



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Conservators of Ashdown Forest
Monday 25 November 2019 at 14.00
Ashdown Forest Centre**

Present: Cllr R Stogdon (Chairman), Cllr S Tidy (Vice Chairman), Mr A Reid, Mr J Francis, Cllr C Hardy, Cllr J Barnes, Mr C Smith, Ms S McAll, Mrs R St Pierre, Mr M Cooper, Cllr Roundell and Cllr Elkin

In attendance: Mrs K Dirs (Clerk), Mrs L Meehan (Finance Officer) and Mr S Alton (Conservation Officer)
Minutes were taken by Ms K Meade

Members of the public present: None

	Item	Action
42/19	Apologies.	
	There were apologies from Mr J Spicer, Cllr F Whetstone, Mr N Mawdsley. Cllr Shing did not attend.	
43/19	Declarations of any interest by Members of a Personal or Prejudicial Nature	
	Ms McAll declared that she is a grazier and secretary of AFRA (Ashdown Forest Riding Association). Mr Smith declared that his wife is a committee member of the Sussex Pony Conservation and Grazing Trust. Cllr Stogdon declared an interest in item 54/19	
44/19	To approve the minutes of the Board meeting of 24 June 2019 – CONFIDENTIAL BD 32/19	
	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.	
45/19	To receive the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of 08 August 2019 – CONFIDENTIAL BD 33/19	
	The minutes of the meeting had been circulated and reviewed by the Board. The minutes were duly received and were approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6	
46/19	To receive the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of 16 September 2019 - CONFIDENTIAL BD 34/19	
	The minutes of the meeting had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy. The minutes were duly received and approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6.	
47/19	To receive the minutes of the Programme Committee meeting of 16 September 2019 BD35/19	
	The minutes of the meeting had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy. The minutes were duly received and approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6.	
	<u>47.01/19 SAMMS</u>	
	The Board was advised that the agreement has now been signed and that WDC will begin the recruitment process soon. The Conservation Officer is to meet with Kelly Sharp to review the job description.	SA
	<u>47.02/19 Sussex Pony Conservation and Grazing Trust</u>	
	The Board was updated on the current status of this project. Some concerns were raised regarding the financial implications of taking on more livestock at this stage and whether increasing the Conservators' herd would impact the Commoners' rights to graze. The Board was advised that the number of ponies grazing on the Forest was unlikely to increase significantly due to the ongoing contract to graze at Pippingford. The Conservation Officer highlighted that the ponies will also be grazing in the winter when the other livestock have	

	<p>been taken off the Forest. The Board approved the proposal. Ms McAll did not support the proposal.</p> <p><u>47.03/19 Deer Programme update</u> BD 37/19 Mr Smith asked the Board to thank Jamie Cordery from the Deer Initiative for the body of work he has provided. The Board was advised that stalking had resumed.</p> <p>Mr Francis asked for an update on the barn at Broadstone Farm. The Board was advised that negotiations with the Landowner are continuing in regard to building design suitability and capacity. Once agreed the Land Agent engaged by the Board shall be in a position to progress matters further.</p>	
48/19	<p>To receive the minutes of the Finance and Regulatory Committee meeting of 14 October 2019 - CONFIDENTIAL BD 38/19</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy. The minutes were duly received and approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6.</p> <p><u>48.01/19 To acknowledge the new Firearms Policy</u> BD 39/19 Changes to some of the definitions need to be made in the next iteration of the Firearms Policy. The Board agreed that the “Responsible Person” detailed in the policy refers to the Conservation Officer. Cllr Tidy acknowledged the work done by Mr Colin Smith in delivering the new Firearms Policy and Mr Smith was thanked by the Board.</p> <p><u>48.02/19 To approve the revised Health and Safety Policy</u> BD 40/19 The policy was approved by the Board.</p> <p><u>48.03/19 To approve the new Time off in Lieu (TOIL) Policy</u> BD41/19 The policy was approved by the Board.</p>	
49/19	<p>To receive the minutes of the Finance and Regulatory budget meeting of 11 November 2019 BD 42/19</p> <p><u>49.01/19 To approve the Budget 2020/21 (Budget and Commentary)</u> BD 43/19 The committee Chairman summarised the main points of the budget and highlighted some of the challenges and risks that might be faced in the coming year. He advised the Board that the budget would be recast in the coming months. He thanked the senior management team and Finance Officer for their work under difficult circumstances.</p> <p>Following discussion of the cost of riding permits, Ms McAll noted her concern in regard to the increase in the permit fee.</p> <p>The Board approved the budget.</p> <p><u>49.02/19 To agree the Forest Rate for 2020/21 as per budget</u> The Board reviewed the proposed Rate and agreed the Forest Rate for 2020/2021 as proposed in the Budget. The Board had agreed at the December 2018 Board meeting to review Forest Rate issues in detail. It was suggested and agreed that the Finance & Regulatory Committee should set up a Working Party to review Rating issues in the coming year</p>	TR
50/19	<p>To appoint an Internal Auditor</p> <p>The Board agreed to appoint an Internal Auditor as recommended by the Finance Officer.</p>	
51/19	<p>The Ashdown Forest Foundation (TAFF) – Verbal update</p> <p>Cllr Hardy advised the Board that the gala dinner had raised £25200 net. The Chairman asked that the Board pass on their thanks to Chris Cowdrey.</p> <p>The Chairman advised the Board that two fundraisers will be giving a presentation at the Board away-day in January</p>	

	51.01/19 To agree that TAFF will be a vehicle for public donations so that gift aid can be applied The Board agreed.	
52/19	Income Generation presentation The presentation highlighted the work that has been accomplished during the year. The Board were advised that a TAFF website and a sponsored walk were being worked on.	
	54/19 was taken before 53/19	
	CONFIDENTIAL SESSION	
54/19	Director Update	
	THE BOARD LEFT CONFIDENTIAL SESSION	
53/19	To receive the Clerk's report BD 44/19	
	The Board received the Clerk's Report and expressed support for a number of initiatives and the progress reported.	
55/19	Allocation of Board Members to Committees (as per Standing Order 5.1)	
	The Clerk highlighted the need to move some committee members to allow all Board Members a vote. Mr Cooper and Mr Hardy agreed to become members of the Programme Committee, thus balancing the membership between the Finance & Regulatory Committee and the Programme Committee.	KD
56/19	Any Urgent Item of which the Clerk has notice in order to pass to the elected Chairman	
	The Chairman reminded Board members about the away-day on January 27 th . The Vice-Chair expressed a concern about how grazing is being portrayed in current affairs and asked that a clear message be produced in readiness.	SA

The meeting closed at 16:20.

Chairman _____

Clerk _____

31 March 2020