



**Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Conservators of Ashdown Forest**  
**Monday 26 November 2012 at 14.30**  
**Ashdown Forest Centre**

Present: Mr R Thornely-Taylor (Chairman), Mr R Galley (Vice Chairman), Cllr J Barnes, Mr M Cooper, Mr P Glyn, Cllr C Hardy, Mrs D Hurrell, Cllr R St. Pierre, Mr J Spicer, Cllr S Tidy and Cllr F Whetstone.

In attendance: Mrs P Buesnel (Director), Mrs R Marriott (Clerk).

The Chairman welcomed the one member of the public present and invited questions. There were no questions.

	Item	Action
<b>37/12</b>	<b>Apologies.</b> Apologies were received from Cllr C Dowling, Mr J Francis, Cllr A Reid, Cllr R Stogdon and Cllr M Weaver.	
<b>38/12</b>	<b>Declarations of any interest by Members of a Personal or Prejudicial Nature.</b> Mr Galley declared an interest in all minutes relating to Millbrook Farm.	
<b>39/12</b>	<b>To approve the minutes of the Board meeting of 10 September 2012, and matters arising – BD 26/12.</b> The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated and were assessed by the Board for accuracy. The following minor amendments were made: 31.5/12 should read <i>'business plans'</i> and in the action <i>'subject to'</i> rather than <i>'pending'</i> ; 34.1/12 should read <i>'the officer presented the owner'</i> rather than <i>'he was'</i> ; 34.4/12 the action should read <i>'auditors report'</i> not <i>'annual return'</i> ; 35.3/12 a <i>'£'</i> should be added.  After the amendments were made, the minutes were duly received and approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6.  28.2/12 The Action Log was scrutinised. It was noted that some rationalisation and minor amendments were required	
<b>40/12</b>	<b>To approve the minutes of the Conservation Committee meeting of 8 October 2012 - BD 27/12.</b> The Chairman asked Cllr St Pierre to present the minutes of the meeting which had been assessed by the Committee for accuracy. The following minor amendments were made: 16/12 Cllr Whetstone should be removed from the apologies. 19/12 the last line should be removed and replaced with <i>'Mr Glyn suggested revisiting the idea of further fencing. Mr Marrable said it was important to proceed in small steps'</i> .  After the amendments were made the minutes were duly received and approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6.	
	<b>40.1/12 Matters Arising</b> In regard to <i>minute 19/12</i> Cllr St Pierre reported that the site visit was excellent. It was obvious, to the Committee members that attended, that grazing was having a good effect. Fencing and livestock would be further explored. There was a short discussion regarding potential future funding from Natural England (NE). Mr Glyn said that NE was hoping to attend the next Committee meeting. There was a brief discussion regarding the Higher Level Stewardship Panel (HLS) and the Chairman gave an explanation of the mechanism and monitoring process. Mr Spicer commented there were fewer meetings than he had expected. The Director replied that with staff changes and maternity leave within the Panel the meetings had lapsed somewhat, however a meeting was scheduled before Christmas.  <b>40.2/12</b> In regard to <i>minute 20/12</i> Cllr Barnes suggested that a leaflet was worth exploring and should have a higher priority for the Committee. He felt it was something the public would be interested in purchasing. It was agreed to carry this item over to the next Committee.	

	40.2/12 In regards to <i>minute 21/12</i> Cllr St Pierre reported that the majority of the problem was on private land. Cllr Barnes suggested that the Committee talk to those landowners and ask them to deal with the problem.	
<b>41/12</b>	<b>To approve the minutes of the Roads, Planning &amp; Amenities Committee meeting of 29 October 2012 - BD 28/12.</b>	
	The Chairman asked Mr Spicer to present the minutes of the meeting which had been assessed by the Committee for accuracy. The minutes were duly received and approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6.	
	<p><b>41.1/12 Matters Arising</b>  In regard to <i>minute 28.2/12</i> Mr Spicer said that an inordinate amount of time had been spent on this property and it remains an on-going issue without an obvious resolution. There was a possibility that the Ashdown Forest Trust (AFT) may end up ceding the land known as the 'triangle'. However the land known as the 'funnel' was a different matter and the AFT would robustly defend its position. There was a short discussion regarding claims for adverse possession and land exchanges. The Chairman said the Board would have to consider what to do should either situation arise and that the decision made by the Committee would stand unless the AFT deemed otherwise. It was agreed that the letter to the property owner would be deferred until after the next RPA when all the legal advice had been gathered.</p> <p>41.2/12 In regard to <i>minute 29.4/12</i> Cllr Barnes said it was important to get an absolute legal ruling from ESCC on the removal of vehicles from private land. He offered to ask the relevant people in County Hall for legal advice.</p> <p>41.3/12 Mr Spicer said that the Act of Remembrance at Airman's Grave was very well attended and that staff and volunteers did an excellent job .</p>	<p><b>RPA</b></p> <p><b>JB</b></p>
<b>42/12</b>	<b>To approve the minutes of the Forest Centre Development Committee meetings of 25 September 2012 - BD 29/12</b>	
	<p>The Chairman asked Cllr Tidy to present the minutes which had been assessed by the Committee for accuracy. The following minor amendment was made:  19/12 a small typographical error was to be amended in the 'apologies' list.</p> <p>With that amendment made the minutes were duly received and approved, up to the end of minute 23.12, in accordance with Standing Order 2.6. The appended post-meeting notes would be removed.</p>	
	<p><b>42.1/12 Matters Arising</b>  Cllr Tidy reported that ESCC had agreed to pay £8,800.00 towards the business plans up to the point of the 'Options Appraisal'. A contract had been drawn up and agreed with Acorn Tourism Consulting Ltd. A very productive inception meeting had been held; staff had been met and a visit to the Llama Farm made. A workshop was planned for 5<sup>th</sup> December at 14.00 for members of the Committee and staff to attend.</p>	
<b>43/12</b>	<b>To approve the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of 19 November 2012 - BD 30/12</b>	
	The Chairman presented the minutes of the meeting which had been assessed by the Committee for accuracy. The minutes were duly received and approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6.	
	<p><b>43.1/12 Matters Arising</b>  In regard to <i>minute 12/12</i> the Chairman said that the Committee had met as an Urgency Committee in order to confirm the Director's position.</p> <p>43.2/12 In regard to <i>minute 13/12</i> the Director explained the process of reviewing the current Forest Plan and that amendments and corrections had been received. This exercise was now complete and the document would be placed on the website.</p> <p>43.3/12 In regard to <i>minute 13.2/12</i> the Chairman asked Mrs Hurrell to present the appended document '<i>Strategic Forest Plan of the Board of Conservators – November 12</i>'. Mrs Hurrell said the current plan, though an attractive document containing much useful information</p>	

	<p>was too academic and narrative in tone and contained outcomes and actions that were not measurable. It was also difficult to work with and lacked internal consistency. The proposed methodology provided an accountable and structured approach which allows for the creation of measured action plans. There was general agreement that the new approach was the way forward and the Board thanked Mrs Hurrell for her valuable input. The Director said ideally the plan needed to be ready for the Board of March 2013 and each Committee would need to re-draft their objectives. Mrs Hurrell said it was difficult to pin down objectives, goals and measures and that each Committee needed to start thinking about it now. The Chairman said that the Plan would take the Board up to 2016 and, perhaps, it would be wise to draw up a plan that would go beyond that date.</p>	
<b>44/12</b>	<p><b>To approve the minutes of the Finance &amp; General Purposes Committee meeting of 12 November 2012 – BD 31/12.</b></p> <p>The Chairman asked Cllr Whetstone 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>	
	<p><b>43.1/12 Matters Arising</b></p> <p>There was a discussion regarding <i>minute 31/12</i> Cllr Whetstone thanked Mrs Hurrell for her work on the new accounts format and all agreed it was an improvement. Mrs Hurrell said it was still a work in progress but it would be finalised soon.</p>	
<b>45/12</b>	<p><b>To receive the Financial Update – BD 31/12.</b></p> <p>45.1/12 The document was scrutinised and it was noted that the deficit had been reduced. However, this would require monitoring through the year. It was also noted that the biggest variance was related to salaries and Mrs Hurrell explained this was to do with appraisals and re-grading therefore it was important to be mindful of this reoccurring cost. Having a small deficit was discussed and the Director said that this would be raised with Mo Hemsley (ESCC) during the meeting scheduled for 19 December. The Board asked the Clerk to double check the figure shown for the ESCC contribution.</p> <p><b>The Board resolved to forward the draft estimates to ESCC subject to certain amendments and authorise the Chairman to approve the amended draft.</b></p> <p>45.2/12 The Chairman said that the FGP Committee had decided to abandon inflationary increases other than where there was a contractual obligation, therefore the Board needed to be comfortable with the fees and charges it set. It was agreed that the title line explaining the inflation increases would be removed. There were short discussions regarding the costs of a wood permit and it was agreed that the proposed increase would stand. Cllr Tidy proposed accepting the fees and charges. Mr Spicer seconded the proposal and it was agreed by a unanimous show of hands.</p> <p><b>The Board agreed the fees and charges for 2013/14.</b></p> <p>The Forest Rate for 2013/2014 was scrutinised. Cllr Barnes proposed accepting the Forest Rate. Mr Glyn seconded the proposal and it was agreed by a unanimous show of hands.</p> <p><b>The Board agreed the Forest rate for 2013/14.</b></p> <p>45.3/12 After a very brief discussion the it was agreed that DMC continue as internal auditor.</p> <p><b>The Board agreed that DMC be re-appointed as internal auditors.</b></p>	<p><b>RM</b></p> <p><b>Chair</b></p>
<b>46/12</b>	<p><b>To approve the meeting dates for 2013/2014 – BD 33/12</b></p> <p>It was agreed that all meetings of the Committees and the Board would commence at 14.00 from 25 March 2013. There was one amendment – that the Commoner’s Meeting was 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013 at Nutley Village Hall. The list of meetings dates would be sent to Democratic Services at ESCC for their information. The Chairman proposed accepting the meeting dates and new start time. Cllr Barnes seconded the proposal and it was agreed by a show of hands. Mr Spicer was against the changes to the start time.</p>	<b>TB</b>

<b>47/12</b>	<b>To receive the Director's report – BD 34/12.</b>	
47.1/12	The document had been previously circulated. The Director presented her report highlighting staff appraisals, work on the Forest Plan, Forest Centre Development, work at the Vachery, on-going engagement process and key relationships. She went on to say Healthy Walks were due to start in January and were being promoted via GP surgeries in Uckfield, Crowborough and the local villages. She reminded the Board that the Parish Liaison Meeting was scheduled for 12 <sup>th</sup> December when Viv Blandford (archaeologist) would be talking about her work on the Forest Pale. A meeting was also scheduled with local authorities for 6 <sup>th</sup> December to talk about, amongst other things, the Dog Project, education and information. Cllr Barnes suggested a Vachery guide book, for sale to the public, should be produced.	
<b>48/12</b>	<b>To receive the Clerk's report – BD 35/12.</b>	
34.1/12	The document had been previously circulated. The proposed wording for planning applications was very briefly discussed. There were two bye-law issues that were being dealt with and three boundary issues remained on-going.	
<b>49/12</b>	<b>Any Urgent Item of which the Clerk has notice in order to pass to the elected Chairman.</b>	
	There were none.	

The meeting closed at 16.35

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

11 March 2013

Clerk \_\_\_\_\_