



Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Conservators of Ashdown Forest
Monday 25th November 2013 at 14.00
Ashdown Forest Centre

Present: Mr R Galley (Chairman), Mr A Reid (Vice Chairman), Cllr J Barnes, Cllr C Belsey, Mr M Cooper, Mr J Francis, Mr P Glyn, Cllr C Hardy, Mrs D Hurrell, Cllr L Keeley, Cllr R St. Pierre, Mr J Spicer, Cllr R Stogdon, Cllr S Tidy and Cllr F Whetstone.

In attendance: Mrs P Buesnel (Director) and Mrs R Marriott (Clerk). Minutes were taken by Mrs T Buxton. There were no members of the public present.

	Item	Action
42/13	Apologies.	
	There were no apologies.	
43/13	Declarations of any interest by Members of a Personal or Prejudicial Nature.	
	There was none.	
44/13	To approve the minutes of the Board meeting of 9th September 2013, and matters arising – BD 32/13.	
	The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy. The minutes were duly received and approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6. <i>44.1/13 Matter Arising minute 39/13</i> Cllr St Pierre reported that the Conservation Officer post had been filled and would be starting on 9 th December. The Board thanked Ranger Allum and the team for taking on additional work during the hiatus.	
45/13	To approve the minutes of the Conservation Committee meeting of 23rd September 2013, and matters arising – BD 39/13.	
	The minutes of the meeting had been circulated and assessed by the Committee for accuracy. The minutes were duly received and approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6. <i>45.1/13 Matter Arising minute 29/13</i> Mr Francis reported that discussions were underway regarding leasing a barn at a nearby location. There was a discussion regarding planning permission, rental cost and length of lease. The Director said that the barn was one of a number of options that were being explored. Cllr St Pierre said that the Committee would proceed with caution. <i>45.2/13 Matter Arising minute 32/13</i> Cllr St Pierre reported that there was confidence from NE that HLS would continue in some form. However, it was possible the duration of grants would be shorter, i.e., five years rather than ten. All agreed it was important to know details asap.	
46/13	To receive the minutes of the Roads, Planning & Amenities Committee meeting of 21st October 2013 – BD 33/13.	
	The minutes of the meeting had been circulated and assessed by the Committee for accuracy. The minutes were duly received and approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6. <i>46.1/13 Matters Arising</i> The Director reported that she and Mr Spicer had recently discussed and submitted comments on WDC's draft Habitats Regulations Assessment for Pre-Submission Modification Strategic Sites Local plan, with a very short response time, prior to the public consultation phase starting on 8 December. Mr Spicer reported that he was pleased to find that the Board were 'very much ahead of the game in almost every aspect' and surprised at 'how little WDC seemed to know about the Forest'. If Board members wished to see comments an electronic version was available from the Director.	

47/13	To receive the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meetings of 11th November 2013 - BD 34/13.	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting had been circulated and assessed by the Committee for accuracy. The minutes were duly received and approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6.</p> <p><i>47.1/13 Matters Arising</i></p> <p>Mrs Hurrell drew the Board's attention to the financial report and it was noted that, at the half year stage, a deficit was forecast. Mrs Hurrell went on to explain the background to the deficit. The Board were pleased to note the increase in school visits and the generous assistance from the Friends. The contingency, based on previous years spends, was also noted as was the salary increase of 1% which is to be backdated to April. Mrs Hurrell proposed accepting the Revised Estimates for 2013/14 and Estimated Budget 2014/15. Cllr Barnes seconded the proposal and it was agreed by a unanimous show of hands.</p> <p>The Director said that she had communicated with Mr Packham at ESCC to arrange a meeting prior to the Board, however, there had not yet been a reply. Mrs Hurrell asked Cllr Tidy to communicate with Mr Packham to help arrange a date at the earliest convenience. Cllr tidy said she would.</p> <p>The Board agreed and adopted the Revised Estimates for 2013/14 and Estimated Budget 2014/15.</p> <p>Mrs Hurrell drew the Board's attention to the policies discussed in minute 40/13: Recruitment, Grievance and Disciplinary. There was a brief discussion regarding sourcing references (in relation to recruitment). Mrs Hurrell recommended the policies to the Board.</p> <p>The Board agreed and adopted the Recruitment Policy, Grievance and Dignity Policy and the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.</p> <p>Mrs Hurrell drew the Board's attention to minute 43/13.</p> <p>The Board agreed and adopted the amendment to the Standing Orders.</p> <p><i>47.2/13 To agree the Forest rate and charges for activities 2014/2015</i></p> <p>Mrs Hurrell proposed agreeing the fees and charges. Cllr Barnes seconded the proposal and it was agreed by a unanimous show of hands.</p> <p>The Board agreed the fees and charges for 2014/15.</p> <p>The Forest Rate for 2014/2015 was scrutinised. Mr Reid proposed accepting the Forest Rate. Cllr Barnes seconded the proposal and it was agreed by a unanimous show of hands.</p> <p>The Board agreed the Forest rate for 2014/15.</p> <p><i>47.3/13 To confirm the re-appointment of the internal auditors</i></p> <p>After a very brief discussion it was agreed that DMC continue as internal auditor.</p> <p>The Board agreed that DMC be re-appointed as internal auditor.</p>	PB/DH/ ST
48/13	To receive the minutes of the Forest Centre Development Committee of 30th September 2013 – BD 36/13	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting had been circulated and assessed by the Committee for accuracy. The minutes were duly received and approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6.</p> <p><i>48.1/13 Matters Arising</i></p> <p>Cllr Tidy asked that the Board put forward suggestions for a fundraising campaign name. It needed to be catchy, meaningful and short. All suggestions should be forwarded to the Director. The planning application was now out for public consultation. Cllr Tidy was very disappointed that the title of the revised planning application had not been changed from that of the original application. Forest Row PC had objected probably because they had not realised it was an amended application. She went on to say if 'people did not realise what was being done it was quite disturbing'. It was vital that the planners and the architects be spoken</p>	

	<p>to asap to put the matter right. Cllr Barnes agreed and Mr Francis said he would express the Board's concern in discussions with the architects and clarify the situation with the planning officer. It was suggested that the planning officer should write to Forest Row Parish Council to explain the situation.</p> <p>Mr Francis reported that preliminary sketches and draft elevation for the workshop / tractor shed barns were now ready and that he was in consultation with staff.</p>	ST/JF
49/13	To approve the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of 30th September 2013, and matters arising – BD 40/13.	
	The minutes of the meeting had been circulated and assessed by the Committee for accuracy. The minutes were duly received and approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6. There were no matters arising.	
50/13	To approve the meeting dates for 2014/2015 – BD 36/13.	
	The Director drew the Board's attention to the meeting dates. It was noted that FCDC meeting planned for 26 May was, in fact, a bank holiday. It was agreed that the meeting would be moved to 2 nd June at 12.00.	
	The Board agreed the meeting dates.	
51/13	To receive the Director's report – BD 37/13.	
	The Director spoke to her report. She said that a considerable amount of time had been spent on the recruitment process for both the Conservation Officer and the Countryside Worker. Induction programmes for both members of staff had been devised. All bar one of the staff appraisals had been completed. The volunteers were discussed and their valuable assistance was gratefully noted. The Parish Liaison meetings were discussed and it was noted that Mr Reid would, in future, act as Chairman. There was a brief discussion regarding the removal of Turkey Oaks. Mr Glyn reminded the Board that it was a long standing policy not to have invasive alien species on the Forest. Cllr Barnes said it would be useful to have a press release ready. All agreed it would be beneficial to have explanatory signage in place before work commenced. There was a discussion regarding the complaints about fencing at Nutley. It was agreed that communication with local residents could have been much better and that having notification and explanation in advance would have been helpful. The Director said that a Ranger, the Grazing Officer and a Board member would be attending a residents meeting early in the new year and that information signage was an issue that would be covered in the Communication Strategy. Cllr Barnes asked if any walks (other than Health Walks) were being devised and the Director said that investigations were underway for 2014. There was a short discussion on commercial mushroom pickers and the Clerk re-iterated current policy.	
	The Board expressed its warm thanks and appreciation for the assistance given by volunteers and Ranger Yates on Remembrance Sunday.	
52/13	To receive the Clerk's report – BD 38/13.	
	The Clerk spoke to her report. There was no update on the encroachment policy. The bye-law increase would be forwarded to the Secretary of State. The proposed group licence had failed as not all residents were in agreement. Direct Debits had run into yet another technical problem. A meeting with NFU insurance had been held to discuss a new for old policy and this was only available for the tractor for the first 12 months and not at all on other vehicles. ESCC had been written to expressing concerns regarding the closure of the dump at Forest Row and the possible negative impact such a closure would have on the Forest in relation to increased fly tipping and increased car journeys across the Forest.	
53/13	Any Urgent Item of which the Clerk has notice in order to pass to the elected Chairman.	
	There was none.	

The meeting closed at 15.15 and the Board viewed the new film.

Chairman _____

March 2014

Clerk _____