



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Conservators of Ashdown Forest
Monday 15 March 2021 at 14:00
VIRTUAL MEETING - MS TEAMS

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

In attendance: Mr J Adler (CEO), Mrs K Dirs (Clerk) and Mrs L Meehan (Finance Officer)

Minutes were taken by the Clerk

Members of the public present: Ms S Way, Ms N Gray Conchar and Ms O Archdeacon

	Item	Action
	The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed members of the public	
	<p>Questions from the public:</p> <p><u>Susanna Way:</u> Ms Way declared she was a founding Member of STAG (The Sussex Together Action Group) established to campaign on local and national issues affecting Sussex people, their wellbeing and the environment. Ms Way emphasised the group was non-party political.</p> <p><i>I am a regular donor and contribute by mobile every month. What is being done on funding and fundraising and other areas where perhaps we can offer support and help?</i></p> <p><u>Response:</u> The Chairman thanked Ms Way for her contribution and advised the Board would discuss the fundraising model later in the meeting including engaging with Apple Fundraising Consultants to develop a feasibility study to help TAFF (The Ashdown Forest Foundation) structure their fundraising to achieve maximum impact.</p>	
06/21	<p>Apologies</p> <p>There were apologies from Mr Mawdsley. The Chairman formally acknowledged the extended absence of Mr Mawdsley and read the following statement:</p> <p><i>In respect of the extended absence of Nick Mawdsley due to ongoing health concerns, the Board of Conservators acknowledge the exceptional circumstances he faces and accept his absence from meetings and other contributions to the Forest. The Board will work around Nick's limited ability to engage and pass on their thoughts for his speedy recovery.</i></p>	
07/21	<p>Declarations of any interest by Members of a Personal or Prejudicial Nature</p> <p>Mr de Mestre declared he is a commoner grazier and receives the BPS payment</p>	
08/21	<p>To approve the minutes of the Board meeting of 01 February 20201</p> <p>The minutes 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</p>	
09/21	<p>To receive the minutes of the Programme Committee of 15 February 2021</p> <p>The minutes had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy</p>	

	<p>The Committee Chair reminded Members the CEO had lodged a formal complaint with the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) in relation to the disputed land parcels and an eligibility disagreement between the RPA and Natural England (NE) and the CEO was in active dialogue with the RPA.</p> <p>The minutes were duly received and were approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6</p>	
10/21	<p>To receive the minutes of the Finance and Regulatory Committee of 25 January 2021</p> <p>The minutes had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy</p> <p>The minutes were duly received and were approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6</p>	
11/21	<p>To receive the minutes of the Finance and Regulatory Committee of 01 March 2021</p> <p>The minutes had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy.</p> <p>The Committee Chairman gave an overview of the current financial position. It was noted that ESCC considered the 21/22 budget 'interim'. The Committee Chairman advised ESCC Cabinet had approved the Covid-19 relief payment grant of £70,000, and this is to go to Full Board at ESCC for final approval on 23 March.</p> <p>The Chairman sought approval of the following statutory documents and reminded Members the documents were being approved retrospectively for the year 01/04/20 – 31/03/21.</p> <p>The Clerk directed Members to the inclusion of a firearms section in the General Risk Management Framework and advised Members a more structured and robust risk management framework would be developed to support both operational and strategic risk.</p> <p>11.01/21 General Risk Management Plan 2020/21 Proposed by Mrs St Pierre, seconded by Cllr Elkin. Agreed unanimously</p> <p>11.02/21 Finance Risk Management Plan 2020/21 Proposed by Mr Cooper, seconded by Mr Reid. Agreed unanimously</p> <p>11.03/21 Standing Orders 2020/21 Proposed by Cllr Barnes, seconded by Mr Cooper. Agreed unanimously</p> <p>11.04/21 Financial Regulations 2020/21 Proposed by Mrs St Pierre, seconded by Cllr Elkin. Agreed unanimously</p> <p>11.05/21 To note the conclusion of audit 2019/20 and external auditor's report BD 12/21 The Board noted the conclusion of the audit.</p> <p>The minutes were duly received and were approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6</p>	
12/21	<p>TAFF - follow up to the Board offsite discussion</p> <p>The Chairman welcomed Nicole Gray Conchar and Olivia Archdeacon from Apple Fundraising. The Chairman introduced paper BD 13/21, prepared by Mr de Mestre, who then spoke, summarising the position of the TAFF operating model and composition and appointment of directors.</p> <p>The Board endorsed the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The recommended operational model as outlined in paper BD 13/21 2) The Board composition, tenure and process for nomination and recommendation of TAFF Directors as outlined in paper BD 13/21 - noting the position of TAFF membership should default to the Vice Chair of the Board 3) The formation of a TAFF Sub-committee with Members Ms St Pierre, Mr Cooper, Ms McAll and the CEO to look to recruit new external TAFF Directors. ACTION: SMA/JA 	

	Ms Gray Conchar gave a short presentation on the fundraising feasibility strategy for TAFF, highlighting the importance of donor acquisition for both high net-worth international fundraising and high net-worth individual charitable giving.	
13/21	Landscape Scale Nature Conservation Update The CEO gave an overview of the future for landscape scale biodiversity recovery. This aims to incentivise practices to create, restore and regenerate species-rich mosaics of habitats by supporting the establishment of new woodland, peat restoration and other ecosystem services to help tackle challenges like climate change and biodiversity loss. The CEO explained the need for a collaborative working alliance with neighbouring landowners and organisations, to deliver a joint plan aimed at restoring and expanding key corridors of connectivity between habitats. The CEO emphasised the importance of creating a long-term vision. The CEO to circulate his paper post-meeting.	
14/21	Any Urgent Item of which the Clerk has notice in order to pass to the elected Chairman 1) <u>SAMMS Officer</u> The CEO advised recruitment for the Wealden District Council employed SAMMS Project Manager would shortly commence 2) <u>Volunteer Litter Pickers</u> The CEO reported the launch of a new volunteer litter picking initiative, Brighter Ashdown Forest, which had been successful. The CEO thanked the volunteers for their efforts.	
	The public meeting closed at 15:45 Staff left the meeting	
	Closed Session	
15/21	Staff Consultation The Board had an update and discussion on the staff consultation status and agreed that it was appropriate that they review, for approval, the final version of the consultation pack as soon as practical, before distribution to the staff. ACTION: CS/JA	

Chairman _____

Clerk _____

12 July 2021