

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST HELD AT THE ASHDOWN FOREST CENTRE, WYCH CROSS, FOREST ROW ON 3 APRIL 1995.

Present: Mr L J Gillham (In the Chair), Mr D C Cumming, Mrs E M Gabriel, Mrs S F Whitley, Mrs S Stokes, Air Marshal Sir Frederick Sowrey, Messrs D H O Allen, L Hamilton, L C Hardy, O E B Hughes, C W Riley, A N White.

At the opening of the meeting, the Chairman informed those present of the death of Mr Michael Dunn, who had been an Elected Member of the Board since 1992. The Board expressed their sorrow and requested that a letter of condolence be sent to Mrs Ann Dunn.

Mr Leslie Gillham welcomed members of the general public present.

**ITEM 1 To receive a verbal brief on the impact of orienteering upon the Forest from Dr Thomas of the South Eastern Orienteering Association.**

1.1 Dr David Thomas and Mr Brian Parker, Environmental Officer for the SEOA, gave a short presentation on the impact of Orienteering on the environment. Board Members took the opportunity to ask pertinent questions relating to the effect of orienteering on the Ashdown Forest and a number of specialist reports were given to Mr Gillham for the Board's information.

**ITEM 2 Election of a Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board**

2.1 Mr D Cumming proposed Mr L J Gillham as Chairman of the Board. Mrs Whitley seconded the proposal. Sir Frederick Sowrey proposed Mr D Cumming as Vice-Chairman of the Board. Mrs Gabriel seconded the proposal. Both candidates were elected unanimously.

**ITEM 3 Acknowledgement of a new member of the Board and apologies for absence.**

3.1 Mr Gillham welcomed Mr J S Heasman, a newly appointed member representing ESCC in his absence.

3.2 Apologies had been received from Mr D L Hall, Mr J S Heasman and Mr R I F Parsons.

**ITEM 4 To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 November 1994**

4.1 The Minutes of the last Meeting, which had been circulated, were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct and accurate record.

**ITEM 5      Matters Arising**

5.1 Mr White asked if there was an update on the proposed traffic lights at Wych Cross. The Clerk reported that he and Ranger Linton had met representatives from the Highways Department on site on 20 March to point out the Forest boundaries in the area. There was no indication when the plans might be put into action.

**ITEM 6      To receive the Minutes of the Conservation Committee held on 13 February 1995.**

6.1 The Minutes, which had been circulated, were presented by Mrs Whitley.

6.2 The Board agreed the Committee's recommendation that their policy should be to continue to allow individuals to collect fungi for their own use, but that no permission should be granted for picking of fungi for commercial use.

6.3 Mrs Whitley moved the adoption of the Minutes. This was agreed.

**ITEM 7      To receive the Minutes of the Roads, Planning & Amenities Committee Meeting held on 27 February 1995.**

7.1 The Minutes, which had been circulated, were presented by Mrs E M Gabriel.

7.2.1 Traffic Calming The Board confirmed that their policy on traffic calming was to slow, not restrict the volume of traffic on Forest roads.

7.2.2 Mrs Gabriel read out the letter from the County Council's Landscape Architect and the reply from the Conservators which again stressed the need for robust traffic calming measures. A copy of the Board's response dated 28 February will be circulated to all Board Members.

7.2.3 Mrs Stokes observed that to date, the Conservators had only been consulted as part of the High Weald Forum. It appeared that the only opportunity for future consultation would be as part of the general public at the Public Meeting concerning traffic calming in Nutley and Forest Row to be held in June. The Chairman of the Board explained that a meeting had been arranged for 6 April with the Highways Department to put across the Board's views on traffic calming.

7.3 Nutley Windmill The Board agreed that it would not support any planning application to construct lavatories or develop a food sales facility at the Nutley Windmill. Sir Frederick Sowery confirmed that he had been personally assured that the Uckfield and District Preservation Society had no intention to develop the site.

7.4 Action Research Ride The Board agreed the Committee's recommendation that only one single large display board showing the names of all sponsors could be placed at the entrance to the event.

7.5.1 Nutley Pumping Station The Clerk reported on the site meeting held on 10 March attended by the Vice-Chairman and himself with representatives from Southern Water and concerned residents. It would appear that the Pumping Station will continue to be a problem. The capacity of the system is insufficient to take the storm water and sewerage mix at times of high rainfall, nevertheless, the outflow still complies with a nationally agreed standard.

7.5.2 The Southern Water representative agreed to investigate the possibility of constructing extra overflow drains, fitted with hopsack filters.

7.5.3 Mr Cumming mentioned that Sir Geoffrey Johnson-Smith MP has been briefed on the situation and has asked to be kept informed of future developments.

7.6 Mrs Gabriel moved the adoption of the Minutes. this was agreed.

**ITEM 8 To receive the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 27 February 1995.**

8.1 The Minutes, which had been circulated, were presented by Mr D H O Allen.

8.2 The Board agreed the Committee's recommended dates for meetings during 1995/96. The composition of the Committees remained unchanged.

8.3 Weather Recording Equipment It was agreed that the Conservation Committee should discuss the sort of weather recording equipment needed bearing in mind that obtaining rainfall figures was the chief requirement.

**8.4 "Ashdown Forest An Illustrated Guide"**

8.4.1 The Clerk briefed the Board that the Society of Friends of Ashdown Forest have agreed to purchase the first 5000 copies and donate them to the Conservators. All the income from sales will go to the Forest. The Board wished that their warm appreciation should be expressed to the Friends and that an acknowledgement of this most generous gift should be placed in the Ashdown Forest News.

8.4.2 The Board also wished to express their appreciation of the book to its authors, Philip Glyn and Hew Prendergast.

8.5 Mr Allen gave a summary of the talk on Forest finances which he gave at the Commoners Annual General Meeting on 3 March 1995.

8.6 Mr Allen moved the adoption of the Minutes. This was agreed.

**ITEM 9 To consider the latest letter from the Department of the Environment on the Board's Application to Fence.**

9.1.1 The latest letter from the Department of the Environment on the Board's application to fence and a draft response from the Conservators which had been circulated together with a copy of a letter sent to the DOE from Mrs A Haig McVity, were presented by the Clerk.

9.1.2 The Chairman stated that advice from the Conservators' insurers, the Country Landowners Association and the County Secretary's Office had already been sought with regards to public safety in a fenced grazing area. A low key response had been received from the first two organisations, the third had yet to reply.

9.1.3 The Board was satisfied that the existing Bye-laws and notices should be sufficient to make the public aware of the need to control dogs as grazing could currently take place anywhere on the Forest by Commoners with Grazing Rights.

9.1.4 The Board had no objection to their Application to Fence being dealt with in two distinct parts and a decision on Phase 2 being deferred, provided that the DOE set a date now for the second decision and that the DOE would also confirm there would be no question of the Conservators having to submit a further application.

**ITEM 10 To consider the implications of the proposed Special Protected Area (SPA) status for the Forest.**

10.1 The Clerk briefed the Board and explained that the hatched area on the map circulated was not all Forest land. However, should all the landowners agree to sign up to SPA status, this could only enhance the protection given to the Forest. Although the protection given to the Forest by its status as an SSSI was already very significant.

**ITEM 11 To approve a correction to the Minutes of the Board's Meeting held on 4 October 1993.**

11.1 The Board agreed the correction to the Minutes of the Board's Meeting of 4 October 1993 to reflect the change of date in Item 5 to read 19 July and not 6 September 1993.

**ITEM 12 The Clerk to report on sundry matters.**

12.1 Staff Changes Following the voluntary resignation of Christopher Weaver, a conscious decision was taken not to advertise his post but to promote within the organisation Daniel Pennington to Forest Ranger. John Harding was appointed to replace him as Estate Worker.

**ITEM 13 Any other business**

13.1 It was agreed that at their next meeting on 1 May, the Conservation Committee should reconsider the application from the South Eastern Orienteering Association to hold a meeting on the Ashdown Forest in March 1996. The Superintendent pointed out that the Management Plan states the position with regards to the maximum number of competitors allowed on the Forest. The Conservation Committee will rule on behalf of the Board.

13.2 Mr White reported that the grips cut in the grass verges by the Wealden District Council workers around the Forest have made riding difficult. He reported that the litter clearance by Council workers has been very good.

13.3 Mr White reported that the laurel trees near Wych Cross Cottages overhang the pavement and are a potential hazard to riders. The Clerk agreed to approach Wych Cross Place who are responsible for the bushes.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 4.35 pm

Chairman

June 1995

Clerk