

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN  
FOREST HELD AT THE ASHDOWN FOREST CENTRE,  
WYCH CROSS ON MONDAY 16 JUNE 2003 AT 2.30pm.**

Present: Mr RIF Parsons (in the Chair), Mrs D Bagshawe, Miss M McPherson, Mrs J Wirdnam, Messrs, MJ Cooper, C Dowling, LJ Gillham, PJ Glyn, FJC Marshall, AG Reid, R Thomas, FWJ Whetstone, AN White.

The Chairman asked all present to stand for a minute as a mark of respect for Mr Humphrey Wills who had died recently. Mr Wills was a past Chairman of the Board.

**ITEM 1      Apologies for absence**

There were apologies for absence from Mr BF Brown, Mr P Scott and Mr T Slack.

**ITEM 2      To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 March 2003**

2.1 The Minutes of the last Meeting, which had been previously circulated, were presented by the Chairman. The Minutes were then approved and signed as an accurate record.

**ITEM 3      Matters arising There were no matters arising.**

**ITEM 4      To receive the Minutes of the Conservation Committee Meeting held on 7 April 2003**

4.1 The Minutes which had been previously circulated, were presented by Mr Gillham.

4.2 Wren's Warren residents' planning applications to remove trees Mr Whetstone expressed his concern at the Clerk's involvement with the planning applications to remove trees within the Wrens Warren site. Mr Gillham supported the Clerk's action and reminded the Board that a protective belt of trees to screen the view of the houses from the Forest was a requirement of the planning application. The Clerk informed the Board that he had written to Wealden District Council who had replied that they were also concerned and the Wealden Arboriculturalist planned to visit the site to examine the situation.

4.3 Llama trekking Mr Reid supported Llama walks as a controlled development of an amenity and the Board agreed the Clerk should further investigate prior to authorising a limited trial on the north or west side of the Forest.

4.4 Ponds and scrapes In response to a question about the viability of ponds in the summer, the Clerk explained that it was expected, and indeed desirable that some ponds and scrapes should dry out.

4.5 There being no further questions, Mr Gillham moved the adoption of the Minutes. This was agreed.

**ITEM 5      To receive the Minutes of the Roads, Planning & Amenities Committee Meeting held on 28 April 2003**

- 5.1      The Minutes, which had been previously circulated, were presented by Mr Marshall.
- 5.2      East Grinstead bypass
- 5.2.1    It was agreed that the Minutes should be altered to read “It was *suggested* that the Board, given its remit of protecting the Forest, neither should nor could, support any taking of Forest land for road making....”
- 5.2.2    Mr Reid informed the Board that East Sussex County Council was a consultee for the scheme. No formal proposal had been put forward to date but the Forest’s position was well covered. It was agreed that the situation should be kept under review but the Board were unable to make any formal comment at this stage.
- 5.3      Mr White reported that there appeared to be an increase in the number and variety of radio-controlled toys being used on the Forest with the attendant noise nuisance. It was agreed that the situation should be kept under review.
- 5.4      Signage at Pooh Car Park It was agreed that the new signs “urbanised” the area but Mr Reid explained that ESCC had adopted the national standard for signs.
- 5.5      There being no further questions or comments, Mr Marshall moved the adoption of the Minutes. This was agreed.

**ITEM 6      To receive the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 2 June 2003**

- 6.1      The Minutes, which had been previously circulated, were presented by Mr Glyn.
- 6.2      The unaudited accounts for 2002/2003
- 6.2.1    In response to a question about the reduction of the East Sussex County Council contribution compared with that of 2001/2002, Mrs Bagshawe confirmed the importance of the discussions between the Clerk and officers of the County Council which increased awareness of the financial commitments on both sides.
- 6.2.2    Mr Thomas stressed the importance of reducing old stock and reviewing prices for all activities on the Forest on a regular basis.
- 6.2.3.    The Board agreed the Committee’s recommendation to accept the unaudited accounts.**
- 6.3      Purchase of capital equipment The Minute was corrected to read ...“The Committee made the point that any digger we get should not necessarily be second-hand.”
- 6.4      There being no further questions or comments, Mr Glyn moved the adoption of the Minutes. This was agreed.

**ITEM 7      The Clerk to report on sundry matters**

- 7.1      Web site The Clerk informed the Board that web editing software had been bought and Ranger Chris Marrable was learning how to use it and gathering material for inclusion on the website. He felt the site had huge potential.
- 7.2      Public Relations The Clerk reported that he had carried out two radio interviews recently, one with BBC Radio 5 the other with Southern Counties Radio. He had also been interviewed by the reporter from the East Grinstead Courier and had proposed doing a monthly column for Courier Newspapers to which they had agreed.
- 7.3      Recruitment of an Estate Worker Following the recent promotion of Ranger Beal, advertisements for an Estate Worker had been placed in the Friday-Ad and on the Countryside Job Services web site.
- 7.4      Encroachments
- 7.4.1    Following discussions with the Rangers, the Clerk had initiated a comprehensive review of encroachments on the Forest and, with the help of the equipment bought through Tomorrow's Heathland Heritage (funded by the National Lottery), illustrated various examples around the Forest depicting the scale, number and variety. Formal procedures were being developed to tackle these problems, both in the short term and more strategically.
- 7.4.2    The Ashdown Forest Act already allows Rangers to remove fences that enclose encroachments. It was agreed that the Clerk should pursue the matter and the Conservation Committee would consider the structure of a warning system through letters to perpetrators.
- 7.5      Dr Prendergast's Title Mr Cooper suggested changing the title of "Superintendent" for the purpose of "gravitas". It was agreed that the Finance and General Purposes Committee should consider the matter.
- 7.6      There being no further questions or comments, Mr Glyn moved the adoption of the Minutes. This was agreed.

**ITEM 8      Any Other Business**      No other business being called, the meeting moved into Confidential Session at 4.15pm

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ 8 September 2003

Clerk \_\_\_\_\_