



Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Conservators of Ashdown Forest
Monday 5 September 2011 at 13.30
Ashdown Forest Centre

Present: Mr R Thornely-Taylor (Chairman), Cllr J Barnes, Mr M Cooper, Mr J Francis, Mr Roy Galley, Mr P Glyn, Cllr C Hardy, Mrs D Hurrell, Cllr A Reid, Mr J Spicer, Cllr R Stogdon, Cllr S Tidy, Cllr M Weaver and Cllr F Whetstone. Minutes were taken by Mrs R Marriott (Clerk).

In attendance: Mr C Marrable (Acting Forest Superintendent).

There was a presentation by Vivienne Blandford and Anne Lock, East Sussex County Council archaeologists, entitled "Ashdown Forest Historic Environment Resource – A Lidar Enhanced Archaeological Survey". A discussion followed on the various ways the information could be shared with the general public in order to enhance understanding of the Forest's history.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the public present and invited questions. In response to Mrs Martin's question about the signs for the Nutley Arms, it was explained that the signs were located in positions that had been agreed with the landlord. In response to Mr Harvey's request for clarification of the bye-laws with regards to mowing on the Forest, Mr Marrable stated the bye-laws were a tool to protect the Forest. He stated that all residents in the area would be receiving a letter from the Clerk advising them of the policy with regards to mowing around properties and he offered to have a site meeting with Mr Harvey.

	Item	Action
25/11	<p>Apologies. Apologies were received from Cllr C Dowling and Cllr R St. Pierre. The Board agreed to send their best wishes to Cllr St. Pierre after her recent operation.</p>	
26/11	<p>Declarations of any interest by Members of a Personal or Prejudicial Nature. Mr Reid and Mr Galley declared an interest in Minute 22.4/11 of the RPA Minutes.</p>	
27/11	<p>To approve the minutes of the Board meeting of 6 June 2011, and matters arising – BD 16/11. The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated and were assessed by the Board for accuracy. Minute 19/11: 13.1/11 was amended to read "Cllr Barnes confirmed that Mr Cooper would invite a member of staff to join the working party when it next met." The Minutes were then approved.</p> <p><i>Matters Arising</i> <i>Refers to Minute 19/11: 13.7/11 Car Parking charges.</i> In response to a question from Mrs Hurrell, it was confirmed that the FGP Committee had asked that the matter be referred back to the RPA Committee for further detail. It was confirmed that the paper would refer to residents' parking permits only.</p> <p><i>Land held by the Conservators</i> A list of the land owned by the Board was circulated. Mr Marrable commented that he recollected that the transference of Chelwood Vachery to the Ashdown Forest Trust had been considered when the land was acquired but it had been decided to retain ownership by the Board in case an opportunity arose to use the land for a purpose that would not normally be permitted by the bye-laws. Mr Whetstone recalled that Chelwood Common was held by the Conservators because the land could be used to "top-up" the Forest should any Forest land be required for road widening.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that the Board was covered by insurance should a claim be made against it as a landowner.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Clerk should seek advice from the County Solicitor on all aspects with regards to the transference of land within the ancient pale not required by the Board for agricultural purposes or other specific requirements to the Ashdown Forest Trust.</p>	

	<p><i>Action Log</i> The Board noted the Action Log. The Clerk commented that it had proved a useful management tool.</p> <p><i>Committee Members</i> The Chairman commented that since the last meeting, members of the Board had been appointed to all the Committees and each had elected a Chairman and Vice Chairman. Unfortunately, the resignation of Cllr Bennett had been confirmed after the Conservation committee meeting so the election of his successor will take place at its next meeting on 17 October 2011. All the other appointments were approved by the Board. They are as follows:</p> <p><i>Conservation Committee:</i> Board members: R St Pierre (Chairman), vacant (Vice Chairman), MJ Cooper, JA Francis, PJ Glyn, C Hardy, S Tidy and M Weaver; advisors: K Cole (Ecologist ESCC), J Harding (Forestry Commission), L Hutchby (NE), C Johnson (Archaeologist ESCC).</p> <p><i>RPA Committee:</i> Board members: MJ Cooper (Chairman), JW Spicer (Vice Chairman), J Barnes, JA Francis, C Hardy and R St Pierre; co-opted: Chase Ranger as required; advisor: I Hurst.</p> <p><i>FGP Committee:</i> Board members: FWJ Whetstone (Chairman), D Hurrell (Vice Chairman), J Barnes, PJ Glyn, A Reid, JW Spicer, R Stogdon and S Tidy.</p>	
28/11	<p>To approve the minutes of the Conservation Committee meeting of 27 June 2011 – BD 17/11. The Chairman asked Mr Francis 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.</p> <p><i>28/11 Matters Arising</i> Paper on the future of grazing. The acting Forest Superintendent informed the meeting that he would produce a synopsis of the previous papers on grazing.</p> <p><i>Suitable winter grazing</i> Mr Francis reported that some winter grazing had been found for the Hebridean sheep but more was required. It was agreed that a request should be sent out on the email news service and in Ashdown Forest Living. Mr Francis also reported that some storage for hay had been found.</p> <p><i>Raptors on the Forest</i> Cllr Whetstone commented that he had noticed a significant increase in buzzards over Ashdown Forest. The acting Forest Superintendent explained that buzzards were now breeding successfully and covered a wide area.</p> <p><i>Funds post HLS</i> Cllr Barnes commented that it had been indicated to him that, as HLS funds come from Europe, further funds would be forthcoming after 2016 when the HLS funding ceases.</p>	
29/11	<p>To approve the minutes of the Roads, Planning & Amenities Committee meeting of 11 July 2011– BD 19/11. The Chairman asked Mr Cooper to present the minutes of the last meeting which had been assessed by the Committee for accuracy. Minute 19/11 was amended to correct the spelling of Cllr Hardy's name. The Minutes were then approved.</p>	

	<p><i>Matters Arising.</i> 22.3/11 <i>Jessops</i> The Chairman formally proposed that the Board should resolve to sell the land known as Jessops. Cllr Stogdon seconded the proposal. The Board agreed unanimously that the land known as Jessops should be sold. The Chairman reminded the Board that the formal approval of the Secretary of State for the Environment had already been sought but not yet obtained. In reply to a question about uplift in value from Cllr Barnes, the Clerk reported that there was a covenant in the transfer deed stating that permission would have to be received from the Board should any building construction be sought in the future.</p> <p>22.4/11 <i>Millbrook Farm</i> Mr Cooper had met with the acting Forest Superintendent and the Clerk to agree a possible solution that was sent to the owner: a perpetual licence that would include the encroachment with the access track. A response had been received that morning but had not been considered. The matter would be referred back to the Committee at its next meeting.</p> <p>22.5/11 <i>Snuff Cottage</i> The Clerk reported that the owner had refused to give written assurance that he would comply with the conditions set out in the letter. It was agreed that the current boundary should be photographed and a regular inspection carried out. Mr Cooper commented that the problem had highlighted the importance of annual boundary walking.</p> <p>22.6/11 <i>Car parking charges for residents</i> After extensive discussion at the FGP Committee, it had been decided to refer the matter back to the RPA Committee.</p> <p>23.4/11 <i>Chelwood Gate Cricket Ground</i> The acting Forest Superintendent reported that the management of the Cricket Club had been very keen to restore good relations and had worked to resolve the matter to mutual satisfaction.</p>	<p>RPA</p> <p>Chase Ranger</p> <p>RPA</p>
<p>30/11</p>	<p>To approve the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting of 1 August 2011 - BD 19/11 and the Extra-Ordinary Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting of 8 July 2011 - BD 20/11.</p> <p>The Chairman asked Cllr Whetstone to present the minutes of the last meeting which had been assessed by the Committee for accuracy. A correction was made to the apologies. A correction was made to Minute 23.1/11. It should read "... the Board should consider sponsorship for Ashdown Forest Life when HLS funding stops in 2016". The Minutes were duly received and approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6.</p> <p><i>Matters Arising</i> 22/11 <i>Financial Reports</i> Mrs Hurrell reported that she had done some preliminary work with Mrs Temple and the Clerk with a view to improving the presentation of management information for the Board. It was anticipated that the new format would be ready for the next FGP meeting.</p> <p>23.1/11 <i>Approach to Charles Hendry MP re VAT</i> The Chairman reported that he would not be able to approach Mr Hendry until October at the earliest.</p> <p>23.5/11 <i>Responsibilities of Landowners of SSSI.</i> The Clerk reported that she had approached other Boards of Conservators to find out how they viewed their responsibilities with those of their landowners. She was awaiting their responses.</p>	<p>DH/RM</p> <p>RTT</p> <p>RM</p>
<p>31/11</p>	<p>Forest Centre Working Party – verbal update 31.1/11 Mr Francis reported that some significant changes had been made to the layout due to concerns over the cost of the proposed scheme; education and the offices would remain in their</p>	

	<p>current buildings negating the need for the external lifts and staircases. Mr Cooper stated that any internal adjustments could be made within the existing layout without applying for further planning permission.</p> <p>31.2/11 The Chairman commented that Wealden District Council were screening the planning application to determine whether an appropriate assessment under the Habitat Regulations may be required. This could involve some expense and the Board may have to approach the Ashdown Forest Conservation Trust for its support. The acting Forest Superintendent said that footfall on the SSSI adjacent to the Forest Centre would be the major impact with car-parking on the common land, the direct affect on protected species and air pollution other significant factors. To ameliorate this, the redistribution of the footfall across the rest of the Forest and the education offered may be considered. Cllr Hardy offered to approach Wealden District Council to seek clarification of the requirements.</p> <p>31.3/11 Mr Spicer stressed the need for a business plan. Mr Cooper advised that it would be an integral part of the fund-raising. A member of the working party had offered his professional advice and guidance to the working party in the construction of the business plan. The cost of running the Forest Centre would be taken into account. A new member of the working party's disciplined approach to project management was proving invaluable.</p> <p>31.4/11 Mr Cooper advised the Board that Cllr Barnes had agreed to be the internal champion of the project. A list of potential donors was already being compiled.</p>	
<p>32/11</p>	<p>Any Urgent Item of which the Clerk has notice in order to pass to the elected Chairman.</p> <p>32.1/11 Mr Francis suggested that a formal reply should go to the High Weald Unit in regards to Ashfest.</p> <p>32.2/11 The Board congratulated the Administrator on the new web site.</p> <p>32.3/11 Cllr Reid asked that a deer management report should be made available for the next Board meeting.</p> <p>The public part of the meeting closed at 15.55. The Board then moved to a confidential session to discuss staffing matters. The next meeting will be on 28 November 2011.</p>	<p>RM</p> <p>CM</p>

Chairman _____

28 November 2011

Clerk _____