



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Conservators of Ashdown Forest  
Monday 29 June 2020 at 14.00  
VIRTUAL MEETING - MS TEAMS**

**Present:** Cllr R Stogdon (Chairman), Cllr S Tidy (Vice Chairman), Mr A Reid, Mr J Spicer, Cllr J Barnes, Cllr F Whetstone, Cllr C Hardy, Cllr P Roundell, Cllr S Shing, Cllr D Elkin, Mr C Smith, Ms S McAll, Mr M Cooper, Mr C de Mestre

**In attendance:** Mr Ron Voden (Interim Chief Executive), Mrs K Dirs (Clerk) and Mrs L Meehan (Finance Officer)

Minutes were taken by the Clerk

Members of the public present: Ms Elizabeth Riminton-Drury

	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>
	<b>Questions by Members of the public</b>	
	Ms Riminton-Drury expressed concern for the future funding of the Forest and questioned what commitments the government had put in place for EU funding.  The Chairman acknowledged the reduction in County Council funding and explained the Income Generation team are working to put funding in place, but it posed the question whether the Forest could be managed differently. The Chairman explained that there was nothing official to say the Countryside Stewardship (CS) funding would not continue. Mr Smith confirmed that the CS scheme ends in 2025 and that the Environment Land Management System (ELMS) is the next generation of funding.	
<b>12/20</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	
	There were apologies from Mrs St Pierre, Mr Mawdsley and Mr John Francis. Cllr Barnes had technical issues and joined for item 18/20.	
<b>13/20</b>	<b>Declarations of any interest by Members of a Personal or Prejudicial Nature</b>	
	Ms McAll declared that she is a grazier and secretary of AFRA (Ashdown Forest Riding Association). Mr Smith declared that his wife is treasurer of the Sussex Pony Conservation and Grazing Trust (SPGCT). Mr de Mestre declared he is a recipient of the BPS payment.	
<b>14/20</b>	<b>To approve the minutes of the Board meeting of 25 November 2019 and matters arising</b>	
	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>	
<b>15/20</b>	<b>To receive the minutes of the Programme Committee meeting of 20 January 2020</b>	
	The minutes of the meeting 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>	
<b>16/20</b>	<b>To receive the minutes of the Programme Committee meeting of 19 May 2020</b>	
	The Vice Chairman gave a brief overview of the previous quarter noting the recent receipt of reduced funds from the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) for the CS programme, as a result of an alleged misclassification of land claimed. Talks are ongoing with Broadstone Farm regarding a grazing base and the SPGCT acquisition has now completed.  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>	
<b>17/20</b>	<b>To receive the minutes of the Finance and Regulatory Committee meeting of 17 February 2020</b>	
	The minutes of the meeting 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>	
<b>18/20</b>	<b>To receive the minutes of the Finance and Regulatory Committee meeting of 17 June 2020</b>	
	<p>The Chairman gave a brief overview of the previous quarter noting the challenges faced by the organisation because of Covid-19.</p> <p>The Chairman emphasised the reliance on the Countryside Stewardship (CS) grant income to support the core budget and highlighted the importance for an urgent, but more structured approach to income generation and fundraising. A recommendation to the Board to temporarily reduce restricted reserves from £260k to £135k was no longer necessary as the Board were now in receipt of the CS grant.</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy.</p> <p><b>The minutes were duly received and approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6</b></p> <p><u>18.1/20 To approve the General Risk Management Plan</u> <b>Item deferred</b></p> <p><u>18.2/20 To approve the Financial Risk Management Plan</u> <b>Item deferred</b></p> <p><u>18.3/20 To approve the Standing Orders</u> <b>Item deferred</b></p> <p><u>18.4/20 To approve the Financial Regulations</u> <b>Item deferred</b></p> <p><u>18.5/20 To approve the Statement of Accounts 2019/20</u> <b>The Board approved the Statement of Accounts</b></p> <p><u>18.6/20 Internal Audit Letter of Comfort and comments</u> <b>Item deferred</b></p> <p><u>18.7/20 Annual Return (Section 1): To consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement 2019/20</u> <b>Item deferred</b></p> <p><u>18.8/20 Annual Return (Section 2): To consider the Accounting Statements 2019/20</u> <b>Item deferred</b></p> <p><u>18.9/20 Annual Return (Section 2): To approve and sign the Accounting Statements 2019/20</u> <b>Item deferred</b></p> <p><u>18.10/20 To approve the revised Disciplinary and Grievance Policy</u> <b>The Board approved the policy subject to some minor amendments</b></p>	
<b>19/20</b>	<b>CLOSED SESSION</b>	
	<b>The Interim Chief Executive's Report</b>	
<b>20/20</b>	<b>CLOSED SESSION</b>	
	<b>The appointment of a Chief Executive</b>	
<b>21/20</b>	<b>To receive the Clerk's report</b>	
	The Clerk highlighted a number of fires, fly-tips and out-of-control dog issues and presented a summary of a Rangers weekend duty.	

<b>22/20</b>	<b>Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board (as per Standing Order 1.2)</b>	
	<p>Prior to the meeting, electronic nominations were invited for the post of Chairman of the Board. Nick Mawdsley nominated Colin Smith and this was seconded by Cllr Sylvia Tidy.  <b>There being no other nominations, Colin Smith was duly elected as Chairman for a period of twelve months and took the chair.</b></p> <p>Prior to the meeting, electronic nominations were invited for the post of Vice Chairman of the Board. Cllr Sylvia Tidy nominated Susan McAll and this was seconded by Cllr David Elkin.  <b>There being no other nominations, Susan McAll was duly elected as Vice Chairman for a period of twelve months.</b></p>	
<b>23/20</b>	<b>Allocation of Board Members to Committees (as per Standing Order 5.1)</b>	
	<p>To be circulated post meeting.  <b>ACTION: Clerk</b></p>	<b>KD</b>
<b>24/20</b>	<b>Any Urgent Item of which the Clerk has notice in order to pass to the elected Chairman</b>	
	<p>Cllr Stogdon expressed the urgency to start a dialogue with fundraisers Apple Consulting to enable the Foundation to move forward.</p> <p>Cllr Stogdon proposed a vote of thanks to John Francis who had served on the Board for over 10 years and was an active volunteer, and offered condolences to the family and friends of ex Board Member, Cllr Peter Holloway, who had sadly passed away the week prior.</p> <p>Cllr Tidy, Cllr Whetstone and Cllr Barnes paid tribute to Cllr Stogdon for serving the Board for four years. Mr Reid offered thanks to Cllr Tidy for her work as Vice Chair.</p>	

The meeting closed at 16:20.

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

Clerk \_\_\_\_\_ 23 November 2020