



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Conservators of Ashdown Forest**  
**Monday 24 June 2019 at 14.00**  
**Ashdown Forest Centre**

Present: Cllr R Stogdon (Chairman), Cllr S Tidy (Vice Chairman), Mr A Reid, Mr J Spicer, Mr J Francis, Cllr C Hardy, Cllr F Whetstone, Mr M Cooper, Mr C Smith, Ms S McAll, Mr N Mawdsley and Mrs R St Pierre.

In attendance: Mrs K Dirs (Clerk) and Mrs L Meehan (Finance Officer)

Minutes were taken by the Clerk

Members of the public present: Mrs Pat Arnold

	Item	Action
28/19	<p><b>Apologies.</b></p> <p>There were apologies from Cllr Hardy, Cllr Barnes, Mr J Francis, Cllr Roundell and Cllr Elkin. Cllr Shing did not attend.</p>	
29/19	<p><b>Declarations of any interest by Members of a Personal or Prejudicial Nature</b></p> <p>There were none.</p>	
30/19	<p><b>To approve the minutes of the Extraordinary Board meeting of 17 May 2019 and matters arising</b></p> <p>The minutes had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy.  <b>The minutes were duly received and were approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6.</b></p>	
31/19	<p><b>To receive the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of 20 May 2019</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting on 20 May had been circulated and reviewed by the Board.  <b>The minutes were duly received and were approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6</b></p>	
32/19	<p><b>To receive the minutes of the Programme Committee meeting of 20 May 2019</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy. <b>The minutes were duly received and approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6.</b></p> <p>The Chairman gave a brief overview of the previous quarter noting the informative visit to the Thames Basin Heath (to understand how the SAMMS project can be implemented). The Deer Working Party is making progress with the establishment of a number of policies and review of the programme. The Chairman also advised of a potential engagement opportunity with the Sussex Pony Grazing and Conservation Trust. Mrs St Pierre expressed concern in relation to lack of Ranger representation at Committee level and asked for her view to be minuted.</p>	
33/19	<p><b>To receive the minutes of the Finance and Regulatory Committee meeting of 10 June 2019</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy. <b>The minutes were duly received and approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6.</b></p> <p>The Chairman of the Committee gave a brief introduction to the annual summary of finances and noted that whilst the budget had predicted a deficit of -£30k, the actual was +£40k with a positive variance of £70k due to recharge of Countryside Stewardship (CS) work and increased income generation. The Finance Officer will recast the 2019/20 budget to take this into account. The Chairman advised a CS underspend of 20%. The Chairman also confirmed a Scrutiny Working Party had been established to review policy.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked the Finance Officer for all the work she had undertaken to produce such clear and transparent reports during a difficult year.</p> <p>33.1/19 Statement of Accounts  <b>The Board agreed the Statement of Accounts.</b></p> <p>33.2/19 Internal Audit Letter of Comfort and comments</p>	<p>LM</p> <p>LM</p>

	<p><b>The Board reviewed the Internal Audit report and noted that there were not any significant comments</b></p> <p>33.3/19 To consider the effectiveness of the system of internal control The Finance Officer 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. <b>The Board agreed.</b></p> <p>33.4/19 Annual Return (Section 1): To consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement 2018/2019 The Finance Officer read out the Governance Statements and sought approval from the Board for each individual statement. <b>The Board approved all the Annual Governance Statements.</b></p> <p>33.5/19 Annual Return (Section 2): To consider the Accounting Statements 2019/2019 <b>The Board agreed the Accounting Statements.</b></p> <p>33.6/19 Annual Return (Section 2): To approve and sign the Accounting Statements 2018/2019 <b>The Board approved the Accounting Statements, which were then signed by the Chairman on behalf of the Board</b></p> <p>33.7/18 To approve the reserves allocation <b>The Board agreed the reserves allocation and noted that the allocation may change after the 2019/20 budget had been recast top take into account the surplus.</b></p> <p><b>The Board agreed that in the absence of a Director, the Clerk would assume the Directors' payment authorisation, as per Standing Orders.</b></p>	<p>LM</p> <p>LM</p> <p>LM</p> <p>LM</p> <p>LM</p> <p>KD</p>
<b>34/19</b>	<p><b>To review Income Generation</b></p> <p>Dr Mawdsley advised he was not an attendee at the meeting.</p>	
	<p>The Chairman reported the Income Generation working party has raised £21,000 to date, towards a target of £60,000 for 2019. The Chairman explained the proposal of the Memorial Wall, and the Board were in full agreement. Cllr Tidy to establish whether planning permission is required. Details of location to be confirmed.</p>	<p>JC/Cllr ST</p>
<b>35/19</b>	<p><b>Charity Commission update</b></p> <p>The Chairman informed the Board The Ashdown Forest Foundation (TAFF) was granted charity registration with the charity number 1183829 on 11 June 2019. A fundraising event is to be held in November to launch the charity. As Chris Cowdrey will be acting as Fundraiser on behalf of TAFF, he will need to retire as a Trustee.</p>	<p>Cllr RS</p>
	<p>Item 37/19 was taken before item 36/19</p>	
<b>37/19</b>	<p><b>To receive the Clerks Report</b></p> <p>The Clerk highlighted a number of fires, fly-tips and out-of-control dog issues. She also reported that despite a generally sluggish housing market, properties were selling on the Forest.</p>	
<b>36/19</b>	<p><b>Staffing Update CONFIDENTIAL SESSION – BOARD MEMBERS ONLY</b></p>	
<b>38/19</b>	<p><b>Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board (as per Standing Order 1.2)</b></p> <p>Although there was an expectation that one of the Commoner Conservators would step into the role of Chairman, it was proposed that the current Chairman and Vice Chairman remain in office for one more year, in order to provide the organisation with much needed stability.</p> <p>Cllrs Stogdon and Tidy agreed to continue in their current roles as Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board for one further year. As Cllr Stogdon has been Chairman for three years, Standing Order 1.2 on the election of the Chairman and Vice Chairman should therefore be suspended (as per Standing Order</p>	

	13) for a period of one year, until the election of Chairman and Vice Chairman in 2020. Ms Susan McCall formally proposed the motion which was seconded by Mr Mawdsley. The proposal was unanimously supported by the Board.	
<b>39/19</b>	<b>Allocation of Board Members to Committees (as per Standing Order 5.1)</b>	
	The Clerk to circulate the Committee allocation sheet post meeting.	<b>KD</b>
<b>40/19</b>	<b>Residents Meetings – Tuesday 09 July</b>	
	Mr Mawdsley reported that Dr Brian Short had recently given a talk at The Keep, on the history of Ashdown Forest. Mr Mawdsley suggested Dr Short be invited to the Residents meeting.	<b>NM</b>
<b>41/19</b>	<b>Any Urgent Item of which the Clerk has notice in order to pass to the elected Chairman</b>	<b>KD/RA</b>

The meeting closed at 17:20.

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_  
November 2019

Clerk \_\_\_\_\_