

**Minutes of the**  
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF**  
**THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST**

**1500, Thursday 8 October 2009**  
**Lancaster Room, Ashdown Forest Centre**

Present: Cllr J Barnes (Chairman), Mr M Cooper, Mr P Glyn, Dr H Prendergast (Clerk).

**1) Apologies**

Mr R Thornely-Taylor.

**2) Standing Orders**

It was agreed that the version of Standing Orders approved at the 7 September 2009 Board meeting, and therefore now in force, required no further changes to sections 1 – 7 other than the following.

- Add new 1.7: “Site visits and seminars are properly convened Board/Committee meetings and shall be conducted according to Standing Orders.”
- In 2.7 replace “XX hours” with “seven days”.
- In 5.8 replace “XX hours” with “seven days”.

Section 8 was not approved at the Board meeting, however. The Committee agreed these amendments.

- Delete all of 8.3.
- In 8.8 replace “, both within meetings and without.” with “when acting in their capacity as a Conservator.”
- In 8.9 replace “The hearing may result in a requirement, if supported subsequently by at least 75% of Board members, to step down as a Conservator.” with “Should the hearing result in a conclusion that the Standing Orders have been breached, the Conservator may be requested to step down as a Conservator.”

**3) Away Day (17 October), Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club**

The main aims of the day were ‘educative’ – to provide Board members with the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the *Strategic Forest Plan* – and ‘inclusive’ – to provide staff, volunteers and Friends the opportunity to join in discussion with the Board about the following topics.

- Vision for the Forest, for which Cllr Barnes had already done a first draft.
- Conservation and amenity.
- Purpose of education and communication.
- Funding.

It was agreed that, following a brief introduction to each topic, those present would split into groups, each comprising a minimum of four and, as far as possible, a thorough mix of those present. Each group would select a convenor to ‘bullet point’ its points for each topic on flip-chart paper and he/she would then present just two of them (the key ones) to report back to all the other groups. All the flip chart papers would be gathered at the end.

**4) Updates**

i) Performance management

Staff had had training sessions in September and are now producing first drafts of their objectives for the rest of 2009/2010.

ii) Staff restructuring

This topic had been discussed at the last meeting of the Committee on 3 June 2009: “there is a need to examine the changing roles of, and demands on, office staff (caused largely by increasing budgets), leading perhaps to a split in (both the historically and currently) combined role of Clerk/Superintendent and changing the title of the latter.”

There was further discussion about how the role might be split and how finance might be handled. It was agreed that Dr Prendergast would investigate options further and that the appropriate title for Dr Prendergast would be Director.

iii) Rural Payment Agency

Chris Marrable has written to the RPA asking that the repayment period for their Single Farm Payment should be extended given that the mistakes about the original payment were entirely those of the RPA. It was agreed that the Board should await a formal response from the RPA and that, if they (RPA) insist on a speedy repayment, it should be done via monthly instalment.

**5) AOB**

Because of the expense of their clearing (£2,990 so far), Dr Prendergast considered it worthwhile informing the Committee of two very recent incidents of asbestos dumping. Last year there were three such incidents in quick succession.

He also reported that 10 acres of land have come up for sale at the bottom of Kidds Hill. On two counts he proposed that it was worthwhile for the Board to make an offer: i) it lies within the Pale and thus within the policy of the Board to acquire such land; and ii) it could be very useful for holding livestock at some stage in the future. He had already made initial approaches to the Friends and to Natural England for support. The Committee agreed that the land was worth pursuing and suggested reinforcing its interest with an option (ca 10% of the price) to purchase.

The meeting ended at 1730.