

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN
FOREST HELD AT THE ASHDOWN FOREST CENTRE,
WYCH CROSS ON MONDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2002 AT 2.30pm.**

Present: Mr RIF Parsons (in the Chair), Mrs D Bagshawe, Mrs S Stokes,
Mrs J Wirdnam, Messrs, LJ Gillham, PJ Glyn, FJC Marshall, AG Reid, P Scott,
RM Thornely-Taylor, M Tunwell, FWJ Whetstone, AN White.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed the member of the public present.

The Chairman expressed the Board's regret at the impending retirement of Brigadier Constantine. He acknowledged it would be a difficult task to select a successor but he had no doubt the Board could be totally confident that the Brigadier would continue his management of the Forest in the intervening period and play a crucial part in the selection of his successor.

ITEM 1 Apologies for absence

1.1 There were apologies for absence from Miss M McPherson, Mr C Dowling and Mr T Slack.

ITEM 2 To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 September 2002

2.1.1 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 30 September 2002

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

4.2 Fencing The Clerk informed the Board that he had not yet received a written response to his letter about the state of the boundary fence from the Old Lodge Estate.

4.3 Sheep deaths In response to a question from Mr Scott, the Clerk informed the Board that the owner of the dogs concerned had paid the farmer compensation. A witness to a similar incident on her adjoining land had withdrawn her statement on the understanding that the dogs would be removed from the Forest area.

4.4 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 14 October 2002

5.1 The Minutes, which had been previously circulated, were presented by Mrs Stokes.

5.2 Access to proposed car park for Pooh Bridge In response to a question from Mr Whetstone, Mrs Stokes confirmed that the new access would be a straight line through the existing car park which would have its surface scraped up to form banks on either side of the proposed

access. Following the recent storms it is anticipated that only one mature tree will have to be felled.

5.3 Site of Ashdown Golf Hotel Mr Scott suggested that the developers be approached to fund the proposed 'Give Way' signs. The Clerk informed the Board that he had already purchased the signs, but the developer had been asked to put in two rows of granite sets at the junction of Shalesbrook Lane and Chapel Lane.

5.4 Interpretive Panels

5.4.1 Mr Marshall produced an example of an interpretive panel encased in a vandal proof cover. This consisted of a panel of unbreakable glass surrounded by a metal frame. It is proposed that the interpretive panel would be sealed in the frame to prevent condensation problems and the whole unit would be fixed to the plinths with self locking stainless steel screws. The effect of sunlight had yet to be assessed.

5.4.2 The Clerk reminded the Board that when the Countryside Commission grant funded the toilet block at the Centre they had made it a condition that interpretive panels should be available on the Forest. If the replacement panels get vandalised the Board are unlikely to replace them again.

5.4.3 Mrs Bagshawe suggested that the feasibility of engraving a map on steel might be investigated. The Chairman stated that the Committee would continue to look at all possibilities and he thanked Mr Marshall for his work in producing a prototype protective cover. He anticipated that the panels would be in place before next summer.

5.4.4 Mrs Stokes informed the Board that funding for the panels would be sought.

5.5 B2026 Horse Crossing Mr White informed the Board that the work done by the Rangers in clearing the sight lines for horse-riders and car drivers had been a great success. The Clerk added that he had a meeting with the Highways Safety Officer planned in the near future.

5.6 There being no further questions, Mrs Stokes moved the adoption of the Minutes. This was agreed.

ITEM 6 To receive the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 4 November 2002

6.1 The Minutes, which had been previously circulated, were presented by Mr Glyn.

6.2 The Forest Rate for 2003/04

6.2.1 Mrs Stokes expressed her concern that the cost of collecting the Forest Rate from non payers may increase. Mr Scott suggested that the cost of collecting late payments should be added to the debt. The Clerk informed the Board that his only course of action against persistent non payers was to resort to the Small Claims Court for the collection of bad debts.

6.2.2 Mr Thornely-Taylor suggested that when the Clerk wrote to DEFRA for approval of the rate, he should link the impact of the VAT situation with the proposed increases. This was agreed.

6.2.2 The Board agreed the Committee's recommendation to increase the Forest Rate as stated in the table under Item 3 of the Finance Committee Minutes.

6.3 Fees and Charges

6.3.1 The Clerk informed the Board that he had written accepting the tender from PWW Ice Creams Ltd.

6.3.2 The Board accepted the Committee's recommendation to approve the fees and charges listed, which should become effective from 1 April 2003.

6.4 The Revised Estimates for 2002/03 and the Estimates for 2003/04

6.4.1 There was a brief discussion about the role of the Ashdown Forest Trust and its Trustees. Mrs Bagshawe felt that the Trust's funds should be more focussed towards the Forest and she advised the Board that she planned to have a meeting with officers of the County Council to consider this.

6.4.2 Mr Scott asked if the Board had a legal liability to collect the litter from the Forest. The Clerk replied that fly-tipping had to be removed as it was classed as industrial waste. Mr Scott asked the Clerk to investigate if the Board would be in breach of any other Act if the rubbish/litter was not collected.

6.4.3 In response to a question about the Budget approval process at County Hall, Mr Tunwell informed the Board that Council's contribution first went to the Transport and Environment Committee; it would then go to the Cabinet and finally to the full County Council for approval as a line entry on the Transport & Environment Budget.

6.4.4 The Board agreed the Committee's recommendation to approve the Revised Estimates for 2002/03 and the Estimates for 2003/04.

6.5 Dates of the Committee and Board Meetings in 2003/04 **The Board approved the following dates for Board and Committee meetings in 2003/04**

BOARD MEETINGS

2003 17 MARCH, 16 JUNE, 8 SEPTEMBER, 17 NOVEMBER

2004 15 MARCH.

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

2003 20 JANUARY, 7 APRIL, 30 JUNE, 29 SEPTEMBER

2004 19 JANUARY

ROADS, PLANNING & AMENITIES COMMITTEE

2003 10 FEBRUARY, 28 APRIL, 28 JULY, 13 OCTOBER

2004 9 FEBRUARY.

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

2003 24 FEBRUARY, 2 JUNE, 18 AUGUST, 3 NOVEMBER

2004 23 FEBRUARY.

6.6 There being no further comments or questions, Mr Glyn moved the adoption of the Minutes. This was agreed.

ITEM 7 The Clerk to report on sundry matters

7.1 Waste site at Danehill The Clerk reported that he had received a letter from Mr Charles Hendry MP inviting the Board's support in opposition to the proposed landfill site at

Danehill. The Board felt it would be inappropriate for them either to support or to oppose an issue of this sort which was outside the boundaries of the Forest.

7.2 Visit of the Lord Lieutenant The Clerk informed the Board that the Lord Lieutenant would be visiting the Forest and the Centre on 27 November 2002.

7.3 Blackhill Reservoir The Clerk informed the Board that SE Water would be starting maintenance work at the reservoir on 19 November 2002. This would entail clearing the gorse ground cover and trenching between the Blackhill Road and the reservoir.

ITEM 8 Report from the Urgency Committee Meeting

8.1 The Board noted the report of the Urgency Committee and in particular the process for recruiting the new Clerk. The Chairman informed the Board that he had issued a Press Release about the Clerk's retirement which had been published in all the local editions of the Courier and Sussex Express.

8.2 It was agreed that the interview panel should consist of the Chairman of the Board, the Chairmen of the Committees and Mr Reid.

8.3 Details of all candidates would be available to all members of the Board in the office.

ITEM 9 Any Other Business

9.1 Mr Whetstone expressed his concern at the description of the old recreation ground at St John's Crowborough as "Recreation Ground" in the new WDC Local Plan. Mr Thornely-Taylor confirmed that the Board could make representation to have this description removed when the Local Plan came up for consultation. He undertook to see if the Board was a statutory consultee and should receive a copy of the Local Plan

9.2 There being no other business, the Chairman moved to the Confidential Session. The open meeting closed at 4.20 pm.

10.1 Confidential Session

10.1.1 The Board approved Confidential Minute No96. The Clerk reported on his meeting with the Deputy County Secretary and the Chairman of the Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club in which they considered the way ahead. The favoured option was an extension of the lease. The Golf Club have been asked to put forward a case to the Ashdown Forest Trust for increasing the period of the new lease to 99 years. The Board supported a 99 year lease in principle. The application from the Golf Club will go before East Sussex County Council for approval and then be forwarded to the Charity Commissioners. It is estimated that this process will take up to three months.

10.1.2 There being no further business the meeting closed at 4.40pm.

Chairman _____
17 March 2003

Clerk _____