



**Minutes of the Board Meeting of the Board of Conservators**  
**Monday 27 June 2022 at 14.00**  
**Cats Protection Visitor Centre, Lewes Road, Chelwood Gate, RH17 7TT**

Present: Ms S McAll (Chair), Mrs R St Pierre (Vice Chair), Mr C de Mestre, Mrs S Tidy, Mr R Stogdon, Mr J Squire, Cllr P Pragnell, Mr A Reid, Ms F Thomas, Mrs L Maudslay, Mrs E Riminton-Drury, Cllr J Howell, Cllr M Lunn, Mr N Goldie-Scot and Cllr A Newton. Mr N Mawdsley joined by MS Teams

In attendance: Mr J Adler (CEO), Mr C Ball (Finance Officer) and Mrs K Dirs (Business Manager)

Minutes were taken by the Business Manager

Members of the public present: Mr Robin St Clair Jones and Mrs Kathryn Aalto (The Ashdown Forest Foundation)

	Item	Action
	The Chair welcomed new Members Mr Goldie-Scot, Cllr Lunn and Cllr Newton to the meeting and gave a vote of thanks to Cllr Roundell who had recently resigned.	
<b>26/22</b>	<b>Apologies</b> There were none	
<b>27/22</b>	<b>Declarations of any interest by Members of a Personal or Prejudicial Nature</b> None	
<b>28/22</b>	<b>To review the Board action log</b> There were no outstanding actions	
<b>29/22</b>	<b>To approve the minutes of the Board meeting of 14 March 2022 and matters arising</b> The minutes had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy <b>The minutes were duly received and were approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6</b>	
<b>30/22</b>	<b>To receive the minutes of the Executive Committee of 12 April 2022 and matters arising</b> The minutes had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy <b>The minutes were duly received and were approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6</b>	
<b>31/22</b>	<b>To receive the minutes of the Programme Committee meeting of 06 June 2022</b> The minutes had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy  The Chair explained the delay in the delivery of the management plan but advised the mapping and ground truthing exercise is complete. <b>The minutes were duly received and were approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6</b>	
<b>32/22</b>	<b>To receive the minutes of the Finance and Regulatory Committee meeting of 13 June 2022</b> The minutes had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy  The Chair gave a summary of the current financial position and explained ESCC had approved the current budget with a deficit of £51k which included a previously unreported staff holiday and TOIL accrual of £19k.  <u>32.1/22 To approve the Statement of Accounts Year ending 31 March 2022</u> <b>The Board agreed the Statement of Accounts</b>  <u>32.2/22 Internal Audit Report; to consider the effectiveness of the system of internal control</u>	

	<p>The Internal Audit report was presented to the Board. <b>The Board considered the effectiveness of the system of internal control and noted that there were not any significant comments</b></p> <p><u>32.3/22 Annual Return (Section 1): To consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21</u></p> <p>The CEO read out the Governance Statements and sought approval from the Board for each individual statement. <b>The Board considered and approved all Annual Governance Statements</b></p> <p><u>32.4/22 Annual Return (Section 2): To consider the Accounting Statements 2021/22</u></p> <p>The CEO asked the Board to consider the Accounting Statements. <b>The Board considered and agreed the Accounting Statements</b></p> <p><u>32.5/22 Annual Return (Section 2): To approve and sign the Accounting Statements 2021/22</u></p> <p><b>The Board approved the Accounting Statements, which were signed by the Chair on behalf of the Board.</b></p> <p><u>32.6/22 Pension Provision</u></p> <p>The CEO explained the current pension provision (a defined benefit average salary pension scheme operated by East Sussex County Council) is potentially unsustainable and that investigations are underway to ascertain whether the existing scheme can be closed to new entrants and an alternative scheme provided. Members noted the proposal and stressed future funds should be ethical.</p>	
<b>33/22</b>	<b>CEO Update</b>	
	<p>The CEO highlighted the work that the organisation has undertaken over the past year, including the completion of the Strategy and Vision, completion of the restructuring, securing a deficit budget with ESCC, approving payments for parking, the start of the Test and Trial programme, independent income generation analysis and resolution of the Countryside stewardship issue.</p> <p>The focus going forward is to review internal processes, including a new ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system, the development of a new and robust risk framework and a programme of work to refresh the Visitor Centre offer.</p> <p>As part of the management plan update, the habitat mapping of Ashdown Forest has been completed which, alongside the key work of caring for the Forest, will enable a carbon audit of the different habitats, which will demonstrate how much carbon is being captured by the Forest. Part of this exercise will include a review of the carbon emissions from use of vehicles and other machinery.</p> <p>The Forest must also improve its profile if it is to resonate with visitors and those who may wish to donate. As such the Forest is in the process of joining the Weald to Wave partnership (a Sussex based regeneration scheme to unite landowners and improve connections for wildlife), looking at species lost from the Forest, working to secure National Nature Reserve status, considering diversification and improving local interactions. There have also been wildlife surveys showing both conservation successes and highlighting where the Forest must do more.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the CEO for his update and a question was asked about progress with a Youth Board/Advisory Board. <b>The CEO to action.</b></p>	<b>JA</b>
<b>34/22</b>	<b>The Ashdown Forest Foundation (TAFF) – Verbal update (Standing Item)</b>	
	<p>The Vice Chair highlighted the recent work of the charity noting a significant donation from a local private donor, a grant for a carbon sequestration review and income from talks and a cake sale. A recent engagement day at Cotchford Farm had generated £12.5k profit.</p>	
<b>35/22</b>	<b>Election of Chair and Vice Chair of the Board</b>	

	<p>Prior to the meeting nominations were invited for the position of Chair to the Board of Conservators. Chris de Mestre nominated Susan McAll and this was seconded by Rosalyn St Pierre. There being no other nominations, Ms McAll was duly elected as Chair for a period of twelve months.</p> <p>Prior to the meeting nominations were invited for the position of Vice Chair to the Board of Conservators. Chris de Mestre nominated Rosalyn St Pierre and this was seconded by Elizabeth Riminton-Drury. There being no other nominations, Mrs St Pierre was duly elected as Vice Chair for a period of twelve months.</p>	
<b>36/22</b>	<b>Allocation of Board Members to Committees</b>	
	To be circulated post meeting. <b>ACTION: KD</b>	
<b>37/22</b>	<b>Any urgent Item of which the Clerk has noticed in order to pass to the elected Chair</b>	
	There were none.	
	There being no further business, the meeting closed at 15:50.	

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Clerk \_\_\_\_\_

21 November 2022