

**Minutes of the  
Seventh meeting of the Parish Liaison Panel  
of the Board of Conservators of Ashdown Forest**

1900, Wednesday 19 May 2010  
Ashdown Forest Centre

Present on behalf of the *Board*: Rupert Thornely-Taylor (who took the Chair), Michael Cooper, Philip Glyn, Hew Prendergast (Clerk).

Present on behalf of *Parishes/Councils*: *Danehill*, Joan Lunn; *Forest Row*, Vivien Hill, Brian Killick; *Hartfield*, George Korbel, Clair Park; *Maresfield*, Roger Street; *West Hoathly*, Paul Brown.

**1) Apologies**

Conservators: John Barnes.

Parishes/Councils: *Buxted*, Geoffrey Sheard; *Cromborough*, Paul Adams (in place of Sandra Timms); *Maresfield*, Charlie Stevenson.

**2) Minutes of the last meeting (17 February)**

After two minor alterations (a corrected name spelling and change of “that there is often a lot of editorial interference” to “does not have editorial control” [under 4]), the minutes were accepted as an accurate record.

**3) Matters arising/updates**

EU Habitat Regulations

A talk on the subject had been given by Natural England at the Centre on 11 May. Those of the Panel who had attended found it most useful. It was agreed that the NE Powerpoint presentation, sent to the Centre afterwards, would be circulated to Parish Clerks.

**4) Update from the Forest (all by Hew Prendergast)**

i) West High Weald Deer Management Group

This Group, set up in 2009 with the remit of coordinating deer shooting in the area bounded, roughly, by Turners Hill, Tunbridge Wells, Haywards Heath and Hadlow Down, had met at the Centre on 30 March. As well as emphasising to all those present, both land owners/managers and stalkers, the importance of shooting does, not bucks, in attempts to control the fallow population, a main feature of the evening was the need to increase the number of people interested in joining the Group. The Panel was asked to spread the word about this and to put such people in contact with the Centre who would then pass details on to the Group Secretary.

In response to a question from Rupert Thornely-Taylor, Philip Glyn offered to look into the details of, and recent or impending possible changes to, the Deer Act.

ii) Ashdown Forest Villages Road Safety Partnership

The last meeting (11 March) of this Partnership, which was set up in 2005 to involve all local parishes on the Forest (i.e. excluding Cromborough and West Hoathly), had agreed to have another campaign this summer. In contrast to previous occasions, volunteers will be using speed guns instead of Speed Indicator Devices. Data from speed guns can be used as evidence against offenders. Training sessions for speed guns were held in Withyham at the beginning of May. Paul Brown said that speed guns in West Hoathly had had effect when they were actually in operation but not otherwise.

Joan Lunn offered to enquire into the possibility of Danehill PC contributing to the Partnership as it had in the latter's early days.

Roger Street mentioned a forthcoming meeting with ESCC and local people (to which the Board has been invited) about the introduction of speed calming measures on the B2026 south of Fairwarp. ESCC were taking action as a result both of speed data and complaints from local people.

Vivien Hill mentioned the 999 event in Forest Row this Friday being held by Sussex Police and East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. The Board has contributed fliers about the Partnership.

iii) Current works – and help from other organisations

Since the last Panel meeting, Forest staff, with the support of teams from ESCC Social Services and the Sussex Probation Service, have done the big annual clean-up of litter. They are now working on various amenity aspects of Forest maintenance: rides, car parks, bridges, barriers, gates etc.

Joan Lunn said that there had been some local disquiet about tree felling down the “Mad Mile” between the A22 and Chelwood Gate. Hew Prendergast said that no one had written to the Centre about it although he had responded to a letter on the subject in the local parish magazine. He added how important it was that the Conservators continued its ‘drip drip’ approach to informing the public about heathland rarity, importance and management and how trees are not in short supply on the Forest (where they cover some 40% of the area) and how most that are felled are very young (almost all growing up since WWII). A rule of thumb is that trees on the Forest (e.g. birch, oak) are half the age in years as they are inches in girth at breast height – i.e. a tree with a girth of 40 inches is 20 years old.

iv) Grazing

The Board's own flock, some 350 strong now, has been out on the Forest most days since mid April, initially by the Isle of Thorns (overnighting on Cats Protection land), now in Wrens Warren. The Board is eagerly awaiting the outcome of the public enquiry held in March into the application by ESCC to fence parts of Chailey Common. According to Philip Glyn ESCC had a well organised proposal but opponents offered little other than the impacts on themselves.

v) Events – Vachery Forest Garden opening – 13 May; Annual Public Meeting, Forest Centre – 1930, 8 June

The first had introduced 140+ paying visitors to the Garden as part of the National Garden Scheme (for the first time) – a surprising number given the mid week timing, the 1.5 hour (minimum) round trip from Trees car park on the A22 and the lack of facilities on offer. Volunteers organised by Tracy Buxton were crucial to the day's success. The Public Meeting, also a first for the Board, is an opportunity for anyone to pose questions to the Board. It has been advertised via the Forest e-news service (first on 18 March), the website and in the Commoner Rate and Acknowledgement Rent demands due to be sent out shortly to commoners and Forest residents. Panel members offered email addresses of local parish magazine editors.

**5) AOB**

On there being none, Rupert Thornely-Taylor thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed at 2003.

NB. Next meeting: 1900, Wednesday 15 September.