



## Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Liaison Panel of the Board of Conservators of Ashdown Forest

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017 19.00 – 20.00 Ashdown Forest Centre

**Present on behalf of the Conservators of Ashdown Forest:** Tony Reid, John Francis and Philip Glyn. **Staff:** Pat Buesnel (Director). **Present on behalf of Parish/Town Councils:** Lolita Reeves (Maresfield), Keith Obbard (Withyham), Tony Lewin (Forest Row), Vivienne Hill (Forest Row) Peter Ellefsen (Crowborough Town Council), Catherine Crouch (Daneshill), Jo Sanders (Hartfield). **Representing the Friends of Ashdown Forest:** Pat Arnold

1. **Introductions:** Tony Reid (Chairman) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Apologies:** Michael Cooper, Sylvia Tidy and Richard Stogdon (Conservators), Paul Brown and Douglas Denham St Pinnock (West Hoathly). Quentin Burch (Crowborough Town Council), Brian Phillips (Ashurst Wood Village Council), Derek Waits (Ashurst Wood Village Council), Sandy Bone (Fletching), Vivienne Blandford (Buxted)

2. **Minutes of the last meeting (September):** agreed.

3. **Matters arising:**

Meetings with Parish and Town Councils (PC/TCs): The Chairman reported that staff and Conservators had attended a number of Council meetings over the last three months as a result of a funding request proposal, tailored to each area. The Director circulated an update of which Councils had accepted their proposal, which had turned down and those that had requested grant applications in the New Year. Special mention was made of Ashurst Wood who had not only accepted the proposal for 2018/19 -2019/20 but had offered a grant for the current financial year. Generally, the Director reported there was a great deal of support for the Forest and acknowledgement of the work that was needed to maintain and protect it. However, it was also disappointing that some key Parishes were not minded to provide core funding and did not seem to understand some of the issues and pressures the Conservators were facing in maintaining and protecting this unique local resource. A number of Councils will be continuing discussions in the New Year and Grant applications will be submitted as requested. Tony Lewin (Forest Row) requested information on what their contribution would be spent on – the Director to follow up.

Items from parishes: Withyham – this had been followed up with the Clerk.

4. **Forest Update:** The Director spoke to her report (previously circulated) and added the following:

- Invite to the History Groups presentation on January 15<sup>th</sup> at 3.15 for 3.30
- Excellent news about purchase of woodland (12.5 acres) adjacent to the Forest Centre with funding from the Friends
- Aviva: have made the finals – thanks to everyone who voted!
- Remembrance Sunday: lovely event, well managed by staff and volunteers.
- We are currently recruiting for the North Chase Ranger position following the retirement of Ranger Mike Yates.

5. **Every Dog Matters (EDM):** The Board have agreed to fund the emptying of 2 bins following the generous offer from Fairwarp Community Society to buy the bins. Although this is an issue Forest wide, this initially will be a trial in both the Forest Centre and Broadstone Car Parks following a large number of complaints from the Education team, schools, teachers and children about the amount of dog mess on the paths and rides in the areas where they are studying.
6. **Governance review:** the Chairman reported that there was little to update since the last meeting – we are awaiting responses from the legal department at ESCC and the Charity Commission following submission of Articles of Association.
7. **Countryside Stewardship (CS):** Philip Glyn (PG) (Chair Conservation Committee) reported that the winter work programme was underway. Questions were asked about hold ups due to weather conditions – it was felt that overall this evened out between wet and dry periods and also that working on the Forest in wet weather could be beneficial in terms of the ground being poached and turned over. The Director reported that at the weekly Monday morning staff meeting the weeks forecast was considered in terms of the work to be undertaken. PG reported that the Deer programme was progressing well and on target to meet the numbers culled for the season. It was reported that a new Grazing Officer had been recruited and that, apart from the ponies, the Conservators stock was off the Forest and being over wintered at Wakehurst Place with whom there is an excellent partnership.
8. **Items from Parishes:** there were none.
- 10 **Any other business:** The Director circulated details of a new exhibition at the Forest Centre starting January 6<sup>th</sup> 2018. The Chairman wished everyone a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.
- 11 **Dates of next meeting: March 21<sup>st</sup> 7-8pm at the Forest Centre**
- 12 **Dates for 2018**  
**June 27<sup>th</sup>**  
**September 26<sup>th</sup>**  
**December 12<sup>th</sup>**