the Chairman confirmed that he has written to the Chairman of the Ashdown Forest Conservation Trust to thank them personally.</p> <p><i>18.2/17 Matters arising minute 19/17</i> Cllr Tidy reported that the kitchen refurbishment is going ahead in July and August 2017.</p>	
19/17	The Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting of 22 May 2017	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy. The minutes were duly received and approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6.</p> <p>The Board entered confidential session</p> <p>The Board left confidential session</p>	
20/17	To receive the Director's Report	
	<p>The Director spoke to her report and highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resignations of Josh Bevan (Grazing Officer) and Tom Simon (Countryside Worker) both will be a real loss for the Conservators. A short-term replacement will be sourced to allow time for the permanent recruitment process; • The volunteer barbeque will be on Thursday 27th July 2017; • There have been two break-ins at the Forest Centre; • The kitchen refurbishment will commence in July/August 2017; • The Friends of Ashdown Forest organised a very successful Teddy Bears' Picnic during which 	

	<p>the Audio Tour was launched to the public;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The funding message was presented during a Parish and Town Council meeting, thirteen Parishes attended with twenty-seven representatives including Clerks, Mayors and Parish Councillors. Several Councillors have asked to join the Parish Liaison Panel; • The Friends of Ashdown Forest are organising a wine and cheese fundraiser in conjunction with the High Weald Dairy and Bluebell Vineyard in September; • Cath Jackson is the new representative from Natural England replacing Louise Hutchby; • The Health walks are proving to be very popular and the walk leaders have offered to arrange a regular litter pick of the walking routes they use; • The latest edition of Ashdown Forest Life has been published. <p>Cllr Ensor was impressed with the Facebook numbers and enquired about the risk of fire on the Forest. The Director clarified that the staff were well equipped and trained in conjunction with the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. Cllr Tidy expressed her gratitude to the Friends of Ashdown Forest for funding the maintenance of three car parks on the Forest; she proposed a letter of thanks be sent from the Board. The Board agreed.</p>	PB
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21/17	<p>To receive the Clerk's Report</p> <p>The Clerk spoke to her report. She confirmed the Commoners meeting was held on Friday 3rd March and was attended by around seventy-five Commoners. Colin Smith won the election with 34 votes to Susan McAll's 18 votes. The Clerk confirmed that invoices for rent and rates would be posted in the following week. Fly-tipping remains the most prevalent Bye-Law breach, straining the resources of the team. Licence fees and charges have been reviewed for activities such as commercial dog walking, riding and filming. Several major production companies have used the Forest as a setting for various shoots and locations for advertisements and movies. There are currently ten commercial dog walkers registered with the Conservators. The renewal of the annual riding permits commenced in April and a flurry of early applications were received by the office. A number of Riders have raised concerns regarding the level of indemnity insurance cover (£5million) requested by the Conservators (as stipulated by the underwriters of the Conservators NFU policy).</p>	
22/17	<p>To receive the draft Ashdown Forest Annual Report</p> <p>The Ashdown Forest Annual Report had been circulated and comments were welcomed. Mr Galley requested clarification on Page 11 Item 3 with regard to the sale of "livestock and deer". The Finance Office agreed to amend the Annual Report to "livestock and meat". The Annual Report was approved.</p>	LM
23/17	<p>To receive the draft Ashdown Forest Strategic plan six month update (Oct 16-Mar 17)</p> <p>The Ashdown Forest Strategic Plan had been circulated and comments were welcomed. The update to the Strategic Plan was approved.</p>	
Refreshment Break		
24/17	<p>Governance Review</p> <p>The Board entered confidential session</p> <p>The Board left confidential session</p>	
25/17	<p>Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board (as per Standing Order 1.2).</p> <p>The Clerk invited nominations for the post of Chairman of the Board. Mr Cooper nominated Cllr Stodgon and this was seconded by Cllr Hardy.</p> <p>There being no other nominations, Cllr Stodgon was duly elected as Chairman for a period of twelve months and took the chair.</p>	

	<p>The Chairman invited nominations for the post of Vice Chairman of the Board. Mr Galley nominated Cllr Tidy and this was seconded by Mr Reid.</p> <p>There being no other nominations, Cllr Tidy was duly elected as Vice Chairman for a period of twelve months.</p>	
26/17	Allocation of Board Members to Committees (as per Standing order 5.1).	
	<p>The Clerk advised she would contact Mr Spicer, Cllr Barnes, Cllr O’Keeffe and Mrs St. Pierre to confirm committee membership.</p> <p>The following changes were agreed at the meeting: <i>Conservation:</i> Cllr Hardy advised he was not a Conservation Committee member and his name had been included erroneously. <i>Finance and General Purposes:</i> Mr Galley to be added. <i>Forest Centre Development:</i> No Changes. <i>Roads, Planning & Amenities:</i> No Changes.</p>	KD
27/17	Residents Meeting	
	The Director stated that the Annual Residents Meeting will be held on Tuesday 11 th July 2017 at 7pm at the Forest Centre.	
28/17	Any Urgent Item of which the Clerk has notice in order to pass to the elected Chairman	
	There were none.	

This part of the meeting closed at 16:19 approx.

Chairman _____
September 2017

Clerk _____