



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN
FOREST HELD AT THE ASHDOWN FOREST CENTRE, WYCH CROSS, FOREST
ROW ON 23 SEPTEMBER 1996

Present: Mr D C Cumming (In the Chair), Mrs S Barr,
Mrs P Wright, Air Marshal Sir Frederick Sowrey,
Messrs D H O Allen, M A Fletcher, L J Gillham,
D Hall, O E B Hughes, R I F Parsons,
C Riley, A N White.

ITEM 1 Site meeting to view and consider the Phase 2 Grazing Area

1.1 The Board met at Friends Car Park and then walked over to view the Misbourne Valley. They then adjourned to the Ashdown Forest Centre.

ITEM 2 Apologies for absence

2.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Mrs S Whitley, and Mr D Norcross.

ITEM 3 To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 April 1996

3.1 The Minutes of the last Meeting, which had been circulated, were amended at 4.3 to read "Consideration of a tree planting site for commemorative purposes for the general public". The Minutes were then approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct and accurate record.

ITEM 4 Matters Arising

4.1 There were no matters arising.

ITEM 5 To receive the Minutes of the Conservation Committee Meeting held on 8 July 1996

5.1 In the absence of Mrs Whitley, the Minutes, which had been previously circulated, were presented by Mr Cumming.

5.2 National Heath Week The Chairman thanked the Rangers and staff for all their hard work and input to Heath Week. He also thanked the Members of the Board who had supported the functions arranged for National Heath Week.

5.3 Update on Genista Pilosa and the efficacy of Tracker

5.3.1 The area scraped for the recolonisation of Genista Pilosa had been temporarily fenced and a notice of explanation put up for the general public. Time will tell if the project is to be successful.

5.3.2 The Clerk informed the Board that the area sprayed with

Tracker near Gills Lap showed clear evidence of the treatment. Long term effects were still to be evaluated. In response to a query about the cost of Tracker if used extensively on the Forest, the Clerk reminded the Board that their policy was against the large scale use of herbicides on the Forest.

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

ITEM 6 To receive the Minutes of the Roads, Planning & Amenities Committee held on 22 July 1996

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

6.2 Wych Cross Traffic Light Scheme The Clerk informed the Board that he had not received any further details of the land to be exchanged for the Forest land required for the scheme.

6.3 Grazing area The Clerk briefed the Board on the few minor problems of vandalism that had occurred with the fencing. The gate giving access to Pippingford Park had had to be padlocked and the fence itself tended to catch litter which needed to be removed.

6.4 Water pipe

6.4.1 The Clerk reported that the Water Board had experienced some problems with the new pipe and it had been decided that the old pipe could be relined. He had not received a revised date for completion of works.

6.4.2 The Clerk reported that the County Highways Department had taken over responsibility for the A22/A275 junction and that any future work, including the removal of the cones, was their responsibility.

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

ITEM 7 To receive the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 2 September 1996

7.1 The Minutes, which had been previously circulated, were presented by Mr Cumming.

7.2 The Audited Accounts for 1995/96 A copy of the Audited Accounts had been previously circulated to all Members of the Board. The Board agreed the Committee's recommendation that the Audited Accounts for 1995/96 be accepted.

7.3 Local Government Pension Scheme The Clerk informed the Board that he had not received a written answer from the Chief Pensions Officer to his letter sent at the Committee's request. Mr Riley agreed to make a follow-up enquiry with the Chief

Pensions Officer if a satisfactory answer had not been received in the near future.

7.4 The renewal of the Conservators' Insurance Policy

7.4.1 The Clerk informed the Board that he had received that morning notice of the new premium. Despite the increase in the excess negotiated and the reduction in the valuation of the buildings, the premium had increased, due to the inflation increase calculated by the insurance company.

7.4.2 Mr Gilham enquired about the possibility of competitive quotes. Mr Parsons commented that the Zurich Insurance Company offered cover in many instances that would not be covered by any other company and had a virtual monopoly of local authority insurance needs. The Board agreed that the Clerk should investigate competitive quotes.

7.5 There being no further comments, Mr Cummings moved the adoption of the Minutes. This was agreed.

ITEM 8 Clerk to report on sundry matters

8.1 The Clerk informed the Board of the death of Christopher Weaver who had been a Ranger on Ashdown Forest from 1991 to 1994.

8.2 National Heath Week This had been a worthwhile exercise. The Clerk thanked the Members of the Board who had helped at the Open Day. Attendance at the arranged functions had been good but little support had been received from English Nature and a letter of constructive criticism of the event will be sent to the organisation.

8.3 Health and Safety

8.3.1 The Clerk informed the Board that he had commissioned a Health and Safety Consultant to visit the Ashdown Forest Centre to prepare a Care of Substances Hazardous to Health Assessment a Risk Assessment and a Written Policy Statement for the Conservators. The Clerk outlined a number of remedial measures which needed to be taken in order to comply with current Health and Safety legislation.

8.3.2 *Sir Frederick Sowrey asked if the Board Members were collectively or individually legally responsible. The Clerk agreed to enquire of the County Secretary.*

8.3.3 At Sir Frederick Sowrey's suggestion, the Board agreed that it should review all aspects of safety on an annual basis.

8.3.4 Mrs Wright enquired about the timescale for the implementation of the remedial measures. The Clerk replied that arrangements were in hand.

8.3.5 The Clerk proposed that he sign the Policy Statement on the Board's Behalf. This was agreed.

8.4 Interpretive Panels

8.4.1 The Clerk presented the new Four Counties Dial which had been financed by the Society of Friends of Ashdown Forest. He informed the Board that it would be put in place after the Friends' AGM on 4 October 1996.

8.4.2 The Clerk briefed the Board on the final drafts of the four interpretive panels on display and confirmed that the panels would be placed at knee height on forest stone plinths.

8.4.3 In response to a query about vandalism, the Clerk confirmed that replacement costs had already been established.

ITEM 9 Any Other Business

9.1 There being no other business, the meeting closed at 3.35pm.

Chairman _____
November 1996

Clerk _____