

	<p>Mr Spicer enquired if concerns regarding gorse, raised by Commoners at their annual meeting in May, were being addressed. Mr Mawdsley assured him that they were.</p> <p>A brief discussion took place regarding site visits and their usefulness in seeing where management techniques have worked and where they haven't.</p>	
16/18	<p>The Roads, Planning & Amenities Committee meeting of 23 April 2018</p> <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>16.01/18 Matters arising (item 12.01/18)</i> Mr Mawdsley enquired about enforcing Wealden District Council's Dog Waste Policy. The Chairman responded that 'policing' an area the size of Ashdown Forest was impossible, however it was hoped that in the future, funding could be found to have more dog waste bins installed in car parks.</p> <p>Mr Mawdsley queried how successful the new dog bins had been. The Director reported that anecdotally the teachers had reported less dog mess on the key routes close to the Forest Centre and less dog waste bags left at the entrance gate since the bins had been installed. The Director explained there had been an issue between Kier and Wealden District Council emptying the bins in the first two months, but the matter had now been resolved.</p> <p><i>16.02/18 Matters arising (item 13.01/18)</i> The Board entered confidential session</p> <p>The Board left confidential session</p> <p><i>16.03/18 Matters arising (item 14.01/18)</i> The Clerk was pleased to report that the SORN cars on Back Lane had finally been removed.</p>	<p>PB</p> <p>KD</p>
17/18	<p>The Forest Centre Development Committee meeting of 09 April 2018</p> <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>17.01/18 Matters arising (item 03/18)</i> The Chairman reported that the Committee had agreed to progressing the Barn extensions due to lack of space for core activities following expansion of the Deer and Grazing programmes and that a Business Plan and Cash Plan need to be prepared. Cllr. Whetstone cautioned against embarking on a retail scheme (deer/meat sales) and Mr Spicer agreed saying alternatives also need to be costed out.</p> <p>The Director reported that Mr Mawdsley had agreed to support the Deer Coordinator in preparing a Business Plan with analysis of risks, that would consider three options: status quo, part retail and full retail.</p> <p>The issue of ongoing delayed payments from Natural England leading to cash flow problems for the Conservators was raised in the event of any major expenditure.</p>	<p>KD</p> <p>GP/NM</p>
18/18	<p>The Finance & General Purposes Committee of 09 April 2018</p> <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 Chairman gave a brief introduction to the annual summary of finances highlighting the reserve balance, the 33k surplus, the ringfenced contribution particularly the generous support from the Friends.</p> <p>The Chairman of the Board thanked AR and the Finance Officer for all the work they had done to produce such clear and transparent reports.</p>	

Matters arising (item 23/18)

The Chairman explained a minor amendment had been made to the Absence Management Policy. **The policy was agreed by the Board.**

18.1/18 Statement of Accounts

The Board agreed the Statement of Accounts.

18.2/18 Internal Audit Letter of Comfort and comments

The Finance Officer explained that some consideration needs to be given to the Financial Regulations and Risk Management Policy to demonstrate internal scrutiny. **The Board agreed the Internal Audit Letter of Comfort and comments.**

18.3/18 To consider the effectiveness of the system of internal control

The Finance Officer explained advised that the fact that the Conservators work to Financial Regulations which are reviewed annually, have minuted meetings with resolutions, and undertake an annual internal audit to review the system should be considered as effective systems of internal control. **The Board agreed.**

It was noted that the Financial Regulations and Risk Management document would be reviewed at the August F&GP meeting for approval at the next Board meeting.

LM

18.4/18 Annual Return (Section 1): To consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement

The Finance Officer read out the Governance Statements and sought approval from the Board for each individual statement.

The Finance Officer reported that there is a £1,200 VAT payment that needs to be claimed but was not addressed in 2017/18 despite being raised by the Internal Audit report in 2016/17. She advised that Governance Statement 7: *"We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit"* should not be affirmed and that a letter of explanation would be submitted to the External Auditor including steps to resolve the matter.

LM

The Board of Conservators noted the above point and agreed to mark Section 7 with a 'no' response. The Board proceeded to review the other assertions, which were all positively agreed.

18.5/18 Annual Return (Section 2): To consider the Accounting Statements

The Board considered the the Accounting Statements 2017/18 along with supporting financial paperwork.

18.6/18 Annual Return (Section 2): To approve and sign the Accounting Statements

The Finance Officer sought approval from the Board for the Accounting Statements which were duly signed by the Chairman and Clerk. **Mr Smith proposed acceptance and Cllrs Tidy and Hardy seconded. The Board agreed the Accounting Statements.**

18.7/18 To approve the reserves allocation

The Board agreed the reserves allocation.

Mr Cooper voiced concern about income vulnerability. Mr Smith reported that he had met initially with Mr Reid, the Finance Officer and the Director to progress work on preparing a 'Plan B' in order to consider the broader income streams affecting the Core budget. A report will be prepared for the Board in September. Mrs St Pierre asked that income-generating potential should also be considered. Mr Mawdsley considered the Countryside Stewardship (CS) budget vulnerable and reported that the CS budget was being recast to meet requirements.

Mr Cooper asked that an amendment be made to the Statement of Accounts to clarify that CS funding came from the European Union. Mr Mawdsley responded that although the funds are sourced from the EU, the payment is made from the UK government through the Rural Payments Agency and the funds, as part of a legally binding contract with Natural England, are underwritten by the UK

	government.	
19/18	The Executive Committee meeting (conducted via email 09 May 2018) 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.	
20/18	To receive the Director's Report The Director spoke to her report and highlighted the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing changes including the recruitment of Katherine Meade as Forest Centre Office Manager and Business Development Manager and the appointment of James Clow as North Chase Ranger. • 6 new Conservation Volunteers have been recruited and a Volunteers Coffee morning was held on 06 June. • The Education Programme is busy with all 25 spaces (funded by Natural England) booked. • A 'Calling in the Birds' event on 13 May had been attended by 36 people. • A recent donation from AFRA had been received for £2,000. There were no questions from the Board.	
21/18	To receive the Clerk's Report The Clerk spoke to her report. She explained the postponed Commoners Meeting had generated a flood of queries and complaints to the office, some extremely unpleasant, which were passed to the Commoner Conservator representatives for response. The Clerk advised that postponing the Commoners meetings had incurred extra costs, including media advertising costs, which were absorbed by the Conservators. Ms McAll asked whether the Commoners could organise their own meeting, but the Clerk responded that the process for convening the meeting was enshrined in the Act (Ashdown Forest Act 1974). Mr Smith raised the issue of the appalling abuse the staff had dealt with and the Commoners Conservators agreed to include a letter in the forthcoming Rent/Rate mail-out to the Commoners and Residents. Mr Mawdsley suggested there should be an explanation of SAMMS and SANGS as questions had been raised at the last two Commoner meetings. The Clerk agreed to add a section under FAQ's on the website.	KD
22/18	To receive the draft Ashdown Forest Annual Report The draft Ashdown Forest Annual Report had been circulated and comments were welcomed. Cllr Barnes requested the word "statutory" was added to the section on Ownership and Management on page 3. The Annual Report was approved subject to the addition of the new Conservators photographs.	
23/18	Ashdown Forest Strategic Plan The Director explained that due to heavy workloads the review of the Strategic Plan had not yet been undertaken and that each committee would be circulated their relevant section for comment and then the sections would be combined and circulated to the full Board.	KD
24/18	Governance Review update A paper updating progress in relation to revised Forest Governance issues had been circulated to the Board by the Chairman, prior to the Board Meeting. The Chairman explained that he and the Director had recently met with the Legal Team at East Sussex County Council (ESCC). At that meeting, the Legal Team recommended that the proposed Not for Profit Company Limited by Guarantee should now proceed to registration with Companies House, following upon which the relevant application can be made to register the Company as a Charity with the Charity Commission. In correspondence between the Legal Team and Companies House, the intended name, "Ashdown Forest Foundation", had been noted in the context of an appropriate capital sum noted as the starting capital of the new Company. The Chairman welcomed the suggestion made by Mrs McAll that the Board should endeavour to register the Company on the basis of de minimis figures.	Cllr RS

	<p>Cllr Barnes questioned whether the Board would need a revenue stream as the Board would require servicing. Cllr Whetstone stated that under the 1974 Act, ESCC could not simply remove funding and Mrs St Pierre queried whether the Roads, Planning and Amenities Committee could administer fines for Bye-law breaches under a charitable trust registration. The Chairman explained that the Governance Working Party's intention would be dealt with in a Service Agreement between the Conservators and the new Company in which it proposed to deal with the delegation issues mentioned by Mrs St Pierre and the monetary issues raised by Cllr. Barnes.</p> <p>The Board agreed that the Legal Team be instructed to progress and register the new company with Companies House. Once the new company has been registered, the charity registration can also be progressed.</p> <p>The Director cautioned about the need for additional administration support to set up and manage the Company and subsequent charity. The Chairman was under the impression this would be provided by ESCC.</p>																																							
25/18	Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board																																							
	<p>The Clerk invited nominations for the post of Chairman of the Board. Cllr Barnes nominated Cllr Stodgon and this was seconded by Cllr Hardy. 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 Clerk invited nominations for the post of Vice Chairman of the Board. Mr Reid nominated Cllr Tidy and this was seconded by Cllr Shing. There being no other nominations, Cllr Tidy was duly elected as Vice Chairman for a period of twelve months.</p> <p>The Clerk reminded the Board that this was the third year of a permitted three year term for both incumbents.</p>																																							
26/18	Allocation of Board members to Committees (as per Standing Order 5.1)																																							
	<p>The Clerk circulation the Committee allocation sheet. The Committees were allocated as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><u>Conservation</u></th> <th><u>Finance and General Purposes</u></th> <th><u>Forest Centre Development</u></th> <th><u>Roads, Planning and Amenity</u></th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Mr JA Francis</td> <td>Cllr. Barnes</td> <td>Mr JA Francis</td> <td>Cllr. Barnes</td> <td rowspan="8">KD</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mr MJ Cooper</td> <td>Mr JA Francis</td> <td>Cllr. Hardy</td> <td>Mr MJ Cooper</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mr N Mawdsley</td> <td>Mr N Mawdsley</td> <td>Mr AG Reid</td> <td>Cllr. Hardy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr. Shing</td> <td>Mr AG Reid</td> <td>Cllr. Stodgon</td> <td>Cllr. Holloway</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mr C Smith</td> <td>Mr C Smith</td> <td>Cllr. Tidy</td> <td>Ms S McAll</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr. Stodgon</td> <td>Mr JW Spicer</td> <td>Cllr. Whetstone</td> <td>Mr JW Spicer</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mrs R St. Pierre</td> <td>Cllr. Stodgon</td> <td></td> <td>Cllr. Stodgon</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr. Tidy</td> <td>Cllr. Tidy Cllr. Whetstone</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<u>Conservation</u>	<u>Finance and General Purposes</u>	<u>Forest Centre Development</u>	<u>Roads, Planning and Amenity</u>		Mr JA Francis	Cllr. Barnes	Mr JA Francis	Cllr. Barnes	KD	Mr MJ Cooper	Mr JA Francis	Cllr. Hardy	Mr MJ Cooper	Mr N Mawdsley	Mr N Mawdsley	Mr AG Reid	Cllr. Hardy	Cllr. Shing	Mr AG Reid	Cllr. Stodgon	Cllr. Holloway	Mr C Smith	Mr C Smith	Cllr. Tidy	Ms S McAll	Cllr. Stodgon	Mr JW Spicer	Cllr. Whetstone	Mr JW Spicer	Mrs R St. Pierre	Cllr. Stodgon		Cllr. Stodgon	Cllr. Tidy	Cllr. Tidy Cllr. Whetstone			
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27/18	Residents Meeting																																							
	<p>The Board agreed with the Directors suggestion of a presentation on progress of the Deer Programme for the Residents Meeting, followed by a general Question and Answer session. It was proposed the Chair and/or a member of each committee should be present at the meeting.</p>	PB																																						
28/18	Any Urgent Item of which the Clerk has notice in order to pass to the elected Chairman																																							
	<p>Ms McAll reported she had been contacted by a member of the public regarding cycling on Ashdown Forest and the reasons why cycling is not permitted. The Clerk agreed to liaise with the individual directly and reminded the Board there was a section on cycling on the website.</p>	KD																																						

This part of the meeting closed at 4:19pm.

Chairman _____

September 2018

Clerk _____