



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Conservators of Ashdown Forest
Monday 14 September 2020 at 12.30
VIRTUAL MEETING - MS TEAMS**

Present: Mr C Smith (Chairman), Ms S McAll (Vice Chairman), Mr N Mawdsley, Mr C de Mestre, Mr J Spicer
Mr A Reid, Mrs R St Pierre, Cllr J Barnes, Cllr D Elkin, Cllr C Hardy, Cllr R Stogdon, Cllr S Tidy, Cllr F
Whetstone and Cllr S Shing

In attendance: Mrs K Dirs (Clerk) and Mrs L Meehan (Finance Officer)

Minutes were taken by the Clerk

Members of the public present: None

	Item	Action
25/20	Apologies There were apologies from Mr Cooper and Cllr Roundell.	
26/20	Declarations of any interest by Members of a Personal or Prejudicial Nature Ms McAll and Mr de Mestre declared they are active Commoners.	
27/20	To approve the minutes of the Board meeting of Monday 29 June 2020 and matters arising The minutes had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy. The minutes were duly received and were approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6	
28/20	To approve deferred items from the Board meeting of Monday 29 June 2020 <i>28.1/20 To consider the effectiveness of the system of internal control: Internal Audit report</i> The Internal Audit report was presented to the Board. There were not any significant comments from the auditor. The Finance Officer addressed the issues raised in the report with a schedule of improvements and deadlines for implementation of changes. The Finance Officer reminded the Board that statutory documents must be reviewed and approved annually and that these were deferred twice, resulting in their approval falling outside the financial year. This will be remedied in future by reviewing the documents earlier in the financial year and supported by the provision of a timeline schedule, which the Clerk and Finance officer will review. The Board agreed the Audit noting the recommendations. <i>28.2/20 Annual Return (Section 1): To consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement 2019/20</i> The Finance Officer read out the statements for the Board to consider. The Board approved seven of the eight relevant statements. Statement 5, relating to the approval of the statutory risk management document was not approved as a review of the document did not take place during the financial year. The Board considered Governance Statement 4 relating to the proper exercising of electors' rights and although the approval process was delayed, the notice of electors' rights was made available through the normal channels and for the required amount of time. It was therefore agreed to affirm statement 4 but to raise the issue to the auditor on submission of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). The Finance Officer acknowledged responsibility for the late approval of the AGAR, having misunderstood the Covid-adjusted deadline for approval of 1 st September and the deadline for	

	<p>submission in November. This will lead to a comment from the External Auditor in the 'Other matters' section of PKF's completed report. The Finance Officer will submit a note of explanation for the missed deadline and the refutation of Annual Governance Statement 5. PKF may return a qualified audit as a result of the issues raised by the Board.</p> <p>The Board considered and the Annual Governance Statements and approved seven of the eight statements.</p> <p><i>28.3/20 Annual Return (Section 2): To consider the Accounting Statements 2019/20</i> The Finance Officer asked the Board to consider the Accounting Statements in relation to the Statement of Accounts approved by the Board on 29th June 2020. The Board considered the Annual Governance Statements.</p> <p><i>28.4/20 Annual Return (Section 2): To approve and sign the Accounting Statements 2019/20</i> The Board approved the Accounting Statements, which were signed by the Chairman on behalf of the Board</p> <p><i>28.5/20 To approve the revised Disciplinary Policy</i> The Board approved the adoption of the revised Disciplinary Policy noting small amendments incorporated into the policy.</p> <p><i>28.6/20 To approve the revised Grievance Policy</i> The Board approved the adoption of the revised Grievance Policy noting small amendments incorporated into the policy.</p>	
29/20	To approve the Terms of Reference for the HR Sub Committee The Board approved the proposed Terms of Reference for the Committee noting that the Terms would need to be revised on an annual basis and would need to include the CEO once in post.	
30/20	CLOSED SESSION Discussion on the Conservators of Ashdown Forest Work Plan	
31/20	CLOSED SESSION To note the recruitment status of the ICEO/CEO	
32/20	To approve new Bye-law signage The Board approved the entire expenditure to fund new signage at £2,434.40 noting that the actual cost incurred by the Conservators was anticipated to be in the region of £634.40, pending approval from the submission of two grant applications.	
33/20	Allocation of Board Members to Committees (as per Standing Order 5.1) The allocation of Board Members had been circulated prior to the meeting. The allocation was agreed. In the absence of a Chairman for the Finance and Regulatory Committee (Tony Reid having resigned from this post in August), the Board agreed Chris de Mestre would act as Interim Chairman for the Finance and Regulatory Committee with immediate effect.	
34/20	Any Urgent Item of which the Clerk has notice in order to pass to the elected Chairman There were none.	

The meeting closed at 14:20.

Chairman _____

Clerk _____

23 November 2020