

Minutes of the

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST

1430, Monday 24 May 2010
Lancaster Room, Ashdown Forest Centre

Present: Cllr F Whetstone (Chairman), Cllr J Barnes, Mr P Glyn, Mr J Francis, Cllr M Hoy, Mr R Parsons (co-opted), Dr H Prendergast (Clerk), Mr J Spicer. Also present Mrs R Marriott. Minutes taken by Mrs T Buxton.

The Chairman opened the meeting. There were no members of the public present.

07/10 Apologies.

Apologies had been received from Cllr A Reid, Cllr R Stogdon and Mr R Thornely-Taylor.

08/10 Declarations of many interests by Members of a Personal or Prejudicial Nature

There was none.

09/10 Annual Accounts 2009-2020 – FGP02

The accounts had been circulated and an updated version tabled. The accounts were scrutinised, in detail, page by page. However, most pages were thought to be self-explanatory and very much as expected.

9/10.1 Mr Spicer queried the page numbering of the financial summary and expanded accounts. Mrs Marriott explained they were arranged by committee responsibilities. Mr Spicer suggested that, for clarification purposes and to reduce unnecessary questions the summary sheet should follow the expanded accounts and Mrs Marriott agreed to change the order of the document. Mr Spicer also asked that a version number and creation date should be added to the front sheet of the accounts and Mrs Marriott agreed to make that amendment. *Post meeting note – this was done and circulated to the Committee via e-mail after the meeting had closed.*

9/10.2 There was a brief discussion regarding bank interest rates and corporate bonds. Cllr Barnes suggested the Committee's earlier decision not to pursue corporate bonds should be revisited if the situation regarding bank interest rates changes.

9/10.3 There was a short discussion regarding the listed assets such as the purchase of a specialist orthopaedic office chair, a quad bike and the loss of the grazing project Land Rover. It was noted that the Land Rover should be included as a loss in the accounts.

9/10.4 There was a query regarding the insurance values shown. Mrs Marriott clarified that the figures were set by Zurich Insurance.

9/10.5 It was noted that creditors and debtors were mostly cleared.

9/10.6 Mr Spicer asked if the pension contributions for the shepherd and her assistant were being paid by the HLS grant. Mrs Marriott confirmed that they were. Mr Spicer asked if the project was going beyond the three years. Mrs Marriott confirmed that it was and that HLS would continue to fund it.

9/10.7 There was a short discussion regarding reserves. It was noted again that reserves should be kept at a sufficient level to meet six-month salary, particularly at the previously identified low points of the year (just prior to the receipt of bi-annual HLS payments).

9/10.8 It was agreed that, after alterations and amendments were made, the accounts be forwarded to the next Board.

10/10 Recommendation to revert the Board's accounts from the Co-operative Bank to HSBC – FGP03

Mrs Marriot said it was very disappointing that the banking arrangements had not worked out as hoped. The recommendation was agreed by the Committee.

11/10 Update on the reorganisation of administration of finances.

This item was withdrawn.

12/10 Any Urgent Item of which the Clerk has notice in order to pass to the elected Chairman

12.1/10 It was noted that the Office had suffered a serious technical set back when the server broke down. The office was without IT for a week and consequently all work, including the accounts and internal audit, was severely set back. Mr Glyn thanked Mrs Marriot for her hard work, much of it after hours, in preparing the accounts at such a difficult time. It was noted that e-mails from 5, 6 May were lost and these should be re-sent if at all possible.

12.2/10 Mr Parsons said, that after three years of being co-opted to the Committee he thought it was time to stand down. The Chairman thanked Mr Parsons for the benefit of his considerable experience and for the help he had given the Board and the Forest over the years.

The meeting closed at 1535.