



**Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Conservators of Ashdown Forest**

Monday 7 March 2011 at 14.30

Ashdown Forest Centre

Present: Mr R Thornely-Taylor (Chairman), Cllr J Barnes, Cllr N Bennett, Mr M Cooper, Mr J Francis, Mr P Glyn, Cllr M Hoy, Mrs D Hurrell, Cllr S Martin, Dr H Prendergast (Director), Cllr A Reid, Cllr R Simmons, Mr J Spicer, Cllr R Stogden, and Cllr F Whetstone. Minutes were taken by Mrs R Marriott (Clerk).

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed the two members of the public present. He then congratulated Mr John Spicer on his reappointment as a Commoner Conservator for a period of five years from 1 April 2011.

	Item	Action
01/11	<b>Apologies.</b> Apologies were received from Mr Roy Galley.	
02/11	<b>Declarations of any interest by Members of a Personal or Prejudicial Nature.</b> Mr Reid offered to withdraw when the matter in which he had a personal interest in the RPA minutes was discussed.	
03/11	<b>To approve the minutes of the Board meeting of 22 November 2010, and matters arising – BD 01/11.</b> The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated and were assessed by the Board for accuracy. There were no changes. The minutes were duly approved.  <b>Matters Arising - Minute 36/10.</b> At the time of the meeting, the Director was unaware of any progress made towards the 'Away-Day'. <b><i>NB Chris Marrable has since informed the Director that a visit to the grazing area at Chailey has been planned for the summer Conservation meeting on 27 June 2011. Details to be confirmed.</i></b>	CM
04/11	<b>To approve the minutes of the Conservation Committee meeting of 10 January 2011 – BD 02/11.</b> The Chairman asked Mr Glyn to present the minutes of the meeting which had been assessed by the Committee for accuracy. There were no changes. The Minutes were duly received and approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6.  <b>Matters Arising.</b> <b>Minute 03/11 re Wych Cross Reservoir.</b> The Director reported that work was still in progress and therefore water was still flowing onto Ashdown Forest.  <b>Minute 06/11 re Deer Management .</b> Cllr Simmonds commented that the deer population did not seem to be falling and asked if there was any progress on deer culling on the Forest. There followed a long discussion on the subject and it was agreed that the Conservation Committee should look at what is being done on local estates and the effectiveness of different methods of culling. Cllr St Pierre suggested the Director to seek support from the Police for the enforcement of the speed limits on the Forest.	Con Cttee  HP
05/11	<b>To approve the minutes of the Roads, Planning &amp; Amenities Committee meeting of 17 January 2011– BD 03/11.</b> The Chairman asked Mr Cooper to present the minutes of the last meeting which had been assessed by the Committee for accuracy. There were no changes. The Minutes were duly received and approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6.	

	<p><b>Matters Arising.</b></p> <p><b>Minute 05.2/11 re Forest Centre Development.</b> A meeting on 21 February had been held between the majority of staff members and the Executive Committee. This had proved productive and it was agreed that there would be staff representation on the Working Party which was due soon. This would have no effect on the outline planning permission which would be sought in the near future.</p> <p><b>Minute 04.4/11 re Millbrook Farm.</b> Cllr Reid offered to withdraw but the meeting agreed it would not be necessary. The Director reported that legal advice had been sought and a meeting between himself, Mr Cooper and Mr Spicer was due to take place the next day when a solution to an equitable way out would be sought. The proposed solution would be considered at the next meeting of the RPA Committee.</p> <p><b>Minute 03/11 re Browns Brook Cottage, Nutley Arms and Lamberts.</b> The Director reported that matters were progressing satisfactorily with all three properties.</p> <p><b>Minute 04.3/11 re Fairwarp development.</b> The Director reported that Ranger Richard Allum had attended the hearing in front of the Planning Inspector on 22 February. The Board's interest in the development was confined to its proximity to the Forest but there was overwhelming objection to the development in general. The Planning Inspector's decision will have an impact on the Board's approach to developments in future.</p> <p><b>Minute 04.4/11 re Olympic Clay Pigeon site at Northall Farm, Furners Green, Fletching.</b> Chris Marrable had found the site would have no detrimental effect on the habitat of the Forest but a comment had been made that the noise from the site would have a detrimental effect on the amenity value of the Forest. Cllr Martin reported that the Planning Officer had recommended refusal.</p> <p><b>Minute 06/11 re Discussion paper BD03/11</b> Mr Cooper emphasised the paper should be seen as guidance for future use and one which might lead to other sources of income for the Forest. He hoped it would help to change the negative attitude some residents felt towards the management of the Forest and would lead to a more pragmatic approach. The Director commented that the paper should be seen as a guideline for exceptions to the Board's policies and bye-laws. Mr Thornely Taylor proposed the paper be re-drafted in a formal manner and go back to the RPA for approval.</p> <p><b>Minute 07/11 re Car parking charges on the Forest.</b> The Director had visited a number of sites where charges were made and would prepare a paper for the next RPA meeting.</p>	<p>RPA</p> <p>MC JS HP</p> <p>RPA</p> <p>HP</p>
06/11	<p><b>To approve the minutes of the Finance &amp; General Purposes Committee meeting of 14 March 2011 - BD 04/11.</b> The Chairman asked Cllr Whetstone to present the minutes of the last meeting which had been assessed by the Committee for accuracy. There were a few typographical corrections. The Minutes were duly received and approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6.</p> <p><b>Matters Arising.</b></p> <p><b>Minute 03.2/11.</b> Mr Thornely-Taylor agreed to approach Mr Hendry MP with the intention of re-visiting the possibility of Ashdown Forest being added to the list of organisations that can claim back VAT. Cllr Barnes suggested that the 'Barrier Busting' team in Local Government be approached; the Forest could be seen as part of the 'Big Society' and this might help the cause.</p>	<p>RTT</p>

	<p><b>Minute 03.3/11.</b> Cllr Reid reported that the County Council could not offer any help. Mr Thornely-Taylor confirmed that there were no long-term favourable interest rates that would be suitable for the Board's funds.</p> <p><b>Minute 06.1/11.</b> <b>The Board agreed the Committee's recommendation to set a budget for the submission of the planning application for the Centre Development at £1050, the exact figure was confirmed by the Director.</b></p> <p><b>Minute 06.3/11.</b> After a short discussion about the confusion over the split in the role of director and Clerk, it was confirmed that Dr Prendergast's title should remain 'Director'.</p> <p><b>Minute 06.4/11.</b> Cllr Reid commented that despite the present financial climate, it would be prudent to have some financial planning over the next two to three years.</p> <p><b>Minute 06.5/11.</b> It was agreed that a paper should be prepared for the next Board meeting on the subject of the Board's land ownership history and policy. The paper would list the land held by the Board and summarize any minutes recording the reasons why the board had chosen to purchase and/or hold land itself rather than transfer it to the Ashdown Forest Trust. Some thought needed to be given as to where land ownership fitted into the Committee structure. It was agreed that it would be helpful to have a list of the insurance cover held by the Board in relation to the potential liabilities of Board members as landowners</p>	<p>HP</p> <p>RM HP</p>
<p><b>07/11</b></p>	<p><b>To receive the Financial Update - BD 05/11.</b> Cllr Whetstone presented the financial update. The Board's finances were in a good condition. The County Council had agreed the Board's budget for the coming financial year.</p> <p>The Director commented that although sites for memorial benches were limited, ideas for further memorials such as bridges and information panels were being explored. It was planned to display plaques that had been removed from old seats at the Forest Centre.</p>	
<p><b>08/11</b></p>	<p><b>To receive the minutes of the Executive Committee meetings of 21 December 2010 and 14 February 2011 – BD 06/11.</b> The Chairman presented the minutes of the last meetings. The meeting with the staff on 14 February had been very productive with a useful exchange of information and further meetings on a six monthly basis would be arranged. He reminded the Board that Executive Committee meetings were for emergency meetings only, in line with Standing Orders although time had been allocated for such meetings should the need arise.</p>	
<p><b>09/11</b></p>	<p><b>Director's Report – BD 07/11.</b> The Director had tabled his report. He commented that the report was a formalisation of the news emails he had circulated to the Board and he welcomed feedback. It was agreed that the format was suitable, giving an excellent summary of the Forest's affairs and the opportunity to enlarge on a topic if necessary.</p> <p>The Board wished to formally express its thanks to the East Sussex Archaeology and Museum Project for the work carried out on the Mesolithic House in the grounds of the Forest Centre.</p>	

10/11	<p><b>Verbal report of the Commoners' Annual Meeting held on 4 March 2011.</b></p> <p>Mr Glyn reported that the meeting had been very friendly. Mr Spicer had given the commoners the opportunity to change the format of the meeting. This had not met with much enthusiasm. Appendix 1 of the Board's Standing Orders, a voluntary Code of Conduct was introduced. Mr Spicer had agreed to sign it but had asked that the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 be made available to future candidates.</p>	RM
11/11	<p><b>Any Urgent Item of which the Clerk has notice in order to pass to the elected Chairman.</b></p> <p>There were no urgent matters but the following comments were made; Cllr Whetstone suggested that Board members make themselves known to the Estate Team; Cllr Martin suggested that a source of income could be memorial bricks, subscribed and built into a feature at the Forest Centre and Mr Spicer stated that the Standing Orders needed to be amended and should be recorded at the next FGP meeting.</p> <p>There being no other business the meeting closed at 16.30.</p>	FGP

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ 2011

Clerk \_\_\_\_\_