

**Minutes of the
ROADS PLANNING AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST**

Monday 23rd July 2018, 14:00

Committee members present: Cllr C Hardy (Vice Chairman), Cllr R Stogdon, Cllr J Barnes.

Ex officio member: Mrs S Tidy was also in attendance.

Also present: Mrs P Buesnel (Director) and Kirsty Dirs (Clerk)

Minutes were taken by Miss K Meade

There were no members of the public present.

The Vice Chairman opened the meeting.

18/18 Apologies

Mr JW Spicer (Chairman), Cllr P Holloway, Ms S McCall and Michael Cooper sent apologies.

19/18 Declarations of any interest by Members of a Personal or Prejudicial Nature.

No declarations of interest.

20/18 Matters Arising

20.01/18 Dog Waste Bins: Additional financial offer

The Director advised that Maresfield Parish Council have expressed a willingness to fund the purchase of 8 dog waste bins to be located at Forest car parks within the parish. The cost of emptying the bins would need to be paid by the Conservators. The current contract to empty dog waste bins is with Wealden District Council (WDC) and costs £240 +VAT per bin per year. Following an in-depth discussion, the Committee felt that the bins would be welcome and Maresfield Parish Council should be thanked for their offer. **The committee agreed that due to the potential costs incurred for emptying the bins, the matter should be put forward at the next F&GP meeting to consider funding 4 more dog waste bins.** Cllr Hardy to liaise with WDC about negotiating a more beneficial contract.

20.02/18 Back Lane Parking

The Clerk was pleased to advise the cars had been removed under breach of Bye-law 5.

20.03/18 Closure of Forest Row household waste recycling site

The Clerk reported that the Forest Row waste site is due to close in September 2018 and this would be detrimental to the Forest. Cllr Stogdon to investigate whether the East Grinstead amenity site has been approached as an alternative.

20.04/18 Parish Council Updates

The Director advised there was nothing to report on the matter and it referred to item 20.01/18.

21/18 Confidential Items

The Committee entered confidential session

The Committee left confidential session

22/18 Traveller eviction process

The Clerk summarised the steps that had been taken to evict the travellers at Friends Clump explaining there were two options available; eviction under Bye-law 3 which required bailiff action, or eviction under section 62 of the Public Order Act 'Unauthorised Encampments', which requires senior officer approval and can add a time delay.

Action

CH

RS

The Clerk advised that in order for the police to use their powers under Section 62, certain conditions had to be met. She explained that in this case, the travellers had breached all the conditions and the police had agreed to follow this course of action. However, because of the time delay seeking senior police approval and the increasing tensions between the travellers and the public, it was more appropriate to pursue the matter through Bye-law 3. As such notice was served under the Act and bailiffs were put on stand-by. The Clerk explained that the travellers moved on before the bailiffs were required but a retention fee still had to be paid to the bailiffs. The Clerk concluded that the clear-up, which was extremely unpleasant, took several days. She advised that the Chairman had requested a vote of thanks to the staff be recorded.

KD

There was some discussion regarding the amount of breaches committed by the travellers and the reports of several incidents of the travellers' dogs biting members of the public.

The Committee agreed that a 'Traveller Eviction Process' needed to be prepared in time for the September Board meeting, detailing the procedures to be undertaken should further incidents arise.

Cllr Tidy asked that a vote of thanks be sent from the Board to the staff

23/18 Fuel emissions from licenced Ice Cream vendors

Mr Cooper had expressed concern about the emissions from the ice-cream vans. Cllr Barnes advised that conditions should be imposed as part of the contract tender process and that the contract is now in the first year. Cllr Tidy suggested that unless more complaints are received there is very little that can be done. Cllr Hardy reminded the Committee that the tender for Ice Cream was a large source of income to the Forest and the Members should be mindful of such a contribution. The Director reported that Mr Cooper had asked a friend to write to the Company on his behalf expressing his concerns but in a personal capacity.

24/18 Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Course – footpath markers

Cllr Tidy advised the Committee that a member of the public has had ongoing issues with the footpath markers across the golf course and that she had responded to the complainant that the issue would be discussed at the Committee meeting. The Committee agreed that footpath way markers were the responsibility of East Sussex County Council and that the Conservators have no jurisdiction in this matter. **Cllr Stogdon to write to the complainant advising him of the Conservators' responsibilities**

RS

25/18 Breach of Bye-law Issues

The Clerk highlighted to the Committee that a number of Bye-law breaches are not raised to the Committee because they are pursued and actioned promptly. She gave the example of a significant breach involving the creation of a decked area and dumped garden waste by a property owner in Nutley. The Clerk explained that following a site visit by the Committee Chairman and the Chase Ranger along with a formal letter from the Clerk, the breaches were rectified almost immediately.

The Committee were made aware of a successful prosecution brought by Wealden District Council (WDC) for a fly-tipping incident at Wych Cross. The Clerk advised that where evidence exists, WDC are keen to pursue prosecutions. The Clerk also thanked WDC for their support in Forest matters. Cllr Stogdon proposed the Conservators submit a claim for the cost of waste removal for future prosecutions.

26/18 Strategic Plan (standing item)

There was nothing to report.

27/18 Management Information

The Clerk highlighted that Bye-law breaches have almost doubled year on year and that the majority of these breaches are fly-tipping and out-of-control dogs.

The Clerk continued that fewer riding permits has been sold this year and Mounted Rangers are finding more people riding without permits. This is possibly due to the closure of a number of yards in the area. Cllr Barnes asked if it was possible to try for a prosecution for serial offenders.

28/18 Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the following year

The Clerk advised Members that Mr Spicer and Cllr Hardy had both served for four years and that Standing Orders did now allow for an extension of this time.

The Clerk asked for nominations for Chairman. Cllr Tidy proposed Cllr Hardy as Chair and this was seconded by Cllr Barnes. Cllr Hardy was duly elected Chairman.

The Clerk asked for nominations for Vice Chairman. Cllr Barnes proposed Mr Spicer as Vice-Chair and this was seconded by Cllr Stogdon. Mr Spicer was duly elected Vice Chairman.

29/18 Any urgent item for which the Clerk has notice in order to pass to the elected Chairman

There were none.

The meeting closed at 15.25