



**Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Conservators of Ashdown Forest**  
**Monday 18 September 2017 at 14.00**  
**Ashdown Forest Centre**

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

Cllr M Ensor arrived for item 33/17.

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
<b>29/17</b>	<b>Apologies.</b> There were apologies from Mr Smith, Cllr Whetstone, Cllr Barnes and Mrs St Pierre	
<b>30/17</b>	<b>Declarations of any interest by Members of a Personal or Prejudicial Nature</b> There were none	
<b>31/17</b>	<b>To approve the minutes of the Board meeting of 19 June 2017, and matters arising</b> The minutes of the last meeting 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>	<b>KD</b>
<b>32/17</b>	<b>To receive the minutes of the Conservation Committee meeting of 3 July 2017</b> The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy. Mr Spicer requested an amendment to item 29/17 in the July 2017 minutes because there has been no agreement by the Conservators to extend grazing to the whole of Ashdown Forest. Mr Glyn advised that as Common land all of Ashdown Forest is grazeable. Mr Spicer asked for a correction to the item because there is 60/40 split between grazeable heathland and woodland. Mr Galley added that the Conservators intention was to graze the heathland on a phased basis. <b>The Board agreed to refer the item to the next Conservation Committee meeting in October before the minutes are approved.</b>  <i>32.1/17 Matters arising</i> Mr Galley reported difficulties and delays with bringing a number of local authorities together to formalise the SAMMS legal agreement. Mr Galley reported that Wealden District Council have agreed to pay the Forest £10,000. <b>Mr Galley agreed to investigate further.</b>	<b>KD/PG</b>      <b>RG</b>
<b>33/17</b>	<b>The Roads, Planning &amp; Amenities Committee meeting of 24 July 2017</b> The minutes of the meeting had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy. The Chairman asked the Board to approve the minute amendment to Item 13.03/17. <b>The Board agreed with the revised wording.</b> In connection with the revised minute, Mr Spicer proposed upgrading and updating the maps of the Forest boundaries as a matter of urgency. <b>The Clerk agreed to prepare a paper for the next Roads, Planning &amp; Amenities Committee meeting on 23 October 2017.</b>  <b>The Board approved the minutes to the July Roads, Planning &amp; Amenities Committee including the amended minute from April 2017.</b>	<b>KD</b>    <b>KD</b>
<b>34/17</b>	<b>The Finance &amp; General Purposes Committee meeting of 21 August 2017</b> 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>  Mr Reid reviewed the Q1 Financial Report and highlighted the performance of the Information Barn and prompt payment of this year’s Acknowledgement Rent and Forest Rates. Mr Reid drew attention to the review of the draft three year budget plan and explained that it is a business plan. The business	<b>KD</b>



	<p>Council invited to attend.</p> <p>Ashdown Officers Group (AOG) – for Officers from Local Authorities, East Sussex County Council, Natural England and the South Downs National Park authority meeting every eight weeks since the beginning of the year. The Director had requested that minutes be circulated.</p> <p>Mr Galley discussed Wealden District Councils policy position with regard to the Forest. The local plan is delayed and it will be some months before the plan is in the public domain. The driving force behind the plan is the protection of the Forest, with no new development in the Forest villages. Mr Galley asked the Board to take a view as to whether the Conservators agree with these policies, despite the government pressing to build lots of new houses. Cllr O’Keeffe enquired about the robustness of the local plan in light of the Newick High Court case. Mr Galley confirmed a strong degree of confidence that the local plan will stand up as it explicitly looks at options.</p> <p>Cllr Tidy expressed her concern of the amount of work the Director and staff undertake over and above their day jobs and gave a huge vote of thanks. Mr Reid highlighted the additional work load during this transitional period for the part-time office staff, who are all contributing above the hours they are recompensed for.</p>	
36/17	<p><b>To receive the Clerk’s Report</b></p>	
	<p>The Clerk spoke to her report. She highlighted the most prevalent bye-law breaches including the increase in dog attacks and the weekly problems with fly-tipping. Mr Cooper enquired whether asbestos is being dumped on the Forest. The Clerk confirmed one or two cases of asbestos had been reported in the last year but after examination there was no asbestos identified. The Clerk explained that the normal offenders are private individuals and small commercial operations.</p> <p>The Clerk discussed the nomadic gathering of the WISE Rainbow Warriors that have set-up camp in Spring Garden Farm, Fairwarp. There have been several bye-law breaches reported and the gathering have caused alarm to some residents in Fairwarp, however, other residents have commented on how well they have integrated into the village.</p> <p>Drone misuse is still prevalent on the Forest. The Clerk confirmed contact has been made with representatives from the Civil Aviation Authority and National Air Traffic Services in an attempt to add Ashdown Forest as a ‘no fly zone’ on the Drone Assist application.</p> <p>The Clerk expressed her concern over an outline planning application submitted for twenty-four new houses south of Hartfield Road within the 400m Ashdown Forest exclusion zone. Should the development be approved it will cause direct and extensive damage to the SAC, SPA and SSSI from both a recreational perspective and from an increase in the level of nitrogen deposition.</p> <p>A new commercial fitness licence has been introduced following a number of queries regarding personal training and group fitness sessions. A digital Filming brochure is currently being produced to promote the Forest as a desirable filming location and take advantage of revenue opportunities. There are currently fourteen Commercial Dog Walkers operating on the Forest; an increase from eight in 2016-17.</p> <p>Acknowledgement Rent and Forest Rates were issued in mid-June and have generated £49,000; an increase of £7,500 received at this time last year.</p> <p>Mr Francis proposed combining the Residence Meeting with the Commoners Meeting. Cllr O’Keeffe agreed and suggested starting the Commoners Meeting fifteen minutes early to hold the Election. <b>The Clerk agreed to raise the proposal at the next Commoners meeting.</b></p>	KD
37/17	<p><b>To review Land Holdings held by the Conservators</b></p>	
	<p>The Board reviewed the Conservators land holdings. The Clerk confirmed that all the land parcels lie within the Ancient Pale. The Chairman confirmed that the Ashdown Forest Trust land will transfer to the new organisation. The remaining land will remain owned by the Conservators.</p>	

38/17	To review proposed Board and Committee dates for 2018/2019	
	The Board agreed the proposed dates for the Board and Committee meetings.	KD
39/17	<b>Governance Update</b> <b>The Board entered confidential session</b>  <b>The Board left confidential session</b>	
40/17	<b>Any Urgent Item of which the Clerk has notice in order to pass to the elected Chairman</b> There were none.	

This part of the meeting closed at 3:36pm.

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_  
December 2017

Clerk \_\_\_\_\_