



**Minutes of the Board Meeting of the Board of Conservators
Monday 14 March 2022 at 14.00
Virtual Meeting – MS Teams**

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, Cllr P Roundell, Mr A Reid, Mr C Smith, Ms F Thomas, Mrs L Maudslay and Mrs E Riminton-Drury.

In attendance: Mr J Adler (CEO) and Mrs K Dirs (Business Services Manager)

Minutes were taken by the Business Services Manager

Members of the public present: Mr N Goldie-Scot

	Item	Action
	<p>The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting and introduced Neil Goldie-Scot, the successful candidate elected at the Commoners meeting on 04 March. The Chair explained Mr Goldie-Scot would be appointed to the Board from 01 April to replace Mr Smith who was retiring by rotation.</p> <p>The Chair led a vote of thanks to Mr Smith highlighting the successes achieved by Mr Smith during his time as Chair of the Board. Mr Smith thanked the Chair and proposed a vote of thanks to the staff team for their patience during the re-structure.</p>	
17/22	<p>Apologies There were none</p>	
18/22	<p>Declarations of any interest by Members of a Personal or Prejudicial Nature None</p>	
19/22	<p>To approve the minutes of the Extraordinary Board meeting of 17 January 2022 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</p>	
20/22	<p>To approve the minutes of the Extraordinary Board meeting of 31 January 2022 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</p>	
21/22	<p>To receive the minutes of the Programme Committee meeting of 07 February 2022 The minutes had been circulated and assessed by the Board for accuracy</p> <p>The Chair gave a summary of the meeting, highlighting the salient points. The CEO confirmed the Management Plan is in progress and the Test & Trial programme is gathering momentum. Contractors have removed 7.8 hectares of gorse from Kidd's Hill with the chippings going to a produce green electricity. TAFF have raised money for a carbon sequestration assessment of the Forest.</p> <p>There was discussion on the use of chemicals for managing invasive species and whether less noxious alternatives would be suitable to contain problematic species. There was also discussion on the SAMMs role and the objectives of the post, which the CEO confirmed were primarily to educate forest users and to promote and encourage the use of SANGS. Staff were working with Wealden District Council to recruit for the role with the Forest being the employer and WDC paying the costs.</p> <p>The minutes were duly received and were approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6</p>	

22/22	<p>To receive the minutes of the Finance and Regulatory Committee meeting of 14 February 202</p>	
	<p>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 the deficit reflected. The Conservators were in receipt of the outstanding payments from the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) and a national review of CS rates had led to an increase of £97k for conservation management for 2022/2023. The Chair thanked the CEO and the Finance Officer for their hard work securing the deficit budget with ESCC. A site visit for an alternative access needs to be arranged. ACTION: KD</p> <p>Mr Reid questioned whether there was spare capacity in the 2022/2023 budget given rising fuel costs. The CEO acknowledged this was an exposure, particularly given the volatile economic situation and that regular monitoring was required and had been implemented.</p> <p>22.01/22 To approve the General Risk Management Plan 2021/2022 The Board unanimously approved the General Risk Management Plan</p> <p>22.02/22 To approve the Financial Risk Management Plan 2021/2022 The Board unanimously approved the Financial Risk Management Plan</p> <p>The minutes were duly received and were approved in accordance with Standing Order 2.6</p>	KD
23/22	<p>Update on Parking Payments on Ashdown Forest – verbal</p> <p>The CEO summarised the current position with parking payments. Written representations to WDC, ESCC, the RAC and the AA have been issued, detailing proposed charges for the parking scheme. The tender process has commenced and the deadline for receipt of Requests for Proposals is midnight on 03 April. An open day is being held on 17 March for companies interested in tendering. The purpose of the open day is to visit car parks, meet members of the team and ask questions. It is intended to open the Forest Centre on a daily basis once charges are implemented.</p> <p>Ms Riminton-Drury asked whether Epping Forest provide monthly payments.</p> <p>The Chair explained to Members that to enable operational decisions to be made in a timely manner, delegated authority to the CEO was recommended.</p> <p>23.01/22 To delegate authority to the CEO to award and instruct related contracts The Board unanimously agreed to delegate authority to the CEO to award and instruct related contracts.</p> <p>23.02/22 To delegate authority to the CEO to agree a sustainable payment scheme The Board unanimously agreed to delegate authority to the CEO to agree a sustainable payment scheme.</p> <p>23.03/22 To delegate authority to the CEO to enter into a loan agreement for this programme The Board unanimously agreed to delegate authority to the CEO to enter into a loan agreement for the programme.</p>	
24/22	<p>The Ashdown Forest Foundation (TAFF) – Verbal update (Standing Item)</p> <p>The Vice Chair highlighted the recent work of the charity. An event organiser is being hired to manage the event at Cotchford Farm on 28 and 29 May. A series of talks are planned through the day and the event will be ticketed. The Chair of TAFF has supported volunteer days on the Forest as part of a corporate volunteer programme and a TAFF social media campaign is underway. Income to date stands at £137k, with £72k unrestricted funding.</p>	
25/22	<p>Any urgent Item of which the Clerk has noticed in order to pass to the elected Chair</p> <p>The Board entered Confidential Session</p>	

The Board left Confidential Session	
There being no further business, the meeting closed at 15:50.	

Chair _____

Clerk _____

27 June 2022