

**Minutes of the
FINANCIAL & REGULATORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST**

Monday 20 February 2023

14:00 at the Ashdown Forest Centre

Committee members present: Mrs Ffion Thomas (Chair), Mr Neil Goldie-Scot (Vice Chair) and Cllr Pragnell

Ex-Officio: None

Also present: Mr J Adler (CEO) and Mr C Ball (Finance Officer)

Minutes taken by the CEO and Finance Officer

		Action
01/23	<p>Apologies Mr AG Reid, Mrs R St. Pierre, Ms S McAll, Mr R Stogdon and Ms K Dirs (Business Manager). Cllr Lunn did not attend.</p>	
02/23	<p>Declarations of interest by Members of a Personal or Prejudicial Nature None</p>	
03/23	<p>Finance <i>03.01/23 2022/23 Q3 Finance Report</i> The Finance Officer presented the report to the committee. The cashflow presentation was discussed with the surrounding issues of the Countryside Stewardship income arriving later in the December to July payment window than ideal. The revenue payment has not yet been received and the RPA have been contacted to be asked if payment can be made as soon as is possible.</p> <p>A legacy has been notified to the Conservators. Due diligence will be undertaken on this potential legacy.</p> <p><i>03.02/23 Budget 2023/2024</i> Cashflow modelling includes the £200k that is held in reserves from the previous HLS agreement. In spite of this the organisation regularly drops below its six month operating costs policy recommendation. There was discussion that this policy recommendation should be amended to three or four months to better reflect cashflow and risk levels.</p> <p><i>03.03/23 CS vs Core verbal update</i> The Finance Officer updated the committee on the Q3 position showing that the core budget is underbudget and therefore the overall deficit is presently lower than anticipated.</p>	<p>CB</p> <p>CB</p>

04/23	<p>Policy and Procedure and Statutory Documents</p> <p><i>04.01/23 To recommend General Risk Management Plan 2022/23 for Board approval</i> The Committee discussed the plan. As it is a retrospective approval it is to be recommended to the Board. The plan will be considered for 2023/24 to include a holistic framework with appropriate RAG reporting. The Committee unanimously supported the proposal to recommend the General Risk Management Plan 2022/23 for Board approval.</p> <p><i>04.02/23 To recommend Finance Risk Management Plan 2022/23 for Board approval</i> The Committee discussed the plan. This was in light of the cashflow discussion at 03.02/23 above. It was agreed to contact the other, similar organisations to determine how they managed banking and overdraft facilities. The Committee unanimously supported the proposal to recommend the Finance Risk Management Plan 2022/23 for Board approval.</p> <p><i>04.03/23 To recommend the Revised Standing Orders 2022/23 for Board approval</i> The Committee discussed the orders. The Committee unanimously supported the proposal to recommend the Revised Standing Orders 2022/23 for Board approval.</p> <p><i>04.04/23 To recommend the revised Financial Regulations 2022/23 for Board approval</i> The Committee discussed the regulations. They highlighted that section 2.2 needed consideration in light of the discussions above but this could be considered in the 2023/24 document. The Committee unanimously supported the proposal to recommend the Revised Financial Regulations 2022/23 for Board approval.</p>	<p>KD/JA</p> <p>KD/CB</p> <p>CB</p>
05/23	<p>Amenity & Licencing</p> <p><i>05.01/23 Renewal of Colemans Hatch Bowling Club licence</i> The CEO updated the Committee that this agreement would remain a licence rather than a lease.</p> <p><i>05.02/ Renewal of Refreshment provision licence</i> Three tenders have been received. There is a tender, from the existing provider, that is considerably higher than the other two. The tender included a request to investigate green technology. The winning tenderer will be encouraged to alter to greener technology over time.</p> <p><i>05.03/23 Sussex Film Office partnership</i> The Forest has entered into an agreement with the Sussex Film Office. This company will advertise and negotiate filming on the Forest. They will take a commission. The agreement has a short break clause provision.</p>	
06/23	<p>Encroachments and Bye-law breaches</p> <p>There were none to report.</p>	
07/23	<p>Employment & Staffing Arrangements (Referred from HR Sub Committee)</p> <p><i>07.01/23 Contract with Peninsula Business Services (& Brighter HR)</i> The Forest has entered into an agreement with this company to provide HR and Staff wellbeing support.</p>	
08/23	<p>Policy and Procedure and Statutory Documents</p> <p><i>08.01/23 Policy review (Peninsula)</i></p>	

	The company is carrying out a review of the Forest's policies. They have produced an updated staff handbook and contracts.	
09/23	Health and Safety and Insurance claims (standing item) verbal update <i>09.01/23 Health & Safety Review (NFU & Peninsula)</i> There has been an incident on the Forest during a tree safety operation. This is under investigation by various agencies.	
10/23	Data breaches (standing item) verbal update There were none. However, a threat has been made by an anonymous correspondent by email related to car parking. The police have been made aware. The Forest's IT provider has also looked at the organisation's firewall.	
11/23	Any Urgent Item of which the Clerk has notice in order to pass to the elected Chairman	
	Cllr Pragnell announced that this would be his last meeting as he is stepping down as Chair of the County Council and therefore as Lord of the Manor, in March. The Committee thanked Cllr Pragnell for everything that he has done for the Forest over many years. The Committee were informed of the names for the Commoners' Election which have been posted publicly.	

The meeting closed at 15:20

Item 03/23 - third paragraph - "There was discussion that this policy recommendation should be amended to three or four months to better reflect cashflow." - please could we add "and risk levels" as I would like to make it clear that we wouldn't just be considering altering it because we don't meet the target, rather we are also considering our actual risk levels, which following analysis may warrant a reduced amount.