

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2016

The Conservators of Ashdown Forest
The Ashdown Forest Centre
Wych Cross
Forest Row
East Sussex
RH18 5JP

Foreword

The accounts for 2015/2016, set out in the following pages, show the financial performance of the Board of Conservators for the year, together with its overall financial position as at 31 March 2016. The purpose of the published statement of accounts is to give the Board of Conservators and other interested parties clear information about the Board's finances. The accounts provide the reader with information of the cost of conserving and managing Ashdown Forest and running and maintaining the Ashdown Forest Centre.

Statement of Accounting Policies and main principles adopted in compiling the accounts

The Board's accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Account and Audit (England) Regulations 2014 for Councils with a gross budgeted income of less than £6,500,000. In addition, supporting notes have been included where appropriate.

The Balance Sheet

This shows the balances and reserves at the Board's disposal as well as the liabilities as at 31 March 2016 (see page 4).

General Account

This reports the expenditure and income relating to conservation and management of the Forest in order to comply with the requirements of the Ashdown Forest Act 1974 and in recognition of the Forest's status as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area for Conservation (SAC) under European legislation.

The Income and Expenditure Accounts

A summary is shown on page 5 with a detail breakdown shown on pages 6 and 7.

Information Barn Account

The Information Barn figures are now shown within the general accounts.

Debtors and creditors outstanding at the end of the year are included in the accounts on the basis of known quantifiable commitments. There are no known Capital Creditors and Debtors.

All capital works and purchases of vehicles, etc., funded by the Conservators are charged to the General Budget in the year in which expenditure arises.

Central administrative charges are wholly charged to the General Budget.

As a non-principal authority there is no requirement to produce a Cash Flow Statement.

Statement of Responsibility for the Statement of Accounts

The Board's Responsibilities

The Board is required to:

- a) make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. The Conservators have employed a Finance Officer to undertake this responsibility.
- b) manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets;
- c) approve the statement of accounts.

The Responsible Financial Officer's Responsibilities

The Financial Officer (FO) is responsible for the preparation of the Board's statement of accounts which, in terms of the Account and Audit (England) Regulations for Councils 2014, is required to present fairly the financial position of the Board at the accounting date and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2016.

In preparing this statement of accounts the FO is responsible for:

- a) selecting suitable accounting policies and then applying them consistently;
- b) making judgements and estimates that are responsible and prudent;
- c) complying with the Account and Audit (England) Regulations for Councils 2014 and fully disclose any significant non-compliance.

The FO is also responsible for:

- a) keeping proper accounting records which are up to date;
- b) taking responsible steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

These financial statements represent fairly the financial position of the Conservators as at 31 March 2016 and reflect its income and expenditure during the year.

Approved by the Board on 13 June 2016

Signed

Chairman

Signed

Finance Officer

Ashdown Forest Finances to 31 March 2016

Balance Sheet

2015		2016	Notes
£	<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>	£	
5,675	INFORMATION CENTRE STOCK	3,356	
17,943	RENTS AND RATES OUTSTANDING	11,761	
19,343	DEBTORS	291,730	P.10
12,489	PAYMENTS IN ADVANCE	15,324	
3,030	FUEL AND OTHER STOCK	482	
0	FUEL DEPOSIT	-	
0	VAT	-	
433,005	CASH ON DEPOSIT	315,744	
140	CASH IN HAND	197	
491,625	TOTAL ASSETS	638,594	
	<u>CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>		
54,668	CREDITORS	64,259	P.10
-11,357	VAT	1,578	
27	RENTS IN ADVANCE	-	
1,573	DEPOSITS IN HAND	2,610	
44,911	TOTAL LIABILITIES	68,448	
446,714	TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	570,146	
446,714	<u>NET ASSETS</u>	570,146	

STATEMENT OF RESERVES AS AT 31ST MARCH 2016

	GENERAL			
	BUDGET	HLS	CS	TOTAL
Reserves Balance as at 1.4.15	317,723	128,991	0	446,714
Plus Income	406,569	323,568	139,589	730,137
Less Expenditure	439,990	228,355	77,949	746,294
RESERVES BALANCE AS AT 31.3.16	£284,302	£224,204	£61,641	£570,146

RESERVES POLICY as agreed by the Board of the Conservators on 21 March 2016

1 It is the Board's policy to maintain an Overheads Reserve equal to six months salaries and administration costs. The salaries accounted for exclude staff costs covered by Countryside Stewardship grant funding.

2 The Board will maintain Discretionary Reserves which will be allocated to earmarked reserves, to be reviewed annually.

Ashdown Forest Finances to 31 March 2016

Income and Expenditure Account

2014/2015 INCOME SUMMARY

2015/2016

£		£
403,492	Grants	550,967
103,988	Charitable Receipts and Donations	102,744
180,979	Licences & Forest Rate	177,462
14,126	Visitors	17,387
18,998	Sundry Receipts	17,725
8,249	Financial	3,441
729,832	TOTAL INCOME	869,726

2014/2015 EXPENDITURE SUMMARY

2015/2016

£		£
373,189	Staff Costs	387,199
68,675	Administration Overheads	92,816
22,214	Forest Centre Development	13,217
94,043	Operational expenses	67,556
102,728	HLS conservation (excluding staff costs)	79,690
-	CS conservation (excluding staff costs)	38,051
24,104	Financial	23,844
684,954	Total non capital Expenditure	702,373

29,183	Capital expenditure	43,920
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714,137	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	746,294
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15,695	SURPLUS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	123,432
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Notes:

Surplus / (Deficit) attributable to HLS	86,809
Surplus / (Deficit) attributable to CS	61,641
Surplus / (Deficit) attributable to Core Activities	(25,017)

Ashdown Forest Finances to 31 March 2016

2014/15 Income		2015/16		Notes
		£		
402,298	Grants		550,967	
289,692		DEFRA HLS	315,164	1
-		DEFRA CS	139,589	2
75,800		ESCC	75,800	
10,000		WDC	13,000	
26,806		Other Grants	7,414	3
103,988	Charitable Receipts and Donations		102,744	
12,641		Friends of Ashdown Forest	20,821	4
86,100		Ashdown Forest Trust	65,100	
-		AF Conservation Trust	11,327	5
5,246		Donations	5,496	
180,979	Licences		177,462	
110,995		Rents and Wayleaves	110,840	
34,601		Riding Permits	31,081	
20,876		Forest Rate	22,251	
8,694		Licence preparation/deed of covenant/consideration fees	8,545	
5,814		Temporary licences (incl Filming, Wood, Events)	4,744	
14,126	Visitors		17,387	
7,419		Barn sales	7,440	
668		Exhibition sales	516	
2,498		AF Centre Events	2,594	
2,444		School visits	5,540	6
740		Hire of premises/equipment	955	
358		Talks by staff	343	
15,119	Sundry Receipts		17,725	7
3,619		Forest products, eg Christmas trees & logs)	725	
4,966		Grazing project income	8,404	
6,534		Miscellaneous Other	7,333	
-		Feed-in-Tarif (solar energy)	1,264	
8,249	Financial		3,441	
830		Bank Interest	791	
6,667		Sale of Assets	2,650	
753		Insurance Claims	-	
724,759	TOTAL INCOME		869,726	

Ashdown Forest Finances to 31 March 2016

2014/15	Expenditure	2015/16	Notes
£		£	
373,189	Staff Costs	387,199	
291,649	Gross salaries	305,873	
19,375	Employer's NI	18,094	
52,599	Employer's pension contribution	61,426	
483	Recruitment Expenses	1,806	
62,008	Administration Overheads	92,816	
17,211	Forest Centre Running costs (rates, utilities, maintenance)	37,270	
4,678	Information Centre expenditure (stock, consumables)	7,491	
4,830	Education programme	10,820	
7,401	Post, phone, printing, stationery	6,418	
5,752	Professional fees (incl land purchase)	9,428	
14,571	Insurances	14,671	
6,849	IT	6,536	
717	Miscellaneous	184	
22,214	Forest Centre Development	13,217	
76,857	Operational expenses	67,556	
42,828	Transport,machinery, equipment (incl vehicle insurance)	40,418	
4,696	Staff expenses	3,732	
1,952	Staff training	2,131	
1,933	Volunteer expenses	2,492	
973	Interpretation (ashdown Forst Life/Byelaws/Signage)	395	
5,821	Non-HLS conservation(dangerous trees, exotics)	3,340	
316	Vachery	272	
18,016	Visitors/PR(car parks, bridges, meetings, litter, rides)	13,861	
321	Other	915	
73,598	HLS conservation (excluding staff costs)	79,690	
15,866	Grazing payments to Commoners	15,471	
55,808	Grazing project and fencing	22,997	
424	Heathland conservation	23,612	
1,500	Other HLS costs	17,610	
-	CS conservation (excluding staff costs)	38,051	
21,952	Financial	23,844	
895	Credit card terminal	984	
233	Irrecoverable rents and rates and bad debts	24	
-	Budget Contingency	-	
878	Bank charges	889	
19,946	Input VAT disallowed	21,948	
629,818	Total non capital Expenditure	702,373	
29,753	Capital expenditure	43,920	
659,571	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	746,294	

Ashdown Forest Finances to 31 March 2016

Supporting Statement to the Income and Expenditure Accounts

Income

£

- 1 The final **Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) Grant** payment, for the half-year period June 2015-December 2015, is paid in arrears and receipt of £157,582 is expected in June 2016. The HLS programme ended on 31 December 2015.
- 2 The **Countryside Stewardship (CS) Grant funding** commenced on 1 January 2016 and will run on a calendar year. Payment will be made in arrears and the first half-year payment is expected in September 2016. Income from this grant has been proportionally accrued therefore one quarter of the committed income from DEFRA has been apportioned to the 2015/16 accounts.
- 3 **Other Grants** include £5,000 from Low Carbon Workspace To contribute to refurbishment work carried out in Education Barn, £1,500 from Gatwick Grant for Arts for the purchase of equipment (macro camera lens and equipment for an audio trail) required for an Ashdown Forest Celebration event and £914 from Action in Rural Sussex to extend the reach of the education project.
- 4 **Friends of Ashdown Forest donations include:**

Ford Ranger 4x4 Pick-up Truck	14,912
Education Project	4,300
Schools travel grant (£1,000 b/f from 2014/15)	1,264
Work in the Vachery	222
- 5 **The Ashdown Forest Trust** provided a grant of £11,327 towards the insulation and glazing of the education barn.
- 6 The number of **school visits** increased in 2015/16 therefore increasing the income from this source. Other income generated by visitors is broadly in line with budget.
- 7 **Sundry receipts** were increased due to unbudgeted income for installation of a memorial seat and unbudgeted income from UK Power Networks for repair to an access across the forest. The new solar panels have generated an income of £1,264 this financial year.

Expenditure

- 1 A 1% increase was awarded to all staff. **Staff costs** are met in part by HLS/CS funding and in part from the general budget. Staff costs exceed budget by 2%. This was partly as a result of new staff: recruitment costs and handover with former staff.
- 2 The cost of **buildings maintenance** was increased considerably due to the urgent requirement to replace the forest centre boiler (see note 8) and upgrade the heating system.
- 3 **Information Centre** expenditure is over budget but has proportionately related income which results in a profit.
- 4
The **education programme** is over budget but has proportionally related income which results in a profit.
- 5 The **HLS final budget** figure is approximately 60% of the agreed budget, however the programme ceased at the end of month 9 therefore the pro-rated expenditure is within budget.
- 6 The **CS programme** was unbudgeted as both the programme and related funding commenced on 1 January 2016.
- 7
The capital items bought in the year are listed on page 9. This includes the purchase of a new biomass boiler.

Ashdown Forest Finances to 31 March 2016

Assets

Movements in the year

	Cost
	£
The following assets were purchased:	
Boiler	21,539
Rangers Truck GN15 NFY	15,727
Fire fogging system	5,500
Desktop (LM)	600
Cordless combi drill	314
Dust extractor	240
Total assets purchased	<u><u>43,920</u></u>

The following assets were sold:	£
Ford Ranger truck reg. GL08 UDJ	2,200
Trailer	450
Total assets sold	<u><u>2,650</u></u>

As at 31 March 2016 the following land assets were held:

	Value
	£
Hectares The Conservators own the following land:	
34.8 Chelwood Gate (Streeters Rough)	1
1.82 Chelwood Gate (Charles Smith Wood)	1
0.12 Millbrook, Nutley	1
0.2 Glenmore Road, Crowborough	1
1.27 Twyford	1
5.54 Isle of Thorns	1
27.92 Chelwood Vachery	1
1.42 Brabies Gate	1
0.8 Whitehouse Farm, Duddleswell	1
2.3 Friends Fields, Chuck Hatch	1
0.19 Browns Brook, Fairwarp	1
0.38 Lamberts, Colemans Hatch	1
<u>76.76</u>	<u>12</u>

Since the Board's policy is that land acquired within the Pale will not be disposed of, a nominal value of £1 per item is given. 0.65ha of land at the Ashdown Forest Centre is also owned by the Board and is given a nominal value of £1000. The remainder of the Forest is owned by the Ashdown Forest Trust.

The Insured Value of the Centre and assets, including those above in note 1, is as follows:

	£
Ashdown Forest Centre buildings (Insured replacement value)	1,513,017
Whitehouse Barn (Purchase cost)	77,890
Whitehouse Barn (Insured value)	91,001
Contents, stock, equipment etc.	382,373
[including "All risks" – portable items £57,890]	
Items on asset register excluding vehicles, buildings & livestock	232,191
Livestock	52,300

Creditors (See Page 4)

At the year end sundry creditors were owed £64,259 by the Conservators of Ashdown Forest.

The principal creditors were the Inland Revenue, £5,349, the Local Government Pension Scheme, £6,845 and the audit provision, £5,100. An amount of £1,030 was due to be settled on the company credit card.

The insurance due to NFU of £10,733 is apportioned for 2015/16 and has been entered into the 2016/17 accounts as a prepayment and will be journalled to the new financial year.

Support membership for Sage accounts in the sum of £784 and a service plan for the new Ford Ranger truck in the sum of £778 have been apportioned for the year and journalled into the new financial year.

Accruals had also been made for payment of audit services, estimated to be in the sum of in the sum of £5,100.

Henderson Products were owed £8,424 for invisible fencing supplies; OHM Energy were due the final installment of £12,223 for the installation of the boiler and heating system. Both sums were duly settled by the end of April.

The remainder of the creditors were all under £1,000 and all creditors were paid by the end of April.

Debtors (see page 4)

At the year end, debts due to the Conservators of Ashdown Forest of £291,731 were outstanding.

The major debtors is DEFRA for the final HLS funding payment of £157,582, which is paid in arrears and is due to be paid in June 2016 for the period June 2015 to December 2015. DEFRA is also due to make the first half annual payment for the Countryside Stewardship ten year programme which commenced on 1st January 2016. CS funding is due to be made on a calendar year basis in arrears, with the first half-year payment due in September 2016. The first quarter payment of the amount expected in the sum of £132,744 has been accrued in the financial accounts for 2015/16.

The remaining sum owing to The Conservators of Ashdown Forest in the sum of £1,395 was due from one local company and two individuals, two of which were paid in full by the end of April and the other, with an outstanding balance of £1,170, is being settled by agreed monthly installments.

Pension Contributions (See page 5)

The Conservators of Ashdown Forest contributed a sum equivalent to 20.6% of the salaries bill to the pension fund. The total was £61,426. The Employer's contribution will remain at 20.6% in 2016/17, however the scheme is undertaking its tri-annual review and an increase for 2017/18 to 2020/21 will be announced during 2016/17.

Advertising and Publicity

The Conservators have a statutory obligation to advertise the publication of the accounts and the notice of the Commoners' Annual Meeting. Public Notices are placed in local newspapers, on the Forest Centre's notice boards and on the Conservators' web site to meet this requirement. The total cost during 2015/16 was £842.