

1966 – 1973

Minutes of The Annual General Meeting of the Commoners duly convened by notices posted on the principal doors of the churches of the parishes and ecclesiastical districts and post offices to which the Forest extends and by notices to the members of the Board more than fourteen days prior to this date and held at the memorial Hall, Nutley, at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, 13th December, 1966.

Present: Mr. Lumsden; Miss Lumsden; Mr. Campbell; Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd Jones; Mr. & Mrs. Donald Ratcliffe; Mr. & Mrs. Stephenson; Mr. F.B. Cornwell; Mr. Derek Evatt; Mr. R. Brooks; Mr. ****well; Mr. & Mrs. Hewitt; Mr. Hoad; Mr. W.D. Gillham; Mr. Kirby; Mr. Evenay; Mr. Glover; Mr. Harding; Mr. *****; Mr. Carmichael; Mr. Wheldon; Mr. Halston; Mrs. Anderson; Mr. Anderson; Mr. & Mrs. Tattersall-Wright; Mr. Heath; Col. Lowe; Mr. & Mrs. Baker; Miss Riley; Mr. Townsend; Mr. *****; Mr. Routledge; Mr. & Mrs. Berkeley; Mr. Bond; Mr. Pillinger; Mr. Ridley; Mr. Osborne; Sir William Garrett; Mr. Randle; Sir Ralph Clarke; and Mr. Drew

1. The Clerk read the notice convening the Meeting.

2. Election of Chairman: The Clerk called for nominations for a Chairman. Sir Ralph Clarke proposed, seconded by Mr. Townsend, that Mr. Drew be re-elected Chairman and this resolution was passed unanimously.

3. The Clerk then read the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting which were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. Election of Conservators: The Clerk reported that Col. Lowe, Mr. Gillham and Sir William Garrett had retired from the Board by rotation but offered themselves for re-election. There were no other nominations and he therefore declared them re-elected.

5. Election of Recreation Ground Superintendents: The Superintendents of the Recreation grounds for last year were unanimously re-elected as under:

- (1) Nutley, Mr. Gillham
- (2) Forest Row, Col. Lowe
- (3) Colemans Hatch, Mr. Drew
- (4) Fairwarp, Mr. Harvey
- (5) Chelwood Gate, Mr. Brooks

6. Chairman's Report: The Chairman stated how pleased he was to see that the Meeting was so well attended. There was a good deal of business to be got through and quite a number of items to discuss, so he would start by giving a resume of what had happened on the Forest during the past year, but first he would like to mention again the Kennedy clump which had been referred to at the previous meeting, because he would like to stress how extremely well it was doing, and he hoped people would go and see it for themselves.

He stated that in December last year Commander Angell had joined the Clerk, Mr. Williams, as his part-time assistant. This appointment had proved a most useful addition to the outside administration as the work of the Rangers had been thoroughly and properly organised to achieve the general maintenance of the Forest.

The clumps had been cut and replanted where necessary. The firebreaks which extend in length to approximately sixty miles, had been cut by the Conservator's own tractor and cutting machine. Numerous posts had been placed at the end of firebreaks to stop visiting motor cars from driving down them, and great use had been made of the new Depot which had been established and finally opened in December the previous year. The Rangers had walked the boundaries of the Forest during the year and had found one or two encroachment and these of course had been corrected. Two new parking areas had been out and laid out for the large number of summer visitors who had enjoyed the facilities of picnicking, particularly in the Kingstanding and Ridge Road area.

In February and March, the Chairman continued, there had been a number of deliberate fires started which had burnt approximately 475 acres, as he had pointed out the previous year, fire started under these circumstances could not always be controlled by firebreaks but at least they had had the satisfaction of seeing that in many cases the area

which had been burnt would have been for greater but for the breaks which had contained the fire from spreading even further.

The Chairman reported that a commoner at Fairwarp had exceeded his License and had constructed a turning circle on the Forest. This turning circle had not been accepted by the Board and after various representations nothing had been done to part it right and so the circle had been blanked off by the creation of posts so that it had been of no further value to the person who had put it down. In the near future the Rangers would be forced to remove the tarmacadam unless this had been done by the resident himself but it would be restored to its natural state within a short time.

He stated that during the year there had been a number of prosecutions instigated by the Rangers and Police, and he listed some of the offences which had been committed – dumping litter, carrying a gun, camping and abandoning a derelict car.

He then referred to the activities of the Friends of Ashdown Forest which he described as “this excellent organisation ably led by the Chairman, Mr. Robert Lumsden” who had helped the Board of Conservators enormously with cash grants for the purchase of a new Allen rotor-scythe, a new motorcycle for one of the Rangers, a new Gloucester forage harvester and a supply of notices which would be attached to litter beakers, one of which the Chairman held up for the Commoners to see.

He told them of a visit which he and the Clerk had made to Epping Forest the previous June to see how their affairs were was explaining that the position there was similar to Ashdown Forest with a few major exceptions. The fringe of their area was very much more built up but the Commoners still had the right to graze their cattle and considerable facilities for the public to enjoy the area were provided. There were many more prepared sports grounds and football pitches were maintained by the Board and this was where the big difference lay namely in finance. Epping was subsidised by the Corporation of London who employed eighteen Rangers, a number of wooden and other men who did ordinary labouring jobs. They expected large number of visitors in the summer months, particularly when the weather was good, and they serried out three hundred prosecutions a year for contravention of the bye-laws. This large organisation was very luckily backed by ample finance, and in the past year their expenditure had been over £100,000, compared with the Ashdown Forest figure of £4,500. Although Ashdown Forest area contained a greater number of acres. He stated that Ashdown Forest might be a poor relation but it was far more beautiful, far less encroached upon and it was still ran by people who actually lived on the Forest and took a great interest in preserving it in an age when change seemed to be the operative word.

He reminded the Commoners of the days when the expenses of running Ashdown Forest had been in the region of £2,500 per annum, but since then the number of Rangers had been increased by one and now there would be selective Employment Tax, as well as the increased cost of petrol and of the maintenance of the machinery which was now used to keep the Forest cut and also patrolled. Revenue had also increased as Licenses to ride had brought in just under £100, a further revenue had been obtained by the proposed re-opening of the Ladies Golf Course belonging to Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club, and organisations such as cadet forces who held Field Days on the Forest now had to pay for the privilege.

The Chairman was pleased to report that the Board had finally heard that the Ministry of Defence no longer claimed any statutory right to train over Ashdown Forest as had been allowed under the 1948 Act. In future any training by army units would only be carried out with the Board's consent.

He mentioned a request for training of a specialist type which consisted of radio signalling between certain points.

This entitled not more than four army vehicles being parked 15 yards from the road in certain specified areas and when this training took place the Board would receive remuneration for the facilities granted and they expected revenue of approximately £50 annum for granting those facilities, but he again emphasised that it was in the Board's discretion whether these facilities were revenue for a period of one year

He then referred back to his Report of the previous year on *** access which had been blocked at Newbridge Mill, Coleman's Hatch, and was glad to tell the meeting that it was now open and that without the continued vigilance and hard work carried out by the three Rangers, the progress of the last year would not have been achieved.

The Chairmen stated that in February 1967 he would have completed four years as Chairman. He would now have to stand down as the rules did not permit him to continue in this position without a break. He was helping that in his place the Board would elect Sir William Garrett who many of the Commoners would know lived at Horney Common. His years in the "hot seat of Chairmanship" lay ahead and he would therefore ask him a little later in the meeting to give his views on what problems he expected to encounter during his term of office, but before this the Clerk, Mr. Williams, would speak on the registration of claim of common land, and after Sir William Garrett had spoken he heard their questions.

7. Any other business:

(a) Commons Registration Act 1965: The Clerk reported on the implications of this Act and explained some of the details and regulations revered in connection with registration.

(b) The Future of Ashdown Forest: Sir William Garrett then addressed the meeting. Forest, he thanked Mr. Drew on behalf of the Commoners for the tremendously energetic and hard work he had put into his four years of office, and he told the Commoners that at his instigation a change had been made in the Standing Order to allow for a Deputy-Chairman, as well as the Chairman and Vice Chairman, the Vice Chairman being in future the retiring Chairman. In this way someone so up to date and full of knowledge as Mr. Drew would still be available to give his help and advice.

Sir William then paid tribute to the Friends of the Forest without whose aid the Conservators would face even greater difficulties in maintaining the Forest which was used by an increasing number of people each year, and the more the Forest was used the more it cost to maintain. Once the period of registration under the Commons Registration Act had ended, it was his opinion that certain parts of the Forest might be brought under the National Parks Authorities under whom considerable financial grants and assistance could then be given. This was something to which all those interest should give thought, and he recommended a recent Government White Paper called "Leisure in the Countryside" which explained what could be done in the right way and with the least possible expense.

8. The meeting was then opened to questions. Various questions were asked and certain matters of general interest were raised by Mr. Townsend, Mr. Stevenson, Miss Riley, Mr. Hoad, Mr. Osborne and Sir Ralph Clarke.

9. Mr. Lumsden then proposed a vote of thanks to the retiring Chairman who, in his opinion, was the best they had had for fifty years. While he had been in the chair the Commoners had know that their Right would be defended.

10. The meeting was then declared closed.

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THE VILLAGE HALL, FOREST ROW, ON THURSDAY 15TH DECEMBER, 1966, AT 2.30 P.M

Present: Miss A. Lumsden; Mrs. P. Foster; Mr. F.B. Cornwell; Mr. W.D. Gillham; Mr. R.F.J. Brooks; Sir William Garrett; Mr. R.P. Odell; The Hon, C.A.S. Grimston; Capt. D.F.M. Armstrong; Col. J.H. Lowe; Mr. L.J. Cornwell; Sir Ralph Clarke; Mrs. U. Ridley; and Mr. J.H. Drew in the chair.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mr. A.K.L. Harvey, Major R.E.W. Grubb and Brig. L.M. Scott.

2. The Minutes of last meeting having been circulated were taken as read and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters arising:

(a) Alteration to Standing Order No.6: The Clerk reported that this was now being printed for insertion in the present copies of the Standing Orders, and he read out the revised version as approved at the last Meeting.

(b) Estimates: The Clerk reported that after the estimates had been approved at the previous Meeting, the full implications of the Commons Registration Act 1965, of which he would be giving details later in the afternoon, had come to light and it was quite obvious to him that a great deal of extra work was going to fall on his department with which he and his present staff, consisting of one half-time book-keeper and the Deputy Clerk who also worked half-time during which he was mostly out on the Forest, would be quite unable to cope. On the face of it the forms of registration looked easy, but he was quite certain a number of Commoners would have to come to his

office to get the necessary particulars. He felt he must have some body to help him with this work who already know and understood the Forest, and he was therefore going to ask the Board to permit him to have Commander Angell working full-time during the next twelve months so that he could come into the office in the mornings. He would remind the Board that the Conservators existed among other things to protect the Commoners and their Rights, and he, the Clerk, therefore could hardly refuse to give them this assistance. He had approached the East Sussex County Council through their clerk on this subject and the reply had been non-committal as they wished first to see the estimates, but since the Clerk's Department was going to be busy with the Commons Registration Act, which applied not only to Ashdown Forest but to every common, village green, manor waste, etc., it would certainly be in the County Council's interests if the Forest Registration form were filled in accurately. He had told the Commoners at their Annual General Meeting two nights previously that, subject to this being acceptable to the Board, he would give them all the help he could so long as they wrote to him, or made appointments to see him, but did not telephone. He hoped many of them would consult their own solicitors, but a great many would not. There were something in the region of 1100 Commoners who might make enquiries.

There was another side to this matter also and that was the subject of objections. A great many rights would be registered to which individuals might object, but more especially the Board itself, and all registrations would have to be watched and objected to if necessary. This would mean examining the register at stated intervals.

A general discussion then took place in which the Board was very divided on whether there was any need for the Deputy Clerk to be employed full-time on the basis that there would be no rush by the Commoners to get themselves registered. They had eighteen months in which to register free of charge and some members of the Board considered they would all wait until the last three months. Another point that arose was whether Commander Angel should now be employed direct by the Conservators or whether he should continue to be paid by the Clerk. It was explained by the Clerk that since he ran the Ashdown Forest work from his own firm of solicitors and not as a separate organisation which meant that it was his office equipment which was used, it was better if he continued to employ Commander Angell direct, but there was no reason why Commander Angell's salary should not be shown in the estimates as a separate entity, and in any case explanatory notes would be going out with the estimates, copies of which would be sent to these members of the Board who also represented Local Authorities, explaining the reasons for the increase in salary, postage, printing, stationery, etc.,

After further discussion, and on the basis that selective Employment Tax would be saved if the Deputy Clerk were employed direct by the Conservators, it was proposed by Captain Armstrong that the Deputy Clerk should be employed full-time direct by the Board of Conservators for one year. This was seconded by Mrs. Ridley and carried by fourteen votes to one against and the amended estimates approved accordingly.

(c) Land Rover: The Chairman stated that at the last Meeting he had authorised the Board to pay up to £450 for a second-hand Land Rover, but it had not proved possible to find a suitable one. Had he now the Board's permission to buy a new one? He had in his hand an estimate from the Felbridge Garage who were prepared to give a discount of 12½% on the cost price and to allow £50 for the van, making a total of £153. The cost of a new diesel Land Rover including delivery charges, heater, number plates, etc., was £900, so that the price to the Board would be £750. A general discussion then took place on the merits of diesel and petrol Land Rovers, and finally the Chairman proposed that the Board should buy a new diesel Land Rover according to the estimate submitted by the Felbridge Grange with a discount of 12½ % and £50. allowance on the van, raising the money to pay for it from securities. Seconded by Miss Lumsden and carried unanimously.

(d) Ashdown Forest Act 1949: The Clerk reported that after the last meeting he had written to the Ministry of Defence about paying £50, a year for the limited use of the Forest for training. This letter was still with the Ministry of Defence. Two members of the Board then stated that they had seen these exercises being carried out, so it could be assumed that the Ministry had accepted the condition and would be given its official sanction shortly.

4. Commons Registration Act 1965: The Clerk reported that he and Commander Angell had visited the Ministry of Land and Natural Resources in October where the whole procedure of registration had been explained to them, and they had learned that the Conservators must register the Forest as a Common, and Commoners, if they wished to keep their Rights, must register the land on which or over which they claimed Rights. Since then he had arranged with the County Council to be the first to register on the 2nd January, so that the Commoners would know the registration number of the map. It had been explained at the Ministry that when the registration period was closed, the Government of the day then examine what Rights had been established and bring in an Act of Parliament for Commons generally, probably around 1975. It had been pointed out that Ashdown Forest already had its own Acts,

and that if the Conservators wished to effect improvements they should start straight away working out a scheme based on the Government White Paper “Leisure & The Countryside”. The Government was not going to initiate any Schemes – the Scheme would have to come from the Conservators or some other local body.

Regarding what would happen to those who failed to register, he had taken Counsel’s Opinion and the answer was (a) Commoners would lose their Common Rights and (b) they would lose their liability to pay Forest Rates. The Board must therefore face the fact that from 1970 onwards there was likely to be a steep decrease if the Rate income.

5. Report on the Commoners Meeting: About fifty people had attended the meeting which was at the Nutley Memorial Hall. The meeting next year would be at Forest Row but the probable date, 12th December at 7 p.m., had not yet been confirmed with the caretaker. Col. Lowe, Mr. Gillham and Sir William Garrett had retired by rotation and had been re-elected.

6. Deputy Clerk’s report: The Rangers had been employed very largely on the collection of Rates since the last Board Meeting. This had required considerable tact and patience, involving in some cases five or six visits to a single house, and many searching enquiries as to acreage and division of land. The result had been a reduction in outstanding Rates by £300. The new Forage harvester had been delivered, and had done a small amount of work, and shown signs of being a very efficient machine. A supply of timber for beater handles, stands, riding posts, etc., had been stacked ready for winter use, and production of fire beaters had commenced. It was intended to make upwards of one hundred new type beaters this year, using second-hand belting and replacing one hundred birch beaters. A start had been made in erecting the new implement shed, thanks to suitable timber for the uprights having been supplied by Mr. Brooks.

Rangers Arnold and Streeter had taken their extra week’s winter holiday. The Deputy Clerk stated that since his Report had been circulated, Ranger Streeter had been off sick but hoped to be back after Christmas.

7. Finance: Accounts as at 14th December, 1966

(1) Bank balances:

General Account	287.18.4
Wages and Petty Cash Account	454.18.9
Licence Account	
Conservators Ack. Rates	<u>37.13.8</u>
	<u>780.10.9</u>

(2) The following amounts had been collected since 1st January, 1966

Period	Forest Rates	Ack. rates	Horse riding	Local Authority Contributions	Temporary licences
1 st Jan – 15 th Feb	8.17.6	141.19.3	23.0.0		10.10.0
16 th Feb – 19 th April	4.11.6	201.18.0	10.0.0	1190.19.0	32.10.0
20 th April – 18 th July	647.10.0	10.13.6	12.0.0	518.0.0	41.17.6
19 th July – 18 th October	448.17.0	113.6.0	18.0.0	714.11.5	43.2.6
19 th October – 14 th December	327.19.0	45.0.4	5.15.0		16.5.0
	1437.15.0	510.17.1	68.15.0	243.10.5	144.3.0

(3) Forest Rate arrears on 1st January, 1966, amounted to £117.16.6. of this amount £112.11.6. had been recovered to date.

(4) Forest Rate arrears outstanding to date amounted to £108 6.0. i.e. already less than those of the previous year despite reluctance by several Commoners to pay the increased rate.

The Clerk than reported that although the Bank balance at present showed £780, when the cheque for his salary £355 and another £200 for wages had been drawn, only £155 would be left at the end of the year. None of the Local Authorities could make their contributions till 1st April, and although demands for Acknowledgement Rents went out on 1st January, the money therefore become overdrawn and he had no authority to overdraw. The Board on the other hand had power to borrow money under the 1937 Act. He had spoken to the Treasurer of the Uckfield Rural District Council who had told him that if the Board's authority was obtained, he thought he could arrange that his Council would finance the Conservators for the period up to the next Board Meeting in February. He therefore asked the Board to give him authority to borrow up to £1,000. This was not the first time the Conservators had been to borrow. The Chairman proposed, seconded by Sir Ralph Clarke, and it was RESOLVED that the Clerk be authorised to borrow up to £1,000 from the Uckfield Rural District Council between 1st January, 1976, and the 15th February.

8. Any Other Business:

(a) Mr. Odell asked whether nothing could be done to help the people living in Bank Farm Cottages whose road was so unapproachable that litter could not be collected. Colonel Lowe replied that he had tried to form a Road Trust of the owners of the eight cottages, and in spite of promise of help, especially of labour, from both the Conservators and the Golf Club, the scheme had fallen down because one lady refused to come into the Trust and the others would not go on without her. The first thing would be to bridge the ford which he estimated would cost £240, of which £70, was already available, but until the owners formed a Trust, nothing more could be done. Mr. Odell said that in the circumstance he would say no more.

(b) Sir William Garrett told the Board he had addressed the Commoners at their Annual General Meeting on the subject of National Parks and that when registration under the Commons Registration Act 1965 was complete, the placing of unoccupied portions of Ashdown Forest under the National Parks scheme was almost certain to come. Captain Armstrong stated that the County Council had appointed a sub-Committee to look into this with special reference to car parks.

9. Dates of Meeting 1967: The Clerk stated that the suggested dates on the Agenda had not yet been confirmed by the caretaker of the hall, but he would be letting members know in good time if 15th February was a firm date for the next Meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed.

MINUTES OF A MEETING HEAD AT THE VILLAGE HALL, FOREST ROW, ON WEDNESDAY, 15th FEBRUARY, at 2.30 p.m.

Present : Sir William Garrett, Mr. J.H. Drew, Mr. R.F.J. Brooke; Mr. A.K.L. Harvey; Mr. F.B. Cornwell; Miss Anne Lumsden; Col. J.H. Lowe; Mr. W.D. Gillham; The Hon. C.A.S. Grimston; Major R.E.W. Grubb; Capt. D.M.F. Armstrong; L.J. Cornwell; Brig. L.W. Scott; Mrs. U.M. Ridley; Mr. I.T. Rush; Mr. R.P. Odell and Mr. J.F. Bishop.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Col. Sir Ralph Clarke.

2. Election of new officers:

(a) The Clerk called for nominations for the election of a new Chairman in the place of Mr. Drew who was resigning after four years in the Chair. Mr. Drew proposed, seconded by Mr. Brooke that Sir William Garrett should be elected as Chairman and this Resolution was carried unanimously.

(b) Sir William Garrett then took the Chair and called for nominations for the Deputy Chairman. He himself suggested Col. Lowe, who served on the Special Purposes Committee and was well-known in Forest Row. Mr. Drew proposed, seconded by Mrs. Ridley and it was RESOLVED that Col. Lowe should be the new Deputy Chairman, which resolution was carried unanimously.

(c) The Chairman stated that following on the recent amendment to the Standing Orders, a Vice-Chairman, as well as a Deputy Chairman, should now be elected and in this case he would like the Board's permission to make the nomination himself. He would like to propose Mr. Drew as his Vice Chairman as he valued his experience and assistance. This proposal was seconded by Major Grubb and the Resolution was carried unanimously.

3. The Chairman stated that he would like to take item No. 6 on the Agenda out of order, which was to welcome Mr. Ian T. Rush as a new member of the Board representing the East Grinstead Urban District Council in place of Mr. Connor.

4. To elect Committees:

The Clerk stated that the Special Purpose Committee consisted normally of the Chairman and Vice Chairman, the Chairman of the Forest Row Committee and of the Maresfield Committee, and the other members at present were Col. Sir Ralph Clarke, Col. Lowe and Mr. Brooke. It was such a long time since either the Forest Row or Maresfield Committees had met, that he had no idea who were their respective Chairman, and he wondered whether in fact these two Committees still served a useful purpose or whether they should be disbanded and made officially defunct. The Board agreed with these views and it was proposed by Mr. Rush, Seconded by Mr. Gillham and RESOLVED that the Forest Row Committee and the Maresfield Committee should cease to exist.

The membership of the Special Purpose Committee was then discussed. It was agreed that the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Vice Chairman should serve ex officio and that Sir Ralph Clarke and Mr. Brooke should be re-elected. It was finally decided that Mr. Gillham, who was often consulted on Nutley affairs, and Brig. Scott, who was the Finance Committee of the East Sussex County Council, could make useful contribution to this Committee and they were elected unanimously.

5. Minutes of last Meeting: These having been circulated were taken as read and signed by the Chairman.

6. Matters arising:

Commons Registration Act, 1965: The Clerk reported that the Forest map had been registered and allotted the registration number "one". A

circular had been sent out to all Commoners advising them how to register and where to obtain the form, and in that circular was a recommendation that they should take the advice of their Solicitors. The forms were in fact quite complicated, and he had Mr. Drew's permission to quote him as an example. As a Commoner with about thirty acres of land, Mr. Drew had no less than four forms to complete to register Common Rights, rights-of-way of necessity and manor waste round his property. Filling in the forms was taking people quite a time. His firm was acting for a number of people, and as Clerk he was receiving enquiries at the rate of about five a day from London Solicitors and others, and he had told the County Council, who had stated that so far they had received only seven applications, that he thought registration would get into its stride in about a month's time and would continue throughout the year.

The Clerk explained that as a result of the many enquires his department had received, it had been discovered that a number of the records were incorrect, and that some people had been happily paying their Forest Rates for a number of years on land which they had sold. The Clerk stated that after about three months he would be making an inspection of the registrations and would object to any Common Rights etc. which had been registered which he considered invalid.

Several members of the Board then questioned the Clerk on various aspects of registration. He was asked what would happen if someone who registered Common Rights died or sold his property before the three year period was up, to which he replied that as Common Rights were attached to property and not to people, this would make no difference, though he agreed that the new owner might not want the Common Rights but would still get them. Asked whether, if a great many people did not register their Common Rights and therefore ceased to pay Forest Rates after 1970, those who did register would find themselves paying greatly enhanced rates to make up the deficiency, the Clerk and the Chairman both agreed that this was most unlikely to occur, and the Chairman pointed out that after 1970 the Board would have to consider a new course of action, and the most likely solution suggested to date was that the unoccupied parts of the Forest should be put under the National Parks Authority.

7. Purchase of Land Rover: The Clerk reported that on the advice of J. Henry Schroder Wagg & Co. Ltd., the Board had sold £1,292.19.1

4% Consolidated stock which realised £750.10.5 which just covered the cost of the Land Rover.

8. Deputy Clerk's Report: The Deputy Clerk reported that the Rangers had taken delivery of the Land Rover on the 9th January, and this had already proved an outstandingly useful acquisition. The four-wheel drive and the low ratio gears had enabled it to be used on the Forest in winter in places where the truck could never go. It was being

used from litter collection with the trailer, and had speeded up the operation considerably. The roof flasher was a very great safety factor when working on the A.22 road.

The past two months had proved very wet, and work on the Forest had been restricted. All the fire beaters had been placed out. Two-thirds of the beaters were of the new type. It was anticipated that by next year all the remaining birch beaters would have been replaced.

A very large number of dead trees had been cut down, and the areas alongside the road had been cleared up. The new implement shed was nearing completion. This would contribute considerably to the tidiness and the ease of working at the Deposit. All three Rangers had been renewed round many parts of the Forest. Name boards had been placed at all the clumps.

Ranger Streeter had returned to duty on the 9th January after a month off with a bad back. He had been fitted with a brace which had proved quite satisfactory and he was able to carry out full duties.

The Deputy Clark added that he would like to tell the Meeting once again how extremely useful they were finding the Land Rover, and he was convinced it was going to be well worth the expenditure on it.

9. The Accounts: The Clerk stated that he had brought his Accountant, Mr. Mephram, with him so that he could explain to the Board the apparent increase in expenditure and decrease in revenue, but first he would draw their attention to the list of Assets owned by the Conservators on the 31st December last which he had drawn up at their request. This read as follows:

Assets (Vehicles, Machines etc.) as at 31st December 1966

1962 1 Motor Van Morris pick-up WAP 723	510.18.6
F.1 Pioneer Chain saw	74.4.4
1962 1 B.S.A. Bantam Motor Cycle, 7160AP	133.4.8
1965 1 B.S.A. Bantam Motor Cycle DAP 72 C	125.8.8
F.1965 1 Ford Super Dexter Tractor EKL 471 C	825.8.0
With Cab	43.12.6
F.1965 1 Mil Master Loader	106.10.0
F.1965 1 Harford Trailer	149.10.0
F.1965 1 Set Ransomes Disc Harrows	113.15.0
1966 2 Extinguisher	31.0.0
Sunday Tools	50.0.0
1966 1 Forage Harvester (2nd hand)	175.0.0
F.1966 1 B.S.A. Bantam Motor Cycle FUF 883D	125.7.0
F.1966 1 Allen Rotary Grass cutter	130.0.0 +
F.1966 1 Gloster Forage Harvester	225.0.0 +
1962 1 Garage	85.0.0
1965 1 Implement Shed	298.15.0

NOTE: In January 1967 the Morris Van Pick-up was sold and a Diesel Land Rover purchased for £900.

+ Approximate figure paid for direct by Friends of Ashdown Forest.

F Gift of Friends of Ashdown Forest.

Although not marked as such, the Morris pick-up was also a gift from the Friends who had donated the money for it after it had been purchased.

The Clerk then went through the Income & Expenditure Account on the Expenditure side in detail and reported there would probably be a small recovery later from Selection Employment Tax. He then called upon Mr. Mephram to address the meeting.

Mr. Mephram spoke on the subject of the Depot and explained that the expenditure on the Depot should be set against the two years 1965 and 1966, as there had been an overlap due to delay in obtaining Planning Permission. If

the two sets of figure were added together it would be seen that the total of £417, was in fact only £26, in excess of the combined estimates.

The Clerk then continued with the Income Expenditure Account on the income side, pointing out that Acknowledgment Rents had gone up and would continue to go up as more Licence were issued, but that as far as Rates were concerned a good deal of money had been lost through contiguous and adjoining land being amalgamated. This was because a number of people had for the first time queried their rates on being faced with a demand for £3. Instead of the much smaller amounts of previous years, and it was not anticipated that the figure of £1,087 would be exceeded this coming year. It would thus be seen that the excess of expenditure over income for year to be defrayed by Local Authorities was £3,711. as opposed to the estimate of £3,180.

A general discussion then took place. The Clerk was asked why the year always started with nothing, and he explained that any excess was automatically handed back to the Local Authorities. In this way a sum of £175 already committed to the purchase of a Forage Harvester which had been ordered and not paid for in 1965, had in effect been returned to the Local Authorities. For this reason it was considered that there should be a special account called "the Commitment Reserve Fund" into which such money could in future be paid, and the Board agreed that this should be done. Asked where the deficit of £531 would come from, the Clerk replied that it was not expected from the East Grinstead Urban District Council which it was thought would restrict its contribution to £200 as would also Cuckfield Rural District Council. Uckfield Rural District Council was expected to restrict its contribution to £1100, but that he had not yet heard from the East Sussex County Council.

Asked what economics could be made what activities could be stopped if the money were not forthcoming, the Clerk told the Board that he had recently had a meeting with an officer from the Organisation and Methods Committee of the East Sussex County Council and they had spent over three hours going into this situation and the work of the administration of the Forest. This officer would now report to the Clerk to the East Sussex County Council who would then invite him over to Lewes to discuss the matter. After this meeting it would probably be necessary for a meeting of the Special Purposes Committee to be convened.

The Chairman commented that the Local Authorities did not appear to realise the position of Ashdown Forest nor how favourably its total expenditure of £6003, compared with other common and forest in England, and he wondered, if the administration by the Conservators came to a grinding halt for lack of funds, whether any Local Authority could run it as cheaply.

The Clerk went through the expenditure item by item showing that there were no economics that could be made if Ashdown Forest were to be maintained at its present level.

It was suggested that instead of discussing economics it would be more practicable to discover ways of increasing the revenue. Since the Forest was used so much by outsiders, particularly people from London and from Kent, why should not the Kent County Council and the Greater London Council be asked to make contributions? With this in mind a census should be taken. An unofficial car counting one weekend the previous year had shown that out of 200 cars parked in the Kings

Standing area, only about 10% had Sussex registrations. It was important for the Greater London Council to have people coming down to the Forest so attractive that they did not proceed any further. Asked why more money was not made by afforestation, the Clerk pointed out that the timber on the Forest, with the exception of estovers, all belonged to the Lord of the Manor and planting trees would not help the Conservators at all.

Brig. Scott stated that it must not be forgotten that this was the year of the squeeze which affected Local Authorities as much as anyone else, but it was not the policy of the East Sussex County Council to allow Ashdown Forest to be run down below its present standards.

The Chairman then proposed, seconded by Mr. Drew, and it was RESOLVED that the Accounts of the Board for the year ending 31st December, 1966, should be adopted and approved.

11. Finance: The Clerk reported that he had received sanction from the Chairman for an overdraft of up to £750, to be obtained from Barclays Bank. Since then he had received a letter from the Uckfield Rural District Council agreeing to make the Board an interest free loan of £750 up the 1st April. It was now necessary to receive sanction

from the Board (a) for the Chairman's action in sanctioning the overdraft - Resolved - and (b) accordingly the Board's acceptance of the loan from the Uckfield Rural District Council – Resolved accordingly.

Accounts as at 14th February 1967

(a) Bank Balances:

General Account	127.15.2
Licence Account :-	
Cons. Ack. Rent	<u>186.2.9</u>
	313.17.11
Wages & Petty Cash Account Overdrawn	581.6.2

(b) The following amounts have been collected since

1st January, 1967 :

Forest Rates (arrears)	16.6.6
Ack. Rents	186.2.9
Horse Riding	31.0.0
Temporary Licence	13.0.0
Miscellaneous	<u>7.12.8</u>
	254.1.11

(c) The following accounts are due for payments :

Clerk's salary for March quarter	280.0.0
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The Clerk stated that the only cheque required was for his salary for a quarter, but this would not be presented until 25th March.

The Clerk explained to the Board that many Acknowledgement Rents were for sums of 2/- or 4/- and were not worth the postage and clerical work involved. He sought the Board's permission to make a minimum charge for all licence fees of 10/-. This pertained to private individuals because public bodies like the Electricity Board, although they paid a number of small acknowledgment rents, sent one cheque to cover them. The Board approve this as from 1st January, 1968.

12. Letter from the proprietor of Duddleswell Stores: The Clerk read out the following letter which he had received from Mr. White on the 14th December last :

"Further to my telephone communication this morning regarding the meeting convened for Wednesday 13th December. I had hoped to have been present at this meeting to put various points before the Committee. The main one being unfair competition by ice-cream vendors, etc., who pay no rights or dues to the Ashdown Forest, whereas we do, and are taking our trade away. If these people are licences I would be prepared to pay a fee use of the green in front of our property. This would not be littered with bottles and ice-cream cartons, but with tables and umbrellas for the use of forest lovers.

A further point is whether we may, in the safety of the public's wellbeing, have a warning sign put further down the road warning people of our business. At the moments they stop out side on seeing refreshments are to be had and on many occasions have very nearly caused nasty accidents.

I would be most grateful if you would give consideration to these two points."

The Clerk asked the Board to consider the two points raised. A general discussion took place in which views both for and against a warning sign being erected were expressed. It was finally decided that the Clerk should write to Mr. White and tell him that the right approach for him to make was to the East Sussex County Council, and that the Board would help him with this approach if he so desired. The second point permitting him to use the Forest in front of his house for business purpose would be considered again when the decision of the County Council was known.

13. Any other business: Mr. Harvey said he understood that the playground in Fairwarp had been exchanged some years ago for a piece of land nearer the village, but it was never developed as intended for tennis court etc. was that

piece of land still the recreation ground and was the exchange ever official? The Clerk replied that he would need notice of that question, and Mr. Gillham stated that he was not surprised the Clerk did not know the answer off-hand as it had happened long before his time, but in his Mr. Gillham's knowledge the land had been sold and everything settled. It was agreed that the Clerk should write to Mr. Harvey with the facts.

The Board then went into Committee.

14. The Chairman addressed the meeting in the light of the following Letter received from Uckfield Rural District Council on the 30th January and which had been circulated to member:

"I have now been able to place your estimated for 1967 before the Finance Committee and the Council.

The Council feel that every endeavour must be made during the current year to curtail the remarks on the rate payers and while they recognise that some increase in expenditure is unavoidable, they feel that this should be kept to a minimum. In view of this they have decided that their contribution to the funds of the Conservators during the year 1967/68 will be limited to £1,100.

I placed your request for a loan before the Finance Committee and they have agreed that an interest-free loan of £750 should be made to the Conservators for the period to the 1st April, 1967. If you will let me know whether you still require this loan I will then arrange for a cheque to be sent to you."

He pointed out that the Board could not anticipate any increased help from Cuckfield or Uckfield and must realise that matters were going to get worse. The use of the Forest was increasing all the time involving more litter collecting, making more parking spaces, and taking greater care with regard to firebreaks. at the same time in two or three years the Conservators would be liable to severe diminution of rateable income from the Forest. As a businessman he the Chairman considered that the whole financial set-up for running the Forest was on an unsound basis, being one of "beg and borrow and see we get on". This meant the Board could not plan ahead.

He asked the Board to think this matter over and he would be very glad before the next meeting in April to receive any suggestion from members on how the administration of the Forest could be put on a sounder basis and by this he did not mean suggestion for raising the add pounds but for increasing the revenue generally to £10,000 or £15,000, in five or six years time. Any suggestions so received he would discuss with his Deputy Chairman, Vice Chairman and Clerk, to see whether they could formulate a financial scheme.

A general discussion then took place, and it was suggested among other things that the financial year of the Board of Conservators should commence with the financial year of Local Authorities. When it was suggested that the Board could cut down on the number of Rangers employed it was pointed out that this, apart from being a retrograde step, was also an unwise one as it took about two year to train a man to be a first class ranger. the opinion was also expressed that Local Authorities would view the estimates more kindly if they know they were based on long term measures, but here again long term measures needed more certainly about the financial position.

15. Mr. Brooke proposed a voice of thanks to the retiring Chairman for all the hard work he had done and the enormous amount of time he had expended on forest matters writing his terms of office and this was heartily endorsed by all the members of the Board present.

There being no further business, the meeting closed.

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL, FOREST ROW ON WEDNESDAY 19TH APRIL, at 2.30 p.m.

Present: Col. J.H. Lowe (in the chair); Mr. L.J. Cornwell; Mrs. U. Ridley; Mr. R.F.J. Brooke; Mr. W.D. Gillham; Mr. R.P. Odell; Brig. L.E. Scott; Mr. A.R. Tubb; Capt. D.M.F. Armstrong; Mr. F.B. Cornwell and Mr. J.H. Drew.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Sir William Garrett; Colonel Sir Ralph Clarke; Major R.E.W. Grubb; Mr. A.K.L. Harvey; Miss A. Lumsden and the Hon. C.A.S. Grimston.

The Deputy Chairman told the Board he had a special message from Sir William Garrett who was most disappointed that he could not take the chair at the first meeting after his appointment as Chairman, but as the Board knew, Lady Garrett had been seriously ill and he had taken her abroad to recuperate.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting: These having been circulated were taken as read and singed by the Deputy Chairman.

3. Matters arising:

(a) Loan from Uckfield R.D.C.: The Clerk reported that the loan of £750 had been gratefully received and would be repaid when the Council made their contribution of £1,100.

(b) Duddleswell Stores: The Clerk reported that he had written to Mr. White as directed at the meeting, asking him to approach the County Council about road safety before the Board considered his request to put out tables and chairs, and offering to assist in this approach. Mr. White had written to the County Council direct, and when the Clerk had asked the County Council what was the outcome of signs were merited and had refused permission to erect them. It was now up to the Board to consider the request to put out tables and chairs on this basis. The Chairman suggested the point be considered in conjunction with Item 7 on the Agenda "Ice Cream Vendors" and the Board agreed.

4. Notice of Audit: The Clerk reported that the annual audit would take place on the 16th May at his offices at 10 a.m. and that the usual statutory notices had been inserted in the newspapers and the District Auditor informed.

5. Correspondence: The Clerk read out two letters he had received, one from the secretary to the S.E. London Scooter Club asking for permission for his Club to hold scrambles on the Forest, and the other from the Trials Secretary of the East Grinstead & District Motor Cycle Club asking for permission to hold Reliability Trials on the Forest, and suggested that both matters should be considered together. A general discussion then took place in which it was unanimously agreed that the noise be kept a quiet place. It was proposed by Mr. Brooke and seconded by Capt. Armstrong and RESOLVED that the Clerk should write to the two Clubs concerned telling them the Board would not grant permission to them to use the Forest for Scrambles or Reliability Trails.

6. Grazing on the Forest: Col. Lowe told the Board that Sir William Garrett had called an informal meeting of those commoners who exercised their right of grazing and had warned them that fire was not the way to preserve the Forest and asked for their consisting of himself as Chairman, the Deputy Clerk and Messrs. Pillinger, Hale and Osborne and Ranger Linton as members. The Committee meeting had been a great success and had suggested a scheme where by certain areas of the Forest might in certain circumstances be enclosed and on which certain people would have rights and would be allowed burn off heather and put down fertiliser etc. He would like the Board to give permission for Cdr. Angell to visit the New Forest to find out how fencing and enclosed was tackled there, and to circulate the minutes of the sub-Committee to the Board of Conservators. A general discussion then took place in which views for and against enclosing parts of the Forest for grazing were strongly expressed. It was suggested by the Clerk that if Cdr. Angell's visit to the New Forest was sanctioned, afterwards he, the Clerk, should visit the Ministry of Land and Natural Resources to discuss the possibility of obtaining an Order of Council to permit the enclosure on a temporary basis of certain parts of the Forest. Undoubtedly the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Agriculture would also be interested, but he appreciated that any such scheme bristled with legal problems. After further discussion it was decided that the Deputy Clerk should visit the New Forest, that the Minutes of the Grazing Sub-Committee should be circulated, and that the matter should be brought up again for discussion at the next meeting of the Board of Conservators.

7. Ice Cream Vendors:

(a) At the request of the Chairman the Deputy Clerk addressed the Board on this subject. Explaining that for the past few years about half a dozen ice cream vendors had been selling their wares on the Forest, and by parking two wheels on the verge and two roadway had escaped being prosecuted either by the police or under the Forest By-laws, although the Rangers had always moved them on when they had been there. Last year, however, there had been something of a truce and the Rangers had only moved them on if they were causing a nuisance. Now the ice cream vendors were finding even two wheels on the road dangerous both for themselves and their customers and there had been a number of minor accidents. As a result the ice cream vendors had asked for permission to park on the Forest and were perfectly willing to pay for a license to do so and had indicated that they would not consider a fee of £50. to be too much.

A general discussion then took place in which it was suggested that only the regular half dozen vendors, if any, should be licensed, that they should each have their pitch in a parking area, that each should be confined to one van with a ban on tables and chairs and that they should pay a deposit against litter. If these vendors were licensed then any others who turned up would be sent away or prosecuted. The Clerk agreed that the maximum fine for breaking the bye-laws was two pounds, but he did not think anyone would consider it worthwhile being prosecuted over and over again. Finally it was agreed unanimously to authorise a standing Committee to go into the matter and to issue licenses.

(b) The Chairman then invited the opinions of the Board on the subject of Duddleswell stores, and it was agreed by most members that if the ice cream vendors were licensed, permission could not be refused to Mr. White to put out tables and chairs. The Clerk warned that it was a precedent and other people might get planning permission for selling teas, etc., but the Board felt it was strong enough to consider each case on its merit. The Deputy Clerk remained the Board that whilst the parking facilities on the road were entirely unsuitable and the police were not prepared to put up a notice, through it would be Duddleswell stores and not the Conservators who would get into trouble. Finally it was agreed that Duddleswell stores should be granted a License, the fee for which would be fixed by the standing Committee for Ice Cream Licenses.

8. Ranger Linton: The Clerk asked the Board to pass the Resolution quoted in the Agenda to include Ranger Linton in the Superannuation quoted proposed by Mr. Brooke, seconded by Capt. Armstrong and it was RESOLVED that in accordance with section 3, sub-section 2, paragraph (c) of the Local Government Superannuation Act 1937 the following Ranger J. Linton be specified as a contributory employee subject to his passing a medical examination to the satisfaction of the Conservators.

9. Deputy Clerk's Report on Rangers' activities:

Report on Fires: There had been 15 known fires on the Forest between the date of the last Board meeting and the 5th April. The major fires occurred as follows:

19th March: Area between the Isle of Thorns and the air strip. Approximately 150 acres, considerable damage to a beautiful area with a large number of young trees destroyed. Fire started 100 yards in from the road, and had either started accidentally or by hooligans.

20th March: Vicinity of Gills Lap. Approximately 70 acres burnt. Fire started at roadside - cause unknown. Damage mostly to gorse and weather. This had resulted in the most popular parking area on the Forest being an unsightly blackened mess for the whole of the Easter weekend.

23rd March: South side of road at top of kids Hill. Started accidentally by Army Units. About 10 acres - mostly gorse and bracken.

24th March: East side of road at Millbrook. About 30 acres. Possible started by cigarette from parked car. Mostly gorse and bracken.

28th March: The valley below wrens warren to the 500 acre wood. About 150 acres. Started 150 yards from the road possibly accidentally by cigarette dropped by walkers. Mostly gorse and bracken. but a considerable number of established scotch firs may have been killed.

One or two of the small fires had almost certainly been deliberate, and some of the major fires could have been also.

Fire Fighting: The existing firebreaks had proved to be of some use, but by no means the complete answer. They had been very useful for fighting fires from particularly for back burning, but they had always to be manned, as fires had burnt across the dried, matted sedge grass on every occasion. The only firebreak which had stopped the head of a fire had been the section experimentally ploughed last year. there was no doubt at all that ploughing was an excellent way of stopping fires from creeping across the grass firebreaks. A narrow section of plough with a wide grass break seemed to be a good answer, though a gorse fire in a high wind might jump anything. The Rangers were continuing the policy of ploughing strips on the more important firebreaks.

The Land Rover had been of exceptional value “in fire fighting; the ability to move a party of firefighters with beaters to strategic positions had helped considerably to limit the spread of fires.

General work carried out by the Rangers during the past two months had been as follows:

cutting of dead trees: renewal of riding posts in the following areas: Golf Course: Crowborough; Fairwarp: Duddleswell. ditching and draining in the vicinity of the Horder Centre where tracks had become impassable: completion of new implement shed at the Depot; clearance of dead gorse from last year's fires; construction of new major firebreak from Stonehill Cottage to Camp Hill clearing and renewal of notice boards; preparation of new parking areas, and tidying of existing ones for the season; little collection ; boundary walking; patrolling Ranger Arnold had taken one week of his annual leave.

At the Chairman's request the Deputy Clark then enlarged further on the subject of firebreaks. He started that the 10' strip ploughed and disced in the middle of firebreaks was not enough and should be extended to 20', but apart from this he would like to see a new policy of master firebreaks so that fires could be limited to definite areas, these master firebreaks being made parallel to the road and about 50 yards inside the Forest. There were two reasons for this: half the fires were started beside the road, the other half in the middle of the Forest, so that whichever way the fires burnt they could be checked, and those commencing in the middle of the Forest would not spread and spoil the amenities for picnickers parked near the road.

Asked if the firebreaks would be ploughed and disced every year, he replied that only discing would take place every year. In this way the sedge grass might eventually disappear. It was also suggested that some of the particularly beautiful areas of the Forest should be protected by the master firebreaks.

10. Finance:

Accounts as at 18th April, 1967

(1) Bank Balances :

General account	637.16.6
Licence account	
+Conservators Ack. Rents	26.0.6
Wages & Petty Cash account overdrawn	769.16.8

+N.B. On the 3rd April £408.6.3 was transferred from Licence Account to General Account this being the Conservators' share of Acknowledgement Rents collected to date.

(2) The following amounts had been collected since 1st January, 1997 :

Period	Forest rates	Ack. Rents	Horse riding	L.A. Contributions	Temp. Licences
1 Jan – 14 Feb	16.6.6 (arrears)	186.2.9	31.0.0		13.0.0
15 Feb – 18 Apr	29.3.6 (current)	233.3.9	10.0.0	950.0.0	35.10.0
Totals	45.10.0	419.6.6	41.0.0	950.0.0	48.0.0
Comp. figures as at 20 April 1966	4.11.6 (arrears)	201.18.0	10.0.0	1190.19.0	46.0.0

(3) The following amount was due for payment:

Clerk's salary for June quarter - £280.

(4) Increase of fixed monthly transfer from General to Wages & Petty Cash Account:

Proposed by Chairman, seconded by Capt. Armstrong and it was RESOLVED that this should be increased from £337 as at present to £450 to allow for Deputy Clerk coming on to the pay roll and Conservators' share of S.A.C. and increased National Insurance Contribution for Linton on superannuation Scheme.

11. Any other business:

(a) Road accident: The Clerk reported that Ranger Arnold had been involved in an accident with a car while on his motorbike at Kidds Hill. The driver of the car had admitted liability. The motor bicycle could be repaired and notice had been given to the Insurance Company.

(b) Friends of the Forest: The Clerk reported that the Friends of the Forest had once more come to the aid of the Conservators and had contributed £34; £20 of which was for repairs to the power saw and £14 for a plough. The Board expressed its appreciation.

(c) Litter Dump: Mr. Drew stated there had been a number of complaints about the new litter dump which had, in fact been authorised by him when he was Chairman. It lay within 350 yards of various houses and wastepaper often blew out of it. Commander Angell had suggested covering the pit with an old tarpaulin when it was too wet to burn paper, but tide was not entirely satisfactory. The Board agreed to go on using the dump only for so long as was absolutely necessary.

(d) Golf Green: It was stated that a golf green was being constructed with a bulldozer outside the Ashdown Forest Hotel. The Golf Club had been granted a licence to open the old course but not to break into any new land. Commander Angell had visited Mr. Luff, Manager of the Hotel which is putting up the capital for the course's reinstatement, who informed him that he had met Mr. Drew and Lord Buckhurst and they had agreed to the eighteenth green being placed right in front of the hotel. Mr. Drew, however, completely denied this, and Mr. Grant White, Secretary of the Golf Club also denied all knowledge. A general discussion then took place in which it was agreed that an encroachment had been committed and the clerk asked for the Board's instructions. It was agreed unanimously that as soon as the meeting closed the Deputy Clerk should visit Mr. Grant White to tell him of the Board's decision that the work of bulldozing must cease forthwith and the land be restored to its proper state, and to ask Mr. Grant White to acquaint Mr. Duff with the Board's decision. The Clerk would write to Mr. Grant White confirming this decision.

(e) Bank Cottage: Mr. Brooke asked if there was any news about the road down from Bank Cottages. He was informed that negotiations were still in progress and had reached a difficult stage. The Clerk stated he would rather not discuss the matter at this point but assured Mr. Brooke that he was doing his best.

(f) Cricket Grounds: Mr. Brooke asked if it were possible to extend Cricket grounds on the Forest. He had been approached by members of a bowling club which had lost its site on private land to ask whether permission would be given for them to have a site adjacent to the cricket grounds. Asked which village was involved he replied that it was Colemans Hatch of which Mr. Drew was the superintendent. The Board told Mr. Drew that they would not obstruct this request and that this fact would be recorded in the Minutes. There being no further business, the meeting closed.

Minutes of a Sub-Committee of the Conservators of Ashdown Forest held at 1&2, Judges Terrace, East Grinstead, at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, May 9th, 1967

Sir William Garret (in the Chair), Col. J.H. Lowe, Mr. J.H. Drew, Clerk, Deputy Clerk.

Ice Cream:

This matter was discussed and it was decided that certain sites should be selected on the Forest and approved ice cream merchants should be invited to tender for each site and should be informed that the highest bidder for each site will be accepted, and anyone else will not be allowed to sell ice cream on that part of the Forest. The Clerk will be authorised to prosecute if necessary. The hours of selling to be sunrise to sunset; motorised caravans only; to be responsible for their own litter and tidiness of site; and notice boards to be affixed to van side "Authorised to sell ice cream on Ashdown Forest by the Conservators".

Duddleswell Stores:

Deputy Clerk informed the meeting that the owner of these stores had had a bad season last year and would be unable to pay a very substantial licence fee, in fact he only envisaged a nominal one. It was decided to recommend that Duddleswell Stores be granted an experimental Licence for four months at the nominal rent of £5 and the owner be informed that as this was in the nature of an experiment, he could not count on such a favourable rent in succeeding years.

Arrangements for tour of Forest with County Council:

The Clerk went through the arrangements for the tour of the Forest on the following day and these were approved.

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS HELD AT 1&2 JUDGES TERRACE, EAST GRINSTEAD, AT 4 p.m. ON FRIDAY. 19TH MAY, 1967.

Present: Sir William Garrett (in the Chair); The Hon. C.A.S. Grimston; Mr. R.P.J. Brooke; Mr. A.K.L. Harvey; Brig. L.M. Scott; Mr. J. H. Drew; Col. Sir Ralph Clarke; Col. J.H. Lowe; and Major R.E.W. Grubb.

The Chairman thanked those present for attending the Meeting at such short notice and proceeded to the first item on the Agenda.

1. Ice Cream Vendors and Duddleswell Stores:

The Chairman pointed out that the present arrangement suffered from two drawbacks; one, it caused a danger on the highway particularly to children, and two, it brought in no revenue. A sub Committee had therefore met to consider whether it would be advisable to regulate this traffic, and as a result of their deliberations they had drafted the Resolution which was Item 2 (a) of the Agenda. Were the Board prepared to pass the Resolution as it stood?

A general discussion then took place from which the following points emerged. Only four companies of some studying were being asked to bid for each site. If one company made the highest bid for each separate site, that company would hold a monopoly for this season, but equally four of the five sites might be held by different companies as only reputable companies were being approached, there was no need to add the word "approved" before the word "bidder" in the Resolution, as this would involve the matter having to be referred back to the Board by the Clerk before tenders were accepted, and time was short. The vans would be allowed to ply their trade along certain specified routes only, but permitted to draw off the highway on the Forest for their sales. If they were confined to one car park only, it would be an open invitation to poacher ice cream vendors to operate on their highways which was what the Conservators were trying to avoid. The ice cream vendors could not be asked to refrain from using their various chimes which were part of their stock in trade, but the Licences to be issued to them would make it quite clear that if they caused a nuisance on the Forest, they would not be allowed to tender for the following year. It was pointed out that it was only the wording of the Resolution that was being discussed, and the wording of the Licences would cover all the fears expressed by some members of the Board, including the fear that the ice cream vans would remain on the Forest at night.

Finally two amendments to the draft Resolution were agreed, namely that the word "vans" should be substituted for the word "caravans" and the "1967" be added to the dates "1st June to the 30th September", and it was proposed by major Grubb, seconded by Mr. Drew and RESOLVED that the sites at Kings Standing, Gills Lap, Ridge Road, Stone hill Road and Goat Cross-roads be let out to tender to purveyors of ice cream, and that the highest bidder for each site shall be accepted, and once accepted no one else shall be permitted to sell ice cream on that part of the Forest, and the Clerk be hereby authorised to prosecute offenders without further reference to the Board, and that the Clerk enters into Licences be confined to motorised vans between the hours of sunrise and sunset and that the Licences be from the 1st June to the 30th September, 1967, and that the Clerk is hereby authorised to make such provisions in the Licences as he may think fit to safeguard the interests of the Conservators and Commoners. The Resolution as carried unanimously.

2. The Chairman then asked the board to consider the draft Resolution under Item 2(b) of the Agenda. He explained that this was to be an experimental period of four months only and the reason for the very low rental of five pounds was that Duddleswell Stores was in danger of closing down altogether and this would give the owner a chance of improving his business.

In the general discussion that followed the opinion was expressed that it was not for the Conservators to give charity to a Commoner. However, it was pointed out that if Duddleswell Stores had to close, it would be a real hardship to some of the elderly people living in that area who relied on the stores for their groceries; also the experimental period would give a chance of finding out whether this Licence to put out tables and chairs for tea would prove an amenity for Commoners and the public or not. The number of tables and chairs that could be put out would be governed by the amount of space and parking facilities available, both of which were extremely limited, and within these limits the idea was to give the owner a free land and see what he could do. It was therefore RESOLVED that the Clerk enter into a Licence with the owner of Duddleswell Stores at the Acknowledgement Rent of five pounds to permit the owner on an experimental basis for 1967 but for four months only to serve teas on that part of the forest in front of Duddleswell Stores, and for that purpose to place, tables, chairs and umbrellas thereon, the Clerk to include such further provisions in the Licence as he shall think fit for the safety of the Conservators and the Commoners. This Resolution was carried unanimously .

3. Grazing Rights on the Forest:

The Chairman told the board that all the forms of Registration under the Commons Registration Act 1965, had been returned because none of them specified the number and type of animals Commoners were permitted to graze on the Forest. In accordance with the directions of the Board of Conservators, Commoners had described their right of pasture and herbage as “The number of commonable animals as fixed by the Conservators from time to time”, which was based on the Bye-Law to this effect. The Clerk to the County Council in his covering letter returning the forms to the individual applicants had stated that he had been advised by the Ministry of Land and Natural Resources that “to comply with the requirements of Section 15 of the Act, an application for the registration of a right to pasture or herbage must be for a definite number of animals - or if for animals of different classes, then for a definite number of animals in each class”. It was therefore imperative for the Board of Conservators to work out a scheme specifying the number of animals a Commoner was permitted to graze on the Forest, and the Board had before it a rough scheme drawn up by the Clerk and Deputy Clerk based on the acreage held by the twelve who, out of the eleven hundred or so Commoners, now exercised their grazing rights and the number of animals these twelve Commoners grazed. Because on this basis some Commoners with a large acreage would be able to graze an absurdly large number of cattle and sheep, this scheme was also based on the fact that since there was a maximum assessment rate of three pounds per annum, so there should be a maximum number of sheep and cattle worked out on the following scale:

Under 1 acre 1 sheep

Over 1 acre Sheep

10 per acre or part thereof, subject to a maximum of 150.

Cattle

2 per acre or part thereof, subject to a maximum of 50

Mill Horses

1 per 50 acres or part thereof.

He asked the Board to approve this scheme, because until the number had been fixed, none of the Commoners of Ashdown Forest could register their Rights, and the Clerk was being pressed on all sides for the decision.

A general discussion then took place and whilst the urgency of the situation was appreciated, the Board felt it could not make up its mind arbitrarily on such a far-reaching policy and that the scheme put before them for approval allowed far too many animals on the Forest. Finally it was decided that the Clerk should contact Mr. Evans of the Ministry of Land and Natural Resources without delay, pointing out to him the difficulties of coming to a decision, and inviting him to attend a meeting of the Sub-Committee of the Board of Conservators, either locally or at the ministry, without delay to find out exactly what the Ministry required and the best method of tackling the problem.

4. Forest Programme for five years ahead:

The Chairman told the Board that various members of the County Council had recently been taken for a tour of the Forest and shown the work that was being carried out and what was needed to be carried out if only funds were made available. Afterwards, he the Chairman, had told the County Council that the Forest could not be run properly on the present financial basis, but that if the County Council would guarantee to make up the Conservators' income to £10,000 a year for the next five years, then a proper programme of work could be drawn up. As a result of this tour and the discussion that had followed it, the Clerk had received a letter from the Clerk of the County Council asking for a programme showing how it was envisaged the increased expenditure would be

incurred, in order that he might place it before his Sub Committee for discussion. He was therefore putting it to the Board of Conservators that they authorise a meeting of the Special Purpose Committee to draw up such a programme which would be submitted to the next full meeting of the Board in July, and if approved by them then forwarded to the County Council. The Board agreed.

There being no further business the meeting closed.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SPECIAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE NEED AT 1 & 2, JUDGES TERRACE, EAST GRINSTEAD, AT 4 p.m. ON TUESDAY, 13th JUNE, 1967

Present: Sir William Garrett (in the Chair)
Col. J.H. Lowe,
Mr. J.H. Drew.

Apologies for absence were received from:

Col. Sir Ralph Clarke,
Mr. R.F.J. Brooks,
Mr. W.D. Gillham.

Before considering the items on the Agenda, the Clerk reported briefly on:

(a) Ice Cream Vendors : In accordance with the instructions of the Board at their Special Meeting on the 19th May, the Clerk had put out tenders, and had entered into Licence with two firms of ice cream vendors:

F.W.W. Ice Cream Supplies Ltd., to have the sole use of 4 sites at an annual rental of £246.
De Mashio to have the sole use of one site at an annual rental of £40.

(b) Duddleswell Stores: As instructed, the Clerk had prepared a Licence for Mr. White to place tables on Ashdown Forest for the purpose of serving teas for an Acknowledgement Rent of £5, but Mr. White had declined to pay the legal charge for the preparation of the Licence. The Committee agreed that the Licence should be withdrawn.

(c) Mr. & Mrs. Catt of Jacks Platt, Duddleswell, had applied for permission to sell garden produce from a barrow on the forest outside their house. The Committee decided that a letter should be written quoting the sum of £5 and 4 guineas costs, which would have been charged to the Duddleswell Stores, and asking if they wished to enter into a similar Licence.

The Items on the Agenda were taken.

1. To consider a reply to the letter from the County Council dated 18th May, 1967, requesting information on how it is envisaged that the Board would spend the sum of £10,000 per annum over the next five years were the Council to guarantee this.

The Clerk presented his estimates of expenditure, and with certain minor changes in the description of the items, the Committee approved this and authorised that it should be presented to the next Board Meeting together with a copy of the covering letter under which it is proposed to forward it to the County Council, giving such explanations of the increase in expenditure as may be necessary.

2. To consider the matter of how many animals are commonable on Ashdown Forest under section 15 of the Commons Registration Act 1965.

The Clerk read out letters from Col. Sir Ralph Clarke and Mr. Brooke giving their views on their views on this matter.

After a full discussion it was decided to recommend to the next Board Meeting that the following scale should be adopted for each separate assessment:

Up to 2 acres 1 sheep

2 acres and over

Sheep

10 per acre or part thereof subject to a maximum of 150.

Cattle

2 per acre or part thereof subject to a maximum of 30.

Mill Horses

1 per 50 acres or part thereof.

There being no further business the Meeting Closed.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 19TH JULY, 1967, AT 2.30 P.M. AT THE VILLAGE HALL, FOREST ROW.

Present: Sir William Garrett (in the Chair); Col. J.H. Lowe; Mrs. M.P. Foster; Miss A. Lumsden; Capt. D.M.F. Armstrong; Mrs. U. Ridley; Mr. R.P. Odell; Major R.E.W. Grubb; The Hon. C.A.S. Grimston; Mr. A.R. Tubb; Mr. F.B. Cornwell; Brig. L.M. Scott; Col. Sir Ralph Clarke and Mr. A.K.L. Harvey, Mr. Brooke.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mr. W.D. Gillham.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on the 19th April and the Meeting held on the 19th May, together with a copy of the Minutes of the Special Purposes Committee held on the 13th June, having been circulated, these were taken as read and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters arising:

(a) Duddleswell Stores: The Clerk reported that Duddleswell Stores had been issued with a Licence for £5 for four months and this was now in use. Mr. White had sold the stores and the Licence would be assigned to his successor for the rest of the current period. His successor would have to apply for a fresh Licence next year. The Chairman stated that all seemed to be going well at present, but asked members of the Board to report if they noticed any infringements.

(b) The Audit: The Clerk reported that the Audit had been completed and read the Auditor's Report as follows:

"In compliance with the statutory requirements I have to report that the audit of the accounts of the Conservators and of their officers for the year ended 31st December, 1966, has been completed.

No matter arose at the audit to which it is necessary to direct your attention. My thanks are due to your officers for their courtesy and assistance."

(c) Grazing on the Forest : The Clerk stated that the Special Purposes Committee had made certain recommendations and referred the matter back to this meeting. He suggested a ***** with controlled burning by the Conservators of some of the heather which had grown too high, the unknown pointing out that there was reason to believe more this step were not taken then there might be uncontrolled burning. The Board agreed to this. Col. Lowe, Chairman of the grazing Sub-Committee asked the Board for power to co-opt on to than Committee a member of the Sussex Naturalist Trust who could advice on the ornithological and botanical aspects of burning. The Board also agreed to this.

(d) Ice Cream Vendors: The Clerk reported that five sites on the Forest had been offered to tender and one firm called P.W.W. Ice Cream Supplies (Hastings) Ltd. had made the highest offer for four of the sites and had been granted a Licence for £246. for the season. The first instalment of the licence fee had been paid and the second was due on the 1st August. According to all reports this agreement was proving very satisfactory. Regarding the fifth site, the Goat cross-roads, the highest tender had come from a Mr. De Maschio for £40. This had been accepted and a Licence prepared and sent to him

for signature, but he had not signed the Licence or made any payment in spite of repeated letters and personal approaches. He suggested that the Board therefore agree to the site being offered to the person making the next highest tender and withdrawn from Mr. De Maschio who had now disappeared from the forest. The Board agreed that a Licence be offered to Mr. Rum*** for £7.10.0. being half his original tender since time had halved the period of the Licence.

The Clerk further started that while on the subject of licences must mention that a Mrs. Catt, who lived two ***** from Kingstanding cross-roads and had seen the Duddleswell Stores tables and chairs on the Forest, had written and asked for permission to put out a trolley on to the Forest verge in front of her house for selling produce from her garden. In conversation with the Chairman the Clerk had agreed to this, subject to the payment of a licence fee of five pounds. A Licence had been granted on these terms and the Clerk now sought the Board's ratification which was given.

(e) Ranger Arnold's road accident: The Clerk reported that the Insurance claim as a result of this accident had been recovered in full.

4. To fix the number of commonable animals under the Commons Registration Act 1965:

The Clerk pointed out that this should really have come under Matters Arising as it had been discussed at the last meeting. He then read to the board a letter he had written to the Chairman after that meeting. He explained that he had written because he had recalled the words of Mr. Evans when he had first discussed the Commons Registration Act, 1965, with him, which in effect where that as he know nothing about Ashdown Forest, it was up to the Conservators to devise their own Schemes. In the circumstances asking Mr. Evans ' opinion on this point would be a waste of time.

The Chairman explained that at the meeting of the Special Purposes Committee it was realised that the main danger in the number of animals as proposed, lay in the opening it gave to people with very little land who had never thought of exercising grazing rights before. On checking through the list of those Commoners who had ever exercised grazing rights, it was discovered that with one exception all of them owned or had owned at least two acres, but usually considerably more. The revised scheme, therefore, was based on limiting the area up to two acres. The new scale was as follows:

Up to 2 acres	1 sheep
2 acres and over:	<u>Sheep</u>
	10 per acre or part thereof subject to a maximum of 150
	<u>Cattle</u>
	2 per acre or part thereof subject to a maximum of 30
	<u>Mill Horses</u>
	1 per 50 acres or part thereof

A general discussion then took place on what constituted a mill horse and whether it could be omitted from the scale. It was proposed by Mr. Cornwell and seconded by Mr. Brooke that the scale of 1 mill horse per 50 acres or part thereof should remain, but a counter proposal was made by Major Grubb, seconded by Col. Lowe, that mill horses should be left out. The proposals were put to the vote, 8 members voting in favour of the first proposal and 5 members voting in favour of the second proposal. By a majority vote, therefore, the Board agreed to circulate the scale to Commoners in the form quoted above. The question of goats was also raised, but it was decided that it would be bad policy to add them to the scale.

5. To consider draft estimates for 1968:

The draft estimates for 1968 and the draft letter to the East Sussex County Council had already been circulated with the Agenda . The Chairman reminded the Board he had already reported to them on a meeting with the County Council at which he had tried to put the finances of the forest on a more realistic basis by getting a guarantee for certain finance to enable the Conservators to draw up a proper programme of work ahead. As a result the Clerk to the County Council had written asking for an estimate and letter of Explanation which he could place before his Council. It had been explained to him that such an estimate and letter would first have to be considered and approved by the Conservators:

Ests. 1967			Increase	New Est.
2852	RANGERS WAGES	4 th Ranger	890	3742
452	RANGERS EXPENSES			
130	Transport	4 th Ranger	70	322
	Clothing, tel. etc.	4 th Ranger uniforms	100	230
165	DEPUTY CLERK	Less deprec.	35	130

	EXPENSES	allowance		
	ADMINISTRATION			
	Clerk's salary	520		
	¼ bookkeeper	600		
	½ secretary	217		
	1/10 office boy	40		
	hire office	100		
	heat, lighting	50		
1120	auditor	80		
	Dy. Clerk		487	1607
1100	Salary			
	General admin			1100
	Postage			
366	Sundries etc.		50	416
	GENERAL FOREST EXPENSES (REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE)			
30	Litter baskets			
20	Notice Boards General	20		70
	Increase			
	Sundries	250		400
	RUNNING EXPENSES			
220	Machinery, extra maintenance	80		300
	DEPOT			
45	Rates etc. additional use	5		50
	Building			30
30				
5	TELEPHONE INSTALLATION	10		15
nil	HIRE OF MACHINERY	250		250
	CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	900		900
6685		3112 <u>35</u> 3077		9762

“Dear Mr. Atkinson,

Further to my letter of the 19th May, the Board of Conservators have, at their meeting held on 19th July, approved the enclosed estimate which is based on an expenditure of £10,000 per annum for the next five years.

The Board has instructed me to supplement the estimate by the following explanatory remarks:

1. General: The figures quoted under each heading are based on the expected expenditure in the first year of operation only. It is obvious that due to factors which may be beyond the control of the Board it will be necessary to increase some items and decrease others correspondingly during the course of the five years. This is particularly relevant to such items as wages, cost of petrol, etc.

2. Rangers Wages: The estimate is based on the 1966/67 scale of wages. All wages are gross figures covering Insurance, superannuation and S.E.T. where appropriate.

3. Rangers Expenses: Clothing: with their ever increasing contact with the public it is imperative that the Rangers should be smartly dressed in a recognisable uniform.

4. Deputy Clerk Expenses: The Deputy Clerk travels approximately 12,000 miles per year on duty. It is no longer justifiable to pay a small depreciation allowance on his private transport. He will be provided with suitable transport under the arrangements for capital expenditure.

5. Administration: It will be seen that my salary has been broken down to give a realistic picture of how it has been used up. The Board has approved the estimate of £520 to be paid to me as opposed to the £33 under the present estimate.

The Board has further instructed me to demonstrate the economy of the present system of administration through my firm's office, by quoting some figure which it might cost to run an entirely separate organisation:

	Present organisation with Whitley Hughes & Luscombe	Separate organisation
Clerk's salary	520	1500
*Solicitor's retainer for legal advice	-	250
Bookkeeper	600 (part time)	600 (part time)
Secretary	217 (part time)	700(full time)
Office boy	40 (part time)	-
Hire Office	100	250
Heat, lighting	50	100
Auditor	80	80
Deputy Clerk	1100	-
	2707	3480

On the assumption that the Clerk was not a Solicitor it would be necessary to retain the services of one for legal advice. To employ a full-time Solicitor would be uneconomic.

6. General Forest Expenses and Running Expenses: The estimates under these items are of necessity rather & matter of guesswork and experience gained in the first year will influence this figure. You will have soon on your tour how much there is that needs to be done on the forest.

2. Hire of Machinery: There is a large amount of work in parking spaces and on fire breaks that can only be done by heavy machinery such as a J.C.B. It would be uneconomic to purchase this machinery, and an annual sum to cover the cost of hiring is shown.

This machinery would not be hired every year.

3. Capital Expenditure: At present the Conservators own sufficient equipment (expect as in note 7 above) for the maintenance or the Forest, and the Rangers are equipped with a motor bicycle each.

The equipment listed below was presented as a gift by the Friends of Ashdown Forest Society , but it has never been their intention that they should replace and maintain this, nor can we ask them to do so.

It is necessary to equip the Deputy Clerk with the car (see Note 4), and in addition the Board now considers that the Rangers should be provided with mini-trucks for patrolling in place of motor-cycles.

The average sum of £900 for replacement of vehicles and machinery has been calculated on the basis of the cost and the expectation of life of each item. Expenditure under this heading will vary from year to year depending on what requires renewal.

Equipment presented by the Friends of Ashdown Forest

1962 1 Pioneer chain saw	74.4.4.
1965 1 Ford Super Dexter tractor	825.8.8.
with cab	43.12.6.

1 Hill master loader	106.0.0.
1 Harford trailer	149.10.0.
1 set disc harrows	113.15.0.
1966 1 Allen rotary cutter	130.0.0.
1 Gloster forage harvester	225.0.0.
1967 1 Plough	

It is of interest that the Friends also provided :

1962 1 garage	85.0.0.
1965 1 implement shed	298.15.0.

You will remember that Sir William Garrett stated that the Conservators would do all they could to increase their income, so as to reduce the burden on the County Council. In this respect I can tell you that I have just licenced certain firms to sell ice cream on the Forest for a rental for the current year of £286.

You will appreciate that I had to wait for full Board approval before sending you the detailed estimates, but now anything that you can do to expedite any decision on the part of the County Council will be much appreciated.”

The Clerk then took the board through the proposed estimate item by item by linking with the draft letter, and pointing out that a much needed fourth Ranger had been included and also a uniform allowance. At present the Rangers were their own working clothes and this was most unsatisfactory when they patrolled the Forest as the public did not recognise their status. Under Administration the Clerk's actual salary had been separated from Office expenses so that any increase in the letter would not in future be assumed to be increases in his salary. His firm provided typewriters and a photographic machine, both in constant use, but the allowance for postage for this year had already been exceeded. Commons Registration was causing a great deal of expense. Commoners had already been circulated three times this year and would now have to be circulated again at the cost of £15 on the scale for commonable animals. Under General Expenses, car parking facilities needed improving with money to spend on hardcore filling in puddles and levelling humps, also seats could be provide at the car parks. Regarding Hire of Machinery, a J.C.B. was required only occasionally and there were three on the Forest that could be hired. It would cost £3,000 to buy one. Under Capital Expenditure provision for £900. a year had been made to cover replacement of machinery already provided generously by the Friends of Ashdown Forest.

Turning to the draft letter, the Clerk explained it was in the form suggested by Mr. Atkinson himself covering each item. At this stage he would like to tell the Board that Commander Angell's mini van, which h had bought privately on becoming Deputy Clerk, was breaking up. He was out on the Forest every day expect Sundays and the Conservators could not do without him. He should be provided with a car and the Board meet his running expenses. Regarding the Rangers' motor-cycles, these were proving unsatisfactory for the purposes for which they were require, i.e. getting to the control of the Forest which they could not do, could they carry loads or transport more than one person. what they needed were mini vans.

The Chairman reminded the Board that the Council were not being asked for a set sum each year but to make up the difference and the Board should try and increase its revenue which it had already done this year with the ice cream licences. He now put it to the Board that revised estimate and draft letter be sent to Mr. Atkinson.

A general discussed then took place in which various amendments were suggested and adopted; first that the Deputy Clerk's name should be altered to a little more in keeping with his work and that he and his expenses should form a separate item in the estimate. It was decided that in future he should be known as Forest Superintendent. Secondly, that in the covering letter reference should not be made to Commander Angell travelling 12,000 miles per year but replaced by “very great distances and thirdly, that a breakdown of the £900 a year for replacement of equipment should made. Finally it was agreed that subject to these amendments the Board would leave it to the Chairman and Clerk to re-draft the estimates and letter.

6. To report the landing of a helicopter on Ashdown Forest:

The Clerk told the meeting that the reason for this event was that was Police, in cooperation with the Army, had been searching for a sub-normal child who was eventually found though not on the Forest. The Police had explained that this had been an emergency and would not happen again.

Major Grubb told the Board that the County Council would shortly be hiring a helicopter to make a survey of the County for suitable areas for lay-bys, and would like to give them advance warning.

7. Re-election of members:

The Clerk reported the re-election of Mrs. Ridley to the Board by the Uckfield Rural District Council and of Mr. Odell, Mr. Tubb and Mr. Bishop to the Board by Uckfield Rural District Council.

8. Production:

The Clerk reported the successful prosecution for parking a car on Ashdown Forest of Mr. Read who had been fined £2 with ** costs. Two other cases were pending for a Mr. Marriott and a Mr. Everest. A further case on a Mr. Burton had been withdrawn as he could not be traced.

9. Deputy Clerk Report:

The newly named Forest Superintendent report that the Rangers had been very largely employed on fire breaks during the ***** three months. Most of the important fire breaks had been ploughed and disced for approximately one-third of their width, and the cutting of the bracken of bracken grass and heather portions are now continuous. The amount of bracken growing on fire breaks **** than each year and should soon be almost eliminated. Nearly every fire break was being widened, some new breaks had been cut, and several small breaks which were of very limited use had been dropped. The total number of fires over a quarter of an acre this spring was 31, burning an approximate acreage of 517 acres. The number of fires was probably slightly above average, but the acreage slightly below. The Rangers had been very busy with weekend patrols, but had not been available for weekday patrols except on Wednesdays when there were usually a large number of visitors. Ranger Arnold had taken the second week of his summer leave, and Ranger Streeter had taken one week.

Mr. Brooke asked whether it would be in order at this stage for him to raise the matter of fire risk. Speaking as the manager of property owned by the Manor Charitable Trustees which possessed eight miles of boundary adjacent to Ashdown Forest, he would like to point out that in the event of a fire in that area the fire break of twenty yards maintained round the property would be quite inadequate to protect the property at certain points where heather and bracken on the Forest had grown to a great height. The Clerk suggested that Mr. Brooke should arrange to show the Forest Superintendent the vulnerable spots, and the Forest Superintended could then report the matter to a meeting of the Special Purposes Committee. This was agreed.

10. Finance: Accounts as at 18th July, 1967

(1) Bank Balances

General Account 3,246.16.7.

Licence Account

(Conservators share only) 1.18.6.

Wages & Petty Cash Account

Overdrawn 893.3.6.

(2) The following amounts have been collected since 1st January, 1967:

Period	Forest rates	Ack Rents	Temp. Licences	Horse riding	L.A. contribs.
1 Jan/14 Feb	16.6.6	186.2.9	13.0.0	31.0.0	-
15 Feb/18 April	29.3.6	233.3.9	35.10.0	10.0.0	950.0.0
19 April/18 Jul	871.13.6	81.10.3 (a)	180.14.0 (b)	12.10.0	3014.5.4
TOTALS 1967	917.3.6	500.16.9	229.4.0	53.10.0	3964.5.4
TOTALS as at July 1966	660.19.0	354.10.0	98.17.6	45.0.0	(c) (d)

Notes:

(a) includes £50. from W.D. on account Army Training

(b) includes £127.4.0. ice cream licences.

(c) Local Authority Contributions to date :

East Sussex C.C.		£2,835.0.0.
Uckfield R.D.C.		929.5.4.
East Grinstead U.D.C.	<u>200.0.0.</u>	£3,964.5.4.

(d) Local Authority Requirement as per Estimates:

1967	£4,458.
add underpaid for 1966	<u>447.</u>
Total	<u>£4,905.</u>

There is therefore a shortfall of just over £940 at present, against our estimated requirements.

(3) The following is due for payment :
Clerk's salary for Sept. quarter £280.

(4) Liquidation of overdraft:

Resolution required that £1,050 should be transferred from General to wages & petty Cash Account to clear existing overdraft of £893 and to meet the balance of Rangers' wages (157) due this month.

Local Authority Contributions

References paragraph (2) note (d): Breakdown of present shortfall of £941.

(1) Due Cuckfield R.D.C.	£169.
(2) Due Uckfield R.D.C.	
Balance of £1,100. Contribution	£350.
(3) Further outstanding balance as follows:	
(a) Uckfield restriction on their full 3/10s contribution so as to reduce to £1,100	£237.
(b) Remaining 3/8s share of East Grinstead and Cuckfield's restrictions, County Council having already met their 5/8s share	
3/8s of £491. – say	<u>£184.</u>
	<u>£940.</u>

The drift Resolution in (4) above was proposed by Col. Lowe, seconded by Mr. Odell, and carried.

The Clerk informed the board that a difficult time lay ahead financially, due to Uckfield Rural District Council's attitude in restricting its contribution this year to £1,100. Funds would be short by £460. The East Sussex County Council had paid their normal contribution and in addition they had paid 5/8s of the shortfall but Uckfield's 3/8s had not been paid. He asked the Board for their approval to write to the Uckfield Rural District Council to see whether on reflection they would do this. There was a great deal of work to be done and the Forest Superintendent had only been allowed to spend £11 this year out of the £150 laid aside for sundries. Most of the money required under this heading was needed for hardcore for improving the car parks.

11. Any other business:

(a) Mr. Drew drew the attention of the Board to an article in the Courier of 18th May on a report Mrs. Ridley had made to the Board of Conservators on a scheme to improve the Forest. He had been approached by a number of people criticising this report of which he had in fact no knowledge. The Chairman stated that this scheme had been sent to him by Mrs. Ridley in a letter to which he had replied. Mrs. Ridley explained that she had shown this scheme to the Special Purposes Committee of the Cuckfield Rural District Council and she regretted that the paper had therefore reported incorrectly that the scheme had been placed before the Conservators.

(b) The Clerk stated he had received a letter from the Secretary of the Society of sheep, Police and Army Dogs asking whether they could be charged a reduced fee for their days on the Forest in view of the fact that they were only a small society operating on a small scale. The Board discussed this but decided that the fixed scale of five guineas should not be altered or exceptions made.

(c) The Clerk reported on the letter-box at Heatherdene, stating that on the advice of the Chairman he had given in, but had obtained an admission that this was by courtesy of the Conservators and did not in any way convey any rights to the Post Office.

(d) The Clerk showed the Board a plan of a notice board which the Ashdown Forest Hotel wished to place on Ashdown Forest indicating where the hotel is, but which in his opinion was more of an advertisement for Courage ales. The Board agreed that this was an advertisement and that the hotel had a board on the Forest already. Permission for the new board was therefore refused.

(e) The Clerk reported he had received a letter from East Sussex County Council on the subject of the Clearway Order for the 4.22 road between Highgate Green end a point approximately 110 yards south of the junction of the Nutley-Duddleswell Road at Nutley. The Clerk explained that he had an understanding with the County Council to put up notice boards showing the public the various picnicking sites. but he had made it plain that the Conservators could not make the boards themselves. Commander Angell would submit a design and he hoped the Council would allow the Conservators to have the boards at cost price made by their regular Contractors. He felt the time had now come to approach the Highway authority on the subject of erecting fences along the clearway as that was the area even now where most accidents to deer occurred.

There being no other business the meeting closed.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL, FOREST ROW, ON WEDNESDAY, the 18th OCTOBER, 1967, AT 2.30.

Present: Sir William Garrett (in the chair); Col. J.H. Lowe; Mr. W.D. Gillham ; The Hon. C.A.S. Grimston ; Miss Anne Lumsden; Mrs. M.P. Foster; Capt. D.M.F. Armstrong ; Mr. R.P. Odell; Mr. J.H. Drew; Col. Sir Ralph Clarke; Mr. A.K.L. Harvey ; Brig. L.M. Scott; Mr. J.F. Bishop; Mr. A.R. Tubb; Mr. R.F.J. Brooke; Mr. L.J. Cornwell.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. U. Ridley and Mr. F.B. Cornwell.

2. Minutes of the last meeting : These having been circulated they were taken as read and the Chairman asked for approval to sign them. Mr. Brookes asked that his name be added to the list of those present as it had been omitted.

3. Matters arising :

(a) Licence to Duddleswell Stores: The Clerk reminded the Board that this year they had granted a Licence to Duddleswell Stores for four months at a nominal fee of £5 to place tables and chairs on the Forest. The Stores was in the process of changing hands and the Solicitors acting for the Purchaser had written and asked whether this Licence would be renewed, and if so for how long and for how much. The Licence this year had been experimental but had heard nothing detrimental. He himself did not think it was a viable proposition for the owner to take out a fresh Licence if granted should be either for a period of twelve months or on a "per month" basis with a fee of say 25/- per month. The matter was debated and finally it was proposed by Sir William Garrett, Seconded by Mr. Odell and RESOLVED that a Licence be granted to the new owner of Duddleswell Stores for the whole of 1968 at the fee of £10. Capt. Armstrong added that the Licence should be displayed outside the grounds of the shop and this was agreed.

(b) Ice Cream Vendors: The Clerk reminded the Board that this year they had also granted a Licence for a four month period to sell ice cream on the Forest. Five sites had been put out for tender but in fact only one Licence had been granted covering four sites, and the fifth site, the Boat cross-roads, had not been let. Here again he felt it would be more satisfactory if the period were extended to twelve months, and he would also suggest for the Board's consideration that the whole of the Forest be put up for tender to ice cream merchants, and not as five separate sites, as it would be easier to control one firm rather than a series of people. A general discussion followed and finally it was agreed that tenders should be for one Licence for twelve months to cover the whole Forest, but that a limit of six should be placed on the number of vans permitted. Mr. Tubb then raised the question of whether Planning Permission was required for the sale of ice cream on the Forest, and the Clerk replied that in his opinion he did not think any such permission was necessary, but in any event all temporary licences of this nature contained a provision that the Licensee would have to obtain all planning consents at his own expense (if necessary) and satisfy the requirements of any local Authority.

(c) Licence to Mrs. Catt: The Clerk asked the Board to renew the Licence granted to Mrs. Catt to put her trolley on the Forest, and suggested that here again the new Licence should cover a twelve month period as requested by Mrs. Catt herself. He also asked the Conservators whether in the event of anyone else making a similar request, they were prepared to grant such a licence. He pointed out that Mrs. Catt's trolley measured 6 ft. by 4 ft., that it was on wheels and could only be put on the Forest from sunrise to sunset, and that the goods licensed were "garden produce". If Mrs. Catt, or anyone else to whom such a Licence were granted, abused the terms of the Licence, it need not be renewed. Capt. Armstrong stated that Mrs. Catt now had a notice on her gate "Open - Please Drive In" and he wondered whether the granting of such Licences would not be the first step to people using their houses for trading purposes to the detriment of local traders, in which event he was against such Licences being granted. After a general discussion it was proposed by Sir Ralph Clarke, seconded by Mr. Drew, and RESOLVED that a Licence be granted to Mrs. Catt for 1968.

(d) Commons Registration: The Forest Superintendent reported on a meeting he had had with the Clerk to the County Council to find out how registration was progressing. The number so far registered totalled 95, but if to that number were added those who had corresponded with the County Council on the subject, and those who had written to the Clerk to the Conservators, as well as those who had had to re-register the number of commonable animals, the total at a rough estimate would be nearer 200. The Clerk stated it was impossible to say at this stage how many people would finally register, "but it was known that a number of the 2/6d. rate payers living in flats or semi-detached houses had no intention or indeed any reason, for registering.

(e) Estimates for 1968: The Clerk stated that it was usual at the October meeting to put the Estimates before the Board. He had written to the Clerk to the County Council asking him, if he had had an opportunity yet of submitting the provisional estimates to his Council. He had replied at the end of September that he had been away for a month and that the County Treasurer was then away, and that he would write again as soon as possible. As nothing had been heard from him since then, the estimates would have to go before the December meeting.

Brig. Scott stated that the sub-Committee would be meeting in a few days time, and he knew that one of the questions that would be raised would be the Conservators' estimation of income from other sources for next year, to which the Clerk replied that whilst he would not like to be tied down, a rough estimate would be the same as for this year.

4. Prosecutions under the Bye-Laws: The Clerk reported the successful prosecution of a lady selling ice cream on the Forest without a Licence. She had been fined £2. but no costs. Two days later the same Company's van was there again with a different driver against whom a Summons had been issued but not yet served. This driver had written a letter of apology and in view of this he suggested to the Board that he should write to the firm owning the van stating the Summons against their employee would be dropped if they were prepared to pay a fine of £2. instead. This was agreed.

5. Report of the Forest Superintendent: The Forest Superintendent reported that the Rangers had largely been employed on cutting and maintaining the firebreaks during the summer months. Most breaks had been cut twice, some three times. This would result in a considerable weakening of the bracken growth next year. Growth for this year had virtually stopped. Sufficient wood had been cut for making up new firebeaters during the coming months. All birch brooms would be replaced by the new type beater which had proved extremely efficient during the last fire season. There had been two summer fires this year, neither large in extent, but the one near Hindleap Farm had left an extremely unsightly patch of burnt gorse. "A Contractor had been employed to use a Ferguson Swipe to cut this, and this had proved most impressive in its speed of operation and in the results obtained. It would tackle much larger growth than would the forage harvester, and the periodic hire of such a machine would greatly facilitate the task of widening and improving the firebreaks. As an experiment, a short length of ditch had been excavated by a hired J.C.B. beside the road to Old Lodge. This was a point where the Rangers had been having constant trouble with motorists driving on to the firebreaks, and this had now been efficiently and permanently stopped. The principle would be extended to car parks when money for the hire of machinery became available. The Land Rover had been unserviceable for three weeks with gear box trouble (repaired under the guarantee), and although a Commer van had been borrowed in its place, its absence had made everyone realise what a very great asset it had proved to the Forest. A start had been made in placing concrete bollards in position to restrict casual parking on the A.22 between Highgate Green and Wych Cross in anticipation of the clearway scheme coming into force. One abandoned car had been removed from the Forest. Investigations as to its ownership were still proceeding. The Rangers had all taken their two weeks summer leave.

He reiterated what a magnificent job of work had been done by the Ferguson Swipe and that it would be well worth hiring such a machine in the future, if 'plans for enlarger budget materialised, not only for cutting old gorse but for

improving firebreaks. Miss Lumsden asked whether the Conservators were adequately insured for using the Swipe which it was well known was an extremely dangerous machine and members of the public could easily be hurt by flying stones. Several other members of the Board endorsed this. The Clerk said the matter of adequate insurance would be looked into.

The Forest Superintendent stated that on the day previous to the meeting a J.C.B. had been used at the Gills Lap car park which had been ditched all round for a depth of 18 inches with a bank on the car park side. By next summer it would have grassed over and not be unsightly. At the same time the two bottom entrances to this car park had been dug out and filled with hardcore which had been bought for this purpose. For one entrance brick dust had been used but the other temporarily contained brick rubble.

Regarding the Land Rover, so much had it been missed while out of action for three weeks as reported, that he had called upon Ranger Linton to lend his which had been much appreciated

Referring back to the bollards placed in position beside the A.22, these had been provided free by the County Council and there were more available. Brig. Scott asked if it were wise to restrict parking to this extent as there would surely be occasions when it would be necessary for vehicles to be towed off the road. He was assured that the County Council Highways Department had been kept fully in the picture. Mr. Odell asked if bollards could be placed on either side of the entrances to Balfour Gardens and Ashdown Place as cars parked on these verges caused a real safety hazard. It was agreed to do this.

6. Finance:

Accounts as at 18th October 1967

1. Bank Balances:

General Account	£1 404.1. 0.
Licence Account	
(Conservators' share only)	2.14.0.
Wages & Petty Cash Account	<u>537.8.1.</u>
Total	<u>1,944.3.1.</u>

2. The following amounts have been collected since 1st January, 1967:

	Forest Rates	Ack. Rents	Temp. Licences	Horse riding	Local Authority Contributions
	1360.3.0	613.19.9 (a)	376.14.6 (b)	57.0.0	3964.5.4 (c) (d)
TOTAL AS AT Oct 1966	1189.16.0	461.16.9	128.0.0	63.0.0	2423.10.5

Notes: (a) Includes £50 from War Dept. on account Army Training

(b) Includes £250.4.0. Ice Cream Licences

(c) Local Authority Contributions to date:

East Sussex C.C. 2,835.0.0.

Uckfield R.D.C. 929.5.4.

East Grinstead U.D.C. 200.0.0.

3,964.5.4.

(d) Local Authority Requirement as per Estimate:

1967 4,458.

add underpaid for 1966 447.

4,905.

There is therefore a shortfall of just over £940 against our estimated requirements (see below)

Local Authority Contributions

Reference paragraph 2, Note (d) - Breakdown of present shortfall of £940.

1. Due Cuckfield R.D.C	£169.
2. Due Uckfield R.D.C. Balance of £1100 cont.	£350.
3. Further outstanding balance as follows:	
(a) Uckfield restriction on their full 3/1 Os cont., so as to reduce to £1100	£237.
(b) Remaining 3/8s share of East Grinstead & Cuckfield's restrictions, County Council having already met their 5/8s share - 3/8s of £491 say	<u>£184</u>
	<u>£940.</u>

With regard to the Forest Rates, the Clerk asked the Board for permission to take legal proceedings against Mr. Conley, for payment of his rates, if necessary by distraint, and the Board having satisfied themselves that all steps had been taken to obtain the money by other means, it was proposed by Col. Lowe, seconded by Sir Ralph Clarke and RESOLVED that the Clerk be authorised to take proceedings against Mr. Conley including distraint.

7. Bowling Green, Colemans Hatch: Mr. Drew told the meeting that at the February meeting one of the Conservators had brought up the question of a bowling green for Colemans Hatch. Previously the Bowling Club had used a green on private property but this had changed hands and they had -received notice to quit. As Superintendent of the Recreation Ground he had investigated further. Subsequently a site at the back of the Hatch Inn had been selected, and he had collected from the residents of Forest Row, Colemans Hatch and Hartfield no less than £350. for establishing the new bowling green. The money was still in the Bank as this site had ceased to be available. He had therefore come to the conclusion that he would have to investigate the possibility of a site on the Forest, and under the Bye-Laws it would seem that the Board were able to authorise enclosure of a piece of Forest for the purpose of recreation and sport for local villages. Therefore he now asked the Board for permission under the Bye-Laws to enclose an area of 50 yds. x 50 yds, for the purpose of establishing a bowling green. The area had in fact been cut by the forage harvester to see what the ground was like and to give the Board an idea of the size. If the project were not proceeded with, the area would return to its natural state. He had asked the owners of property on either side, Miss Leeson and Major Courage, whether they had any objections, and he had their replies in writing that they had not. The only comment they had made was -that it would probably produce more litter in the area. Before the Board came to a decision, he would ask the Clerk to read out the relevant Bye-Law 17. The Clerk read it out as follows:

"The Superintendent of each Recreation Ground appointed by the Conservators shall have the management and general control of such ground, and shall have the power to set apart and either fence in or make out in a conspicuous manner a portion thereof for the purpose of Cricket Matches or any other special purposes of recreation; and no person shall play any games on or drive or ride, or pass over the portion of any Recreation Ground so set apart as aforesaid, or over any other portion of any Recreation Ground, which may be from time to time enclosed by the Conservators or by their authority, without the permission of such Superintendent, or some, person duly authorised by him in writing. No person shall obstruct or interfere with any person playing, or who shall have made preparation for playing, at Cricket or any other lawful games upon any Recreation Ground."

The Clerk stated that the Conservators were being urged by Local Authorities to encourage recreation on Ashdown Forest, and for this reason they had made the extra car parking facilities. The car parks, however, were for people who did not live on Ashdown Forest. Subject to the Commoners having no objection, he considered this bowling green for local villages was a good idea, though he had pointed out to the Secretary of the Bowling Club that he would act he able to refuse admission for membership to people living in the three villages concerned. He thought there would probably be more requests in future from other parts of the Forest for bowling greens, tennis courts, etc. A general discussion then took place with regard to fencing in parts of the Forest which have not been fenced in before, and it was finally agreed that this matter should go before the Commoners at their Annual General Meeting in December as a recommendation by the Board of Conservators.

8. Firearms on Ashdown Forest: The Clerk reported that a Mr. Powell had applied to the Surrey Police for a Licence to use rifles and revolvers for practice, it was understood, over Ashdown Forest. On the instructions of the

Chairmen he had written to the Chief Constable of the East Sussex Constabulary objecting most strongly. He had received the following reply:

"I am directed by the Chief Constable to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 3rd October, 1967, and note your wishes concerning the use of firearms over Ashdown Forest. A copy of your letter has been passed to the Chief Constable, Surrey Constabulary, in whose area the applicant resides, together with the information that the Chief Constable of this Force will not allow such use by Mr. Powell."

On being questioned by the Board Mr. Grimston, representing Lord Buckhurst, stated that deer were excluded from sporting Licences and that all new Licences issued now stated that rifles were forbidden. He explained that Lord Buckhurst had been approached by the Agricultural Committee on account of complaints about deer from farmers. No deer could be shot on the Forest but if the deer were on the farmers land he could shoot them if he had a licence from the Police to do so. The Deer Society did not hold a Sporting Licence so were not affected by this.

9. Any other business:

(a) The Depot: The Clerk reported that since the addition of the small lean-to shed at the Depot, the rateable value had been increased from £45. to £55., so the net value was now £30.. instead of £25. In view of the small amount involved he had not appealed against it.

(b) Appeals for funds to motorists: The Chairman informed the Board that while visiting the California National Park recently, he had come out from lunch and found stuck behind his windscreen wipers a notice appealing for funds for the Park. He had followed this up and discovered that the Society received a response from an average of five out of every one hundred people. He thought the Board might like to try out the experiment here, particularly aimed at motor car owners, and the best time to catch them would be when the car parks were in a bad condition. He then read out the draft of a notice as follows:

Welcome to Ashdown Forest

It is the responsibility of the Conservators of the Forest to maintain and to improve the amenities of the Forest for the increasing numbers who visit it each year. This work includes fire prevention, litter clearance, and provision of parking facilities. Much still has to be done, especially in the hard surfacing of parking areas, but the Conservators are badly handicapped by lack of funds. If you would like to help in the task, would you please send a contribution to The Clerk, The Conservators of Ashdown Forest, 1 & 2 Judges Terrace, East Grinstead, Sussex.

The Chairmen suggested printing 1000 notices to begin with which could be distributed by the Rangers during the winter months while they went about the normal course of their duties.

The Board voted unanimously to try the experiment, but considered an initial printing of 3000 copies should be made, and that not only the Rangers be supplied with them but the Conservators themselves could distribute them whenever they were on the Forest, and perhaps the ice cream vendors could be asked to cooperate as well.

There being no other business, the meeting then closed.

MINUTES of The Annual General Meeting of the Commoners duly convened by notices posted on the principal doors of the churches of the parishes and ecclesiastical districts and post offices to which the Forest extends and by notices to the members of the Board more than fourteen days prior to this date and held at the Village Hall, Forest Row at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, 12th December, 1967:

Present: Mr. Townsend; Mr. A.K.L. Hervey; Mr. W.D. Gillham; Mr. F.B. Cornwell; Mr. A.D. Macpherson; Lt. Col & Mrs. Durkell; Miss C.H.I. Wood; Mr. P.W. Shaw; Mr. W.I. Hoath; Mr. D. Evatt; Mr. L.H. Smith; Mr. & Mrs. C.W. Roberts; Mr. & Mrs. Glover; Mr. Stevenson; Mr. G. St. L. Berkeley; Mr & Mrs, R. Lloyd Jones; Miss Anne Lumsden; Mr. & Mrs. *ulsken; Mr. H. Weeding; Col. Sir Ralph Clarke; Capt. & Mrs. Brett; Miss. M.B. Reed; Mr. Hale; Mr. D. Workman; Capt. Armstrong; Sir William Garrett; Mr. J.H. Drew; Col. J.H. Lowe.

1. Election of Chairman: The Clerk called for nominations for a Chairman. Mr. D. Evatt proposed, seconded by Mr. Townsend, that Sir William Garrett be elected Chairman and this Resolution was passed unanimously.

2. The Clerk read the Notice convening the Meeting.

3. Minutes: The Clerk then read the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting which were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. Election of Conservators : The Clerk reported that Mr. F.B. Cornwall, Col. Sir Ralph Clarke and Miss Anne Lumsden had retired from the Board by rotation but offered themselves for re-election. There were no other nominations and he therefore declared them re-elected.

5. Election of Recreation Ground Superintendents: The Superintendents of Recreation Grounds were unanimously re-elected as follows:

Nutley	Mr. Gillham
Forest. Row	Col. Lowe
Colemans Hatch	Mr. Drew
Fairwarp	Mr. Harvey
Chelwood Gate	Mr. Brooke

6. General Business

(a) Chairman's Report: The Chairman re-routed that the Forest had been enjoyed throughout the year by an increasing number of people. A Committee had been formed to enquire into the improvement of erasing on which Col. Lowe would report, and car parks had been enlarged and improved. There was a possibility that the County Council would fence the east side of the A.22 from Pippingford Park to the southern end of the Forest at Dodds Bank with roadways and cattle rids where necessary, which would benefit commoners grazing animals near this road. He drew the attention of the Meeting to the Countryside Bill now before Parliament and advised those Interested in the Forest to study the bill carefully. He reported that registration under the Commons Registration Act 1965 was proceeding slowly and warned that after next July a registration fee of £5 would be payable. Regarding finance, he had instigated a meeting with the Chairman and Clerk of the County Council and Uckfield Rural District Council respectively who had been taken for a tour of the Forest and shown, the achievements and also the complexity of the task compared with the financial resources. As a result the County Council had Increased its contribution to £4,400 and Uckfield had agreed to contribute a fixed sum of £1600. He made special mention of the Friends of Ashdown Forest. who had made several donations during the year including an Austin mini-truck for use by the Forest Superintendent. Altogether gifts from the Friends in terms of money now totalled £3,400. He mentioned the restrictions to take care that foot and mouth did not reach the Forest and adjacent farms which he realised meant hard shop for some but the restrictions would be lifted as soon as possible. Lastly he thanked the Forest Superintendent and the Rangers for the good work they had performed in fair weather and foul. He knew the Commoners would like to add their thanks to his.

The Clerk added that with regard to the A.?? fencing for which the County Council would seek formal approval next year, the County Council felt-that some people who were grazing cattle and would therefore benefit from the fencing might like to donate towards the cost of the grids or gates, and asked those interested to contact him later.

(b) The Deputy Chairman reported on the Grazing Committee: He stated three were four main problem dogs, the complexity of the Forest boundaries; the traffic on the road *** poor *****. His Committee were concentrating on the grazing and the controlled burning of heather and were doing all they could to effect an improvement.

(c) Colemans Hatch Bowling Green: Mr. Drew, Vice Chairman, explained the events leading up to this request, and that the Board of Conservators supported the ideas subject to the Commoners' approval which he now bought. On being assured that the bowling green would remain part of the Forest, the Commoners agreed unanimously to the construction of the bowling green and to it being properly fenced in.

(d) Foot and Mouth Disease: The Clerk explained the precautions taken to prevent the spread of foot and mouth disease to Ashdown Forest and adjacent farmland, including the removal of cattle and sheep from the Forest, the ban on horse riding and the request not to exercise dogs on the Forest, He pointed out, that to wait until the disease actually arrived in the areas would have been too late. He assured the Commoners that the restrictions would be lifted as soon as it was safe to do so. The Commoners approved the measures taken.

(e) Fire Prevention: Mr. Andrews, the District Fire Officer, addressed the meeting on fire fighting and fire precautions on the Forest, with particular reference to those Commoners whose properties were on or adjoining the Forest, and offered to visit any of them to give advice.

7. The Meeting was then opened to questions. Mr. Townsend, Mr. Weeding and Mr. Glover all raised points on the number and type of combinable animals permitted under the Commons Registration Act 1965, and after some discussion it was suggested by the Chairman and agreed that the matter be left for the Clerk to have a chance to consider.

8. The date for the 1968. Annual General Meeting was agreed as Tuesday, 10th December, at Hartfield.

9. The Meeting was then declared closed.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, COLEMANS HATCH, WEDNESDAY, 13TH DECEMBER AT 2.30 P.M.

Present: Col. Lowe (in the Chair; Mr. R.F.J. Brooke, Mr. A.K.L. Harvey; Major R.E.W. Grubb; Mrs. U. Ridley; Mr. J.P. Bishop; Mr. R.P. Odell; Brig. L.M. Scott; Mr. W.D. Gillham; Miss A. Lumsden; Mr. F.B. Cornwall; Mr. L.J. Cornwell; Capt. D.H.F. Armstrong; The Hon, C.A.S. Grimston; Mrs. M.P. Foster.

Before the Meeting commenced the Clerk asked the Board whether they approved of the meeting place at Colemans Hatch, and it was agreed to hold the next meeting at the same venue.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Sir William Garrett who was abroad, Col. Sir Ralph Clarke, Mr. J.H. Drew and Mr. A.R. Tubb.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting: These having been circulated they were taken as read. Capt. Armstrong requested that in paragraph 2 line 4, the words "Mr. Odell" to the end of the paragraph be deleted. Mr. Brooke then drew attention to page 6, paragraph 7, line 4, and requested that the reference to the Bowling Club at Colemans Hatch having "owned" a green on private property be changed to "used". He also referred to page 7. paragraph 8, line 15, and suggested the words "are being" be substituted for "were", and that on the following line "rifles be substituted for "f ire arms" and Mr. Grimston agreed that these substitutions would be more accurate. All these amendments were therefore made and the Chairman signed the Minutes.

3. Matter Arising:

(a) Ice Cream Vendors: The Clerk reported that the highest tender had been received from Reigate Caterers Ltd. for £620. The other tenders received had been for £350, £315, and £210. RESOLVED that the tender for £620. from Reigate Caterers Ltd. be accepted.

(b) Appeals for funds to motorists: The Clerk reported that these leaflets approved at the previous meeting had now been printed and a moderate hand-out started. So far there had been no response.

(c) Licence to Duddleswell Stores: The Clerk reported this Licence was in the course of completion.

4(a) The Chairmen reported that at the Commoners Meeting the following Conservators had been re-elected to the Board:

Mr. F.B. Cornwell.
Col. Sir. Ralph Clarke
Miss Anne Lumsden.

(b) The Clerk reported that he had received a letter from the Clerk to the East Sussex County Council stating that Capt. D.H.F. Armstrong, Mr. M.P. Foster, Major R.E.W. Grubb and Brig. L.M. Scoot had been re-elected to the Board of Conservators. As from 1st January next Mr. L.J. Cornwell was retiring and his place would be taken by Mr. J.R. Greenwood. He had also received a letter that morning from the East Grinstead Urban District Council stating that Councillor G.S. King had been elected to the Board of Conservators in place of Mr. Rush. Mr. King had been elected for a care of where years up to the 31st December, 1970, subject to his re-election to the Council in May 1969. The Clerk reminded the Board that Mr. King was the male Matron of St. Leonard's Hospital

5. Commoners Meeting: The Chairman, Col. Lowe, then reported on the Commoners' Annual General Meeting which had taken place at Forest Row the previous evening. He stated that the election of the Conservators and of

the Superintendents for recreation grounds had been carried unopposed. There had been an interesting talk give by the sure for district. Mr. Andrews, on fire fighting generally and on cooperation between the Fire Fighting services, the Rangers and the public when fighting fires on the Forest, and Mr. Andrews had offered to give advice and help to the Commoners living on the Forest on how to prevent or tackle fires affecting their properties. The precautions taken to prevent foot and mouth disease spreading on the Forest and adjacent travelling had been accepted by the Commoners present without complaint. A discussion had also taken place in connection with the number of animals which could be registered in reference to the Commons Registration Act.

6. Estimates: The Clerk stated that the estimates now before the Board for approval were basically the same as those they had received in July to **** had broken down into further detail. As this concerned the Salaries of the Forest Superintendents and the Rangers asked them to leave the room during the discussions and they withdrew. The Clerk then told the meeting he has received a letter from the National Farmers Union from which he had ascertained that since 1965, when the Rangers had received their last increase, agricultural wages had risen by ** per cent. The Rangers' wages were based on the minimum wages of on agriculture worker without overtime, plus the amount of overtime they right expect to receive for **** work and to that was then added a slight increase over the minimum. Sir William Garrett had seen the estimates now before the meeting and was of the opinion that the Rangers' wages should be increased by ten per cent so that the percentage differential between their wages and agricultural wages should be *****. At the moment Arnold was receiving £17.10.0 ***** percent increase would take it £19.5.0 representing **** in Arnold's pocket. Streeter and Linton at present received £16. The ten per cent increase would bring this up to £17.12.0. which in Linton's pocket represents 16/- a week extra where as Streeter who had four children would get the whole of the increase. Before the matter was discussed he would like to state very strongly that if the Ranger received this ten per cent increase then the Forest Superintendent was entitled to the same amount to keep his salary in proportion to that of the Rangers, and he would like to point out that the estimates would still come out well below the £10,000. limit set on them.

A general discussion them took place. The Clerk was asked by Capt. Armstrong whether the National Farmers Union figures include the increase in February next, and the Clerk read out the figures he had been sent:

4th Jan. 1965 202/-
2nd Jan. 1966 210/-
6th Feb. 1967 216/-
5th Feb. 1966 231/-

Col. Lowe provided out then in his opinion the Rangers were in a class on their own and it was important that they should realise that having joined the staff of Ashdown Forest they would not worse off than agricultural workers on the land elsewhere. Major Grubb stated that the Rangers' wages were at 50% above agricultural wages, they did not perform any rough work. This the Clerk refuted, pointing out that they spent 75% of there time on manual labour and it was at weekends only that they patrolled. The work could not be related to agricultural workers more to gamekeepers. The post of Head Ranger for instance carried a great deal of responsibility and skill and could be compared to more extent with a herdsman. Mrs. Ridley agreed that Rangers work was specialised and it should be made worthwhile for them to stay. Col. Lowe stated that at this stage would rather have three well-paid Rangers than employ the proposed fourth Ranger. Mr. Grimston pointed out that farm workers lived in cottages that were either rent free or cost a few shillings weekly. It was then suggested by Brig. Scott that while an increase in the Rangers' present wages was obviously justified, the increase should be a flat increase of the agricultural wage and not based on a different on watch basis the Rangers and the Forest Superintendent would get rise 21/- a week each, and after further debate on this point it was proposed by Brig. Scott, seconded by Mrs. Ridley and RESOLVED that the Forest Superintendent and the three Rangers should each receive a rise of 21/- a week.

The part of the estimates relating to the employment of a fourth Rangers was then debated. Mr. Odell and Mrs. Foster were firmly of the opinion that with the country in its present economic state this was no time to employ a fourth Ranger. Capt. Armstrong was in favour of employing him. Col. Lowe and Brig. Scott pointed out that it was an expanding service that was being given to the public and the strain on the three existing Rangers was increasing every year. Major Grubb thought that the money for the fourth Ranger should be left in the estimates but his actual employment deferred until the country's finances improved. Mrs. Ridley thought the fourth Ranger should be struck from the 1968 estimates altogether. These two points of view were then discussed at length, the Clerk pointing out that if a fourth Ranger were not to be employed in March as envisaged, it was wrong to leave the money in the estimates, but finally it was proposed by Major Grubb, seconded by Mr. Odell and RESOLVED that

the fourth Ranger be left in the Estimates but the proposal should not take effect until the affairs of the country warranted it.

The Clerk then enlarged on the heading "Rangers Expenses". Up till now the Rangers had been given a clothing allowance of £15 a year to provide their own working clothes. This had proved unsatisfactory for several reasons, not least that when they were patrolling the Forest the public failed to recognise them, and it had also caused confusion between the Rangers and the Fire Fighting Service during forest fires. It was therefore proposed that each Ranger should receive a patrol uniform coat and trousers; 2 boiler suits for working in; draw-on protective clothing for their motor cycles, a crash helmet and arm bands, and that they should receive £5. a year boot allowance instead of a clothing allowance of £25. It was proposed by Mr. L.J Cornwell, seconded by Mr. Bishop and RESOLVED that the uniform expenses be passed.

There was then a short debate on the subject of the expenses for car parks on the Forest and the lay-bys being made by the County Council. The Clerk and the Forest Superintendent explained that the policy now was to enlarge and improve the existing car parks but to close some of the numerous places where one or two cars could get off the road on to the Forest where they left litter which imposed an added burden on the Rangers whose task it was to keep the Forest tidy. It was pointed out by the Forest Superintendent that the County Council were spending vast sums on lay-bys in the county generally and they had been co-operating with the Conservators in making lay-bys for two or three cars near existing car parks. This was particularly helpful to lorry drivers who did not need or wish to draw on to the Forest.

The last heading in the Estimates to be debated was Administration. Capt. Armstrong stated that in his opinion money should be spent on the forest itself and the administration expenses were far too high. He saw no reason why Forest Rates should not be collected like other rates by one or more of the Local Authorities, and that a police-type house, with extra rooms for offices, should be built at the Depot and occupied by the Forest Superintendent or Senior Ranger and the Forest administered from there. There would be some typing for which arrangements would have to be made perhaps with the help of a Local Authority. The day to day records could be kept at the Depot and the historical documents and records lodged elsewhere, perhaps with the County Council. He could see no justification in retaining the services of a lawyer to run the affairs of Ashdown Forest. The Clerk replied that there was rather more work in administering the Forest than Capt. Armstrong seemed to imagine. "Some typing" hardly described the work done for the Forest by his secretary, and his, the Clerk's work was no sinecure. He could assure Capt. Armstrong that the set-up he had just outlined would in the end cost the Conservators a great deal more money than the present administration. Brig. Scott and Col Lowe both pointed out to Capt. Armstrong that the matter before the Board was the estimates and his proposals for administration should be left to a more appropriate occasion. It was therefore proposed by Mr. Brooke, seconded by Brig. Scott and RESOLVED that the estimates as amended should be approved.

7. Bowling Green at Colemans Hatch: The Clerk reported that Mr. Drew had put this proposal to the Commoners Meeting the previous evening and they had approved it subject to a Licence being entered into by the Colemans Hatch Bowling Club and a small Acknowledgement Rent being paid. As the Board of Conservators had already agreed to this at their last meeting, subject to the Commoners' approval, this matter could now go ahead.

8. Expo Sussex 68. The Clerk stated that notices had been circulated with the Agenda. All organisations in Sussex had been approached and asked to play their part. Col. Lowe had discussed it briefly with Sir William Garrett who had made the point that Conservators were going to do anything at all, they should do it well and put the Forest in a good light. Col. Lowe stated that this would cost money – his guess was around £350 and if it was decided to take part they should also decide how the money would be raised. The Clerk said he did not think he was giving any secret away & stating that the Friends of Ashdown Forest would like to join in and would help the expense. Various suggestions were put forward, particularly by Miss Lumsden, and it was agreed that this idea be adopted in principle and space booked, and the matter be discussed in greater detail at the next meeting.

8a. To fix the Forest Rate for 1968. It was proposed by Mr. Brooke, seconded by Mr. Odell and RESOLVED that the Forest Rate for 1968 shall be at the rate of Two Shillings and Sixpence for the first acre or part thereof, and one pound for each acre thereafter (subject to a maximum of three pounds).

9. Finance:

ACCOUNTS AS AT 12TH DECEMBER. 1967.

1. <u>Bank Balances</u>	1967	1966
General Account	1,600.5.11.	(£286)
Licence Account (Conservators' income only)	13 15.0.	(£37)
Wages & Petty Cash Account	<u>132 10.4.</u>	<u>(£455)</u>
	£1,746 11.3.	(£760)

2. The following amounts have been collected since 1st January, 1967-

	Forest Rates	Acknow. Rates	Temp. Licences	Horse riding	Local Auth. Contributions
	1475.4.6	623.9.9 (a)	398.4.6 (b)	57.0.0	4904.6.7 (c)
Totals at 12 Dec 1966	1437.15.0	500.8.11	144.5.0	68.15.0	2423.10.5

Notes:

(a) Includes £50 from War Dept - Army Training.

(b) Includes £250.4.0. from Ice Cream Licences.

(c) Local Authority contributions

East Sussex C.C. £2835.0.0 (8d underpaid)

Uckfield R.D.C. £1700.5.4 (15/- underpaid)

East Grinstead U.D.C. £200.0.0.

Cuckfield R.D.C. £169,1.3. (+ £30.18,9.

Total £4904.6.7. overpaid in 1966)

Requirement as per 1967 Estimates: £4905.2.3

3. Arrears position.

Forest Rate arrears at 31 Dec. 1966 £83.7.6.
 recovered to date 60.2.6
 Total arrears outstanding
 to date including 1967 39.9.0.

Ack. Rent Arrears at 31 Dec. 1966 15.16.10.
 Recovered to date 12.12.1
 Total arrears outstanding
 to date including 1967 12.6.2.
 but £8.2.8. of this is expected
 from P.M.G. next week which should
 reduce to £4.3.6.

A summary of the Arrears Position for the last 10 years is attached. It will be noted that the 1967 position has never been bettered during these years for Ack. Rents, and only once, in 1966 for Forest Rates.

4. The following amount is due for payment:

ARREARS POSITION 1958 to 1967.

	Forest Rates	Acknowledgment Rents
1958	80.11.0	12.12.11
1959	135.8.6	24.1.5
1960	28.13.6	12.7.0
1961	40.0.0	30.7.3
1962	75.7.0	26.14.8
1963	82.1.0	42.15.11

1964	47.19.0	28.12.2
1965	117.16.0	16.16.6
1966	83.7.6	15.16.10
1967	39.9.0 to date	12.6.2 to date but should reduce to 4.3.6

The Clerk asked for the Board's approval for Col. Lowe's name to be added to those whose signatures, could appear on the Conservators' cheques, and this was agreed unanimously.

10. Mini Truck: The Clerk reported the gift of a Mini-truck costing £422. by the Friends of the Ashdown Forest for the use of the Forest Superintendent. This was already in use and was proving of great maintenance. He had written to the Friends to thank them on behalf of the Committee.

11. Fire Fighting on Ashdown Forest. The Clerk drew the attention of the Board to the Memorandum circulated with the Agenda. He was placed to report that very friendly relations had now been established between the Fire Fighting Services and the Forest Superintendent and the Rangers. At the Commoners' meeting the previous evening three fire officers had turned on and Mr. Andrew the Divisional Officer.

Mr. Andrews' Report.

On Tuesday 31st October 1967, I met Commander J.P. Angell (Forest Superintendent) in order to:

- (a) Get to know one another,
- (b) To arrange a meeting of forest rangers and fire officers. This has been fixed for 1930 hours on 21st November 1967 at Uckfield Fire Station.
- (c) To discuss mutually satisfactory methods of fire fighting on Ashdown Forest as the result of a better understanding of each others problems with regard to fires in the forest.

With regard to the many points discussed the following are, in my opinion, the most important, and my comments as to the value of each are included. May a report based on this be sent to Commander J.P. Angell.

1. Reciprocal Information.

(a) Fire Brigade Control to be provided with the following telephone numbers so that forestry personnel may be notified of calls received from members of the public.

Depot	(daytime calls only)
Office	(daytime calls only)
Senior Ranger	(outside working hours)

- (b) Personnel as above to be instructed in, the proper method of contacting fire brigade control.
- (c) The object of (a) and (b) is to enable a rapid exchange of important information, e.g. fire location, best access point for brigade equipment, forestry machinery available to cut or plough breaks etc.

Agreed and recommended.

2. Maps of the Forest

Fire stations likely to be involved to be provided with detailed maps of the forest showing all the principle fire breaks and tracks and roads capable of bearing vehicular traffic.

(I feel that these maps should be 18" by 18" sections of a six inch to the mile scale, in a hard-backed transparent polythene fronted envelope, provided by the Conservators).

3. Identification of Rangers.

It would be very helpful if the forest rangers were issued with a distinctive armband or cap bearing the words "Forest Ranger". The Forestry Commission have a standard system of yellow armlets with markings indicating workmen, foremen, forester etc. This simple but effective measure would do much towards preventing misunderstandings between the Rangers, the fire brigade; and members of the public whose help is invariably enlisted in beating operations during the fire season

4. Access to the Forest

Where posts are positioned to prevent access to the forest by members of the public, it is recommended that at least one of the posts should be removable to allow access for fire fighting equipment when necessary.

It is not anticipated that fire appliances would, in normal circumstances, traverse the rough forest ground, but the occasion might well arise when access for the Land Rover was necessary in an emergency. An alternative method of controlling the access could be adopted, such as the rise and fall method as discussed, and this would facilitate the passage of a Land Rover type of vehicle.

5. Fire Breaks and Rides.

There has been a great deal done to provide and maintain fire breaks and rides. It is strongly recommended that this process of dividing the forest into areas of a manageable size be pursued and the ploughing of these rides should continue to be extended.

6. Radio Communication.

This form of communication, either in the form of fitted radio on a fixed frequency or walkie talkie in all vehicles was suggested by Commander Angell. This would obviously be of value in maintaining contact between members of the Commander's staff working on the forest and would certainly result in assistance being summoned rapidly to the many outbreaks of fire which occur on the forest during the Spring and Autumn. It would also facilitate control when an outbreak occurs over a very wide area.

The actual financial outlay in supplying the necessary equipment, i.e. approximately £80 per set for walkie talkie or £100 per set for fitted radio and main control, might prove prohibitive in relation to the risk involved and it must also be appreciated that, allowing for different radio frequencies, it would still be necessary to maintain contact between fire brigade and rangers by other methods.

12. Report of the Forest Superintendent.

1. Fire Precautions

A new liaison had been established with the local Fire Services. The Divisional Fire Officer had inspected the Forest in company with the Forest Superintendent and Rangers, and had submitted a report. A meeting had been held with the Chief Fire Officer, the Divisional Officer, and the senior officers and their deputies from all local Fire Stations. The Rangers had met all these officers and discussions had taken place which would lead to greater co-operation and the more effective control of fires.

On the Forest the Rangers had commenced the improvement of some fire breaks. They had established new and readily usable accesses on to the Forest for use by the Fire Services, and had marked these.

The Rangers had, completed the renewal of all beater stands, and have a full complement of beaters ready to put out when the period of fire danger approaches.

2. Fires:

There had been one small fire of approximately 1/4 acre beside the highroad near Gills Lap.

3. Other duties carried out by the Rangers since the last meeting included:

- Collecting outstanding rates,
- Boundary walking,
- Felling of dead trees,
- Renewal of notice boards,
- Maintenance and painting of implements,
- Renews of riding posts.

4. The restriction of parking on the A.22 in connection with the proposed Clearway scheme had been extended by making a bank and ditch. Earth had also been banked between some of the bollards beside this road, and the appearance should be much improved when the earth grasses over.

The Rangers had been co-operating fully with the County Council workmen who had been tidying up the lay-bys on the B.2026 in the Kings Standing to Gills Lap area. Opportunity had been taken to combine this Council roadwork with our car parking requirements.

5. The foot and mouth disease precautions had entailed an increase in patrolling. The Commoners and the general public had given their full co-operation in the control of animals.

Questioned on his report the Forest Superintendent agreed that very good relations had now been established with the Fire Fighting Services and that all three Rangers had been down to Uckfield and met the firemen from the whole district. The radio communications mentioned in the last paragraph of the Memorandum were only an idea at present. Mr. Brooke suggested the Friends of Ashdown Forest might be asked to provide them, but the Clerk stated that he had certain reservations on the subject as they would be expensive to maintain. The Forest Superintendent in reply to a further question stated that the maps mentioned in the Memorandum would be provided by the County Council and marked by the Conservators.

It was suggested by Mr. Brooke that Mr. Richardson and his department, who had given the Forest Superintendent so much co-operation over the construction of lay-bys on roads on the Forest, should be written a formal letter of thanks from the Board and this was agreed.

13. Foot and Mouth Disease. The Clerk explained to the Board that he had become increasingly worried as the epidemic spread. After the New Forest had taken precautions, and after an unconfirmed report of a case in Kent and then one in Sussex, neither of which fortunately were subsequently confirmed, he felt the time had come to act, and in consultation with the Chairman he had asked the Commoners concerned to remove their cattle from the Forest, and had asked people not to ride horses exercise their dogs on the Forest. This matter had been put to the Commoners Meeting the previous evening and no objections had been raised. On the whole people were taking the precautions in good part. He now asked the Board for official confirmation of his actions and leave to remove the restrictions in consultation with the Chairman as soon as it was safe to do so. The Board agreed. Asked by Mrs. Foster why the restrictions extended to dogs, it was pointed out that not everyone kept their dogs under control, that some of them came from great distances and it was impossible to distinguish between one dog owner and another, and that as the incubation period for the disease was three weeks, to wait till the epidemic arrived in the area would be too late.

13a. The dates for the Conservators Meetings in 1968 were approved as follows

14th February, 17th April, 17th July, 16th October, 11th December

The Clerk stated the Commoners Meeting for 1968 would be held on the 10th December, at Hartfield.

14. Any other business.

a. Swine. Capt. Armstrong stated that the matter raised by Mr. Townsend at the Commoners Meeting the previous evening about the keeping of swine on Ashdown Forest should be investigated. The Clerk stated that in law swine were not commonable on open land but only on woodland. Possibly when Ashdown Forest had been woodland swine had been permitted. Col. Lowe stated he thought the matter would be better handled by the Standing Committee who could then report back to the Board.

b. Car Park near Fairwarp Church. Mr. Harvey told the Board that he had approached the Clerk on the possibility of having a car park on forest land south of Fairwarp church off the B.2026 road which was becoming increasingly dangerous. Mr. Williams had replied that he should first consult the police which he had done and they had approved, from the road safety angle, a site 40' x 40'. Mr. Williams had also pointed out that such a car park could not be used exclusively for members of the church. This point was appreciated, but the idea of the car park was to prevent parking on the road itself not only on Sundays but for weddings and funerals. The surface of the car park would be hardcore, and the church council would naturally be responsible for any cost involved. It was proposed by Mr. L. J. Cornwall, seconded by Mr. F.B. Cornwell and RESOLVED that permission for the car park at Fairwarp be given subject to highway permission also being obtained.

There being no other business the meeting was declared closed.

MINUTES OF A MEETING ON BOARD OF CONSERVATORS HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, COLEMANS HATCH, ON WEDNESDAY 14TH FEBRUARY AT 2.30 P.M.

Present: Sir William Garrett (in the Chair), Col. J.H.B. Lowe, Mr. R.F.J. Brooke, Brig. L.M. Scott, Mr. A.K.L. Harvey, Mr. W.D. Gillham, Mrs. U. Ridley, Capt. D.M.F. Armstrong, The Hon, C.A.S. Grimston, Miss A. Lumsden, Major R.E.W. Grubb.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mr. F.B. Cornwell, Sir Ralph Clarke, Mr. R.P. Odell, Mr. J.R. Greenwood, Mrs. Foster and Mr. J.H. Drew.

The Chairman apologised for the fact that he was unable to attend the previous meeting, but thanked Col. Lowe for taking the Chair.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting. These having been circulated they were taken as read. Major R.S.W. Grubb stated the three words on page three, i.e. "much too high" should be deleted. This was agreed.

3 Matters Arising

(a) Ice cream Vendors. The Clerk reported that Reigate Caterers Limited the successful tenderer for the current year had only paid, so far, £100 on account of the first instalment due under the licence, amounting to £315, and had asked if the balance of £215 could be left over until the beginning of March. After a discussion, it was RESOLVED that the Clerk inform Reigate Caterers Limited that they should pay the balance on the 1st of March, and that 8 per cent interest would be charged from the 1st February until payment.

(b) Duddleswell Stores. The Clerk reported this licence had been completed.

(c) Expo Sussex '68. The Clerk reported a letter from the organiser asking for details of percentage required. After a discussion it was left that Major Grubb would liaise with the Clerk and would try and ensure that the Conservators would not be asked to pay for the space or for a tent. Captain Armstrong said he would contact the County Authorities with regard to the display at the exhibition, of historical documents. It was agreed that a limit of £50 be put on the expenditure by the Board in connection with this project,

(d) Foot and Mouth Disease Precaution. The Clerk read a letter he had received from the National Farmers Union, expressing the appreciation of the action taken by the Board.

4. Election of Officers.

(a) Chairman. Proposed, Seconded and unanimously RESOLVED that Sir William Garrett be elected Chairman for the ensuing year.

(b) Deputy Chairman. Proposed, Seconded and unanimously RESOLVED that Col. J.H.B. Lowe be elected Deputy Chairman for the ensuing year.

(c) Vice Chairman. Proposed, Seconded, and unanimously RESOLVED that Mr. J.H. Drew be elected Vice Chairman for the ensuing year.

5. Yew Trees at Duddleswell Cross Roads. The Clerk reported that according to Newspaper reports, there had been an accident at the Duddleswell cross roads, and the driver of the motor car had pleaded that three Yew Trees at these cross roads impeded his view. According again to Press reports, the Chairman of the Bench had accepted this plea in mitigation of sentence and the Clerk asked the Board to decide in the circumstances whether the trees should be felled. Although the trees belonged to the Lord of the Manor, Mr. Grimston on his behalf had given his consent to the felling, if the Conservators so Resolved. After a discussion, it was decided that this matter should be deferred to the next meeting to give individual members of the Board an opportunity to see whether they considered the trees were dangerous or not,

6. Fire Breaks. The Clerk read a letter from Mr. C.B. Clark, of C.B. Clark Limited, the firm engaged on work on one of the fire breaks, in which it was stated that a tyre and inner tube had been burst on a hidden tree stump, and asking the Conservators if they would make some contribution towards the cost of a replacement, which amounts to £63 12s. 6d. plus £8 fitting charge. After a discussion it was RESOLVED that Mr. Clark be sent £30 as an ex gratia payment.

7. A22 Clearway Fencing The Clerk read a letter from the County Surveyor in which he stated that the County Council had decided to take no action for the time being, but would consider any scheme put forward by the Conservators. It was decided the matter be deferred sine die.

8. Notice Boards. The Clerk reported recent for a notice board marked "Private Road, No Parking", to be erected in the Duddleswell Stores area. He also reported that several of these boards had been erected with the acquiescence of the Conservators from time to time in the past, and he thought the number was now growing too large and a definite decision should be taken as to whether they should be permitted to continue or not. After discussion it was decided that Boards carrying the words "Private Road", should not be allowed in future, and that all boards already erected would have to be taken down. The Board decided further that they would sanction without payment of any acknowledgment rent, boards carrying the words, "No through road, no parking – By Order of the Conservators". The construction and erection of these boards would have to be borne by the persons involved.

9. Report of the Forest Superintendent.

1. Fire Breaks.

The Major work done by the rangers since the last Meeting, had been on improving the fire breaks. The existing small breaks had all been widened out to a minimum of 35 feet, and when possible, ploughed end disced. This work had been possible due to the hire of heavy machinery from Colin Clark, whose drivers had given us the utmost co-operation.

- (a) Parallel to, and on the south side of the Stonehill Road.
- (b) Parallel to, and on the west side of the A22 from Wych Cross to the Vachery Road.
- (c) Parallel to and on the south side of the Wych Cross, Chelwood Gate Road.

The ploughed stretches on existing fire breaks had been re-disced.

All entrances to fire breaks for fire fighting equipment had been marked with red posts and the access points made suitable for Land Rovers, but not ordinary motor cars.

2. Car Parks.

Small blue and white posts had been placed at the entrances to car parks in the Kings Standing, Gills Lap area. These should have the effect of drawing the motorists' attention to the tarmac drive-ins recently made by the County Council, and preventing care from cutting the corners, thus spoiling the tidy effect. Small 'P' signs had been placed at each end of these series of parks, in order to draw the public's attention to the facilities.

A start had been made in increasing the size of the most popular parks, again using hired machinery.

3. A22.

Due to criticisms of the bollards placed along the road to prevent parking, the main runs of bollards had been removed and replaced by banks of earth, with a shallow ditch behind. These will grass over this spring.

4. The Rangers had completed their annual winter holidays.

The Forest Superintendent displayed a Notice carrying the words "Fire Hazard", which he proposed to have placed on parts of the Forest during the fire season. The notice was approved with minor alterations.

10. Finance.

(a) A letter from the Rangers regarding their pay. Proposed by Brig. Scott, seconded and carried that the Board go into Committee.

The Rangers and Press then left the room.

A long discussion took place and finally the Rangers were called back into the room and asked if they had anything to say in connection with their letter. Ranger Linton then spoke for all 3 Rangers (Ranger Streeter was absent on sick leave), and stressed certain points. The Rangers were then asked to leave the room again, and a further discussion took place, after which the Rangers were called to the Meeting, and were informed that the decision of the Board at the previous meeting could not be altered, but as soon as the National Financial Situation permitted,

the Board would maintain the percentage differential between the Rangers' wages and agricultural wages, and the first opportunity of considering this would be in December next. Owing to the financial 'set up', of the Board, there would be no opportunity of back-dating any wage increase.

On behalf of the Rangers, Ranker Arnold thanked the Board for their consideration.

RESOLVED that the Board come out of Committee.

(b) The Clerk reported on the bank balances.

Accounts as at 13th February, 1968.

(1) Bank Balance	1968	1967
General Account	595.14.3.	£127.15.2.
Licence Account		
Cons. Ackn. Rent	383.19.11.	186.2.9.
	£979.14.2.	£313.17.11.
Wages & Petty		
Cash Account		
Overdrawn	239.1.4.	581.6.2 .o/d

(2) The following amounts have been collected since 1st January, 1968.

Forest Rates (arrears)	Ack. Rents	Horse Riding	Temp. Licences	TOTAL
6.0.0	383.19.11	55.0.0	0.10.0	445.9.11
(1967) 26.6.6	186.2.9	31.0.0	13.0.0	246.9.3

(3) The following accounts are due for payment.

L. Reed, Builder.	Return of Deposit	£10.0.0.
Clerk's salary, 25th March.		£402.0.0.

The Clerk explained that the first two to three months of the year included the heaviest expenditure and that was the reason why wages and petty cash account was over-drawn, RESOLVED that £500 should be transferred from General account to wages and petty cash account forthwith.

The Clerk further reported that in view of the increased expenditure in the estimates, it would be necessary to increase the monthly transfer from General account to wages and petty cash account, RESOLVED that as from the 1st March the monthly transfer be increased to £600.

The Clerk reminded the Board that on the death of Ranger Day, they purchased a small Annuity for his widow, the purchase price had been £500. The late Mrs. Day had died quite recently and as a result and under the terms of the Annuity policy, the sum of £293 was due to be re-paid by the Equity and Law Life Assurance Society to the Board, and he hoped to receive this in the near future.

(c) Purchase of Mini Truck.

The Clerk reported that Messrs. Wadhams of East Grinstead had made the lowest tender and as a result the vehicle had been ordered in December because the last truck had taken 3 months to arrive. For some reason unknown to the Clerk this new truck had been available almost immediately but owing to the Financial Position he had not yet paid for it. RESOLVED that the sum of £293 when received from the Equity & Law Life Assurance Society should be expended as part of the purchase price of the new truck and the balance be drawn from General account, and if necessary an overdraft should be created for this purpose, in view of the fact that overdraft facilities on the General account existed with Barclays Bank Limited, East Grinstead, up to a limit of £750.

(d) The Accounts and Balance Sheet for the year 31st December 1967, were placed before each member, and the Clerk then went through the income and expenditure account in detail, and pointed out several matters in connection with the break-down of individual items. The Chairman drew the attention of the Board to the inventory of machinery and buildings at the Depot and pointed out how many items had been presented by the

Friends of Ashdown Forest. RESOLVED that the accounts as Drawn be adopted, subject to Audit by the District Auditor.

11. Any other business.

(a) Annual Audit. The Clerk announced that the District Auditor had appointed the 26th March next as the date for his Audit.

(b) The Clerk reported that Ranger Streeter was ill and it was suspected that he was suffering from an ulcer.

(c) Military Trailing on the Forest. A question of whether map reading exercises by uniformed members of the Services should be permitted on the Forest was discussed. RESOLVED that they should be permitted, that the agreement with the Secretary of State for Defence be amended to include map reading exercises, and it was left with the Clerk to negotiate for a small increase in the annual acknowledgment rent.

(d) Captain Armstrong had circulated his proposals for re-organisation of the Administration of the Clerk's office. RESOLVED that this matter be deferred to the next Meeting to give members a time to consider Captain Armstrong's proposals.

(e) The Chairman Proposed the Co-option of Brig. Scott on to the "Executive Committee" of officers. Capt. Armstrong Proposed and it was agreed that if Brig. Scott was unable to attend any Meeting of this Committee, he would appoint a deputy from the County Council. This was accepted.

There being no other business the meeting was declared closed.

CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST

ASSETS (VEHICLES, MACHINES ETC.) at 31st DECEMBER 1967.

DATE OF ACQUISITION		PURCHASE PRICE	
F. 19631 Pioneer Chain Saw	74.4.4		
1965	1 B.S.A. Bantam Motor Cycle DAP 72 C	125.8.8	
F. 19651 Ford Super Dexter Tractor EKL V71 C	825.8.0		with cab
	43.12.6		
F. 19651 till Master Loader	106.10.0		
F. 19651 Harford Trailer	149.10.0		
F. 19651 Sat Ransomes Disc Harrows	113.15.0		
1966	2 Extinguishers	31.0.0	
	Sundry Tools	50.0.0	
1966	1 Forage Harvester (2nd Hand)	175.0.0	
F. 19661 B, 3.A. Bantam Motor Cycle PDF 883 D	125.7.0		
F. 19661 Allen Rotary Grasscutter	130.0.0x		
F. 19661 Gloster Forage Harvester	225.0.0x		
1967	1 Land Rover	885.8.9	
F. 19671 Austin Pick-Up Truck	409.9.0		
F. 19671 Plough (2nd Hand)	14.0.0		
F. 19621 Garage	85.0.0		
F. 19651 Implement Sheet	298.15.0		

Note:

- x Approximate figure paid for direct by Friends of Ashdown Forest.
F. Gift of Friends of Ashdown Forest.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, COLEMAN'S HATCH, OH WEDNESDAY 17th APRIL, AT 2.30. p.m.

Present: Sir William Garrett (in the Chair), Col. J.H.B. Lowe, Mr. J.H. Drew, Mr. R.P.J. Brooke, Brig. L.M. Scott, Mr. A.K.L. Harvey, Mr. W.D. Gillham, Mrs. U. Ridley, Capt. D.M.F. Armstrong, The Hon. C.A.S. Grimston, Miss A. Lumsden, Major R.E.W. Grubb, Mr. F.B. Cornwall, Col. Sir R.S. Clarke, Mr. J.F. Bishop, Mr. A.R. Tubb, Mr. R.P. Odell, and Mr. J.R. Greenwood.

The Chairman extended a warm welcome to Mr. Greenwood on his joining the Board.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. Poster and Mr. G.J. King.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting. These having been circulated they were taken as read.

3. Matters Arising.

(a) Ice Cream Licences. The Clerk reported that Reigate Caterers Limited had now paid the first instalment of their licence, but requested permission to use a trailer on the forest, for the sale of ice-cream, i.e., drive it on to the forest and park it for a day, and take it away in the evening. A discussion took place, and it was decided that conditional permission would be given, and if the trailer proved unsatisfactory permission would be withdrawn.

(b) Expo Sussex 68. The Friends of Ashdown Forest will pay for the cost of this exhibition, but they will work in conjunction with the Rangers. The date of the exhibition is the 19th and 20th of July. The Chairman thanked the Friends of Ashdown Forest once again for their generosity.

(c) Yew Trees at Duddleswell Cross Roads. The Clerk reported that the Yew trees had been trimmed, and visibility was greatly improved. RESOLVED that the trees remain.

(d) Mini Truck. The Clerk reported that the final payment on the truck had been paid, and it had now been delivered and was in use.

(e) Military Training on the Forest. The Clerk reminded the Board that it had agreed that map reading exercises would be permissible in future, provided he could negotiate a reasonable addition to the Acknowledgment Rent.

The Clerk reported that an additional rent of £10 had been agreed, and paid.

4. Gift of 3 Oak Trees. The Clerk reported that through an organisation known as International Communications Consultants, the Men of the Trees desired to give 3 Oak trees to Ashdown Forest. These Oak saplings were part of a clump planted (the year Sir Winston Churchill died) in a part of Blenheim Park. They were given to the Men of the Trees by the Duke of Marlborough and the Men of the Trees now wished to hand them over to the Forest. There would be a planting ceremony, and the members of the Board would be invited. RESOLVED that the gift be accepted with gratitude and the Clerk should write to International Communications Consultants accordingly.

5. Seats at selected car parks. The Board generally discussed the possibility of seats being erected in selected sites for the use of people who wished to sit and admire the view, especially the elderly. The Clerk reported that the cheapest and most suitable seats would cost approximately £50 for six, and were made of concrete and wood. Captain Armstrong suggested that benches would be better than seats, as they were not so easily broken. It was decided that if the six seats are a success, and not broken, more seats and benches would be considered later. RESOLVED that six seats should be purchased, and erected in selected places.

6. Annual Audit. The Clerk reported on the Annual Audit and read out the following letter from the District Auditor.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

In compliance with the statutory requirement I have to report that the audit of the accounts of the Conservators and of their officers for the year ended 31st December, 1967, has been completed.

No matters arose at the audit to which it is necessary to direct your attention. My thanks are due to your officers for their courtesy and assistance.

(ERIC FIRTH)
District Auditor.

Cdr. Angell accompanied the District auditor on a tour of Ashdown Forest.

7. Report of Forest Superintendent.

FIRES. The unusually dry weather for the past two months had produced a large number of fires - up to 8th April, there had been 53 fires, burning an estimated area of 268 acres. The number of individual fires being for greater, but the area burnt far smaller than last year.

A large number of these fires are thought to have been deliberately started, possibly up to 40.

At one period the rangers were put on night patrols, and their day time hours reduced correspondingly. While they did not catch a fire raiser, they were able to tackle numerous fires at a very early stage, thus presenting them from spreading.

For the remainder of the period the rangers have worked normal working hours, and have voluntarily attended nearly every fire, some even at 3.30. a.m. as an example on one Saturday, Ranger Linton attended 5 fires, and worked for 10 hours, although off duty.

The work of the various fire brigades this year had been exceptional, and the relatively small area burnt is largely due to their vigilance.

The ploughed fire breaks have proved their worth beyond all doubt, containing many fires, even in windy conditions.

The fire warning notices had probably helped to keep down accidental fires, as the number along road verges and in car parks had been all. It is possible, however, that the notices may have put ideas into some people's heads thus counteracting the good done by warning the general public.

CAR PARKING FACILITIES. Much work had been done in preparing the parking area for the summer months. Most of the major parks had been increased in size, a few of the small trouble spots had been blocked. Probably upwards of 10 new car spaces had been gained for every one lost.

Some of the shallow ditches dug to control cars had been filled in, and converted into banks, and sown with grass. This had been done entirely at the expense of the Friends of Ashdown Forest.

A large amount of gravel had been carted and placed in entrances to parking areas, and the number of muddy patches greatly reduced.

Litter baskets had been put out ready for use - and the number is being increased by 15 this year.

FIRE BREAKS. The Friends of Ashdown Forest had granted £250 for the improvement of fire breaks, in particular the piping and draining of boggy areas. A start had been made on this. All the ploughed areas had been reduced, and some breaks had been widened.

YEW TREES AT DUDDLESWELL. The lower branches ***** these trees, thus improving the visibility at this corner, and reducing the traffic hazard.

PATROLLING. The Rangers had taken delivery of the pick-up truck and this had proved to be an outstanding move forward. The public are now met by a Ranger in a smart uniform in a smart truck, and the added authority he has is most noticeable. Many Commoners and local residents can now find and talk with the Rangers, and relations and cooperation improve daily. The Patrol Ranger is able to replace and repair signposts, fire beater stands etc., and the general appearance of the forest should improve.

(a) Fires. The Chairman expressed the Board's grateful thanks to the Rangers for their extra efforts of late. The Chairman also expressed gratitude to the excellent service and cooperation from the Fire Brigade, and suggested that the Clerk should send a letter of appreciation from the Board of Conservators to the Fire Authorities to thank them. This was agreed. Cdr. Angell reported that there had been 87 fires on the forest this year, and 21 over Easter Weekend alone. Approximately 475 acres had been burnt, but this compared favourably with last year when 600 acres were burnt. The fire breaks have definitely helped to stop fires spreading.

(b) Rubbish Dump. The Clerk reported that the Rangers had caused a small fire at the forest dump, where there is an enormous collection of litter, which can easily cause fires. If the existing dump is to remain there must be a fire break built around it, and wire fencing to keep the public out. The present dump is not in a very good position, but is where a number of the general public and local residents walk and ride. Permission was requested of the Board to set up a small sub-Committee, to go into the question of the dumps, and give authority to spend £50 to £100 to not it in properly. It was agreed that the dump had to remain on the Forest, and it was RESOLVED that the Clerk, Cdr. Angell and Col. Lowe should find a suitable place to re-position the existing dump, and money could be spent in making it into a suitable and safe place to deposit litter.

(c) Radio Communication between Rangers. Miss Lumsden asked if portable R/T sets could be supplied to the Rangers, and stated that the Friends would be sympathetic, and would probably pay for the cost of the acts. They would, be of great assistance during the fire season. Captain Armstrong supported the proposal. A General discussion took place, and it was decided by the Chairman that Cdr. Angell should get in touch with the County Police, and obtain more information about the technical side of the problem before the next meeting.

ACCOUNTS AS AT THE 16th April 1968

Finance

1. Bank Balances:-

General Account	£2333.7.5. (18 April 1967) (637.0.0)
X Licence Account -	
Conservators Share	6.8.3 (£26.0.0.)

Wages and Petty Cash

Account	246.8.9	(£770.0.0.)
		Overdrawn.

X On 31st March a total of £793.0.9. had been transferred from the licence to the general account, this being the Conservators share of Acknowledgment Rents collected to that date.

2. The following amounts have been collected since 1st Jan, 1968.

Forest Rates	Ack. Rents	Temp. Licences	Horse Riding	Local Authority Contributions
6.2.6	799.9.0	26.5.0	83.10.0	2953.19.5 *
45.10.0 as at 18 April 1967	419.6.6	48.10.0	41.0.0	950.0.0

* L.A. Conts.	Uckfield	553.19.5
	East Grinstead	200.0.0
	East Sussex CC	2200.0.0

3. The following deposit is due for return.

Mrs. P. Killer, of Hurstlands, Hartfield.	£10. 0. 0.
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5. Finance.

(a) Financial statement. The Clerk read the usual Financial statement, giving details of the Bank balances, and presented one cheque for £10 in favour of Mrs. P. Miller for signature. It was agreed that if there was at any time a substantial surplus on General account, the Clerk would place this on deposit.

(b) Resolution required by Barclays Bank Ltd. Proposed by Brig. Scott, seconded by Mr. J.K. Drew, and unanimously RESOLVED that:

At a Meeting of the Board of the Conservators of Ashdown Forest held on 17th April, 1968 it was Resolved that Barclays Bank Limited be and they are hereby requested to make advances from time to time by way of temporary loan or overdraft of such sums as the Board may require not exceeding at any one time £750 for the purpose of defraying expenses pending the receipt of revenues receivable in respect of the period of account in which those expenses are chargeable and taken into account in the estimates made by the Board for that period; but that in making such advances the bank shall not be bound to enquire whether the borrowing of the money is legal or regular or whether the money raised is properly applied, and shall not be prejudiced by any illegality or irregularity in the matters aforesaid or by the misapplication or non-application of any such money.

9. Any other Business.

(a) The Clerk reported briefly on the Countryside Bill at present being considered by Parliament, after a general discussion, it was decided that the Clerk should convene a Special Meeting of the Board with the sole object of a discussion concerning the future of the Forest in the light of the Countryside Bill becoming law, and the setting up of a Special Planning Committee to consider further the implications thereof, and to formulate a plan future of the Forest under the general terms of the Bill.

THE BOARD WENT INTO COMMITTEE.

Captain Armstrong's paper on Administration was debated, and it was decided that the administration of the forest should be included in the consideration of the Planning Committee. The Board then came out of Committee.

There being no other business, the Meeting was declared closed.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST, HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, COLEMANS HATCH ON THURSDAY 10TH MAY AT 2.30. P.M.

Present: Mrs. U.M. Ridley, G.J. King Esq., Col. J.H. Lowe, Brig. L.M. Scott, R.P.J. Brooke, Miss Anne Lumsden, J.F. Bishop Esq., R.P. Odell Esq., W.D. Gillham Esq., F.B. Cornwell Esq., Mrs. M.P. Poster, Capt. D.M.P. Armstrong, and A.R. Tubb Esq.

1. The Clerk reported that he had received a formal letter from Sir William Garrett tendering his resignation from the office of Chairman, and also as a member of the Board because he had ceased to reside in the district and therefore, was no longer a Commoner. Proposed by Captain Armstrong and seconded by Mr. Brooke, and unanimously RESOLVED that Colonel J.H.B. Lowe be elected Chairman for the remainder of the current year.

2. It was RESOLVED that the Board go INTO COMMITTEE.

(a) There had been circulated to all members present a copy of a memorandum prepared by Mrs. Ridley and a paper prepared

by the Clerk. Colonel Lowe had also circulated headings for discussion and they were taken item by item, as follows:

What sort of Amenity.

A full discussion took place and it was decided that the future policy of the Board as regards the amenities of Ashdown Forest was that it should be a place for those members of the public who desired to take their recreation in quiet open countryside. It was considered that the Board of Conservators should not try and compete with the type of recreation and entertainment which was offered by Epping Forest, and the Coastal Strip. It was further agreed that the area of the Forest stated to be 6,400 acres should remain as always but at some later stage the Board should take power to add to this area if necessary and power to exchange an area of the Forest for an equivalent area of other land if it should be more suitable. The question of camping was discussed and it was agreed that camping sites would best be found in area adjacent to Ashdown Forest, but not part of it.

The Clerk's suggestion about the nature reserve was debated, and it was agreed that this could form part of the terms of reference of a working party which would have to be set up.

Ownership.

A discussion also took place on this subject and it was agreed that the existing division of power, whereby the ownership of the Forest was vested in Lord Buckhurst subject to the Statutory rights of administration by the Conservators, was not entirely satisfactory, and undesirable for the future. Some means would have to be found of purchasing Lord Buckhurst's rights and interests, and vesting the freehold of the Forest in a Body of Trustees to be held by them on Charitable Trusts.

Special Rights.

(a) Lord of the Manor.

These were not discussed.

(b) Commoners.

A general discussion took place on the subject of Commoners' rights and it was agreed that Commoners could be separated into two sections, those who exercise their rights of Common and those who do not. It was finally decided that Rights of Common should be retained but might have to be modified if this could be achieved by a change of the law. The Board would have to at some time seek power to enclose parts of the Forest.

Revenue.

The Clerk explained that if the Lord of the Manor was divested of his rights and interest there would be an accretion to the revenue of the governing body of at present about £1,300 per year. This sum did not take into account the cost of collection but the Clerk said he thought the cost of the present administration could cope with this problem without, any additional staff. He also thought that if the Conservators controlled the whole forest, the revenue to be obtained from it would be increased by such things as re-forestation, licenced tipping, sale of gorse to race courses etc. He also thought that the contributions received from the Cuckfield Rural District Council and East Grinstead Urban District Council should no longer be payable, but contributions toward the expenses of the Conservators or governing Body would still have to be received from the County Council, and possibly the Uckfield Rural District Council who would in exchange have representation on the Board. It was decided that further thought must be given to ways and means of becoming self-supporting, and the Clerk was instructed to make enquiries about the Forest becoming a National Park.

Who is to Administer.

After a short discussion it was unanimously agreed that the administration of Ashdown Forest should continue in the hands of Board of Conservators as hitherto, subject to possible amendments and alterations. One member suggested that the Parish Councils should have representation on the Board in future, but it was agreed that local commoners representations should still comprise the majority, because it was envisaged that in the future Local Authority representation might confine itself to interest in finance only at the expense of other interest.

Working Party.

It was agreed that a working party should be established to draw up a scheme for the future of Ashdown Forest with its terms of reference as wide as possible to investigate all the matters discussed above, and with power to co-opt as temporary or permanent members any individual or representative of any other Board or public or private association.

The following members were elected to serve:-

Col. J.H. Lowe. (Chairman)

Mr. J.H. Drew.

Mr. R.P.J. Brooke.

Capt. D.M.P. Armstrong.

Brig. L.M. Scott.

Miss Anne Lumsden,

Mr. C.A.S. Grimston.

Mr. Williams would act as Clerk

to the working party, and he and the Forest Superintendent would attend all meetings.

3. The Board came OUT OF COMMITTEE.

4. There being no other business the meeting was concluded.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, COLEMANS MATCH, ON WEDNESDAY 16TH OCTOBER AT 2 30. P.M.

Present: Col. J.H. Lowe (in the chair), Mr. J.H. Drew, Brig. L.M. Scott, Mr. R.F.J. Brooke, The Hon. C.A.S. Grimston, Mr. W.D. Gillham, Mr. F.B. Cornwell, Mr. B.W. Ellison, Mr. R.P. Odell, Miss Anne Lumsden, Captain D.M.F. Armstrong, and Mrs. U.M. Ridley.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mr. J.R. Greenwood, Major R.B.W. Grubb, Colonel Sir R.S. Clarke, and Mrs. M.P. Foster.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting. These having been circulated they were taken as read.

3. Matters Arising.

(a) Expo Sussex '68. The Forest Superintendent reported on the success of the Stand, which was open to the public for two days. He stated that he was grateful to the Friends of Ashdown Forest who financed it, and gave the Forest Superintendent the utmost support.

The Clerk proceeded to read a letter from the South of England Agricultural Society:

"I have been instructed by the Committee of the Education/Arts and Crafts Section of this Society to invite you to stage and exhibit demonstrating your particular craft and its products at our Show at Ardingly on June 5th, 6th and 7th next year.

You would be allotted space in a marquee to whatever size you required and any other assistance we could provide would be forthcoming as far as possible. There would be no charge made to you other than electricity if required, at approximately £7.10.0 per plug inclusive of current consumed.

Whilst we do not encourage exhibitors in this section to sell their products there would be no objection to you taking orders for goods to be supplied after the Show.

We sincerely hope that you will be able to accept this invitation and we look forward to hearing from you in the near future, when it would be appreciated if you would let us know the space you would require".

R.F. Hughes, Secretary.

The Clerk reported that the show would run for three days and although the space for the stand is free, it would have to be manned for three days in June, when the Rangers are very busy on the forest. A general discussion took place, and the Board unanimously decided that as the stand at Expo Sussex was such a success this year, it would be a mistake to repeat it next year, but perhaps it would be a good idea the following year.

The Clerk was requested to inform the Friends of this decision.

(b) Radio Communication between Rangers. The Forest Superintendent reported that the radio communication equipment had not arrived yet and there was a delay of three to five weeks. Pye could not place a definite order for the equipment until the wave length was confirmed. The wave length has now been confirmed, and even if the land line to East Grinstead from the Depot has not been completed by the time the radio sets arrive, there will still be radio communication between Rangers. The whole system should be in operation before the next fire season.

(c) The Working Party. The Clerk reported that the last meeting of the Working Party was held on the 15th August, on the Forest. A further meeting takes place on the 24th October.

(d) The Golf Club and Forest Row Parish Council. The Clerk reported that the meeting which he was to attend and report on was cancelled until a later date, and he would report fully on it at the next Board Meeting.

4. Ice Cream Licence. The Clerk reported that the Ice cream Vendor had not paid his second instalment on his Licence in the sum of £310. The Clerk read a letter from the Vendor:

"Further to my recent telephone conversation with Commander Angell, and also the invoice for the balance of licence received recently.

At this point, I would like you to consider the following facts, being my Company's experience over the past few months trading at the Forest. Our gross takings to date on this site have been £804. which has been obtained by both week-end and a certain amount of weekday trading. Since the commission for our salesmen is 25% from an overall profit margin of 42% you will realise that we are extremely disappointed with results.

Whilst we would readily agree that the weather has been greatly responsible, at the same time it does appear that the number of people visiting the area is also diminishing. We base this assumption on comparisons with other concessions we hold on similar sites. One can draw many conclusions from this statement, but we feel that the lack of more comprehensive refreshment service is partly responsible.

This point was illustrated to us recently when a mobile covering unit from another company parked on the "Eastbourne lay-by" and served teas and various snacks with very great success, until moved by one of your rangers. Our unit's takings at this site was only £12. for the whole day.

Consequently, we beg to suggest that a well-stocked and comprehensive refreshment van at both the "Eastbourne lay-by" and the "Beacon" together with our Fleet of ice cream vans on the remainder of your sites would not be detrimental to your Forest. In fact, we are firmly convinced that it would be an added attraction and enhance the desire to visit the scenery.

To enable my Company to meet your outstanding invoice for the completion of the licence dues, we would greatly appreciate your giving your kind consideration to the possibility of the Committee re-considering their decision. Even an experimental period, say until the end of the year, would allow for both a close examination on your part and also assist us to offset what will inevitably be a substantial loss.

Naturally, I would welcome an opportunity to meet your Committee at a time and date to suit their convenience, should they feel that they require further explanations or discussions.

Thanking you for all your past considerations.

A.M. Holden.

The Clerk also read his reply to that letter:

"Thank you for your letter of yesterday's date, which will be placed before the Conservators at their meeting on the 16th October. In the meantime, I am bound to point out to you that however remunerative a well stocked refreshment van might prove the Conservators have definitely ruled already that they do not wish to cater for this section of the public and that the people who visit Ashdown Forest are mainly those who bring their own food or picnic. The only thing they cannot bring is an ice cream and perhaps a soft drink and that is why the sale of ice cream etc., is licenced and encouraged.

With great respect to you, I think part of your trouble has been your own organisation. The Rangers who have some experience of ice cream vendors have repeatedly informed me that your vans were often late arriving on the forest, and frequently visited the wrong parts. They have tried to carry out a roving commission, whereas if they had simply parked their vans in the principle car parks which were pointed out to you I believe by Commander Angell in the first instance, we estimate that your gross sales would have been nearly double. There have been many occasions when the forest was heavily populated with visitors when no ice cream vans were visible at all. On one occasion during the summer on a very fine day, I was motoring from Uckfield to Coleman's Hatch and I passed

longstanding and Ghylls Lap, both full of parked cars and eventually found one of your vans at the bottom of Kidd's Hill by the Water Splash, where there were not more than six cars. In the light of this experience, I feel I cannot advise the Conservators to make any concessions and that the second instalment of your rent which is now overdue must be paid immediately, but as I have told you before in this letter I will certainly pass your remarks on to the full Board of Conservators.

We have had a bad summer but there can be no doubt that there have been opportunities for a good turnover in the sale of ice cream during the fine weather periods and if your organisation had been geared to take advantage of this, I am sure you would have made a very reasonable profit.

The Clerk has not received a further letter from the ice cream vendor, and the second instalment of £310 was due on the 1st July. A

general discussion took place, and Brig. Scott proposed that the Board should press for the money and Captain Armstrong seconded it. It was unanimously RESOLVED that the Clerk should write to the Ice cream vendor accordingly, and if the sum of £310 was not forthcoming, the Clerk should take legal action.

The Chairman proposed that the Board should consider extending the scope of sales from refreshment vans to include teas and light refreshment. A general discussion took place on this subject. It was finally decided that consideration should be given to licensing not more than six refreshment vans sited in the six major car parks on the Forest for the sale of hot drinks and pre-cooked food for consumption on the site. As a preliminary, the Clerk was instructed to make a Planning Enquiry of the Uckfield R.D.C., and to report at the next meeting.

5. Report of Forest Superintendent.

"The Rangers had been principally employed on cutting fire breaks and patrolling through the summer months.

The following additional work had been carried out:

Cutting and maintenance of clumps.

Construction of a new rubbish tip, and the establishment of a suitable fire break round it.

Rate collecting. Over 150 outstanding rates had so far been collected.

Census of cars on the forest throughout the month of August showing the distance they had travelled, the reason for their visit, how often they came, and what other facilities they would like to have [been] provided.

Further draining of Fire breaks.

All the Rangers had completed their summer holiday.

COMMONS REGISTRATION.

The large number of registrations which took place at the end of the first registration period up to 30th June was taking a considerable time to check and classify and some people were still registering, so it was not yet possible to give a final total, but the number of commoners on the new list would probably be slightly over 500, representing about 40 per cent of the existing commoners".

The Superintendent reported that the new rubbish tip was nearly completed, but not in use yet because they were still working on the fire breaks. The Superintendent was congratulated by the Board for finding such a suitable site for the tip. To keep the tip in good order, it would probably mean that a J.C.B. would have to be employed each year. The Clerk asked the press not to report the position of the tip.

The Superintendent also reported on the Census he had prepared for visitors to Ashdown Forest. From the figures so far, 90 per cent of the public who visit the forest require nothing more than for it to stay in its natural state.

It was reported by a member of the Board that Gorse has been cut from one of the car parks so that it was open to the road. It was requested that the Lord of the Manor should be asked not to allow race course contractors to cut gorse as and where they liked.

6. Finance.

Financial Statement. The Clerk read the usual Financial statement giving details of the Bank Balances.

Accounts as at 15th October 1968

Finance. 1968 As at 18 Oct 1967

1. Bank Balances :

General Account	2648.7.11	(1404.1.0.)
Wages & Petty Cash Account	509.1.5.	(537.8.1.)
Licence Account		
Conservators Share.	X NIL	(2.14.0)

(X Balance transferred to General A/C on 9th Oct. 1968.
See Para. 2 Acknowledgment Rents for Conservators share to date.)

2. The following amount have been collected since 1st January 1968.

Forest Rates	Ack. Rents	Temp. Licences	Horse Riding	Local Authority Contributions
1378.18.4	(a) 940.18.0	91.5.6	100.10.0	6103.19.5 (b)
1360.3.0 as at 18 Oct 1967	863.19.9	126.14.6	57.0.0	3964.5.4

(a) Forest Rates

Current 1349.0.6
Arrears 12.11.0
Advance 17.6.10

1378.18.4

(b) Local Authority Conts.

East Sussex C.C. 4400.0.0
Uckfield R.D.C. 1303.19.5
Cuckfield & East Grinstead R.D.C. 400.0.0

6103.19.5

3. The following amount was due for payment:

Clerk's Salary. September quarter. £402. 0. 0.

The Clerk reported that in spite of numerous demands, a Mr. Gaute was seriously in arrear with his Forest rate and the amount is now in excess of £9. As Mr. Gaute only owned land in Sussex adjacent to the forest with no "buildings thereon, it might be difficult to collect the rate by Distress and it might be necessary to sue Mr. Gaute in the Civil Courts in the area where he resides. RESOLVED that the Clerk take all proceedings necessary by way of Distress or Action in the County Court to recover arrears of Forest rate from Mr. Gaute.

7. The Estimates. The Clerk produced the Estimates for the Financial year 1st January to 31st December, 1969 so I went through them item by item. It was RESOLVED that the estimates be amended by including a further sum of £100 under the heading of "Public Amenities" to enable further seats to be purchased during the year. It was further RESOLVED that the Estimates as amended be adopted. The Clerk was asked to re-arrange the Estimates under more convenient headings during the next Financial Year.

Forest Rate. It was proposed by Mr. Drew and seconded by Brig. Scott and unanimously RESOLVED that the Forest rate for 1969 should be fixed at the same figure as for 1968, namely 2/6d for the first acre and £1 for each succeeding acre with a maximum of £3.

The Forest Superintendent and the Rangers and Press then withdrew from the meeting and THE BOARD WENT INTO COMMITTEE:

The Clerk reported that the Agricultural Farm Workers Union had applied for a 40 per cent increase in their wages and the claim was being considered by the employers and any award would presumably have to be confirmed by the Prices and incomes Board. The Clerk felt he should remind the Board of their decision to base the salary and wages of the Forest Superintendent and Rangers on agricultural wages, and he asked whether any mention of a possible increase should be placed on the Estimates. It was decided that a foot note should be placed on the Estimates to the effect that if agricultural wages did rise an increase in the salary and wages of the Forest Superintendent and Rangers would follow, and it might be necessary to prepare a supplementary Estimate. THE BOARD THEN CAME OUT OF COMMITTEE.

8. Vacancies on the Board for 1969. The Clerk drew the Board's attention to the fact that Mr. A.K.L. Harvey and Sir Ralph Clarke had both intimated they proposed to resign from the Board at the end of the current year, and the vacancy caused by the retirement of Sir William Garrett had not been filled. The vacancies would be filled at the Commoners' Meeting on December the 10th at Hartfield.

9. Proposed Car park on Ashdown Forest. The Clerk reported on a letter received from the owners of Ashdown Forest Hotel, asking permission to use a small parcel of land opposite the Hotel for a car park.

"On the 6th June, the Clerk to Forest Row Parish Council sent us a copy of his letter to you in connection with car parking at the hotel.

We have since then seen all the adjoining owners and the Clerk to the Council and discussed with them our proposals for improving the parking facilities at the side of the hotel. They are all in agreement with these proposals and it is therefore our intention to put the work in hand in the autumn. The enclosed plan shows our proposals.

This will undoubtedly improve car parking arrangements considerably and should, on most occasions take care of all the cars using the hotel.

On exceptional occasions, however, there could be an overflow and we would like to have your permission to use the piece of ground opposite the hotel, between Highgate Road and Thompssetts Bank Road as an overflow car park.

On the same subject, we find it necessary on occasions to start some of our golfers from the 10th tee, and we would like your permission to form a small car park, for say 10 cars near that tee; this of course, only to be used in the summer months in dry weather,

I shall be glad to hear that the Conservators will grant us these permits,,"

A.P. Parker.

A general discussion took place, and it was decided that the Special Purposes Committee should look into the possibility of having a car park for the general use of the public who take part in sporting activities on the forest. It was proposed by Brig. Scott, seconded by Mr. Drew, and unanimously RESOLVED that the Special Purposes Committee should look into the matter, and report the outcome at the following Board Meeting in December.

20. Any other business. It was suggested that grouse should be re-established on the Forest, but it would necessitate a temporary aviary on the forest. The aviary would be approximately 50 ft. x 50 ft. and would have to remain on the forest for one year. A general discussion took place, and it was decided that it would have to be put before the Commoners at their next meeting. The Board would not be involved in any expense, and the grouse chicks would be a gift to the forest. It was decided that the Chairman would put it before the Commoners at their next meeting.

There being no other business the meeting was closed.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, COLEMANS HATCH, ON WEDNESDAY 17TH JULY AT 2.30. P.M.

Present: Col, J.H. Lowe (in the chair) Mr. J.H. Drew, Mr. R.F.J. Brooke, The Hon. C.A.S. Grimston, Mr. E.W. Ellison, Mr. R.P. Odell, Mr W.D. Gillham, Mr. F.B. Cornwall, Brig. L.M. Scott, Capt. D.M.F. Armstrong, Mr. G.J. King, Miss Anne Lumsden, Mrs. H.P. Foster, Mrs. C.M. Ridley, Maj. R.E.W. Grubb, and Mr. J.R. Greenwood.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Col. Sir. R.S. Clarke.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting. It was RESOLVED that the words "Urban District Council" on page two of the Minutes under the heading Revenue, should be amended to read "Uckfield Rural District Council", and that under the heading of Who is to Administer, from the words "but it was agreed" to the end of the sentence should be deleted. Ma Ridley on behalf of the Cuckfield R.D.C. stated that her Council would like to retain an interest in the Forest and Mr. G.J. King spoke in similar terms for the East Grinstead U.D.C.

3. Matters arising.

(a) Expo Sussex '68. The Forest Superintendent stated that the Stand was in the process of being erected. With the help of the Friends. coloured photographs had been taken of the forest, the history of Ashdown and the present administration arrangements were portrayed on a large notice board, and there was a second display describing what the Friends have done, also what they have given to the Conservators. There were also maps on display. A Ranger would be on duty at the Stand all the time, and the Forest Superintendent; also a member of the Friends.

(b) Gift of Three Oak Trees. The Clerk reported that because of the death of Mr. Randolph Churchill, Mr. Winston Churchill had declined to attend the ceremony arranged for the planting of the three oak trees in memory of Sir Winston Churchill. The ceremony was cancelled and the three oak trees planted without ceremony. There may be an official ceremony later on in the 1992

(c) Seats at selected car parks. The Forest Superintendent reported that two seats had been erected by the Rangers at ***** but owing to the extra work involved in organising Expo Sussex, the remaining seats would be erected after the show.

(d) Radio communication between Rangers. The Forest Superintendent explained to the Board the general facts about the radio communication system. There would be three fixed radios, one in the Superintendent's vehicle, one in the land rover, and one in the pick-up. There would also be a portable set for the Rangers when out at work. A fixed station would be erected in the Depot, and a land line from the Depot to the office at East Grinstead, the only problem being when the office was not period, but this could be overcome by the Duty Ranger's wife being a portable set in the home of the Ranger when he was in duty on the Forest. It was stated that if this form of communication was installed, it could be worth at least half an extra man to the Superintendent, and invaluable during the fire fighting season. Col. Lowe asked the Forest Superintendent and Ranger Arnold to retire from the Board room, and a general discussion took place. The Chairman reminded the Board of their meeting in February when they stated that they would consider restoring to the Superintendent and Rangers later in the year the percentage above the agricultural wage which they originally enjoyed. If they decided to accept the gift of £930 offered by the Friends of Ashdown Forest, and have the Radio Communication between the Rangers, it would be worth an extra half man. As the Board was considering employing a fourth Ranger, perhaps it would be better to have the radio installation and put the pay of Rangers and Superintendent took on their originally agreed basis. It was proposed by Captain Armstrong and seconded by Major Grubb and unanimously on that the gift of £900 should be accepted from the Friends for the installation of the radios, and the Clerk was to write a letter officially accepting and thanking them for

extra generous gift. It was proposed by Major Grubb and called by Mr. Drew and unanimously RESOLVED that the employment of a fourth Ranger be deferred and the wages of the Forest Superintendent and the Rangers as from the 2nd August is increased by the following amounts: :

Cdr. Angell	£0.19.0
Ranger. Arnold	£0.14.0
Ranger Linton	£0.11.0
Ranger Streeter	£0.11.0

The effect of this increase was to restore their wages to the same per cent age above the agricultural minimum wage as they formerly had before the agricultural wage was increased in ***** subsequently.

(e) The Countryside Bill. It was decided that the Clerk should obtain a copy of the Bill and make a precis of it for the business of the Board.

(f) The Working Party. The Clerk reported that one meeting of the Working Party had been held, and another would be held 1st August on the Forest.

(g) Appointment of Mr. E.W. Ellison to the Board. The Clerk welcomed Mr. Ellison as representative of the Uckfield Rural District Council on behalf of the Board.

(h) Appointment of Mrs. Ridley to the Board. The Clerk reported the Re-appointment of Mrs. Ridley as representative of the Cuckfield Rural District Council for a further year.

6. The Clearway on the A22. The Clerk reported that the Clearway on the A22 could not proceed any further until a lay-by could be provided, at Highgate Green. The Council had offered a strip of land near Pippingford Park in exchange for the piece of land to be used as a lay-by. The Clerk recommended that the Board should agree to this, and stated he would produce a plan of the land involved when available. It was unanimously RESOLVED that the exchange of land should take place subject to the concurrence of the Lord of the Manor.

7. Finance.

Financial Statement. The Clerk read the usual Financial Statement giving details of the Bank balances.

Accounts as at the 16th July, 1966.

(a) Bank Balance.

		(July 1967)
General Account	£1094.7.2	£32246.16.7
Wages and Petty		
Cash Account	555.16.11	893.3.6 O/D
Licence Account	NIL	1.18.6
	(Cleared to Gen A/C	
	30th June)	

When comparing General Account balances, account should be taken of the fact a further £2753 is still due from East Sussex and Uckfield Councils.

(b) The following amounts have been collected since 1st Jan. 1968.

Forest Rates	Ack. Rents	Temp. Licences	Horse Riding	Local Authority Contributions
693.19.4	828.13.3	53.0.0	91.10.0	3153.19.5
917.3.6	628.0.9	102.0.0	53.10.0	As at July 1967

(c) Local Authority Contributions paid to date.

East Sussex	2200.0.0 (Half Cont.)
Uckfield	553.9.5 (Half Cont.)
East Grinstead	200.0.0
Cuckfield	<u>200.0.0</u>
Total:	<u>3153.9.5</u>

8. Report of Forest Superintendent.

Fires - Since the last Board Meeting the number of fires this season had increased to a total of 105. All the fires in recent weeks had been very small in size, and had mostly been casual fires caused by picnickers.

The Rangers had been increasingly employed on Petrol duties, with the increase in summer visitors. The Pick-Up truck was proving invaluable.

Work had continued on the improvement of fire breaks – some draining had been done and cutting had now commenced. The grass in the clumps had been cut.

Some work had been done preparing for Expo Sussex '68.

Ranger Arnold had taken one week of his summer holiday.

Captain Armstrong asked the Forest Superintendent if he knew how many Commons Registrations had taken place. He replied approximately 300 or more Major Grubb asked if there was any method of dealing with the draining of the fire breaks. The Superintendent reported that some of the breaks had already been drained, but the remainder would be attended to in the Autumn. The Friends had granted up to £250 for improvements and drainage.

9. Any other Business.

(a) New Golf Club. Col. Lowe reported that certain dissension had arisen between the Forest Row Parish Council and the New Golf Club Management. There had also been complaints about the siting of the proposed new too. The Chairman reported further that for the moment he had asked the Chairman of the Parish Council and the Captain of the Golf Club to meet, to see if they could compose their differences of opinion. Failing this, the Conservators might have to intervene.

(b) Proposed Licence for selling produce on the Forest. The Clerk read a letter from Mr. Cook about selling his produce on the Forest,

"I am a greengrocer and fruiterer, and am writing to you asking for a licence to sell fruit in the picnic area of Ashdown Forest on Sundays and Holidays. Hoping you will give me consideration in this matter".

C.F. Cook.

After a general discussion it was proposed by Mr. Drew, seconded by Miss Lumsden and unanimously agreed that a licence would not be granted to Mr. Cook.

(c) Picnic Areas. The Clerk read a letter from Sir Arnold Silverstone.

"I have had occasion to give considerable thought to the siting of the various picnic areas that have been set up in Ashdown Forest. I am deeply concerned with the siting of that on the Lewes Road between Wych Cross and Chelwood Gate. This portion of the main road is so straight that cars invariably flash past at between 60 and 80 m.p.h., each overtaking the other. To consider turning right on this road, to enter the picnic area, against the flow of oncoming traffic, together with overtaking traffic, all at the highest possible speeds, is a most hazardous and perilous liability to which I feel the members of the public should not be exposed.

I feel sure that if you would place this reasonable view before the Conservators they would appreciate with me how extremely dangerous the siting of this particular picnic area is.

On the subject of picnic areas in general, may I make the submission that these are entirely useless unless adequate toilet facilities are provided. The whole system of picnic areas is, to my way of thinking unsatisfactory, unless they be at such points as give sight of a vast and excellent panoramic view. Merely to provide physical areas of picnic cannot possibly be the answer to access to the Forest.

I may say that in my discussions with various people they too accede to the views expressed herein and I would be glad if you would be good enough to give consideration both in particular and in general, to my representations".

Arnold Silverstone.

After a general discussion, it was decided that no immediate action, if any, could be taken. It was admitted that there was a traffic hazard caused by traffic proceeding at present from the direction of London having to cross the Lewes Road to gain access to the Car Park on the western side. The Clerk was asked to write and inform Sir Arnold of the Board's decision.

(d) The Clerk read a letter from Mr. Balfour-Smith.

Re: Grazing of Cattle and Sheep on the Forest.

"Commander Angell has been discussing the above with my wife and the idea appeals to us providing certain precautions can be taken; because it would be essential to prevent stock reaching the Public Highway or roaming too far away from the Farm.

A part of the Forest behind our farm, would lend itself inasmuch as there are two points where some temporary fencing to confine stock could be erected, leaving grazing between. In regard to the track that passes through this part, a simple form of temporary Cattle Grid constructed, say out of railway sleepers which would allow vehicles to pass, and a self-closing, self-locking gate, say 4 feet wide erected at the side of the grid which would allow pedestrians and horse riding traffic, should prove adequate.

With the above provisions agreed; we would be interested in principle in pursuing and I look forward to hearing that the Conservators approve; we can then get down to details.

C.R. Balfour-Smith.

After a brief discussion the Board unanimously decided that consent to Mr. Balfour-Smith's request could not be given. There being no other business, the Meeting was declared closed.

1969 ESTIMATES OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE

1967 Actual		1968 Ests			1969 Ests	
				FOREST SUPERINTENDENT		
1099		1160		Salary (including Employers basic NI contributions at present rate	1211	
185	1284	130	1290	Expenses	130	1341
	2754		3045 + 802 (4 th Ranger)	RANGERS WAGES		3150
427 98	525	522 270	792	RANGERS EXPENSES Transport Uniform, telephone, etc	750 90	840
				MOBILE RADIO EQUIPMENT maintenance		220
10 32 93	135	40 30 100 250	420	GENERAL FOREST EXPENSES Litter Baskets Notice Boards Sundries Public amenities	40 30 100 400	570
	204		300	RUNNING EXPENSES MACHINERY	—	200
	38		250	HIRE OF MACHINERY		250
49 15	64	50	50	DEPOT Rates, water, NI Additional building	50	50
1120		520		ADMINISTRATION Clerk's Salary Office expenses:	520	

98		600		½ bookkeeper	600	
9		218		¼ secretary	218	
27		40		1/10 office staff	40	
20				office hire allowance		
31		100		heat and light	100	
		50		auditor	50	
		80		post & telephone	80	
		120		room hire & travel	100	
		14		bank charges	15	
		4		advertising	5	
		20		insurance	20	
		35		printing & stationery	35	
				audit stamp duty	150	
				sundries		
172		150				
35		35			35	
23	1535	30	2016		30	1998
			422	CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	430	505
				1 Mini P.U. truck	75	
				1 power saw		
	22		25	IRRECOVERABLE		25
				Ackn – rates		
329		331		ESTIMATED NORMAL INCOME		9149
				Rates at 6d per acre		
				Ack rents & temporary licences	331	
1090		1460		Sundry receipts	1200	
94	1513	60	1851		60	1591
	1115		1112	ADDITIONAL RATE INCOME		1124
	3933		6449	EXCESS EXPENDITURE OVER INCOME		6434

MINUTES of The Annual General Meeting of the Commoners duly convened by notices posted on the principal doors of the churches of the parishes and ecclesiastical districts and post offices to which the Forest extends and by notices to the members of the Board more than fourteen days prior to this date and held at the Memorial Hall, Hartfield, at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, 10th December, 1968:

Present: Mr. F.P.L. Gray, Mrs. E. Squarey, Mr. CM. Squarey, Mr. & Mrs. Metcalfe, Barbara Willard, N. Philip Esq. Mr. & Mrs. Tattersall-Wright, Mr. & Mrs. Clark, Mr. & Mrs. Glover, Mr. H. Weeding, Mr. D. Baird, Mr. & Mrs. G. St. L. Berkeley, Mr. H.S. Stevenson, Mr. Derek Evatt Miss A. Lumsden, Mr. G.J. Mountain, Mr. W.K. Oliver, Mr. & Mrs. A.J. Wells, Mr. B.C. Lucking, Mr. and Mrs. Roberts, Mr. R. Clarke, Col. Sir Ralph Clarke, Mr. A.K.L. Harvey, Mr. R.F.J. Brooke, Mr. & Mrs. Raikes, Mr. H.W. Nance, Mr. & Mrs. Drew, Mr. T. Townsend, Mr. S. Rimmins, Mr. R. Waller, Mrs. J. Waters and Mr. P. Shaw.

1. Election of Chairman : The Clerk called for nominations for a Chairman. Mr. J.H. Drew proposed, seconded by Mr. Brooke, that Col. J.H. Lowe be elected Chairman and this Resolution was passed unanimously.

2. The Clerk read the Notice convening the Meeting.

3. Minutes: The Clerk then read the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting which were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. The following Conservators, had retired and did not, therefore, offer themselves for re-election:

Sir Ralph Clarke
Sir William Garrett,
Mr. A.K.L. Harvey.

The following Conservators were due to retire by rotation, and offered themselves for re-election:

Mr. J.H. Drew,
Mr. R.P.J. Brooke,

There were, therefore, five vacancies and the following candidates offered themselves for election:

Mr. J.H. Drew,
Mr. R.F.J. Brooke,
Mr. R.S.G. Martin,
Mr. G.J. Mountain,
Mr. G.M. Raikes,
Mr. R. St. C. Clarke.

Voting then took place according to the custom of the Forest, and the following five candidates were successful and declared duly elected to the Board as the representative of the Commoners as from the 1st January, 1969.

Mr. J.H. Drew,
Mr. R.F.J. Brooke,
Mr. G.J. Mountain,
Mr. G.M. Raikes,
Mr. R. St. G. Clarke.

5. The following were elected Superintendents for the recreation grounds.

- (1) Nutley – Mr. Gillham.
- (2) Forest Row - Col. Lowe.
- (3) Colemans Hatch - Mr. Drew.
- (4) Fairwarp - Mr. Harvey.
- (5) Chelwood Gate - Mr. Brooke.

6. Chairman's Report:

The Chairman then made his report. He first of all paid a generous tribute to Sir William Garrett who had retired from the Chair during the current year, as he had left the district and now lived at Eastbourne. He also paid a tribute to Sir Ralph Clarke, who had been associated with the Board of Conservators for so many years, and whose valuable work and devotion to the Forest would be sadly missed in the years to come. The Chairman then paid a tribute to the executive staff, including the Clerk, the Forest Superintendent and the three Rangers, and recalled to the members present the long hours of loyal service given by the Rangers, particularly during the period when fires took place on the forest.

Once again, he thanked the Friends of Ashdown Forest for their generosity and this year he particularly wanted to mention the fact that they had donated the cost of portable radio equipment, which would enable the Rangers to get into touch with each other, and with the Depot, and with the office, so that in times of emergency, the police, the ambulance, or the fire service could be summoned from any part of Ashdown Forest with the minimum of delay. This radio service would be particularly valuable in combating fires.

The Chairman touched briefly on problems which were facing the Board of Conservators in relation to our parking and conflict of opinion which was apparent among the public regarding uncontrolled parking of cars, anywhere on the forest, and controlled parking in large areas, especially set aside for that purpose.

He also briefly touched upon finance and told the meeting that out of a total of expenditure of roughly £9,000 only £1,500 was met by the Forest Rate, £1000 by Licences and Acknowledgement Rents, and £6,500 being the balance, by the Local Authorities,

He finally announced to the meeting, it was the firm intention of the Conservators to conserve in tact all the 6,400 acres of the Forest and to preserve it in its natural state and beauty.

7. General Business. The Clerk recalled the death of Mr. R.W. Fovargue, who had been his predecessor in office of Clerk to the Conservators, and who had held that office for 25 years. The Clerk also asked the Commoners for permission to plant some trees generously given by the Association known as the Men of the Trees against the southern boundary fence of the Radio Station at Kingstanding as this would help to preserve the skyline and conceal the ugly fencing. This was generally agreed to and RESOLVED that the trees be fenced for a period of 10 years. A general discussion then took place on such subjects as the Commoners voting by their acreage and other matters of general interest.

8. It was decided to hold the next meeting at Nutley at 7.30 p.m. on the 9th December, and it was left to the Clerk to investigate whether the meeting could be held at the Shelley Arms and failing that at the Village Hall.

There being no other business the meeting was concluded.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM COLEMANS HATCH, ON WEDNESDAY 11th DECEMBER AT 2.30 p.m.

Present: Col. Lowe (in the Chair), Mr. J.H. Drew, Mr. W. Gillham, Mr. F.B. Cornwell, Mrs. M.P. Poster, Mr. G.J. King, Brig. L.M. Scott, Capt. D.M.F. Armstrong, Mr. E.W. Ellison, The Hon. C.A.S. Grimston, Mr. R.P.J. Brooke.

1. Apologies for absence. were received from Major Grubb, Mr. Greenwood, Mrs. Ridley, Mr. O'Dell, Sir Ralph Clarke, and Miss Lumsden.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting. At the bottom of page six of the Minutes it was RESOLVED that the word "Commoners" should be deleted, and the words "Race Course Contractors", be inserted. Also on page nine the words "to use" to be inserted in the second line from the top of the page, between the words "permission" and "the".

3. Matters Arising.

(a) Radio Communications between Rangers. The Clerk reported there was still a delay on the delivery of the radio sets, but it was hoped that Pye would be able to supply them by the 17th January.

(b) Working Party. The Clerk reported there had been two meetings for the following reasons:

1. A tour of the Forest to make recommendations as to what trees should be felled and what should be left.

2. To listen to an address by Mr. Ian Campbell of the Commons, Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society.

(c) Meeting Between the Golf Club and the Forest Row Parish Council.

The Clerk reported briefly on his meeting, and as a result of the meeting it was decided that on the ticket and score card which each golfer receives from the Ashdown Forest Hotel when he plays golf should be printed a notice to the effect that he is playing on Common land, and the public are entitled to walk there. Also at the meeting it was pointed out that in a booklet issued by the Golf Club it is stated that the Golf Course might belong to the Ashdown Forest Hotel, and this is to be deleted.

It was stated it was impossible for the public to cross the Golf Course from one side to the other without crossing four Fairways, whereas in fact they need only cross two. It is hoped that signs can be posted to show the public where they can walk safely, without interference with golfers.

(d) Ice Cream Licence. The Clerk reported that following the Board's instructions of the last meeting, he had issued a Summons against Reigate Caterers, and received a Judgement for £310 plus costs. The debt had been admitted

and the Court had supplied a list of the weekly commitments which Reigate Caterers incur, and the Company he offered to pay monthly instalments of £20, which would take approximately 18 months to clear the debt. If this was not acceptable to the Board the Clerk pointed out that he would have to issued a Judgement Summons. A general discussion took place. Proposed by Mr. Brooke, seconded by Mr. Drew, and unanimously RESOLVED that the Clerk should accept the offer of £20 per month from Reigate Caterers in payment of the outstanding debt.

Mr. Gillham on behalf of the Maresfield Parish Council put before the Board the fact that several inhabitants of the Duddleswell area were against the Board giving permission to sell tea from refreshment vans, as this could affect the sales of the Duddleswell Stores, which pays a licence to the Conservators for the sale of tea and other goods. If there was a caravan on the Forest selling teas, and the shop was to go out of business the local inhabitants would be without a local shop, and this would cause inconvenience. A general discussion -took place on the subject of refreshments, teas, etc., After the experience with Reigate Caterers, the Board did not feel it would be a good thing to accept a tender from a small firm. Captain Armstrong reported that the Uckfield Rural District Council was not sure about the Planning Permission, and a small sub-Committee had been set up. If the caravans selling teas only parked in car parks, which it is proposed should be built on the Forest, this might be acceptable to the Council.

(e) Estimates. The Clerk read a letter from the Rural District Council of Uckfield.

"The Council have now considered the Conservators' estimates for income and expenditure for the year 1969.

After giving consideration to the estimates and noting that the expenditure for next year is approximately the same as the estimated not expenditure for the current year, the Council have decided that their contribution will be limited to £1,500 - the same as the current year".

The Clerk reported that neither the East Sussex County Council, the East Grinstead Council or the Cuckfield Council had commented on the Estimates, but it has been intimated by Mrs. Ridley that Cuckfield might increase its contribution. Mr. King representing the East Grinstead Council stated that he would try and encourage his Council to increase its donation.

Mr. Ellison suggested that in future the estimates should show how much of the shortfall would have to be contributed by each of the four Councils concerned.

The Clerk reported that the National Farmers' Union had agreed to a wage increase on the minimum agricultural wage, of 7.36 per cent, which would amount to another £273 for salaries and Wages over and above the amounts shown in the Estimates, if applied to the Forest Superintendent and Rangers. If it is accepted by the Prices and Incomes Board, it will take effect from the 3rd February. The figure of £273 is based on eleven months.

The Superintendent and Rangers, and the Press were asked to leave the meeting.

THE BOARD WENT INTO COMMITTEE

A general discussion took place, and it was decided that as the Board had already decided to keep the wages based on agricultural wages, it should be accepted by the Board, that the increase takes place. It was proposed by Mr. Drew, seconded by Mr. Cornwell and unanimously RESOLVED that the increase of 7.36 per cent be granted and should become effective from the 3rd February, 1969

THE BOARD CAME OUT OF COMMITTEE.

The Superintendent and Rangers, and the press were asked to return to the meeting.

(g) Proposed car park on Ashdown Forest near the Hotel.

The Clerk reported that an application had been made by the Ashdown Forest Hotel to use a piece of land opposite the hotel for a car park. The Forest Superintendent and Clerk thought they knew of a more suitable site for a car park, for the use of people who wished to take part in all sporting activities on the Forest in this area. It was decided by the Board that the Special Purposes Committee should meet on the Forest and inspect the proposed site to consider whether it was suitable for a car park. A date was fixed for the 1st of January, at 2.15. p.m. outside the Ashdown Forest Hotel.

4. Report of the Commoners' Meeting held on the 10th December 1968.

The Clerk reported on the Commoners' Meeting, which was well attended but quieter than in previous years.

The following five persons were elected to the Board for next year.

Mr. J.H. Drew.
Mr. R.F.J. Brooke.

Mr. O.J. Mountain.

Mr. G.M. Raikes.
Mr. R. St.G. Clarke.

It was decided at the Commoners meeting that trees should be planted around the Radio Station against the fences, The Men of the Trees had presented the Conservators with the trees which it is proposed should be planted, and they will be fenced for 10 years. Oakover Forest Services are to be asked to give their advice on the planting of trees free of cost. The Superintendent was asked to check that the trees to be planted were not harmful to cattle. The Clerk said he would produce a list of the trees at the next meeting. The Commoners Meeting next year would be at Nutley at the Shelley Arms, on December 9th.

Mr. Gillham raised the question of who the new Members to the Board should replace, otherwise in three years the same five members would come up for re-election together.

As far as Mr. Drew and Mr. Brooke were concerned they were elected to the Board for a further three years.

It was decided that the following new members to the Board should take the place of the following retiring members:

Mr. A.K.L. Harvey - Mr. G.J. Mountain.
Sir William Garrett - Mr. G.M. Raikes.
Sir Ralph Clarke - Mr. R. St.G. Clarke.

5. Report of the Forest Superintendent.

In addition to their routine duties, the Rangers had been employed on:

- (1) Ditching and draining of foot-paths and riding tracks in the vicinity of the Horder Centre,
- (2) Draining and widening of fire breaks to the south of the Ridge Road.
- (3) Ditching, draining and surfacing the car park at the western end of the Ridge Road.
- (4) Hardening off entrances to some car parks.
- (5) Covering over rubbish in the old dump, which is now no longer needed.
- (6) Cutting burnt gorse.
- (7) Boundary walking.
- (8) Cutting chestnut for fire beaters and stands.

The Forest Superintendent and the Rangers witnessed a Land Rover demonstration in Pippingford.

Rangers Arnold and Streeter had completed their annual holiday.

FOREST SUPERINTENDENT.

The Superintendent reported fully on the Land Rover Demonstration.

6. Finance.

Authority was given by the Board for the Clerk's salary cheque to be signed, although it was not presented for signature at the meeting.

7. Correspondence. The Clerk read a letter from a Mrs. McNair relating to the planting of trees, on the village recreation ground in commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Women's Institute.

A general discussion took place, and it was unanimously decided that the Conservators had no objections to this proposal, but could not accept responsibility for the trees. Also the trees must be in keeping with Ashdown Forest and not poisonous to animals. The Forest Superintendent was asked to attend to this matter.

The Clerk reported that Mr. Fovargue, who was the Clerk to the Conservators before him, had died. A wreath had been sent by the Clerk, who also attended the funeral. He also wrote a letter of sympathy to Mrs. Fovargue. The Board agreed the Clerk should be reimbursed for the cost of the wreath.

8. To fix the dates of the Board Meetings for 1969. The following dates have been fixed for the Board Meetings for 1969:

February 19th
April 16th
July 16th
October 15th
December 10th

9. Any other business.

Mr. Gillham stated that he had been asked by the inhabitants of Nutley to raise the question of the line of trees at Fords Green, which were in danger of being destroyed by fire. They were planted in 1878, and the bracken and leaves need clearing away around the trees, so that they are not so vulnerable to fire. A general discussion took place, and it was decided that controlled burning around the trees should be carried out.

Mr. Gillham also raised the question of the Nutley Recreation Ground, and whether it could be extended to include a Bowling Green. A general discussion took place and it was decided that a more considered opinion could be given on February 19th at the new Meeting of the Board, after a visit to the site by the General Purposes Committee at its meeting on the 1st January next.

There being no other business the meeting was concluded.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, COLEMANS HATCH, ON WEDNESDAY 19th FEBRUARY AT 2.30. P.m.

Present: Mr. J.H. Drew (in the Chair), Col. J.H. Lowe, Mr. F.B. Cornwall, Miss Anne Lumsden, Mr. W. Gillham, Brig. L.M. Scott, Mr. E.W. Ellison, Mr. G.J. Mountain, Captain D.M.F. Armstrong, Mr. R. St.G. Clarke, Mr. G.M. Raikes, Mr. R.F.J. Brooke, Mr. J.R. Greenwood, Mr. J.F. Bishop, and Mr. A.R. Mephram

1. Apologies for Absence were received from the Hon. C.A.S. Grimston, Major Grubb, Mrs. Ridley, Mrs. Foster and Mr. Odell.

2. Election of Chairman. It was proposed by Col. Lowe, seconded by Mr. Brooke, and unanimously RESOLVED that Mr. J.H. Drew be Chairman for the ensuing year. Mr. Drew then took the Chair.

Election of Vice-Chairman. It was proposed by Mr. Drew, seconded by Brig. Scott and unanimously RESOLVED that Col. Lowe be Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

It was decided by the Board that the position of Deputy Chairman should not be filled at the present time, but perhaps at a later date if it was thought necessary.

The Chairman welcomed the new members to the Board, Mr. Raikes, Mr. Mountain and Mr. Clarke. He also paid tribute to Sir William Garrett, Sir Ralph Clarke, and Mr. Harvey, who had retired during the previous year.

The Chairman announced that he hoped to carry on with the projects already commenced in 1968, such as widening fire breaks and improving the car parks. He also hoped it might be possible to improve the fire breaks by encouraging the growth of grass and to experiment to a very limited extent with fertilisers,

3. The Minutes of the last Meeting. The last paragraph on page one should read "It was impossible for the public to cross the golf course from one side to the other", and not as stated "It was impossible for the public walk across the Golf Course from one end to the other". The rest of the minutes having been circulated were taken as read.

4. Matters Arising.

(a) Radio Communications. The Clerk reported that the only equipment outstanding was one hand set called a Bantam. All the other equipment had been installed, and it was hoped the whole system would be in working order within the next few days.

(b) Working Party. The Clerk reported that two meetings had been held since the last Ashdown Forest Board Meeting. At the meeting held in February, the Working Party listened to a talk given by a Mr. Guy Mountford. The next meeting of the Working party is to be held on the 12th March.

(c) Ice Cream Licences. The Clerk reported that tenders for the sale of ice cream had been very slow in arriving. He stated he would let the Board know which firm had quoted the highest figure at the next Meeting. The last date for tenders to be submitted was the 20th February. It was agreed by the Board that the decision as to who would get the ice cream licence should not be held over until the next Board Meeting, but would be decided by the Chairman.

(d) Clerk reported the Government's Acceptance of the increase in the minimum Agricultural Wage.

Following a previous decision, the Superintendent's and the Rangers' salaries would be increased accordingly, with effect from the 3rd February, 1969.

(e) Proposed car park on Ashdown Forest near the hotel.

The Clerk reported that there had been a request from the Ashdown Forest Hotel regarding parking. He also reported that a meeting had been held on the forest and a suitable site for a car park had been chosen. The Forest Superintendent, had then been instructed to call a meeting of representatives of the Golf Club, which included Ashdown Forest Hotel, and the Forest Row Parish Council. This meeting had taken place, and it was agreed that the site was suitable, and the Ashdown Forest Hotel was preparing a plan. This car park should solve the problem of parking on the road outside the Ashdown Forest Hotel, by golfers and others. The cost of making the car park would not be bourn by the Board.

(f) Nutley Recreation Ground. The Clerk reported on the proposed extension of the recreation ground for a Bowling Green. Certain members of the Board have been to Nutley Recreation ground and met Mr. Gillham. It was decided that if a Bowling Green were to be established on the Green, there would not be sufficient space and Mr. Gillham indicated broadly where the Boiling Green would be, and it was left that he would consult with the other interested parties in this project and a plan would be produced showing how much forest would be required for this green. The Bowling Club have the matter in hand and it will be dealt with by the next Meeting.

5. Accounts for the year ended 31st December 1968. The Clerk reported in detail on the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st December, 1968, and the Balance Sheet as at 31st December 1968. As a result of the death of the widow of the late Ranger Day and the return of capital a sum arising from the cessation of the Annuity, the Conservators had £293 in hand for investment. It was proposed by Mr. Drew, seconded by Mr. Brooke and unanimously RESOLVED that the Clerk should write to Messrs. J. Schroeder Wagg and Company for advice on investing this sum.

It was stated by the Clerk, that owing to an oversight the rent of the Depot had not been paid for five years, and the arrears plus the amount due in September, 1969, would be £25. He was making arrangements to pay this rent forthwith.

It was suggested that the Insurance risk of £50,000 for public liability was insufficient, and should be increased. It was decided that the Clerk should write and find out what figure the Conservators could be insured for at a premium of £20 per annum, instead of £17 10s.

Mr. Drew proposed that the accounts should be adopted, and it was seconded by Brig. Scott and unanimously RESOLVED accordingly.

6. Sale of refreshments other than Ice Cream. The Clerk read correspondence received from the East Sussex County Council inviting the Board to appoint delegates to attend a meeting with the Council and the Uckfield R.D.C., relating to the sale of refreshments other than Ice-creams. The dates for the meeting quoted by the Council were the 25th February, 6th March, 13th March, and 17th March. The meeting would also include a general exchange of views on the future of Ashdown Forest. The date was fixed for the 13th March for the meeting, and the following members of the Board were chosen as representatives:

Mr. J.H. Drew,
Col. J.H. Lowe,
Mr. R.P.J. Brooke,
Hon. C.A.S. Grimston,
Brig. L.H. Scott,
Mr. G. Raikes,
Mr. P.B. Cornwall
and the Clerk.

The Clerk was instructed to inform the Council of the date of the Meeting and would find out the time of the meeting and let the selected members know. He would also ask the Council to prepare an Agenda.

7. Report of the Forest Superintendent.

The Rangers had been primarily employed on widening, levelling, draining and cutting major firebreaks. The following breaks had been widened from an average width of 10 feet to at least 50 feet:

North side of the Ridge road.
From Kings Standing corner to Forest Holme.
From Wych Cross to Hindleap Farm.
From Wych Cross to Chelwood Gate
(west side) and thence to cricket
ground.
East side of Priory Road from
Hindleap to Kidbrooke.

Also other shorter sections where the firebreaks narrowed.

This had required the extensive use of hired machinery - J.C.B. and Swipe - The removal and burning up of a considerable number of scrub trees, principally birch, and the laying of drain pipes in the worst areas. Much discing still remained to be done as soon as weather permitted, and the firebreaks should all "be looking respectable by the spring.

The Rangers had just taken delivery of a new more powerful tractor and a swipe, the gift of the Friends of Ashdown Forest. This new machinery will enable all work on firebreaks to be speeded up and carried out more efficiently.

It will obviate the necessity of hiring a swipe, and will greatly assist in the general management of the forest, notably the cutting of footpaths, clearing of gorse, etc. The tractor is fitted with a safety cab, a most desirable feature on the rough forest ground.

Preparations had been made at the Depot for the installation of the radio equipment.

On the few days when work on the firebreaks had proved impossible, the rangers had been employed boundary walking.

All the Rangers had taken their winter holiday.

FOREST SUPERINTENDENT.

8. The Clerk reported on the Financial Statement as at the 18th February, 1969.

Finance.	1969	(1968) .
1. <u>Bank Balances.</u>		
General Account	91.11.6.	(595.14.3)
Licence Account		
Conservators Income only	314.10.3.	(383.19.11)
Wages and Petty Cash Account	424.16.11.	(239.1.4.)
		O/Drawn.

2. The following amounts have been collected since 1st January, 1969*

<u>Forest Rates.</u>	<u>Ack. Rents.</u>	<u>Horse Riding.</u>	<u>Temp. Licences.</u>
3.5.0.	314.10.3.	18.0.0.	1.0.0.
(3.2.6. arrears)			

3. The following accounts are due for payment:

W.H. Price (Builders) Limited	Return of Deposit 5.0.0.
R.W. Jack (Contractors)	Return of Deposit 15.0.0.
Clerk's Salary - March Quarter	402.0.0.

The Clerk requested authority for the signing of the three cheques mentioned at the bottom of the Statement, namely W.H. Price (Builders) Limited, return of deposit, R.W. Jack (Contractors), return of deposit, and the Clerk's salary. Proposed by Mr. Drew, seconded by Mr. Brooke, and unanimously RESOLVED that these cheques be signed

9. Gift of £900 from the Friends of Ashdown Forest.

The Clerk reported a gift of £900 from the Friends of Ashdown Forest for the purchase of a new tractor. The Clerk reported that he had written to the Friends thanking them for this gift. He also explained exactly how the sum £2000 was spent:

New Tractor	1339.10.0
Allowance on old tractor	<u>560.10.0</u>
	779.10.0
Second hand Ferguson	
Swipe	<u>121.0.0</u>
Total	900.0.0

The Board decided it would be a nice gesture if the Chairman called on Major Lumsden to personally thank him for the gift of £900.

10. Correspondence.

(a) The Clerk read a letter from a Mrs. E.C. Harden relating to an invitation he had received to attend a talk and discussion on the preservation of Rural England, given by Lt. Col. Gerald Haythornthwaite, J.P., M.A., Pip. Arch., F.R.I.B.A., M.T.P.I., Technical Adviser to the Council for the Preservation of Rural England. The Clerk reported he was unable to attend the meeting which will be held on the 28th June, and the members of the Board were asked if any of them would like to represent the Conservators. Captain Armstrong stated he would be very interested in attending, and it was unanimously RESOLVED by the Board that the Clerk should write to Mrs. Harden, requesting that an official invitation should be sent to Captain Armstrong, on behalf of the Board of Conservators.

(b) The Clerk reported that the Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club had offered to pay for the services of an extra Ranger if he could be employed for five months out of the year exclusively on the Golf Course with the object of ensuring that the rights of golfers and public is duly observed. It was also suggested that if the Conservators wished they could employ him on general duties for the remainder of the year at their own expense. After a general

discussion, it was decided that the Board could not agree to this proposition and that the bank should write to the Secretary of the Golf Club accordingly. It was considered, however, that if a Fixture List for both Courses was applied to the Clerk early in the year, it should be possible for the Forest Superintendent to be present on most of the occasions when an open meeting was being held, or some Golfing Society was coming down from some distance away, and this should prove to be beneficial to all parties concerned. If possible a Ranger would be asked to visit the Golf Course during afternoons at a weekend.

(c) The Clerk read a letter from the Withyham Parish Council relating to St. John's Recreation Ground at Crowborough. It was reported that this area used to be a playing field, and it is still reasonably flat, and the idea of the Parish Council was to obtain a licence from the Board for the restoration of this ground for football, or perhaps cricket at a later date. It was suggested that perhaps some form of fencing could be erected around it. Also, close to this area, is another area very suitable for the parking of cars, which would mean there would be no problem about parking facilities.

A general discussion took place and the proposition was accepted in principle. It was suggested that a Superintendent should be appointed to the ground by the Board, and it was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Col. Lowe and unanimously RESOLVED that Mr. Ellison should be appointed Superintendent. The Clerk was requested to draw a draft Licence for the Council's consideration.

11. Any other business.

The Chairman stated that he had had many complaints concerning the shooting of deer on the forest. The Chairman proposed that the Special Purposes Committee should look into the aspects of the preservation of deer on the forest and their control. A general discussion took place and it was decided that the Special Purposes Committee should meet the Deer Preservation Society to be re-assured on the aspects of the control and preservation of the deer. The question of maps of the Forest was raised, and the Clerk was requested to include these in the Estimates for next year to produce a further supply of maps.

There being no other business the meeting was concluded.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM COLEMANS HATCH, OK WEDNESDAY 16TH APRIL AT 2.30. p.m. ,

Present: Mr. J.,H. Drew (in the chair), Col. J.H. Lowe, Major R.E.W. Grubb, Mr. E.W. Ellison, Mr. R.P. Odell, Mr. J.F. Bishop, Captain D.M.F. Armstrong, Mr. W.D. Gillham, Mr. F.B. Cornwell, Miss Anne Lumsden, Mr. G.J. Mountain, Mr. G.J. King, The Hon. C.A.S. Grimston, Brig. L.M. Scott, Mr. R. St.G. Clarke.

1. Apologies for Absence were received from Mr. Greenwood, Mr. Brooke, Mrs. Ridley and Mr. Raikes.

2. The Minutes of the last Meeting. The Minutes having been circulated were taken as read.

3. Matters Arising.

(a) Fire Breaks. Although not on the Agenda, the question of ploughing and cultivating the forest was raised, in connection with cutting fire breaks. Mr. Mountain did not think the large cultivating machinery should be used at all as before long a large area of the forest would be left bare of vegetation with the possibility of soil erosion on a large scale. It was pointed out by the Vice-Chairman that more damage was caused by fire, than by cutting fire breaks, and causing erosion. A general discussion took place, and it was decided that the Rangers should continue to disc and harrow, but not plough the fire breaks. The Chairman stated that £50, which Lord Buckhurst had volunteered to contribute, would initially be spent on a test sowing and liming of certain fire breaks.

(b) Radio Communication. The Clerk reported that all the radio equipment was installed, and the system was working extremely well.

(c) Ice Cream Licences. The Clerk reported that the tender received from P.W.W. Ice Creams Limited, in the sum of £320 had been accepted and the Company had already paid the complete fee in the sum of £320.

(d) Report on Meeting with East Sussex County Council on 13th March 1969.

The Clerk reported on the meeting with the East Sussex County Council, and read to the Board the Minutes of that meeting

A general discussion took place on the notes.

(e) St. John's Recreation Ground at Crowborough. The Clerk reported that at the last meeting it was decided in principle to grant a Licence for a Recreation Ground at St. Johns, Crowborough, and Mr. Ellison had been appointed Superintendent of the ground. The Clerk reported that he had prepared a Licence, which had been approved by Mr. Ellison, and it was now with the Clerk to the Withyham Parish Council for approval.

(f) Deer. The Clerk reported that he had endeavoured to arrange a meeting with the Deer. Preservation Society but the date fixed was not convenient to all members of the Society, and the meeting had therefore, been cancelled. Mr. Brooke previously informed the Clerk that the Deer Society would like a meeting to take place between it and the Board, but after they had carried out their census during May. The Chairman suggested the discussion on deer should be left until the Board had had a chance to meet the Deer Society. The Clerk was requested to arrange a meeting with the Deer Society, and let all the members of the Board know the date, and any members who are sufficiently interested in the subject of Deer can attend. It was agreed that the Press should be omitted from the meeting.

4. Children's Playground at Fairwarp - to consider a proposal by the Maresfield Parish Council

The Clerk read a letter from the Clerk of the Maresfield Parish Council, in which was contained a request for the Board to consider allowing a children's playground to be made at Fairwarp. The Clerk circulated to the Board a map showing exactly where it was suggested the proposed playground should be. The Clerk then read his reply to the letter, which asked for more detail in relation to the proposal. He then read the reply from the Council, which did not answer any of the questions the Clerk had raised in his letter relating to exactly what proposals were intended. The Clerk pointed out that it was very difficult for the Board to agree or disagree with the proposal, when there were no exact details. The Chairman proposed it should be part of the recreation ground at Fairwarp, and it was not really necessary for a further playground to be made. A general discussion took place, and the Clerk suggested the Board should re-consider the matter when the Council had told the exactly what they propose to do. The Clerk was insisted to reply to the letter from the Council on those lines.

5. Proposed Bowls Green at Fords Green.

The Clerk raised the question of the proposed Bowls Green at Fords Green. The Bowls Club had produced a plan of the proposed site for the Bowls Green, and the Clerk submitted it to the Board for approval. The Clerk pointed out to the Board that who ever undertakes the work of constructing the green, will also have to make a new track around it, because part of the original one will be covered by the bowling greens. After a general discussion, it was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Major Grubb and unanimously RESOLVED that the matter be approved in principle, subject to a formal application.

6. Forest Superintendent's Report.

Fires.

There had been thirty-eight up to the 9th April, burning approximately 880 acres. Of these, 24 were thought to be deliberate, the remainder probably accidental.

Apart from Easter Saturday, the only sizeable fire was one of about 25 acres opposite the radio station. This was one of five fires lit at about 0030 on Monday the 10th March. This fire was effectively stopped by a major ploughed firebreak, and partly by a forest track worn to bare earth.

On Easter Saturday fires started in two places, on the Old Lodge Boundary at the Kings Standing end, and shortly afterwards at the bottom of Millbrook. The weather was hot, with a high wind, and no efforts of the rangers or the 7 fire engines in attendance could control these fires. Fire breaks were ineffective and the fires swept across roads, both the Stonehill Road, and the A22. Another fire started opposite Pippingford, which might have been accidental, and this fire soon joined up with the main fire burning across from Millbrook. In all about 825 acres were burned out. It is thought that these fires were started deliberately, probably by the hooligan element. The Rangers and the Fire Services worked hard to prevent the spread, as did numerous members of the public, but in the prevailing conditions little could be done.

On several occasions the rangers were put on night patrols, often lasting till 0100 in the morning. These patrols, sometimes in conjunction with the police succeeded in putting out several fires within minutes of their being started, but never in catching the fire lighter.

The radio communications have proved of the greatest value, and have enabled the Forest Superintendent and rangers to be at the scene of the fires often within minutes. The radio link maintained at night by the rangers wives has proved invaluable. Rangers on patrol on the forest have received fire reports from the headquarters at Lewes, and in reverse, calls for the fire brigade have been passed over the radio, thence by telephone to the fire brigade. The voluntary assistance of the rangers' wives is greatly appreciated. In normal forest administration the radio has proved an outstanding success, communication has been possible from all parts of the forest, and there has been a marked increase in productivity.

The incidence of fires and fire watching had necessarily cut down the amount of production work done on the forest, as had the commencement of normal summer weekend patrols. Work on fire breaks had continued.

The Friends of Ashdown Forest had generously donated a mounted chain harrow, and this will prove invaluable in putting a finish to the fire breaks.

On instructions from the Chairman no ploughing had been done on the new fire breaks created this year and much discing remains to be done, on these. This backlog and much other desirable work may well remain for some time, due to the labour shortage which persists throughout the summer months.

Preparations are in hand for ploughing and seeding two experimental strips of fire break, using quantities of lime and Fertiliser. This will be commenced as soon as the combination of labour availability and suitable weather can be achieved, possibly by the date of the Board meeting.

The Rangers had also been employed on routine preparations for the summer season, such as the renewal of notices, placing of litter baskets etc. Already the litter problem is on the increase, taking more time each week.

An indication of the volume of work undertaken by the rangers is the fact that the new tractor had its 500 hour service in exactly one third of the time that the last tractor took three years ago.

Ranger Arnold had taken 1 week's holiday.

FOREST SUPERINTENDENT.

The Forest Superintendent gave an up-to-date report, because the above mentioned report was written before the last large fire. He reported that 1,200 acres of forest, had been burned, from 48 fires, 26 of which were probably deliberately lighted. The large Easter fire was started by accident, but was fed by 3 or 4 deliberate fires. It was agreed by the Board that controlled burning could be done around properties by the owners under supervision of the Rangers, to prevent the fires from spreading on to their properties.

A general discussion took place on the matter of fires. Controlled burning was discussed. The Clerk stated that to his knowledge, the two large fires which had occurred this year are the first ones which have endangered properties. It was stated that it had been established that the bracken causes the fires to spread. The Clerk reported he had written to I.C.I., asking if they produced a chemical which would kill bracken, but had so far received no reply, but would report on any reply received at the next Board Meeting.

It was suggested that the Board might do well to invest in a water spraying machine to be fitted in the forest Land Rover, similar to that which the Fire Brigade use. The Chairman suggested the Fire Brigade should be approached and they might consider lending the machine to the Board. The Board, however, thought they should invest in a machine of their own. It was proposed by Mr. Ellison, seconded by Captain Armstrong, and unanimously resolved that a water spraying machine should be included in next year's estimates.

The Chairman took the opportunity of thanking the Superintendent and the Rangers for the very fine job they have done during the fire season, and also their wives, and he asked Ranger Arnold who was present at the meeting, to convey this to the other Rangers and their wives.

The Superintendent reported that on the 5th April a Mrs. Goodyear of Edenbridge, started a fire by accident on the forest which destroyed about 25 acres, and the Board were asked if they wanted to prosecute her. He also stated that gas-stoves seem to substitute the flask now, and all day the Rangers are telling picnickers to put their stoves out.

A general discussion took place, and it was proposed by Major Grubb, seconded by Miss Lumsden, and the motion was carried, that the Clerk should issue a Summons for breach of the Bye Laws of Ashdown Forest, to Mrs. Goodyear.

The Board also unanimously RESOLVED that anyone in future caught lighting a stove during the fire season, should be prosecuted, and the Press was asked to make a note of this point.

It was suggested that a card should be printed for Members of the Board to hold, to prove their authority, so that they can also warn people about fires and other breaches of Bye Laws on the forest. The Chairman stated that next year the printed cards showing the list of members and appointed Conservator would be endorsed with a notice stating that the member of the Board holding the card was an authorised officer. This was unanimously RESOLVED but for the remainder of this year, if members of the Board cared to forward their list of members card to the Clerk, he would affix on appropriate notice to this effect, and stamp it with the Conservators' official stamp.

The Board discussed the possibility of raising the fines for fire offences on the Forest, and it was unanimously RESOLVED that the maximum penalty in the Bye Laws for breach thereof should be increased to a maximum of £20, and an application should be made to the Home Office to this effect.

7. Finance.

Accounts as at 16th April 1969.

1. Bank Balance.	1969	16 April 1968.
General Account.	312.1.9 (b)	(2333.7.5)
Wages & Petty Cash Account	528.8.11	(246.8.9)
Licence Account (Conservators only)	(a) 7.10.9	(6.8.3)

Notes. (a) Amount banked since 31st March. On that date the existing balance in Licence Account of £738.5.9. was transferred to General.
(b) Large balance by comparison in General Account in April 1968 was due to East Sussex County Council having already paid their half share of annual contribution by then £2200.0.0.)

2. The following amounts have been collected since 1st January, 1969:

Forest Rates	Ack. Rents	Temp Licences	Horse Riding	Local Authorities
6.7.6	745.16.6	30.0.0	76.10.0	(c) 950.0.0
6.2.6	799.9.0	26.5.0	83.10.0	(c) 2953.19.5

Note. (c) 1969 Contributions Uckfield R.D.C. £750.0.0
East Grinstead £200.0.0
£950.0.0

1968 Large balance accounted for by East Sussex County Council. Half contribution already been received.

3. The following is due for payment:

Wadhams Limited - New Pick-Up £423.3.6.

The following will be due on 24th June

Clerk's Salary June Quarter £402.0.0.

The Clerk reported on the Financial Statement.

The Clerk presented two cheques for signature, one for Wadhams in the sum of £423 3s 6d, which it was stated would not be paid until the County Council's contributions had been received, and the other for the Clerk's Salary up to the 24th June, in the sum of £402.0.0.

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Major Grubb and unanimously RESOLVED that the cheques be signed.

8. Any other business.

The Chairman stated that a date must soon be fixed for the next Working Party meeting. The Clerk reported that he was waiting to hear from the Countryside Commission.

There being no other business the meeting was closed.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM COLEMANS HATCH ON WEDNESDAY 16TH JULY AT 2.30. p.m.

Present: Mr. J.H. Drew (in the chair), Col. J.H. Lowe, The Hon: C.A.S. Grimston, Mr. R.F.J. Brooke, Mr. R.P. Often, Brig. L.M. Scott, Mr. F.B. Cornwall, Mrs. U. Ridley, Miss Anne Lumsden, Mr. G.J. Mountain, Major R.E.W. Grubb, Mr. J.R. Greenwood, Mr. G Raikes, Mrs. M.P. Foster, and Captain D.M.F. Armstrong.

1. Apologies for Absence were received from Mr. Ellison, Mr. Gillham and Mr. Clarke.

2. The Minutes of the last Meeting. The Minutes having been circulated were taken as read.

3. Matters Arising.

(a) Police prosecutions. The Clerk reported to the Board on the 15 prosecutions against individuals for having picnic stoves on the forest. The Clerk reported that Mrs. Goodyear, who actually caused a fire on the forest by lighting a picnic stove was fined £2 with £2 2s costs, but the remaining 14. although pleading guilty had been given an absolute discharge because the Magistrates said the Bye Laws were insufficiently clear on the subject of fires. The Clerk then read Bye Law number 4 to the Board:

"No person, unless expressly authorised by the Conservators or their Officer in writing, shall light any fire upon the Common, or set fire to any gorse, furze, broom, brakes, fern, heather, rushes, grass, litter, herbage, underwood, or other growth upon the Common; or place, throw or let fall thereon any substance, article or thing which may cause or be likely to cause damage by fire to anything growing or being upon the Common".

It was reported that all further prosecutions for having picnic stoves on the forest had been withdrawn.

The Clerk reported that there had also been two prosecutions for parking cars more than 15 yards from a highway. Both defendants were fined £2. Again the Magistrates thought the notices were not clear. A specimen of the notice was produced for inspection. It was reported by the Clerk that there were still a number of prosecutions pending for similar offences, and the Board's Agreement to carry on with these prosecutions was asked. The Board unanimously RESOLVED that the prosecutions for parking offences should continue.

A general discussion took place on the whole aspect of notice boards on the forest and the changing of the wording of Bye Laws.

4. The Board unanimously RESOLVED the following wording should substitute the present wording of Bye Law 4.

"No person, unless expressly authorised by the Conservators or their Officer in writing, shall light any fire, stove or any other appliance upon the Common, or set fire to any gorse, furze, broom, brakes, fern, heather, rushes, grass, litter, herbage, underwood or other growth upon the Common; or place, throw or let fall thereon any substance,

article or thing which may cause or be likely to cause damage by fire to anything growing or being upon the Common".

The Clerk was authorised by the Board to write to the Chairman of the Bench asking for more support to be given to the Conservators by the Magistrates in enforcing Bye Laws of Ashdown Forest. The Chairman requested that the discussion of new notice boards should be left until a later date.

(b) Amendment to Bye-Laws.

Bye Law 4 had already been agreed.

Bye Law 5 uses the word Common Keeper, and it was suggested that the word Forest Ranger should be substituted. Agreed.

Bye Law 17 reads

"The Superintendent of each Recreation Ground appointed by the Conservators shall have the management and general control of such ground, and shall have the power to set apart and either fence in or mark out in a conspicuous manner a portion thereof for the purpose of Cricket Matches or any other special purposes of recreation; and no person shall play any games on or drive or ride, or pass over the portion of any Recreation Ground so set apart as aforesaid, or over any other portion of any Recreation Ground, which may be from time to time enclosed by the Conservators or by their authority, without the permission of such Superintendent or some person duly authorised by him in writing. No person shall obstruct or interfere with any person playing or who shall have made preparations for playing, at cricket or any other lawful game upon any Recreation Ground".

It was suggested that Bye Law 17 should become 17(a) and a new Bye Law 17(h) should be inserted, as follows:

"No person shall obstruct or interfere with any person playing golf on the Golf Courses licenced by the Lord of the Manor and Conservators to the Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club or any person who shall have made preparations for playing golf on the said courses".

A general discussion took place on the proposed insertion of this extra Bye Law 17(b), and the proposed new addition was agreed.

Bye Law 19(a) reads as follows:

"No unauthorised person shall at any time use the Common for the purpose of exercising horses or shall upon or over the Common ride any bicycle or ride, drive, draw, take, use or place any wheeled vehicle other than a bicycle".

Proposed alteration:

"No unauthorised person without express written permission shall at any time use the Common for the purpose of exercising horses or shall upon or over the Common ride any bicycle or ride, drive, draw, take, use or place any wheeled vehicle other than a bicycle".

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Mountain and unanimously RESOLVED that Bye Law 19(a) should be so amended.

Bye Law 21, relating to the maximum fine for any offences being 40/-d, should be increased to a maximum of £10. Proposed by Mr. Brooke, seconded by Major Grubb, and unanimously RESOLVED that the maximum fine should be £10.

(c) Third Party liability. The Clerk reported that in the past the Conservators third party insurance cover amounted to £15,000, at a premium of £17 17s 0d a year. It was suggested that the cover should be increased to £25,000 at a premium of £24 0s 0d per year. The Board unanimously agreed.

4. Annual Audit. The Clerk read a letter from the District Auditor, which reported that the Accounts as at the end of December 1968 had been audited and no matters had arisen which should be brought to the Board's attention.

5. *Arrears of Forest Rate - Gaute.*

The Clerk reported that a Mr. Gaute who was in arrear with his Forest Rates in the sum of £12 had now paid. No further proceedings were necessary.

6. The Clerk read a letter from a Col. Forbes, and four other persons, in which a proposal was made that Ashdown Forest should be administered by some National Society. He then read his reply to that letter.

A general discussion took place, and it was unanimously RESOLVED that the Clerk should write a further letter to Col. Forbes, explaining that if the Forest was to be administered by another Body, an Act of Parliament would have to be passed, and it was unlikely that the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, which Col. Forbes suggested should be approached, would have sufficient funds to fully administer the forest.

The Clerk suggested a snail Committee should be set up to draw up a programme of controlled burning of the Forest to help prevent the spread of large fires next year. A general discussion took place on the subject of fires, and it was decided that the burning should take place in the Winter rather than the Spring. The Clerk was instructed to contact Dr. Streeter to ask his advice on the subject. Also the Clerk was instructed to write to the Fire Brigade.

The following people were asked to serve on the Fire Committee

Mr. J.H. Drew.

Mr. R.F.J. Brooke.

Col. J.H. Lowe.

Mr. G.M. Raikes.

7. Working Party. Taken in Committee.

8. Special Purposes Committee. To receive a report from the Chairman about an emergency meeting of the Special Purposes Committee held to consider the employment of a weekend patrolman.

As it had been decided to restrict the duties of Ranger Streeter to that of Tractor driver, this entailed Rangers Arnold and Linton being both on duty every weekend during the summer unless a relief Ranger was employed. In anticipation that the Board would agree to this the Chairman, Clerk and Forest Superintendent had interviewed candidates who replied to an advertisement inserted in the local Press, and a Mr. Cornelius Vickers had been selected. The terms of employment were for each weekend from the 19th July until the end of September, working seven hours on Saturday and seven hours on Sunday at a salary of £5 per weekend. The Clerk reported that if the Board were to give its approval he would be able to make economies within the estimates for this amount. It was proposed by Mr. Greenwood, seconded by Major Grubb and unanimously RESOLVED that Mr. Vickers should be employed as the Weekend Patrolman.

The Chairman reported that the trailer which had been used for the transportation of litter had been sold for £15 and the Friends of Ashdown Forest had agreed to purchase a new one for the Board which is now on order, and will cost £110.

The Chairman also reported on the liming of some of the fire breaks on the forest, for the proposed seeding and improving. The Friends kindly allocated £100 towards the liming of the fire breaks which purchased 78 tons of chalk which has already been put on the forest and covered six miles of fire breaks. The Chairman told the Board that a report would be made in about April next year on the progress of the improving of the fire breaks for the Board's approval.

The Chairman was asked by the Board to thank the Friends once more for their generous gifts and the Clerk reported he had already written a letter to this effect.

9. To receive a letter from a Mr. Sully about no parking notices.

The Clerk reported on a letter received from Mr. Sully about "no parking" notices on the forest. As the notices stand at the moment the wording is "no through road - no parking", and Mr. Sully recommended that they should be altered to read "no parking beyond this point". The Board considered the matter and a general discussion took place. The Superintendent reported that 18 months ago the "no through road - no parking" notices had been approved by the Board and no complaints had been received that these notices were ineffective, except by Mr. Sully. It was proposed by Captain Armstrong, seconded by Col. Lowe and unanimously RESOLVED that the Clerk should write to Mr. Sully and inform him that the notices must remain as they are.

10. Report of the Forest Superintendent.

FIRES.

There had been some 70 fires this year, continuing up to the end of June - Since about 1st June, when the bracken started to come through few fires had spread, and they mostly had been confined to small patches. Most of that recent fires had been adjacent to parking areas, and had in all probability been started accidentally.

The rangers had been employed on: Cutting firebreaks. Cutting the clumps. Cutting the parking areas. Cutting grass at corners and round notice boards and litter baskets. General forest maintenance and litter collection. The two experimental strips of firebreak which will be seeded in the autumn had been limed and disced. The bank opposite to "Ardens" on the Stonehill road had been lowered to improve visibility. A small pit had been dug on the north side of the Stonehill road as an experiment to see if the ground will retain water with a view to the possible construction of a pond at some future date. Several of the major parking areas had been extended in size, and small banks created to prevent cars driving down the firebreaks.

FOREST SUPERINTENDENT,

22. Finance. The Clerk reported on the Financial Statement.

1. Bank Balances.

	<u>1969</u>	<u>16 July 1968</u>
General Account	892.8.7.	1094.0.0
Wages & Petty Cash Account	457.12.8.	555.0.0
Licence Account		
(Conservators only) (a)	NIL	NIL

N.B. (a) The existing balance in Licence account of £112 10s 9d on 30th June has "been transferred to General.

2. The following amounts have been collected since 1st January, 1969.

Forest Ack. Rents Rates	Temp. Horse Licences	Local Riding Authorities.
827.15.0	935.17.6	67.15.0 88.10.0 3060.0.0(b)
693.19.4	828.13.3	53.0.0 91.0.0 3153.19.5
as at July 1968		

(b) Local Authority Contributions:

East Sussex County Council (half payment)	1860.0.0
Uckfield R.D.C. (half payment)	750.0.0
Cuckfield R.D.C.	250.0.0
East Grinstead U.D.C.	<u>200.0.0.</u>
	£3060.0.0

3. The following will be due for payment in September:

Clerk's salary September quarter £402.0.0

There was one cheque for signature, which was the Clerk's salary, for the September quarter. The Board RESOLVED that the cheque should be signed.

12. Any other business. It was suggested by Mr. Brooke that the Minutes of the meetings should not be sent out only one week before the next meeting, but as soon as possible. It was agreed.

THE BOARD WENT INTO COMMITTEE. .

7. Working Party. To receive a report of a meeting at which a Member of the Countryside Commission was present.

The Chairman reported on the meeting which took place on the 7th June of the Working Party when a Mrs. Jones of the Countryside Commission was present, and who gave a very interesting talk about the future of Ash down Forest and whether the Countryside Commission could be of any help. The Chairman asked the Superintendent to read the notes which he made on that meeting.

It had been suggested by the Chairman that the Clerk should go and see the County Council to find out their views on this matter. The Clerk reported that he went to Lewes on Monday the 13th July and discussed this subject with Mr. Atkinson and Mr. Jay. The Clerk reported that no definite conclusions were reached, but it was merely an exchange of views and ideas.

The Clerk made the proposal that the Countryside Commission should be approached direct for a grant instead of making the application through the County Council. The Clerk reported that the Working Party has been set up for one year and it had made quite a lot of progress on general, and separate problems concerning the forest and he suggested that perhaps it was time for the Working Party to make its report. The only subjects which had not yet been discussed were Finance and Administration. The Chairman asked for the Board's agreement to the Clerk approaching the Countryside Commission again regarding a grant, and this was agreed. A general discussion took place, and it was unanimously RESOLVED by the Board that the Chairman and Clerk should go to London to see Mrs. Jones at the Countryside Commission and find out if the Commission would consider giving a grant for certain purposes to the Board direct.

RANGERS.

The Forest Superintendent reported on the proposed change in the duties of the Rangers. At the present moment they work a 44 hour week.

Tractor Driver. The Superintendent informed the board that Ranger Streeter had asked to work a five day week as opposed to the present 51/2 day week. A general discussion took place and it was agreed by the Board that he should continue to be employed on a 5½ day week basis.

2 Rangers. The Superintendent informed the Board that Rangers Arnold and Linton also worked a 51/2 day week and were requesting to work a 5 day week. He informed the Board that Rangers Arnold and Linton worked every other weekend, getting 1½ days off in lieu, and they were requesting 2 days off in lieu. The Superintendent recommended to the Board that the two Rangers should be granted a 5 day week. A general discussion took place and it was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Miss Lumsden, and unanimously RESOLVED that the two Rangers should get a 5 day week, on the condition that their hours worked are not less than 40 a week. The Clerk suggested that new Contracts should be drawn up for the three Rangers.

THE BOARD CAME OUT OF COMMITTEE.

There being no other business the meeting was closed.

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST
HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, COLEMANS HATCH, ON WEDNESDAY 15TH OCTOBER 1969
AT 2.30 p.m.**

Present: Mr. J.H. Drew (in the Chair), Capt. D.M.F. Armstrong, Mr. B.F.J. Brooke, Mr. R. St G. Clarke, Mr. F.B. Cornwall, Mr. E.W. Ellison, Mr W.D. Gillham, The Hon. C.A.S. Grimston, Col. J.H. Lowe, Miss Anne Lumsden, Mr. G.J. Mountain and Brig. L.M. Scott.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Greenwood, Major Grubb, Mr. Odell, Mr. Raikes and Mrs. Ridley.

2. The Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 16th July 1969, having been circulated, were taken as read, apart from the following amendments:

a) Brig. Scott felt that the reference to the Clerk's salary, under para. 3 of Item 11 - Finance, was rather misleading, and it was agreed that the words "and expenses" should be added. Thus this item would now read "Clerk's salary and expenses September Quarter £822. 0.0".

b) Col. Lowe felt that the wording of the proposed new Bye Law 17(b) was rather confusing, and after discussion it was generally agreed that the wording of Bye Law 17(b) should read

"No person shall obstruct or interfere with any person playing golf on the Golf Courses licensed by the Lord of the Manor and Conservators to the Royal Ashdown Forest Club or any person who shall be making preparations for playing golf on the said courses".

c) Col. Lowe then referred to the proposed amendment to Bye Law 19(a), and following discussion it was agreed that the wording should be changed to include "... for the purpose of riding or exercising horses ...". The Bye Law 19(a) would now read as follows:

"No unauthorised person without express written permission shall at any time use the Common for the purpose of riding or exercising horses or shall upon or over the Common ride any bicycle or ride, drive, draw, take, use or place any wheeled vehicle other than a bicycle".

d) Mr Drew referred to the Committee that was to be set up for the controlled burning of the Forest, and reported that he had been unable to contact Dr Streeter and asked for the Board's approval to delete Dr Streeter's name as a member of this Committee, so that the first meeting could be arranged. It was resolved to go ahead without Dr Streeter.

3. Matters Arising

a) Police Prosecutions

The Clerk reported that three young men had been committed for trial to the Assizes on charges of arson, and Mr. Williams reported on two other young men, Young and Unfold, who had been charged with setting fire to the Forest. These five young men were all resident in Forest Bow.

b) Prosecutions under Bye Laws

The Clerk reported that 9 people had been prosecuted for parking more than 15 yards from the highway. All had been convicted and fined £2 each. More prosecutions were to follow.

c) Bye Law Amendments

The Clerk reported that he was still in correspondence with the Home Office regarding the Conservators having the power to charge a fee for horse riding on the Forest. He hoped that agreement would have been reached by the time the next meeting of the Board was held.

4. Report of the Forest Superintendent

The Forest Superintendent made his report, and the Chairman asked him to elaborate.

a) The Superintendent reported that the change in organisation had worked very well. Mr. Vickers, the Patrolman, was an excellent man, and he would like to continue next year, if finances permitted and the Board agreed to his employment.

b) Seeding of the Fire Breaks

The Superintendent reported that the grass was coming through well in most areas, and the Chairman said he felt the position was most encouraging. Mr. Ellison asked if the Superintendent had any idea of the cost of this work, and it was thought that the cost would be in the nature of £60 for three acres for the initial work. Liming would have to be continued, and possibly basic slagging in the future. The cost of the Rangers' labour must also be taken into account.

The Superintendent promised to look into the costs of the whole project and report at the next meeting. About six miles had been limed, but as yet no difference could be seen. The Superintendent felt that the test would come next Autumn. It was hoped that by next Winter the grass on the treated fire breaks would show signs of remaining green. Liming had been done in three places - Millbrook, along the South side of the Stonehill Road, and on the south side of the ridge road along towards Colemans Hatch cricket ground.

c) Power Digging Arm

The Superintendent reported that this machine was not suitable for major works, but in future it may be useful for ditches and various small levelling works.

d) Litter Problem

The Superintendent reported that the dump had proved very satisfactory, and there had been no complaints of it being unsightly.

The Uckfield Council were very helpful in the matter of disposing of large metal objects.

e) Seats

The Superintendent reported that the seats had proved very popular and were much appreciated.

f) Access on to the Fire Breaks

The Superintendent reported that, in an effort to stop cars being driven down the fire breaks, a small chain fence had been executed, with the Chairman's permission. As yet this barrier had not been removed by any member of the public. The Chairman asked for the Board's approval of the erection of similar barriers in all places where cars are to be prevented from entering but where it is essential to have access for the rangers and for the fire service.

This was agreed.

Mr Brooke asked if the Conservators were insured against someone having an accident by their horse stumbling into such a chain barrier. It was felt that present insurances were sufficient.

g) Replying to a question from Capt. Armstrong, the Superintendent reported that there had only been one or two ears abandoned on the Forest this year, and that the local Council had been informed.

5. Finance

Financial Statement on 14th October 1969

BANK BALANCES	1969	14 OCT 1969
General Account	1591.5.5.	2648.7.11.
Wages & Petty Cash A/c	581.3.0	509.1.5.
Licence Account		
(Conservators Only)	10.19.0	NIL

The following amounts have been collected since 1st January 1969:

	<u>Forest</u>	<u>Ack</u>	<u>Temp.</u>	<u>Horse</u>	<u>Local</u> (A)
	<u>Rates</u>	<u>Rents</u>	<u>Licence</u>	<u>Riding</u>	<u>Authority</u>
1969	1054.4.6	950.16.6	84.0.0	91.10.0	5669.0.0
14 Oct 69	1378.18.4	940.18.0	91.5.6	100.10.0	6103.19.5

Note: (A) East Sussex County Council £3719
Uckfield R.D.C. £1500

Cuckfield's R.D.C.	<u>£250</u>
East Grinstead U.D.C.	<u>£200</u>
	<u>£5669</u>

6. Notice Boards

It was felt that the proposed wording of the Notice Boards was not sufficiently definite, and open to challenge. It was proposed that the wording of the Notice Boards, to be sited in all areas where the public are allowed to park, should read as follows:

"Ashdown Forest Parking Area

The public are welcome to picnic and walk on the Forest, but it is an offence to light fires, or picnic stoves at any time, leave any litter, camp or caravan, remove soil, plants or timber, or drive more than 15 yards on to the Forest, other than in authorised parking areas".

This wording was finally agreed, after a lengthy discussion regarding the use or non-use of picnic stoves. It was agreed that the colours of the notice boards should be green and white, which stood out very well but were not offensive.

The proposal regarding picnic stoves was carried by a majority vote, proposed by Mr. Mountain and seconded, by Capt. Armstrong

Notice boards worded "No parking, no through road" were then discussed. The Forest Superintendent pointed out that these were to be erected at certain tracks on the Forest, and were available for sale to property owners for their own use at the entrance to their licensed roadways. The Chairman felt the price should be 10/-, of which about 1s. 3d would be profit, and the size of the notice board would be 12" x 10".

7. Estimates.

A copy of the 1970 Estimates of Income and Expenditure is attached to these Minutes. The Clerk elaborated on the various items contained in the Estimates.

(a) The increase in salaries was necessary, as the National Health Insurance stamp was due to increase in amount. Allowance had also been made for a weekend patrolman for a period of 26 weeks. If his employment is approved. The Chairman asked for the meeting's approval to the employment of a "weekend patrolman, and this was proposed by Col. Lowe and seconded by Mr Cornwell.

(b) The Clerk referred to the item of the Rangers' uniform, and Brig. Scott said he felt provision for the replacement of uniform as should be made in the estimates, but the expenditure only undertaken if necessary.

(c) The Clerk explained that figure for transport included the cost of three mini trucks and one motor-cycle used by Streeter.

(d) Machinery running expenses covered the Land Rover and tractor and other machinery, and the Clerk pointed out that it costs £75 a year to put the Land Rover on the road. He explained that there was no mention of the fire engine, as the cost had been found to be prohibitive. Capt. Armstrong undertook to make enquiries of the Transport Office of the County Surveyor's Department. The Chairman said that as an alternative it might be possible to obtain a small fire tender. It was generally agreed that such a vehicle would be very useful, but that the expenditure for the coming year would be too great.

(e) Litter baskets. The Chairman said he had made quite an extensive tour of the parking areas with the Superintendent, and had found that the little baskets were quite insufficient, and many were damaged and beyond repair. Money must be spent on this item this year, and the £125 estimated would also cover some held mesh type of litter baskets which the Superintendent will make, and which will hold twice the quantity of the normal type.

(f) Notice boards. The Chairman said this expenditure was very necessary, in order that the intention of the Bye Laws was made apparent. 250 small and 200 large notice boards would be needed, some of which would be sold and should bring in an income of the nature of £50 - £60.

(g) Public Amenities. The Superintendent said there was a long schedule of work to be done in the next year. One bridge has to be re-built and access to car parks has to be improved.

(h) Depot buildings. It would be necessary to enlarge the much more substantial fence of the working area at the Depot.

(i) Room hire – travel. The Clerk stated that as there were likely to be more meetings next year, the figure for room hire, etc., had been increased.

(j) Insurance. Brig. Scott asked what the figure of £55 covered, and in reply the Clerk stated that this covered insurance of the Conservator's papers at his office, third party indemnity insurance, liability and fidelity bond; and he confirmed that the insurance of the depot was included.

(k) The Clerk said he felt that unless more maps were obtained, it would not be possible to go much further with discussions with working parties or other authorities regarding the Forest. Included in the figure of £400 was a sum for re-printing of bye-laws of 22 Guineas. £150 would be spent on new maps, some of which could be sold. The Chairman said he felt this would be a profitable income.

The colouring and type of map to be made was discussed, and Capt. Armstrong suggested that the Planning Department should be contacted for their assistance. It was felt that the maps should be of the scale of 6" to 1 mile. The Chairman felt that the Friends of Ashdown Forest could be approached for help in this matter, as suggested by Mr Clarke.

It was agreed in the first place that steps should be taken to obtain working maps for the Conservators' own use, and that the matter of maps for only to the public should be investigated further and estimates obtained.

The Clerk said he would report on this matter at the February meeting.

(1) Referring to the item of Capital Expenditure being Nil for the year 1970, Brig. Scott questioned whether some provision should be made for replacement of a vehicle in 1970. It was agreed that the position was satisfactory regarding vehicles, although a replacement may be needed in 1971: therefore it was agreed that the Nil figure should remain.

(m) The Clerk informed the meeting that the figure for total expenditure was £9,717. Referring to income, he pointed out that after 31st December 1969 registration under the Commons Registration Act ceases. After that date anyone who has not registered would no longer be liable to pay the Forest Rate.

On the Registrations that have been made so far, the rate would work out for next year, on a 6d basis, at £150 instead of £331, and on the additional rate income £550 as opposed to £1124; a drop in revenue of £755.

The increase of expenditure was due to the engagement of a patrolman for 26 weeks, increase of National Health Insurance, expenditure on litter baskets, notice boards, maps, etc. Extra expenditure amounts to £800, but as there would be no capital expenditure the extra involved would only be £295. Normal income was down by a sum of £755. therefore the estimated expenditure has increased by £1050. The contribution from the various Councils was expected to be as follows:

County Council	£5,807
East Grinstead	£200
Cuckfield	£250
Uckfield	£1,500

The adoption of the Estimates was proposed by Col. Lowe and seconded by Brig. Scott.

8. Forest Rate

The Clerk informed the meeting that the present rate was 2s. 6d for the first acre, £1 for each succeeding acre up to 3 acres, and a maximum of £3. Proposed by Mr. Brooke, seconded by Miss Lumsden and unanimously resolved that the rate for 1970 be 2s. 6d for the first acre, £1 for each succeeding acre, with a maximum of £3.

9. Commoners' Meeting 9th December 1969 at 7.30 p.m. at Shelley Arms

Two of the retiring members present at the meeting, Col. H.J. Lowe and Mr. W.D. Gillham, stated that they would be willing to serve again.

10. Any Other Business

Ministry of Defence - Licences for training on. Forest for people not in uniform

After discussion it was generally agreed that this Licence should be granted for a further year in the sum of £50.

Model Aircraft

The Clerk reported that a Model Aircraft Club held two meetings a year near the Stonehill Road, for which they made a payment of £5.5s.0d for each meeting. In the Summer season a number of other people had been flying model aircraft on the Forest, which had been the cause of complaints by residents. After some discussion, it was finally agreed that people would be allowed to fly model aircraft, provided they produced an insurance policy covering the use of the aircraft, a Licence fee of £1 was paid and the Licence carried with them while they were on the Forest, and that the area to be used for flying should be that stipulated by the Conservators. The area below the Wireless Station was thought to be the most likely to cause the least annoyance to residents. Apart from the Club which met twice a year at Stonehill, flying would be banned at that site.

The Chairman reminded the meeting of a further meeting to be held on 23rd October at the Colemans Hatch Parish Room.

The meeting closed at 4.20 p.m.

CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST. 1970 ESTIMATES OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

1968 Actual		1969 Ests			1969 Ests	
				SALARIES & WAGES (including NI)		
1182		1287		Forest Superintendent	1306	
3057	4239	3347	46344	Rangers (Note 1)	3511	4817
				FOREST EXPENSES (NOTE 2)		
2		5		Forest Superintendent - misc.	5	
				Rangers		
				Telephone, uniform and misc.		
210		90		Transport	140	
505		475		Machinery, running	592	
542		600		expenses		
				Hire of machinery	600	
279		250		Radio Equipment	150	
-		220		maintenance		
				Litter baskets	210	
56		40		Notice boards	175	
12		30		Sundries	220	
72		100		Public amenities	100	
248		400		Depot – rates, water, etc.	400	
				Depot - buildings		
52		50			55	
-	1978	-	2260		15	2662

520		520		ADMINISTRATION		
				Clerk's Salary	520	
1088		600		Office expenses:		
		218		½ bookkeeper	600	
		40		¼ secretary	218	
				1/10 office staff	40	
				office hire allowance		
		100		heat and light	100	
		50		auditor	50	
		80		post & telephone	80	
60		100		room hire & travel	100	
16		15		bank charges	15	
2		5		advertising	5	
9		20		insurance	20	
46		35		printing & stationery	35	
				audit stamp duty	150	
152		150		sundries		
35		35			35	
11	1939	30	1998		30	2213
	417		430	CAPITAL		
			75	EXPENDITURE		
				1 Mini P.U. truck		25
				1 power saw		
	22		25	IRRECOVERABLE		
				Ackn – rates		25
335		331		ESTIMATED		
				NORMAL INCOME		
				Rates at 6d per acre		
				Ack rents & temporary	150	
				licences		
1480		1200		Sundry receipts	1200	
69	1884	60	1591		60	1410
	6711		7831	ADDITIONAL RATE		8307
	1121		1124	INCOME		
	5590		6707	EXCESS		7757
				EXPENDITURE		
				OVER INCOME		

Note 1. 168 & 1969 - 3 Rangers.

1970 - 3 Rangers and 1 Weekend Patrolman for 26 wks.

Note 2. Due to a re-arrangement of the estimates, principally the re-grouping of Transport to include both the Forest Superintendent and Rangers' transport, and the transfer of the Laud Rover to be included in Machinery Expenses, the 1968 and 1969 figures do not correspond directly with those previously published. The breakdown of individual items has been shewn, and the sum figures in columns 2 and show the gross estimates and expenditure previously presented.

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST
HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, COLEMANS HATCH, ON THURSDAY 30TH OCTOBER, 1969 AT
2.30 p.m.**

Present: Mr. J.H. Drew (in the Chair), Capt. D.M.F. Armstrong, Mr. R.F.J. Brooke, Mr. R. St.G. Clarke, Mr. F.B. Cornwell, Mr. W.D. Gillham, The Hon. C.A.S. Grimston, Major R.E.W. Grubb, Col. J.H. Lowe, Miss. Anne

Lumsden, Mr. G.J. Mountain, Mr. R.P. Odell, Mr. G.M. Raikes, Brig. L.M. Scott and Lord Buckhurst, who was warmly welcomed by the Chairman.

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks

A meeting this afternoon has been called to discuss the Minutes of the Meetings the Working Party has carried out over the past eighteen months, and I feel that it is likely to be both an interesting and lively meeting - and I am sure you will join me in welcoming the Lord of the Manor, Lord Buckhurst.

The history of the Working Party goes back to May 1968, when our Clerk, Mr. Williams, produced a very good paper, giving the whole of the background of Ashdown Forest, going back in details to the original Act of 1885, together with the various amending Acts which have taken place since then, and much background information.

The terms of reference setting up the Working Party were necessarily vague, but one clear directive which appeared in the Minutes of the May 1968 Board Meeting was as follows: "The Working Party should look at all aspects connected with Ashdown Forest over the next ten to twenty years, it being a place for those members of the public who desire to take their recreation in quiet open countryside".

Of the eight meetings which took place I, unfortunately myself, was only able to attend three of them but, of course, at that time the Chairman was Colonel Lowe, and I feel sure he will want to speak himself on the Working Party, and how he feels about the summary of the minutes of each of these meetings which has been prepared by our Clerk, dated the 16th September.

This summary I do not think was at all an easy document to prepare, as a great many points were discussed at each and all of the meetings, and a number of the recommendations which were actually made by members of the Working Party, which have been recorded in the minutes, I feel should very likely have been designated "suggestions". Firm recommendations usually need further debate, if insufficient time has been given to the implications and consequences.

I believe that one or two of the newly elected members of the Board feel some disquiet concerning the recommendations which I referred to earlier in the summary, and I believe that many of the recommendations are unpalatable. I hope, therefore, that by the end of this meeting we may well have some clear recommendations, which will be the future policy for the Board of Conservators to follow in the next five years.

2. The Clerk's Report on the Working Party

The Clerk's Report on the Working Party was discussed, and it was generally agreed that the Working Party should at their next meeting go through this Report in detail. Major Grubb pointed out that the Countryside Committee of the County Council would not wish to take over the administration of the Forest, but would wish it to be run by a local Committee, such as the Board of Conservators. It was felt that there would be a problem over obtaining a grant, if application was not made through the County Council. It was suggested that the Act of Parliament should be so amended that direct grant from the Countryside Commissions could be obtained.

Col. Lowe referred to the meetings of the Working Party which he had chaired, and said he felt that the conclusions reached were meant to be a guide as to future policy, not as recommendations for approval of the Board.

Capt. Armstrong said he felt that the Report was very fair as an interim report of the Working Party, and would keep the Board informed of what the Working Party had been doing. The final report would have to be more definite. The Chairman confirmed that the Report would have to be discussed by the Working Party in great detail, and a further report submitted to the Board.

Mr. Mountain was concerned at some of the suggestions made in the Report, which would cost a great deal of money and would destroy what the Conservators were trying to preserve. He felt that the Forest should be preserved as it is now, a place of great beauty where the public could come in increasing numbers. The Chairman stated that the suggestions which caused concern were only suggestions made by a Mr. Mountford: a lecturer who had been asked to attend a Working Party meeting. It was not proposed to necessarily carry out these suggestions, but merely give an idea of what could be done in the future.

The Chairman stated that the Countryside Commission would be prepared to help with the collection of litter on the Forest and Wardening Services, both of which were expensive items.

The Clerk said he felt it would be a good thing if he read out to the meeting the present legal powers of the Conservators under the 1885 Act, which he proceeded to do. In addition, the 1937 Act gave the Conservators power to set aside certain land for car parks, etc. At present many things were done by the Conservators, for which they had, on the surface at any rate, no legal power. The Clerk felt that a new Act of Parliament was necessary, to cope with the present day administration of the Forest. Mr. Mountain agreed that a new Act was probably necessary, but he did not wish the character of the Forest to be changed. Major Grubb pointed out that Mr. Mountford, as a most eminent ornithologist, would like to see the return of bird life to the Forest, and said that once a habitat had been established, the birds would return, and the use of such areas of the Forest by the public could be controlled.

Brig. Scott said he felt it was most important to get a sound relationship between the Lord of the Manor, The Conservators, and the Local Authorities, and to have an efficient administration of the Forest.

Col. Lowe then addressed the meeting, stating that in his recollection the forking Party was formed because the Commons Registration Act and the Countryside Act showed that many people were taking an interest in such places as Ashdown Forest. The Chairman agreed with Col. Lowe that the Board must ensure that the Forest is made secure from any encroachment from outside authority. At present the Conservators have only very limited power. The Board's case would be much stronger if stress could be laid on the point that Ashdown Forest is a priceless asset to the nation, rather than that it should be preserved for the Commoners and the Lord of the Manor. Col. Lowe said he would like to see some body such as the National Trust take over ownership. Such an ownership would not be assailable. The National Trust would employ local people on a Board of Management. Col. Lowe felt that the only snag would be finance, and suggested might it might be possible to approach the East Sussex County Council with such a plan, and to receive the normal grant from them.

Mr. Gillham said that, in his opinion, the National Trust would not be interested in Ashdown Forest, as they would not derive any profit from ownership. The Chairman stated that he thought the point of ownership by the National Trust, raised by Col. Lowe, should be discussed at a future meeting.

At this point, the Clerk said he felt it more important to consider the political future of the country. There would obviously be increasing pressure to liberalise and democratise England, so that everyone derived as much as possible from the countryside. He felt the purpose of the Working Party was to design the future of Ashdown Forest for the next 20 years or more, to promote a Bill in Parliament to support it, so that Ashdown Forest would remain as a place of wild and natural beauty - and within that concept things of interest to the public could be introduced, such as a bird conservancy. The Clerk stressed that careful thought must be given to the future: otherwise, there was a threat that the Forest would be taken over, and become a place like Richmond Park. Major Grubb said he felt his Committee would agree with the Clerk's comments.

Capt. Armstrong pointed out that the County Council had not completely discarded the idea of taking over the Forest.

Lord Buckhurst, the Lord of the Manor, then addressed the Meeting. He said he had carefully studied the Working Party Minutes and felt that a first-class job was being done, and that the Clerk's warning regarding the future should be heeded. Lord Buckhurst commented that when the original Act was passed in 1885 only two parties were involved, the Lord of the Manor and the Commoners. There was now a third party - the general public. He felt that the view to take in the future was that the duties of the Lord of the Manor and the Conservators were to act as Trustees of the Forest, bearing in mind the growing interests of the public. For that reason, Lord Buckhurst said he had been very interested and in favour of many of the suggestions made by the Working Party. Those suggestions were working towards the improvement of amenities for the public, which should be strictly of an informal nature.

Referring to the constitutional position, Lord Buckhurst said he would like to see many improvements made, but such improvements would cost money and require grants. There was no doubt that local government would be re-organised, and there would be great aggregations of power in regional authorities. Lord Buckhurst said it was important that he and the Conservators should be in a position to show that they are a properly constituted body, conscious of their duty, not only to the Commoners, but also to the general public. Lord Buckhurst then said that, having made these general observations, it might be helpful if he made dear his position as owner. After very careful thought, he said he had come to the final and absolute conclusion that under no circumstances would he be prepared to divest himself of the ownership of the soil as Lord of the Manor. At the same time, Lord Buckhurst

said he realised that a new Act would result in the need for much give and take between the two parties, and he was willing to have it on record that from his point of view, this would probably mean more give than take.

In conclusion, Lord Buckhurst said he hoped that the Conservators would agree with his attitude, and that they and he would fight for the maintenance of the present situation: where he owned the soil, while the Board of Conservators were the administrators. He felt that the fact that the Forest was being run so well at present made their position invulnerable.

The Chairman thanked the Lord of the Manor for attending the meeting, and for so clearly putting his point of view. It was most helpful and reassuring to have Lord Buckhurst's statement that he would not relinquish ownership of the soil as Lord of the Manor. The Chairman said the flexibility between Lord Buckhurst's ownership and the Conservators' powers would help to produce a satisfactory Act of Parliament for the administration of the Forest, for the benefit of the Lord of the Manor, those who live on the Forest, and the public.

Capt. Armstrong expressed concern over the future of the ownership, should Lord Buckhurst's estate change hands, and asked if there was any way of strengthening the ownership.

Mr. Grimston said, that if the Government wished to nationalise, there was nothing that could be done to stop it.

Replying to a question from the Clerk, Lord Buckhurst confirmed that the land was his own personal property, and not settled land. The Clerk pointed out that if it became settled land, it would be more difficult to dispose of it in the future. Lord Buckhurst said he would give serious thought to this point, and that perhaps the Clerk and Lord Buckhurst's solicitors might like to discuss the matter.

Mr. Mountain asked when a new Act might come into force, and in reply the Chairman said the earliest date would be 1974 or 1975.

It was generally agreed that the Working Party should hold a meeting to discuss the Minutes and points raised by Lord Buckhurst.

Mr. Gillham asked if these matters would be mentioned at the Commoners Meeting, but the Chairman said he felt that it was not yet possible to put forward comprehensive ideas. The Clerk made the point that it was advisable not to get involved with the Press at the present time, which might, arise if mention was made at the Commoners' Meeting. The Chairman said he hoped there would be a good attendance of the Board Members at the Commoners' Meeting.

The Chairman recommended that the Working Party should discuss the Minutes of the Working Party already produced, and then concentrate their efforts on the amendments necessary to bring the Act up to date. Replying to Mr. Mountain, the Clerk confirmed that the new Act would repeal all previous Acts. Mr. Mountain proposed, Col. Lowe seconded, and it was resolved that the Working Party should now produce an outline for the new Act.

In due course, the Clerk said, the local authorities would have to be brought into the discussions. He felt confident that the Ministry of Housing and Local Government would be helpful with negotiations. The local Member of Parliament, Mr. Geoffrey Johnson Smith, would be willing to assist at the appropriate time.

Referring to the future pattern of Management, Lord Buckhurst said legislation should make it possible to bringing anyone who it was thought could assist with Management, such as naturalists, as suggested by Major Grubb. Replying to Mr. Raikes, the Chairman said he felt it quite likely that the Board would have the power to co-opt members.

In conclusion, the Chairman said there was now an opportunity to get down to hard work, and the Working Party would report to the Board as soon as possible - and it was hoped to produce recommendations for the new Act within approximately six months.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Commoners duly convened by notice posted on the principal doors of the churches of the parishes and ecclesiastical districts and post offices to which the

Forest extends. and by notices to the members of the Board more than fourteen days prior to this date and held at the Shelley Arms, Nutley, at 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday 9th December 1969.

Present: Mr. and Mrs. R. Glover, Mr. P. Weeding, Mr. G. Berkley, Mr. H. Stevenson, Mr. R. Clarke, Mr. R. Brooke, Mrs. Williams, Mr. F. Formly, Mr. A. Batchelor, Mr. H. Hoath, Mr. *. Gillham, Mr. P. Cornwell, Mr. and Mrs. Sinden, Miss B. Willard, Mr. J. Ritchie, Col. J. Lowe, Capt. D. Armstrong, Brig. Campbell, Mr. G. Raikes, Mr. J. Hulsken, Mr. R. Cossens, Mr. D. Start, Mr. D. James, Mr. and Mrs. H. Lowcock, Mr. A. Plass, Mr. W. de Cource, Mr. A. Halpern, Mr. F. Kennard, Mr. C. Cooke, Mr. D. Carter, Mr. Hall, Mr. H. Pillinger, Mr. M. Dillaway, Mr. F. Kirby, Mr. T. Townsend, Miss. A. Lumsden, Mrs. O. Witcher, Mr. M.G. Hall, Mr. J.H. Drew.

1. Election of Chairman. Mr. D. Evatt proposed, seconded by Mr. A. Harvey, that Mr. H. Drew be elected Chairman, and this resolution was passed unanimously.

2. The Clerk read the notice convening the Meeting.

3. The Clerk then read the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting, which were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. Election of Conservators: The Clerk reported that Col. J.F. Lowe, Mr. G. M, Raikes, and Mr. W.D. Gillham. had retired from the Board by rotation, but offered themselves for re-election. There were no other nominations, and he therefore declared them re-elected Ground Superintendents were unanimously re-elected as follows:

Nutley	Mr. Gillham.
Forest Row	Col. Lowe
Colemans Hatch	Mr. Drew
Fairwarp	Mr. Harvey
Chelwood Gate	Mr. Brooke
Crowborough	Mr. Ellison

6. Chairman's Report. The Chairman then made his report. He first of all paid generous tributes to those who had worked for the forest during a very active year. He referred to the hard work put in by the rangers, and of the success of the reorganisation whereby two men were employed as rangers, one as a tractor driver, and these were backed up by the engagement of a patrolman at weekends during the summer. He referred to the improvements instigated by the Forest Superintendent, and to the Clerk's 17 years unstinting service to the Forest. He went on to tell of the many hours put in by the Board in the interests of the commoners. This year there had been numerous extra meetings as problems affecting the future of the forest had been studied. He mentioned particularly Col Lowe, who had led these discussions. In October, Lord Buckhurst, the Lord of the Manor had attended a special meeting of the Board.

Lord Buckhurst had expressed his opinions on the future of the forest for the next 20 years or so. He had referred particularly to the third party, namely the general public, who now had to, be considered alongside the Commoner's and himself, as owner of the forest.

The Chairman went on to explain some of the limitations of the present Act of Parliament, and the need to look into the question of its renewal. He told the meeting that the Commoners had nothing to fear over this. The Board would safeguard their Interests, and any proposed new legislation would be submitted to the commoners before being presented to Parliament.

On the question of Commons Registration, he reported that over 500 people had registered their rights. Those who did not do so by the end of this year would cease to be Commoners.

He talked at length on the problem of fires, particularly on the question of deliberate incendiaries. The Fire services had cost the general ratepayer some £3000 this year, when 72 fires were considered to have been deliberately started. Several youths had been convicted for setting fire to the forest this year, and the law of the land would provide an adequate deterrent.

Several minor amendments had been made to the Bye-Laws, and the maximum fine for their infringement had been raised to £10.

The Friends of Ashdown Forest had again been very generous this year, providing no less than £2800, which had enabled the Conservators to purchase a new tractor, trailer, harrows and radio equipment. They had also provided funds for experimental liming of some of the firebreaks, while Lord Buckhurst had donated money for reseeded two sections of firebreak. It was too early to assess, the success of these trials, but it is hoped that a finer form of grass can be cultivated, thus improving the effectiveness of the breaks. The radio equipment had really proved its worth, both as an aid to fire-fighting and as an aid to administration.

7. General Business. The following subjects were raised and discussed: Mr. Sinden asked about the control of building around the forest area and the Clerk explained that this was outside the province of the Conservators. He also asked about fishing rights Mr. Cooke asked questions about the rights of the public in the proposed new Act, and was reassured that their interests would be fully considered. Mr. Kennard queried the voting procedure and the Clerk explained. Mr. Evatt raised the question of ploughing firebreaks, and the Chairman agreed that he else was worried about this, but that the experiments with liming and seeding were being carried out in order to try and produce an alternative policy Mr. Stevenson asked about the method of rate collection Miss. Willard asked for an, extension of the idea of forming ponds, on the forest in the interests of natural history. Mr. Glover, Capt. Armstrong, Mr. Gillham and Mr. Townsend all asked questions about Commons Registration, and the Clerk explained the procedure in dealing with objections.

8. It was decided to hold the next meeting at the Village Hall, Forest Row on Tuesday 15th December at 7.30 p.m.

9. Col. Lowe proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman for the immense amount of work he had put in on behalf of the Commoners during the year.

There being no other business the meeting was concluded.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, COLEMANS HATCH, ON WEDNESDAY 10th DECEMBER 1969 AT 2.30 p.m.

Present: Mr. J.H. Drew (in the Chair), Capt. D.M.F. Armstrong, Mr. R.P.J. Brooke, Mr. R. St. G. Clarke, Mr. F.E. Cornwell, Mr. W.D. Gillham, The Hon. C.A.S. Grimston, Major R.E.W. Grubb, Col. J.H. Lowe, Miss Anne Lumsden, Mr. G.J. Mountain, Mr. E.W. Ellison, and Brig. L.M. Scott.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. Foster, Mrs. Greenwood, Mr. Odell, Mr. Raikes and Mrs. Ridley.

2. The Minutes of the Meeting, held on the 15th October 1969.

The Minutes of the meeting having been circulated, were taken as read, after one point had been raised:

Mr. Ellison asked the Forest Superintendent if he had looked into the costs of the seeding of the fire breaks, but due to pressure of work the Superintendent had been unable to estimate this.

Major Grubb enquired how many people had so far registered their rights and was informed that approximately 560 out of 1,100 had registered.

3. The Minutes of the Meeting held on the 30th October 1969.

The Minutes of the Meeting having been circulated, were taken as read.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 15th October.

(a) The Bye Laws

The Clerk reported that agreement with the Home Office had been reached. All that remained was for an informal submission to be made and final approval might be obtained before the next Board Meeting.

(b) Police Prosecutions

The Clerk reported that three young man charged with arson were due to come before the Assizes Court either Thursday or Friday next. There were three more prosecutions by the Conservators due for hearing on the 29th December at East Grinstead Magistrates Court.

(c) Notice Boards

The Clerk said that this matter had been raised in case the Board had any comments on the re-wording "but it is an offence to light fires or picnic stoves at any time". He pointed out that during the Summer months there could be on average fifty prosecutions per week. This would mean that the Rangers would be kept extremely busy; the Court would be reluctant to allot so much time to the hearing of the prosecutions; it would take the County Court Clerk three days to complete all the cases and costs might not be recovered from the Defendants. In the light of these facts the Clerk asked the Board if they would like to re-consider the wording of the proposed Notice Boards.

After a lengthy discussion it was agreed that the Board would rescind minute 6 and re-word it at the next meeting. This was proposed by Mr. Brooke, seconded by Mr. Cornwell and carried by a majority vote. It was agreed that the use of picnic stoves would be permitted in the parking areas between the 1st June and the 1st January. Mr. Mountain proposed that the Notice, Boards should read "It is an offence to use a picnic stove on any part of Ashdown Forest except in an authorised parking area and then only between the 1st June and the 1st January". This proposal was carried by a majority vote.

(d) Estimates

The Clerk reported on the increase in the agricultural wages scale which concerned the Forest Rangers. There were two possible percentage increases of 6.05% or 8.53% in view of the fact that the increase of 15/- per week was accompanied by a proposed 43 hour week and the Clerk said he felt that the Rangers should be entitled to the latter increase. It was proposed by Mr. Drew and seconded by Mr. Clarke and agreed that the Rangers were entitled to the £503 increase. Notice of a possible increase had been given to the Local Authorities when the estimates had been sent to them. The increase would take effect on the 3rd February 1970.

(e) Meeting of the Sub Committee - Date

It was proposed by Mr. Drew that the sub-Committee set up to consider controlled burning should meet on Friday the 9th January at 2.15 p.m. at the Depot. This was agreed.

5. Report of the Forest Superintendent

The Chairman reported that the residents of the Forest said they would be prepared to foot the bill for making the banks more rounded and obvious, and for the filling of ditches. The Chairman said that he had inspected the seven places which had been blocked up and that since there were seventy six car parks by way of access to the Forest, it could not be said that all entrances had been blocked. After a discussion Mr. Drew told the Board that no further ditches could be dug this year, that the present ditches where possible would be replaced by banks and if anyone felt that any particular places should be unblocked he would be pleased to listen to their views.

Mr. Brooke proposed that no earthworks should be carried out without the Board's approval.

6. Financial Statement

The Clerk reported that since no further payments had been received from Reigate Caterers he had issued a Warrant of Execution, but the Bailiff had not as yet been successful.

7. Chairman's Report on the Meeting of the Commoners

The Chairman reported that it had been a cold, unfriendly and not very good meeting. Many subjects had been discussed but there were no comments from the Commoners on the question of possible amendment to the Acts of Parliament. Col. Lowe, Mr. Raikes and Mr. Gillham were re-elected unopposed and likewise the Superintendents of the recreation grounds.

8(a). Letter from the Jorrock's Hunt Club

The Chairman referred to the letter received from the Hunt Club suggesting that the Club may organise a Junior Ride on Ashdown Forest in August next year, and a twenty mile ride was envisaged. It was agreed to reply to the Club that the Conservators were willing to agree to the ride for a fee of £5 and although they would not object, a ride during the week and not the weekend would be preferable.

The Clerk then reported that a letter had been received from the Rev. F.S. Elgar enquiring about the possibility of placing one or two plaques on the Forest. The plaques would be dark brown in colour to blend with the surroundings and the Conservators would not have to be responsible for any cost or maintenance. The Board were asked by the

Chairman to voice their approval or disapproval Major Grubb proposed that the Board should approve in principle the placing of the plaques on the Forest provided they could be erected on stone and that the Rev. Elgar would be asked for further details, including the proposed wording of the texts. Mr. Mountain seconded this and it was carried by the majority vote.

(b) Letter from the Conservation Corps.

The Clerk reported that a letter had been received from the Corps, asking the Board to give consideration to the possibility of participation by the Corps, in connection with the Forest in 1970. The Corps, consisted of young people who undertook such things as hedge laying fire break construction, woodlands, surveying etc. Capt. Armstrong asked if they might be used for surveying and mapping purposes and it was agreed that the Clerk should reply to the effect that the Conservators would be glad to use their services as and when the need arises, and should enquire as to the possibility of their constructing a sign indicating landmarks.

9. Dates for Meetings in 1970

The suggested dates, namely Wednesday the 18th February, Wednesday the 15th April, and Wednesday the 22nd July, Wednesday the 21st October, and Wednesday the 16th December, were approved. The Chairman said that in addition to these dates there would possibly be a specific meeting in June. It was agreed that a meeting of the Working Party would be held on Thursday the 15th January at 2.30 p.m. at 1 & 2 Judges Terrace, East Grinstead.

10. Any Other Business

Capt. Armstrong raised the question of the notices of objection sent to people who claim Forest rights, but who were not so entitled. He believed that full explanations should be given to these people and before a formal objection is sent to the claimant the matter should come before the Board.

CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST

ACCOUNTS as at 10th December 1969

1. Bank Balances	1969	1968
General Account	£930.17.7	£1.651.3.2.
Wages & Petty Cash Accounts	£580.6.7	£737.11. 0
Licence Account		
(Conservators Income only)	NIL	0.6.0.

2. The following amounts have been collected since 1st January 1969:

Forest Ack. Rates	Temp. Rents	Horse Licences	Local Riding Auth. Contribution
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1373.19.6.	859.16.6.	95.0 0.	94.10.0.	5669.0.0.
1445.13.4.	941.4.0.	93.15.6.	108.10.0	6103.19.5.

as at Dec. 1968

	<u>Forest Rates</u>	<u>Ack. Rents</u>
(a)		
Current	1358.9.0.	659.16.6.
Arrears	13.0.6.	-
Advance	<u>2.10.0.</u>	-
	1373.19.6.	

3. The following amount is due for payment:

Clerks Salary and Expenses - £402
N.B. Reigate Caterers - Clerk to Report.

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST
HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, COLEMANS HATCH, ON WEDNESDAY 18TH FEBRUARY 1970
AT 2.30 PM**

Present: Mr. G.J. Mountain (in the Chair), Capt. D.M.F. Armstrong, Mr. R.F.J. Brooke, Mr. J.F. Bishop, Mr. R. St. G. Clarke, Mr. F.B. Cornwall, Mr. E.W. Ellison, Mr. W. Gillham, Mr. J.R. Greenwood, The Hon. G.A.S. Grimston, Col. J.H. Lowe, Miss A. Lumsden, Mr. G.M. Raikes, Mrs. U.M. Ridley, and Brig. L.M. Scott.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Major R.E.W. Grubb, Mr. R.P. Odell and Mr. J.H. Drew.

2a. Appointment of Chairman

Mr. Drew had indicated that he wished to retire, and the Clerk called for nominations. Mrs. Ridley proposed Col. Lowe and this was seconded by Capt. Armstrong. Mr. Brooke proposed Mr. G.J. Mountain and Mr. Raikes seconded this. Mr. Mountain suggested he should withdraw but a vote was taken and Mr. Mountain was duly elected Chairman.

2b. Appointment of Vice Chairman

Mr. Mountain proposed Mr. Raikes and this was seconded by Mr. Greenwood. Capt. Armstrong proposed Col. Lowe and this was seconded by Mr. Cornwall. A vote was taken and Col. Lowe was elected as Vice Chairman.

2c. Appointment of Deputy Chairman

Mr. Drew was proposed by Brig. Scott and seconded by Capt. Armstrong, and was declared duly elected.

Special Purposes Committee consisted of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Mr. Brooke, Mr. Gillham and Brig. Scott. The Chairman asked if they were to be re-elected. It was proposed that they should be re-elected by Mr. Bishop and seconded by Mrs. Ridley.

3. The Minutes of the last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 1969, having been circulated, were taken as read.

4. Matters Arising

(a) Fire Breaks

It was reported that the cost of seeding fire breaks was £85.15.3 and this was for about four acres of fire break and a distance slightly above one mile. The cost was borne by Lord Buckhurst. Mr. Brooke pointed out that deer had been seen feeding on the fire breaks.

(b) Police Prosecutions

The Clerk read a letter from the police about the conviction of three youths on charges of arson.

(c) Bye-laws

The Clerk reported and that they had been informally approved by the Secretary of State and were now on deposit and that any objections must be sent to the Home Office.

(d) Notice Boards

The Clerk reported that the wording of the notice boards which had been agreed at the last meeting conflicted with the bye-laws, approval for which was now being sought from the Home Secretary and he therefore, had altered them slightly with the approval of members of the Working Party.

The Clerk read out the new form of notice. Proposed by Mr. Brooke, seconded by Mr. Cornwall that the Clerk's version of the notice be accepted.

(e) Ice Cream Licences

The Clerk reported that the arrears of acknowledgement rent from Reigate Caterers in the sum of £219 was still due. Legal section had been taken and the court bailiff had tried to levy execution but there were no goods upon which to levy. The Clerk recommended, with regret, that this amount should be written off. Resolved that the sum of £219 due from Reigate Caterers be written off.

(f) Religious Plaques

The Clerk produced a form of plaque which had been handed to him by that Reverend Elgar together with samples of wording some of which were read out to the Board, After a very full discussion It was decided not to proceed with this project and, on being reminded by the Clerk, that in view of a previous resolution of the Board approving the same it would be necessary for the matter to be placed on the Agenda of the next meeting for a rescission of the previous resolution and it was decided that this matter be placed on thy Agenda of the next meeting.

(g) Report of Controlled Burning Committee

Cdr. Angell reported that the only useful exercise was the burning of heather with a view to improving the look of certain areas of forest by removing the old heather out, there where not many areas with old heather. One area was chosen for the experiment and approximately one acres was to be burned. The area was behind the reservoir at Wych Cross. The Chairman wanted to know how many people more going to be present and Cdr. Angell said that the Fire Brigade would be informed and that they would send up a land rove with water to keep a check but there would be very little danger.

5. Picnic Stoves

On the proposal. by the Chairman and on being seconded by Miss Lumsden it was resolved that the sensible use of picnic stoves be permitted in authorised parking areas between 1st June and 1st January and that the previous resolution as to tills be rescinded.

6. Annual Accounts

The Clerk went through the income and expenditure account and balance sheet item by item. Several matters were discussed including the investment policy of the Board, the Clerk's administration expenses and various other matters. It was resolved that the accounts and balance sheet be adopted. It was further resolved that the sum of £159.17.5 which was a capital sum received as a result of the death of the late Ranger Day's widow, should be taken out of the General Account and invested as capital.

7a. Finance

Financial Statement as at 18th February 1970

1. <u>Bank Balances</u>	1970	1969
General Account	216.18.6	91.11.6.
	O/drawn	
Licence Account		
Conservators' income only	19.11.5	314.10.3.
Wages and Petty Cash Account	215.7.5	424.16.11

2. The following amounts have been collected since 1st January 1970.

Forest Rates	£8.8.0
Ack. Rents	£338.4.3
Horse Riding	£72.0 0
Temp. Licences	£4.0.0

3. The following accounts are due for payment:-

Wages and Petty Cash account - £2.10.0.
(refund of Temp. Licence to A.A. event cancelled, cheque paid originally into General Account)

Clerk's Salary - March Quarter - £402.0.0.

4. Resolution to increase the Board's borrowing powers £750 to £2500.

It was resolved that cheques for £402 for the Clerk's salary expenses and £2.10.0. to refund the A.A. for acknowledgement rents be signed. It was also resolved that the Clerk arrange further overdraft facilities with Barclays Bank Ltd. to a figure not exceeding £2500.

7b. Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club

The Clerk reported that the acknowledgement rent paid by the Golf Club was due for review and after a long discussion it was decided that Messrs. St. John Smith and Son of Uckfield should be appointed to represent the Conservators subject, to the Clerk being satisfied as to their fee beforehand.

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12. Windyridge – Access across Forest

A short discussion took place as to whether the Forest Superintendent, who was purchasing part of the Windridge estate, should be granted a licence, to make up a roadway across the Forest. It was decided that before any final decision was taken the offer of Capt. Armstrong to see the owner of Windyridge to iron out all the difficulties should be accepted.

The Board came out of Committee.

13. It was resolved that Barclays Bank Limited he and is hereby directed to honour the signature of the Chairman on cheques drawn on the General Account.

14. There being no other business the meeting was concluded.

CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST ASSETS (VEHICLES. MACHINES ETC.) AT 31ST DECEMBER 1969

Date of Acquisition	Purchase Price
F. 19651 Mil Master Loader	106.10.0.
F. 19651 Harford Trailer	149.10.0.
F. 19651 Set Ransomes Disc Harrows	113.15.0.
1966 2 Extinguishers	31.0.0.
Sundry Tools	60.0.0.
F. 19661 BSA Bantam Motor Cycle FUF 383D	125.0.0.
F. 19661 Allen Rotary Grasscutter	130.0.0.
F. 19661 Gloster Forage Harvester	225.0.0.
1967 1 Land Rover	805.8.9.
F. 19671 Austin Pick-Up Truck	409.9.0.
F. 19671 Plough (2nd Hand)	14.0.0.
1968 1 Austin Pick-Up Truck	434.18.6.
F. 19621 Garage	85.0.0.
F. 19651 Implement Shed	298.15.0.
F. 19691 Ford 4000 Tractor with Safety Cab	1,339.10.0.
F. 19691 Ferguson Swipe	121.0.0.
F. 19691 Set Chain Harrows	74.11.6.
F. 19691 Trailer	125.0.0.
1969 1 Mini Pick-Up Truck SNJ 77BG	423.0.0.
1969 1 Chain Saw	70.0.0.
F. 1969 Radio Equipment	910.0.0.

Note:

F. Gift of Friends of Ashdown Forest

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, COLEMANS MATCH, ON WEDNESDAY 15TH APRIL 1970 AT 3.30 P.M.

Present: Mr. G.J. Mountain (in the Chair), Mr. F.B. Cornwell, Mr. W.D. Gillham, Mr. G.M. Raikes, Ms. R.F.J. Brooke, Mr. J. Drew, Mr. R. St.G. Clarke, Major R.B.W. Grubb, Mrs. U.M. Ridley, Brig. L.M. Scott, Mr. B.W. Ellison, Mr. R.P. Odell, Col. J.H. Lowe

1. Apologies for absence were received Capt. Armstrong, Mr. Greenwood and the Hon. C.A.S. Grimston.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18th February 1970 has been circulated, were taken as read.

3. Matters Arising

(a) Ice Cream Licences

The Clerk reported that a licence had been granted to P.W.W. Ice Cream Supplies Ltd. for £305.

(b) Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club

Mr. Wenham of St. John Smith and Son Of Uckfield had been appointed to look into the review of the acknowledgement rent and preliminary meetings with the Secretary of the Golf Club had taken place.

(c) Model Aeroplane Licences

The Chairman pointed out that firstly these are limited to a clearly defined area, secondly all flyers should be licenced and to get a licence they must have insurance cover and silencers, and thirdly there should be only twelve licences issued. After lengthy discussion it was proposed by Mr. Raikes and seconded by Mr. Gillham that eight more licences, bringing total up to twenty, be issued but these should only be issued to people resident in the Cuckfield, Uckfield and East Grinstead rateable areas. The motion was carried.

4. Religious Plaques

The Clerk reported on further conversations with the Reverend Elgar. After lengthy discussion it was resolved that the Resolution of the Board Minute 6(a) in the Minutes of the meeting held on the 10th of December 1969 be rescinded and that the religious plaques referred to therein be not permitted on Ashdown Forest. This was proposed by Mrs. Ridley and seconded by Brig. Scott.

5. Annual Audit

The Clerk reported that the District Auditor had commenced his audit and would return next week to complete it. The Clerk also mentioned that at the next July meeting as the Forest Rate for 1971 would have to conform to Decimalisation it would need to be discussed so that the Clerk could prepare estimates, for the October meeting.

6. Finance

Financial Statement as at 15th April 1970

1. <u>Bank Balances</u>	1970	1969
General Account	£794.12.11.(0/drawn)	£312.1.9.
Wages and Petty Cash Account	£143.8.9.	£528.8.11.
Licence Account (Conservators only)	£386.4.6.	£7.10.9.

2. The following amounts have been collected since 1st January 1970

	1970	1969
Forest Rates	0.7.6.	6.7.6.
Acknowledgement Rents	710.7.4.	745.10.0.
Temporary Licence	19.5.0.	30.0.0.
Horse Riding	95.0.0.	76.10.0
Local Authorities	950.0.0.	180.0.0

3. The following amount is due for payment

Clerk's salary and expenses - £402.

A resolution proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Mr. Raikes that the cheque in the sum of £402.0.0. for the Clerk's salary and expenses be signed was passed.

7. Investments

On the advice of J. Henry Schroder-Wagg & Co, Ltd. £409 4% Consolidated loan had been sold to realise £189.2.2. and £236 Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd. ordinary stock had been sold to realise £624.13.4. The following purchases had been effected:

135 Shell Transport ordinary shares costing £471.10.11.

£656 British Electricity 3% Guaranteed Stock 1974/77 costing £499.17.9,

The Clerk reported that following a conversation with the District Auditor there would be no objection provided all four local authorities agreed to budgeting for a sufficient surplus of revenue in the financial year to carry the Board through the beginning of the following year, thus avoiding bank overdrafts and he proposed to contact the four Treasurers during the course of the year and before the estimates were prepared,

8. Superintendent's Report

The Superintendent's Report was considered and a discussion took place about the treatment of fire breaks with chemicals in order to improve the grass. In view of the fact that the treatment would be expensive and would constitute a danger to livestock it was decided that no further action should be taken. It was decided, however, to constitute a small ad hoc Committee to consider in the future the improvement of grazing and similar matters and it was decided that Mr. Clarke, Mr. Cornwell, Mr. Raikes and Major Grubb should form the Committee and the Forest Superintendent would act as their Clerk.

The Chairman told the Board it would be necessary to construct a few ditches around car parks for drainage purposes and this was agreed.

9. Temporary Licences

The Clerk reported that there were a few demands from persons resident within the confines of Ashdown Forest but not near a main road to place boards on the Forest advertising the sale of farm produce, e.g. eggs for sale. After a discussion it was resolved that licences be granted at 10/- per annum, the size and lettering of the board to be approved by the Clerk.

10. No Parking Notices

It was proposed by Major Grubb and seconded by Mrs. Ridgley that by 31st December 1971 no further notices bearing the words 'No Parking' or 'Private Road' be authorised but that residents of properties adjoining the Forest be permitted to purchase from the Conservators the authorised notice which reads 'No Parking No Through Road' at the price of 10/-.

11. Forest Row Festival 1970

The Clerk read a letter from Dr. Hall, who is organising the Forest Row Festival, who asked whether the Conservators would be prepared to mount a small exhibit. After a discussion it was decided that the Conservators could not, for financial and other reasons, take part in the Festival.

The Board then went into Committee.

Mr. Ellison informed the Board that the Uckfield Rural District Council were looking for a suitable area of about 40 to 50 acres for use as a rubbish dump and asked whether any area of the Forest would be permitted for this purpose. Various members of the Board expressed opinions and it was decided no further action would be taken. The Board then went out of Committee and the meeting was concluded.

Present: Mr. G.J. Mountain (in the Chair), Col. J.H. Lowe, Mr. R.P.J. Brooke, Miss A. Lumsden, Mr. G.M. Raikes, Mr. C.W. Shelford, Mr. J.R. Greenwood, Mrs. U.M. Ridley, Mr. A.W.C. Dascombe, Mr. W.D. Gillham, Mr. J.H. Drew, Mr. C.A.S. Grimston, Lady B. Brind, Capt. D.M.P. Armstrong.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Clarke, Mr. Ellison and Mr. Cornwall.

2. The Chairman welcomed Mr. C.W. Shelford, Lady E. Brind and Mr. A.W.C. Dascombe as new members of the Board.

3. Minutes of the last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15th April 1970 having been circulated were taken as read.

4. Matters Arising

(a) Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club

It was resolved that this matter be taken in Committee.

(b) Model Aeroplane Licences

The Clerk reported that in accordance with instructions received, at the last Board meeting he had granted a further eight licences bringing the total up to twenty.

(c) Annual Audit

The Clerk read a letter dated 6th May 1970 from the District Auditor addressed to the Board stating that the audit of the accounts and of the Board's officers for the year ended 31st December 1969 had been completed and no matters arose at the audit to which it was necessary to direct the Board's attention.

(d) The Clerk reported on a proposal to budget for a surplus of revenue at the end of the financial year to avoid the necessity of Bank borrowing at the commencement of the following year. The Treasurer of the Uckfield Rural District Council had suggested it might be possible for his Council and the East Sussex County Council to pay two thirds of their estimated contribution in the month of February and this would obviate the necessity for budgeting for a surplus or Bank borrowing. It was agreed that further investigations should take place.

5. The Forest Rate for 1971

A general discussion took place concerning the paper the Clerk had circulated prior to the meeting. The Chairman pointed out that it was uneconomical at the present time to collect a rate of 2/6 and the probable cost of collection was in the region of 10/- hence the reason why the minimum rate had been proposed as 50 new pence.

After a further discussion it was proposed by Captain Armstrong and seconded by Mrs. Ridley that under two acres the rate should be £1 (100 new pence), between two acres and fifteen acres £3 (300 new pence) and over fifteen acres £6 (600 new pence). An amendment proposed by the Chairman from the chair and seconded by Mr. Raikes was that the rate should be fixed as set out in the paper circulated by the Clerk.

Captain Armstrong's proposal was put to the vote and lost by ten votes to three. The amendment was then put to the vote and was carried by nine votes to three and the rate for 1971 was, therefore, as follows.

	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Return</u>
Under 2 acres	50 new pence	313	156.5
2 - 15 acres	£3	173	519
15 - 100 acres	£5	67	335
100 - 200 acres	£6	10	60
200 - 300 acres	£7	3	21
300 - 400 acres	£8	3	24
400 - 500 acres	£9	-	-
500 - 600 acres	£10	-	<u>10</u>
			1125.5

Captain Armstrong reported that, in his experience, there were many people who did not possess common rights and who had, therefore, not registered but who would like to be commoners and he thought there could be some method by which they could become commoners of Ashdown Forest without having to prove that they had

enjoyed common rights in the past. It was decided that the Clerk should investigate this matter and report at the next meeting.

Mr. Drew raised the question of one person owning several parcels of land separated from each other and paying a rate on each separate assessment. It was decided that the Clerk should place this matter on the agenda for the next meeting and should produce figures showing the effect of the aggregation of separate assessments.

6. Forest Superintendent's Report

The Forest Superintendent reported the following:

The Rangers have been employed on the following items in addition to routine patrolling and maintenance on the Forest.

1. Cutting (a) Firebreaks
 (b) Clumps
 (c) Car parking areas
2. Draining certain parking areas by both ditching and by piping.
3. Levelling car parking areas.
4. Banking round certain car park areas to restrict access on to the firebreaks.
5. Liming the experimental stretches of re-seeded firebreaks,

Fires

Largely due to the wet spring the incidence of fires has been very much lower this year than for a long time past. There have been twenty-three fires, the largest of which was ten acres, the majority being less than one acre. The area of forest burnt is estimated at twenty-eight acres.

The few fires that have occurred since the hot dry spell started have shown that while it is always possible to have fires after the bracken had started growing, and such fires could still be dangerous, the risk at this time of year is diminished.

It would be of very great assistance in fighting fires if the Land Rover could be equipped with a water tank and pump. The East Sussex Fire Brigade have one such Land Rover and are now being supplied with a second. These vehicles have proved time and again to be the only method of tackling certain fires when beating is impracticable and where the fire tender cannot reach.

I have investigated the equipment required and recommend that the Board purchase similar fittings to those installed in all Forestry Commission Land Rovers in the south of England. I have already obtained, free of cost to the Board, a fibre glass sixty gallon water tank, specially constructed to be carried in a Land Rover, and a P.T.O. fitting for a Land Rover engine. The cost of a Beresford pump would be approximately £25 and hoses etc. some £10 to £15. The fitting could be undertaken by the rangers, and for about £40 the Land Rover could be an efficient fire fighting vehicle. The Divisional Fire Officer has strongly recommended that our Land Rover, which is almost invariably the first on the scene of fires, should be so equipped in order to assist the local fire brigades. The equipment recommended is such that it does not in any way preclude the Land Rover from its normal use on the Forest.

Personnel

Mr. D. Kemp has been engaged as Tractor Driver/General Workman in place of Mr. Streeter who resigned. Mr. R.H. Halston has been engaged as part-time patrolman for the summer months.

7. Finance

Financial Statement as at 15th July 1970

1. Bank Balances

1970

1969

General Account	o/drawn	280.6.5.	892.8.7.
Wages and Petty Cash Account		268.11.0.	457.12.8.
Licence Account (Conservators only)		Nil	Nil

2. The following amounts have been collected since 1st January 1970.

Forest Ack. <u>Rates</u>	Temp <u>Rents</u>	<u>Licences</u>	<u>Horse Riding</u>	Local <u>Authorities</u>
£432.4.0	£727.12.6.	£57.5.0	£111.10.0	£3200.0.0.

As at July 1969

£927.15.0.	£935.17.6.	£67.15.0	£3.10.0	£3060.0.0
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Details of L.A. Contributions

East Sussex County Council	£2000.0.0.
Uckfield R.D.C.,	£750.0.0.
Cuckfield R.D.C.	£250.0.0.
East Grinstead U.D.C.	<u>£200.0.0.</u>
	£3200.0.0.

3. The following will by will be due for payment in September.
Clerk's salary and expense September quarter £402.0.0.

The Clerk reported that when the change of investments took place as previously authorised there was a shortfall in cash of £.157.13.2. or this sum, which represented the return of premium from the pension paid to the late Ranger Day's widow had never previously Loan invested as capital and he felt that he should pay Messrs. J. Henry Schroder-Wagg and Co.'s Account which he aid from Petty Cash and it was, therefore, necessary for this sum to be transferred from the General Account to Wages and Petty Cash Account. It was resolved that the transfer take effect. It was further resolved that the Chairman and Vice Chairman's action in signing cheques on the General Account for the following be confirmed.

Pye Telecommunications	93.10.0.
P.W. Tyler Ltd.	57. 3.8.
E.G. Beale & Co.	178.2.0.
PAYE & Grad Insurance	134.10.8.
	471.11.4.

It was further resolved that crying to the increase in wages and other expenses the monthly transfer from General Account to Wages and Petty Cash Account be increased from £600 to £675, and it was also resolved that the cheque for the Clerk's salary and office expenses in the sum of £402 for the quarter ending September be signed.

8. The Forest Superintendent left the meeting and the Clerk reported receipt of a letter from him pointing out that he was purchasing a property adjacent to the Ridge Road, Coleman's Hatch and he asked if the Board would pay for the installation of a telephone service and pay his telephone rental charges and calls made by him in connection with his duties. The Chairman pointed out that the Forest Superintendent must be on the telephone as ha was frequently telephoned at night during the fire season and in the evenings on forest matters. It was resolved that, the connection charge and rental and telephone calls in connection with Ashdown Forest matters should in future be paid by the Board.

The Board that went into Committee.

9. The Acknowledgement Rent from the Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club

The Chairmen reported at some length on the negotiations which had taken place between the values appointed by the Board and The Golf Club and that no satisfactory solution had yet been reached. Mr. Grimston reported that he had experience of valuing golf courses and fixing rents and further that the Lord of the Manor had not yet decided whether his share of the acknowledgement rent should be increased. After a further discussion it was

agreed that the rent paid by the Golf Course is the **** of the Major and the Conservators should be treated as one matter and not two separate matters in future and that no further action should be taken until consultations between the Lord at the Manor and the Conservators had taken place. The Lord *** Golf Club ought not to be the same until after the next Board meeting in October. It was suggested that the rent should be decided by ***** Party after consultation with the Lord of the Manor. This was agreed.

The Board then not out of Condition.

9. Any Other Business

(a) The Chairman reported that through the generosity of the Friends he had been able to order about 400 tons of railway ballast which could be used as stock for the future.

(b) Gatwick Airport Extension

The Chairman reminded members of the proposed extension to Gatwick Airport and the likelihood of an increase in population in the area of 100,000 persons. He understood that the East Sussex County Council and the Surrey County Council were protesting to the authorities about the extension and he considered that the Board should join with the local authorities in adding their protests. It was resolved that the Clerk write to the Clerk to the last Sussex County Council offering to join in any representations which might be made to the appropriate authorities.

(c) Mrs. Ridley asked whether it was necessary to send the Minutes out separately after s meeting and not with the agenda before the next meeting. After a discussion it was resolved that the present practice of sending the Minutes separately should be continued.

(d) Mr. Drew reported that the bowling green at Coleman's Hatch was affected by flooding from a pond nearby and requested permission for the pond to be drained. It was decided that Mr. Drew and Mr. Raikes should consult together to discover what was best for the bowling green and the surrounding forest.

(c) The Forest Superintendent reported on the direction plaque which it was proposed at a previous meeting of the Board should be made by the Conservation Corps. A drawing was produced together with estimates for making the plaque in various materials. It was decided that investigations should continue to see if a different material than bronze could be obtained as it was feared a bronze plaque might be stolen by pilferers.

There being no other business the meeting was concluded.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OP CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM. COLEMANS HATCH, ON WEDNESDAY 21st OCTOBER 1970 AT 2.30 P.M.

Present: Mr. G.J. Mountain (in the Chair), Col. J.H. Lowe, Mr. R.F.J. Brooke, Miss A. Lumsden, Mr. G.M. Raikes, Mr. C.W. Shelford Mr. J.R. Greenwood, Mr. W.D. Gillham, Mr. R. St.G. Clarke, Mr. E.W. Ellison, Mr. F.B. Cornwell, Mr. J.M. Drew, Lady E. Brind, Capt. D.M.F. Armstrong

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. U.M. Ridley, Mr. A.W.C. Dascombe and The Hon. C.A.S. Grimston.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting, having been circulated, were approved subject to the words in para. 5 "after further discussion" being deleted.

3. Matters Arising

(a) The Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club

The Clerk reported that having been delegated to the Working Party it had resolved that the acknowledgement rent be increased to £300 per annum which is an increase of £100. At first the Working Party had considered that any increase should be the subject of a joint approach of the Lord of the Manor and the Conservators, but as the Lord of the Manor had originally granted a 7-year licence this was not possible and the increase therefore was to be in force for 1970 and 1971 and a new joint approach to the Club would be made for the year 1972.

(b) Model Aeroplane Licences

The Chairman reported that it would be necessary to consider the renewal of these licences and the fact that there had been a number of objections to the noise caused by the aircraft to local residents. He gave, the Board three alternatives:

- (i) All the licences would be cancelled and would not be renewed in the coming year on the basis that Ashdown Forest was a place for quiet recreation, and there had been the objections referred to above.
- (ii) The licences could be renewed and the objectors could be informed that they would have to put up with the noise for another year.
- (iii) Two or three licensees could be invited to give a demonstration one Saturday morning or afternoon, members of the Board could be informed and could take station outside the boundaries of the properties the owners of which had objected, and could see for themselves whether the noise constituted a serious menace.

It was resolved that alternative number (iii) be adopted and the Forest Superintendent was asked to arrange for the model aeroplane fliers to attend on a convenient day.

(c) Budgeting for a Surplus of Revenue

The Clerk reported that after conversations with the Treasurers of the East Sussex County Council and the Uckfield Rural District Council it had been agreed that both Councils would pay during the month of February two thirds of their estimated contribution and he hoped this would result in the Conservators' account being in credit and no recourse would have to be made to bank borrowing.

(d) Bowling Green at Colemans Hatch

Mr. Raikes reported that he and Mr. Drew had not met to discuss this matter and it was decided to defer it to a later meeting.

(e) Direction plaque

The Chairman reported briefly on this subject and informed the meeting that insufficient progress had been made to bring the matter forward for decision. The further report would be made at a later meeting.

(f) Gatwick Airport Extension

The Clerk reported that the Surrey County Council, with whom the East Sussex County Council were working in conjunction, had applied for an adjournment of the public enquiry to be held in November. He would bear this matter in mind and report at a later meeting. It was, however, decided that whether or not the East Sussex County Council decided to object to the extension, the Conservators of Ashdown Forest would object.

4. The Airman's Grave

The Forest Superintendent reported on the proposals for carrying out certain minor works which would make it easier to maintain the grave. He outlined proposals for making one simple flower bed in front of the cross and covering the remainder of the ground with paving stones. It was estimated this would cost £75. He also informed the meeting that Mrs. Sutton, the Mother of the airman, had decided to give to the Conservators the sum of £150 for the up-keep of the grave, and part of this sum could be utilised for the alterations. He also said that the Uckfield Round Table Association had offered to accept the liability of maintaining the grave henceforth and this offer was gratefully accepted.

5. Correspondence

- (a) The Clerk read a letter of thanks from the British Mycological Society.
- (b) The Clerk read a letter from Mr. E.F. Goddard asking for permission to sell garden produce from a table on the Forest outside his house "High and Over" at Friars Gate. It was resolved that a licence be granted to Mr. Goddard for the sale of home produce at an acknowledgement rent of £1 per annum.

6. Fire Breaks Committee

The Forest Superintendent reported that the Committee had inspected the newly sown firebreaks and although these had taken very well, and had an excellent growth of grass, they considered that it was too early to pronounce on the success of the experiment. They recommended that one further small experimental strip should be limed,

basic slagged, harrowed and have a utility grass seed mixture worked in. This had been done, but no results could be reported yet. The Committee recommended that while the experiments were proceeding the present policy of maintaining a strip of bare earth along the firebreaks should continue, but not on hillsides where erosion was likely. The Board confirmed this policy. It was agreed that the Firebreak and Controlled Burning sub-Committees should be merged.

7. FINANCE

Financial Statement as at the 21st October 1970

<u>Bank Balances</u>	1970	1969
General Account	2516.1.4	1591.5.5
Wages & Petty Cash Account	575.0.9 581.3.0	
Licence Account	Nil	10.19.0

The following amounts have been collected since Jan. 1970.

Forest Ack. Rents	Temp. Horse Local	
Rates	Licences.	Riding Authorities
£758.18.8	1044.13.8	79.5.0 134.0.0 7894.0.0

As at October 1969.

1054.4.6	950.16.6	84.0.0 91.10.0 5669.0.0
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East Sussex County Council	5944
Uckfield R.D.C.	1500
Cuckfield R.D.C.	2500
East Grinstead U.D.C.	200

5. ESTIMATES

The Clerk presented the Estimates for the year 1971. The Forest Superintendent and the Rangers retired from the room while their salaries were being considered and the Clerk retired from the room while his salary and expenses were being considered. The Estimates were finally approved as follows:

1971 ESTIMATE OF EXPENDITURE AND STORES

1970 Ests		EXPENDITURE	1971 Ests	
		SALARIES & WAGES (including NI)		
1306		Forest Superintendent	1574	
3511	4817	Rangers	4321	5895
5		FOREST EXPENSES		
		Forest Superintendent - misc.	30	
		Rangers		
140		Telephone, uniform and misc.	185	
		Transport		
		Machinery, running expenses		
592		Hire of machinery	600	
600		Radio Equipment maintenance	600	
		Litter baskets		
		Notice boards		
150		Sundries	150	
210		Improvements	210	
		Depot – rates, water, etc.		
175		Depot - buildings	60	
220			60	

100			100	
400			400	
55			75	
15			100	2570
520		ADMINISTRATION	600	
		Clerk's Salary		
600		Office expenses:	600	
218		½ bookkeeper	230	
40		¼ secretary	40	
100		1/10 office staff	100	
		office hire allowance		
		heat and light		
50		auditor	50	
80		post & telephone	80	
60		room hire & travel	80	
20		bank charges	30	
5		advertising	5	
20		insurance	20	
35		printing & stationery	50	
400		audit stamp duty	400	
		sundries		
35			35	
30	2213		30	2350
	NIL	CAPITAL EXPENDITURE		
		Land Rover	500	
		Fire **** for Land Rover		
		Roller	50	
			25	575
	25	IRRECOVERABLE		
		Ackn – rates		25
	9717			11415
		INCOME		
		ESTIMATED ***** INCOME		
130		Rate	194	
		Acknowledgement Rents – Temp. Licences		
1200		Sundry receipts	1325	
60	141*		60	1579
	8308			9836
	550			931
	7757			8905

(Note: The Figure shown for Salaries and Wages includes an additional £36 that stated at the meeting as this takes into account the increased amounts of Graduated pension and Rangers' Superannuation resulting from the increases.)

With regard to the Clerk's salary, it was proposed by Mr. Mountain and seconded by Mr. Brooke that this be increased from £520 to £600 per annum and his expenses from £1088 to £1100, it being understood that special expenses in connection with the Gatwick Airport Enquiry or a new Act for Ashdown Forest be the subject of a special arrangement. These increases are shown in the above Estimates.

It was proposed by Colonel Lowe, seconded by Mr. Shelford and unanimously resolved that the Estimates as amended be adopted.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Clerk reported that a Mr. Myatt had been prosecuted under the Bye-laws for parking in an unauthorised place and lighting a barbecue stove in a dangerous place, had been convicted on both offences and fined a total of £10.

Captain Armstrong reported on various matters connected with a bridle path along the disused railway line and the traffic re-direction along the A.272 and B.2026. The Chairman reported that the final report of the Working Party would not be available until 1971.

There being no other business the meeting was concluded.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMONERS OF ASHDOWN FOREST HELD AT THE FOREST ROW VILLAGE HALL ON THE 15th DECEMBER 1970 AT 7.30 P.M.

1. **PRESENT:** Mr. Hall, Mr. Townsend, Mr. Clarke, Mr. Brooke, Miss Lumsden, Mr. Lumsden, Mr. Evatt, Mr. Shaw, Mr. Agnew, Mr. Laycock, Mr. Carter, Mr. Gillham, Mr. Hood, Mr. Kirby, Mr. Hamer, Mrs. *****, Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Oliver, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Cornwell, Mr. Harvey, Mr. Batchelor, Mrs. Glover, Mr. Glover, Miss Scotson, Mr. O'Kane, Mrs. Hunt, Mr. Hunt, Mr. and Mrs. Perring, Colonel Lowe, Mr. and Mrs. Mance, Mr. and Mrs. Howard.

The Clerk, after welcoming the Commoners to the 84th Meeting, called for proposals for election of the office of Chairman. Mr. Brooke proposed and Mr. Evatt seconded that Mr. Mountain should take the Chair and when put to the vote this motion was carried by a large majority.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE %

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. Barbara Willard. The Clerk then read the Notice convening the Meeting.

3. ELECTION OF CONSERVATORS

The Clerk reported that, the Notices concerning the election of Conservators had been posted at the following places:

COLEMANS HATCH - Post Office & Church; HARTFIELD - Post Office and Church; WITHYHAM - Post Office & Church; CROWBOROUGH - Parish Church; DUDDLESWELL - Post Office; FAIRWARP - Post Office & Church; MARESFIELD - Post Office & Church; NUTLEY - Post Office & Church; BUXTED - Church; FLETCHING - Post Office & Church; DANEHILL - Post Office & Church; CHELWOOD GATE - Post Office; SHARP THORNE - Post Office; EAST GRINSTEAD - Post Office & Church; FOREST ROW - Post Office, Church & Village Hall; HIGH HURSTWOOD - Post Office & Church; ASHURST WOOD - Post Office & Church. Mr. Cornwell, Miss Lumsden and Mr. Clarke, were retiring by rotation and had offered themselves for re-election. As there had been no further nominations the Clerk declared them re-elected for a further period of three years. Mr. Cornwell pointed out that there had been no notice of the election of Conservators at the Post Office at Nutley. When asked Ranger Arnold told the meeting that he had handed a copy of the notice to the Postmaster at Nutley and asked him to affix it in a conspicuous place. The Clerk apologised if the notice had been destroyed or removed and Mr. Cornwell accepted the position.

4. RECREATION GROUND SUPERINTENDENTS

It was resolved that the Recreation Ground Superintendents be re-elected en bloc for their districts.

5. CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

The Chairman then addressed the meeting. He said he had lived on the edge of the Forest for 40 years and had never taken much notice of how it was run until he noticed it was being ploughed up. As a result of his complaints on this score he had been elected to the Board and he had continued to complain until he is now Chairman. He quoted President Truman when he said: "The buck stops here!". He thought this applied to him too. He said he was frightened of the effects of erosion and said that the two experiments in re seeding, one across Kidds Hill and one to the south had been remarkably successful, with lime and Slag added. The look of the Forest had improved, the shorter green grass will prove effectiveness a firebreak and has already improved the grazing. It has been intended to wait a year or two to see whether the experiment warranted continuation but he said that he had persuaded the Forest Superintendent, Commander Angell, and the Firebreak Sub-Committee to recommend to the Board that

all the ploughed areas be re-seeded in 1971, which will be possible because the Friends of Ashdown Forest have agreed to foot the bill. He said he had the opportunity of becoming Chairman because of Mr. Drew's resignation from office. He paid tribute to the enormous amount of work done by him for the Forest and the enthusiasm with which it had been done. He then paid tributes to the Clerk, the Forest Superintendent and the Rangers for their loyal service during the past year. He also thanked the Friends of Ashdown Forest who, he said, have contributed no less than £9,000 which had been spent on machinery, wireless, etc - a marvellous achievement.

6. THE FOREST RATE

Up until now the rate has been 2/6d. for the first acre and 2/6d for each succeeding acre with a maximum of £3. Now scales had been introduced for 1971 including a minimum of 10/- for up to one acre. Before Commons Registration there were 1160 Commoners and the Forest Rate produced £1531. After Commons Registration there are 580 Commoners and the Forest Rate at the old rate produced £790. At the new rate it will produce £1125. He said he realised that the new rate will in some cases give a large percentage increase over the old rate but no-one is really being asked to pay very much.

7. GENERAL BUSINESS

Mr. Hall asked if the rates for horse riders etc were being changed. Mr. Howard said he thought it should be raised to £5 a horse. The Clerk said that from riding, the Conservators received about £100. The licence at present was £1 for a horse, £2 for a family and £5 for a Riding school. Riding schools were not making much, if any, profit and there were very few "family" users. The Clerk assured the meeting that the Rangers have clear instructions to ask every rider to show a licence. He would be interested to hear of anyone transgressing the law. Mr. Hall worked out that at the present rate the horse riders were paying 41/2d a weekend. Mr. Evatt said that the horse riders are probably "the people who pay the greatest amount towards the Friends of Ashdown Forest and they therefore pay that way. Mr. Howard thought the same applied to the people who pay Forest Rates. Mr. Mountain said he would put this to the Board to be considered. The Clerk told the meeting that during the past year a series of notices had been erected over the Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Course with the object of trying to enable the public to cross the courses with immunity. Every green fee issued (and trolley card ticket) has a warning on the back of it so that the golfer is aware of the fact that the course forms part of Ashdown Forest. There have been a few incidents, he said, but by and large since the notices there have not been so many incidents as in the past. Recently Forest Row has expanded and new people have come to live in the area and one hopes, he said, that people who went to walk over the Forest and the golfers can learn to live in peace with one another. Mr. Howard's next question was concerned with the policy of the Conservators on the question of Registration of Rights by Commoners.

He said he thought one of the duties was to protect, or at least safeguard, the interests of Commoners, but that he had heard of one or two cases of Conservators objecting to the rights claimed or lodged by Commoners and he thought this seemed to be wrong. He thought there should be a consultation between the Commoners and Conservators. The Chairman said this was a matter of law. He said many people registered rights in error and they did not possess them. Everyone had been advised before Registration on a fair number of animals to be grazed. Mr. Carter said he seemed to remember that anyone with under 2 acres was allowed to graze 1 sheep. He asked if the number could now be increased since there were now to be only half as many Commoners, many of whom were now paying an increase of 400%. Could there be an increase of 400% in the number of sheep

The Clerk said the answer was bound up with the answer to what you could Winter on your land. During the foot and mouth epidemic in 1968 this had been put to the test. He recalled all the cattle and sheep to people's own land. The basis is that if you cannot Winter the cattle or sheep on your own land you must get rid of them.

Mr. Howard asked how much rent the Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club paid and was informed by the Clerk that the acknowledgement rent had been increased from £290 to £300 per annum at the beginning of the current year. The Clerk also informed Mr. Howard that the Club paid £400 to the Lord of the Manor, making a total at present of £700 a year. Mr. Howard stated that he thought this was inadequate and questioned whether the Conservators were charging a commercial rent. He then asked if both courses paid separately. He was told that there was only one Club and therefore one payment inclusive. The Chairman said the licence covered both courses.

8. NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting should be held at the Village Hall at Hartfield on Tuesday 7th December 1971 at 7.30 p.m.

9. TRIBUTE TO CHAIRMAN

Mr. Perring paid tribute to the Chairman and thanked him for chairing the meeting.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, COLEMANS HATCH, ON WEDNESDAY 16th DECEMBER 1970 AT 2.30 P.M.

Present: Mr. G.J. Mountain (in the Chair), Col. J.H. Lowe, Mr. R.F.J. Brooke, Miss A. Lumsden, Mr. W.D. Gillham, Mr. R., St .B. Clarke, Mr. E.W. Ellison, Mr. F.B. Cornwell, Mr. J.H. Drew, Capt. D.H.F. Armstrong, Brigadier L.M. Scott, Major R.E.W. Grubb, Mrs. U.M. Ridley, Mr. A.W.C. Dascombe and The Hon C.A.S. Grimston.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mr. J.R. Greenwood, Mr. C.W. Shelford and Lady E. Brind.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting

Subject to the alteration of the inclusion of Major Grubb and the deletion of Mr. Drew and one small grammatical alteration, the Minutes, having been circulated, were approved.

3. Matters Arising

(a) Model Aeroplanes

A lengthy discussion took place on whether licences for flying model aeroplanes should be renewed for the year 1971 or not. The Chairman briefly reported on a demonstration which had taken place on the Forest some two weeks previously. After several proposals and counter-proposals, it was finally resolved that 20 licences be issued for the year 1971 but that a clause should be inserted in the licence limiting the times of flying to between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. on seven days a week and between 6 p.m. and 6 p.m. on Wednesdays only.

(b) The Bowling Green at Colemans Hatch

Mr. Drew reported that he had discussed this matter with Mr. Raikes and he had decided that as the drain would have to be piped underground it would be too costly and he did not propose to proceed with the project.

(c) Gatwick Airport Runway Extension

The Clerk reported that he had withdrawn the Board's objection after receiving notice from the East Sussex County Council, the West Sussex County Council and Surrey County Council that these Councils were also withdrawing their objections. Mr. Ellison then pointed out that the Board had decided at its previous meeting to object whether or not the East Sussex County Council withdrew its objection, and it was unanimously Resolved that the Clerk forthwith give notice to the Ministry that the Board wished to maintain its objection.

4. Firebreaks Committee

The Chairman stated that he had met the Firebreak Sub-Committee and with their concurrence he asked the Board to alter its policy with regard to ploughed Firebreaks. He proposed that the 11 miles of ploughed break should be re-seeded in the spring of 1971, pointing out that the experiments so far carried out in re-seeding indicated that it should be possible to achieve a sward of grass that will stay green, and provide the required break. He stated that the Friends of Ashdown Forest would finance the project, thus incurring no cost to the Board. In reply to Mr. Brew he stated that the re-seeding would entail virtually no more ploughing. Mr. Clarke stated that the Committee had reservations as to whether the grass would be quite as effective as the plough, and as to the permanency of the new grasses. The Chairman stated that it had been pointed out to the Friends that should the indigenous grasses take over and the breaks prove ineffective, the Board would have to revert to other policies. The Board agreed to the re-seeding in 1971

Mr. Drew undertook to make enquiries about a second--hand roller.

5. Forest Superintendent's Report

In addition to routine maintenance, the Rangers have been employed on: Re-ploughing and discing sections of main firebreaks, Felling dead trees, Cutting chestnut for lire beaters etc., Repairing bridges, Clearing drains and ditches, Constructing hard entrances to six car parks on the Ridge Road. Five of these have been finished in tarmac, and as an experiment one has been laid in concrete. The tarmac entrances were constructed with a hired J.C.B., laid with brick rubble, which was bound and then rolled Two layers of tarmac, one coarse and one fine were laid and rolled. The results, while perhaps not quite up to a contractor's standard of finish, are very satisfactory, and should

give some years of wear before requiring repair. The process of tarmac-ing is however heavy on time and labour. The concrete was laid by Readymix, and was completed in one hour. It should be permanent, never requiring repair, and cost almost the same as the tarmac.

6. FINANCE

(1) Bank Balances

	1970	1969
General Account	1477.0.4	930.17.7
Wages & Petty Cash	336.14.8	580.6.7
Licences Account	Nil	Nil

(2) The following amounts have been collected since January 1st 1970

Forest Rate	762.6.6
Acknowledgement rents	1044.13.8
Horse Riding	143.0.0
Temp. Licences	111.15.0
L.A. Contributions	7894.0.0

(3) The following accounts are due for payments:

Clerks salary and expenses, December Quarter.	£402
K.J. Sinden. Return of Deposit	£5
G.P.O.	£20

To transfer £124.13.4 from General Account to Wages and Petty Cash Account.

7. Commoners' Meeting

The Chairman reported briefly on the meeting of the Commoners held the previous evening when Miss Lumsden, Mr. Cornwell and Mr. Clarke were re-elected to the Board for a further period of three years. About 30 people attended the meeting and matters of general interest were discussed.

8. Meeting for 1971

The dates of the meetings for 1971 were agreed as follows:

Wednesday 27th January (Special Meeting)
Wednesday 17th February
Wednesday 21st April
Wednesday 20th October
Wednesday 15th December

9. Any other Business

The Clerk read a letter from the Ministry of Defence Quality Assurance Directorate (Weapons) asking for permission to carry out noise trials with small military instruments. The Clerk reported he had written for further information but so far had not received any reply. It was Resolved that this matter should be left with the Chairman for decision. Mr. Cornwell mentioned the subject of the Forest Rate and stated that in his opinion it was excessive. Mr. Gillham reported that the Press had not been present at the Commoners' Meeting on the previous evening and that the attendance of Commoners at the meeting was very poor. It was his opinion that the poor attendance was caused by the fact that notices of the Commoners' Meeting were included in the Rate Demands which were sent out to the Commoners very often six or seven months before the actual Meeting. After a discussion it was agreed that the Clerk should send each Commoner a separate notice of the meeting not less than one month before it was due to be held.

There being no other business the meeting was concluded.

Mr. G.J. Mountain (in the Chair), Mr. J.H. Drew, Mr. Ellison, Mr. A.W.C. Dascombe. Major R.E.W. Grubb, Captain D.F.F. Armstrong, Mrs. U.M. Ridley, Miss. A. Lumsden, Mr. R.F.J. Brooke, Mr. D.J. Stradwick, Mr. W.D. Gillham, Mr. F.B. Cornwell, The Hon C.A.S. Grimston, Mr. C.W. Shelford, Col J.H. Lowe and Mr. G.M. Raikes

APOLOGIES

1. Apologies were received from Brigadier L. H. Scott, Mr R. St.G. Clarke and Mr. J.R. Greenwood.
2. The Chairman introduced Mr. D. J. Stradwick, a new member appointed by the East Grinstead Urban District Council in the place of Mr. King.
3. Copies of the new Forest maps and Calendar for the year were handed out to each member.

RANGERS' SALARIES

4. The Clerk reported that contrary to the usual practice, the Agricultural Wages Board had dated the increase in the agricultural wage from 4th January 1971 instead of the 4th February. He reminded members of the Board that when the Estimated were prepared and the increases in the wages had been resolved, the Board had decided that the increase should take effect from the 4th February, and he had now received a request from the Rangers what their increase should be back-dated to the 4th January. After a short discussion it was unanimously Resolved that the increase in the Rangers' salaries be back-dated to the 4th January 1971 . The total amount involved was £52.4.4d.

THE REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY

5. The Chairman opened the discussion by reiterating the history of the Working Party and gave the names of those who served or it. He paid a tribute to the individual members and Mr. Drew who was the Chairman during the period covered generally by Part I of the Report. He then announced that he proposed, with the leave of other members of the Board, to concentrate on two matters, namely, the Composition of the Board and Finance be outlined the differing points of view between members of the Working Party and the East Sussex County Council represented by Mr. C. W Shelford. The main difference lay in the fact that the Working Party considered that although the County Council should have overall financial control (through the Estimates) it should not have managerial control. The Working Party considered that the interest of the Public, the Commoners and local residence would be best served if Management Control remained in local hands. The Council's view was that financial control through the Estimates would be largely ineffective and unsatisfactory. The following extract from a letter written by Mr. Shelford to the Clerk summarises the County Council's point of view:

1) The interests of the public are now undoubtedly the main interest in the forest. There is very little grazing or cutting of bracken and certainly this would not justify keeping 6,000 acres idle. I believe, therefore, that representatives of the public must have the majority representation on the Board.

2) The set-up proposed is not consistent with the financial interests in the Forest.

3) If the public had a greater interest it would be very probable that the Country side Commission would be prepared to give grants up to 75% on the maintenance and management cost.

"It is, in my view, unreasonable to expect the Local Authority to carry 80% of the expenditure with the full 100% of any increase and to have only equal voting powers on the Board. A more usual arrangement would be for representation on the Board to be directly in Proportion to the burden of expenditure but the County Council are not asking for that."

Mr. Shelford emphasised the importance of the future interest of the Countryside Commission and the possibility that financial help from the Commission could be available. He also said that so far as he was aware there was no intention in the minds of anyone serving on the County Council that the Board of Conservators should be a sub-Committee of the County Council.

A general discussion then took place. In Mrs. Ridley's personal opinion it did not matter whether the Cuckfield Rural District Council was represented on the Board or not so long as there was local representation from that area through the Parish Councils. Mr. Dascombe and Mr. Ellison representing the Uckfield Rural District Council were both of the opinion that as the Planning Authority for the whole of the Forest area that Council should have

representation. Several members of the Board spoke on the Composition and it was finally AGREED that in all the circumstances the financial responsibility for Ashdown Forest should in future lie with the East Sussex County Council only.

In order to sound the opinion of the members of the Board it was decided to take a vote on the two following propositions but it was agreed that members should not be bound at a subsequent meeting by the way they had voted and that the purpose of these votes was to enable Mr. Shelford to report back to the East Sussex County Council the "feeling" of members of the Board.

The first proposition was: Should the East Grinstead Urban District Council be represented on the Board in future Mr. Stradwick spoke against the proposition but when the vote was taken 11 were in favour of no representation by the East Grinstead Council and three were in favour of representation continuing. A similar vote was taken in regard to the Cuckfield Rural District Council and 10 were in favour of no representation in future and three were in favour of representation continuing.

The Chairman then asked members of the Board to vote on a possible combination of members for the future composition of the Board. The proposition was as follows:

9 members appointed by the County Council - including two members representing the Planning Authority
6 members elected by the Commoners
1 representative of the Lord of the Manor
3 co-opted members elected by the Board of Conservators but having no vote on financial matters or the Estimates.

Twelve members of the Board were in favour of this proposition but two were against. It was again agreed that the purpose of this vote was to enable Mr. Shelford to report ***** the Clerk to the East Sussex County Council and it was in no way binding of members of the Board.

6. Proposed by the Chairman and Seconded by Mr. Drew, that Mr. C.W. Shelford be co-opted onto the Working Party so that he could attend future meetings.

7. Finally, there being no other business, the meeting was concluded.

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE BOARD ON CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, COLEMANS HATCH, ON WEDNESDAY 17TH FEBRUARY 1971 AT 2.30 P.M.

PRESENT: Mr. G.J. Mountain (in the Chair), Col. J.H. Lowe, Mr. J.H. Drew, Mr. C.W. Shelford, Major R.E.W. Grubb, The Hon. C.A.S. Grimston, Mr. D.J. Stradwick, Brigadier L.M. Scott, Mrs. U.M. Ridley, Miss A. Lumsden, Mr. R. St. G. Clarke, Mr. W.D. Gilham and Mr. F.B. Cornwell.

1. **APOLOGIES:** The Forest Superintendent told the meeting that the Clerk was unable to attend because of urgent legal business and tendered his apologies. Apologies were also received from Mr. J.R. Greenwood, Lady E. Brind, Mr. G.M. Raikes, Captain D.F.F. Armstrong, Mr. A.W.C. Dascombe and Mr. R.F.J. Brooke.

2. **ELECTION OF OFFICERS:** Major Grubb proposed and Mr. Drew seconded the proposal that Mr. Mountain be appointed Chairman for the ensuing year. The meeting agreed unanimously. Mr. Mountain took the Chair and thanked the Board. The Chairman then called on the meeting to appoint a Vice-Chairman and a Deputy Chairman.

Deputy Chairman: Colonel Lowe was proposed for this office by Mr. Mountain and seconded by Brigadier Scott and it was unanimously approved.

Vice-Chairman: Mr. Drew was proposed for this office by Colonel Lowe and seconded by Miss Lumsden and it was unanimously approved.

Special Purposes Committee: In addition to the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, it was proposed and seconded and unanimously agreed that the Special Purposes Committee should be re-elected en bloc.

3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING. The Minutes of the Meeting of 16th December 1970 were approved and signed as a true record of the meeting. The Minutes of the Meeting of 27th January 1971 were discussed in Committee and were approved and signed as a true record of the meeting.

4. RIDING ON THE FOREST. The Chairman handed the representatives of the Press a copy of a statement he had prepared and asked them to give it some publicity. He said that he was advised that the only people with a legal right to ride on the Forest were Commoners when attending to their stock, and those who had paid a fee and held a permit to do so. All Commoners have been permitted to ride free of charge up to now. He said he was now having second thoughts about this. Although the bridle paths were clearly marked across the Golf Course, some people persisted in riding on the fairways. It is possible but improbable that these people do not realise how much damage they are doing. There is strong circumstantial evidence that some of the offenders are Commoners. If Commoners were only permitted to ride with a permit or if tending stock then if they did not conform to the regulations their permits could be withdrawn. Issuing permits to Commoners, he said, was the very last thing he wanted to do. And he was, he emphasised, not asking for it to be done now. He said he hoped that the offenders would "mend their ways". He said the Clerk had suggested to him that the meeting might be to consider whether the existing charge for permits should be altered. They run from 1st January for 12 months and the charge are:

£1 for one Person

£2 for a Family.

£5 for a Riding School.

His own opinion was that this was too low and that it would be sensible to increase the £1 to £2, the £2 to £4. As regards Riding Schools, he said he realised what a good job they did but that when the fee was fixed at £5 there had been a good deal of lobbying of the Board to the effect that this was all they could afford. However, he was not convinced of this now as they frequently take out six or even 12 horses, and then sometimes twice a day, onto the Forest. They are obviously doing far more business, as well as more damage, on the Forest. They are also riding for profit and not only for pleasure. The Chairman asked for opinions. Mrs. Ridley thought that they should not be put up too much. There are seven Riding Schools in all. They often ride in areas where there are a lot of houses and down narrow tracks, which was causing a similar problem to the Golf Course area, but the Schools are not in fact Golf Course offenders. The Riding Schools are well supervised. There had always been some conflict between walkers and riders. After a general discussion on the subject the Forest Superintendent was asked to produce a map marked with the parts of the Forest where he thought the riders should not go. The Chairman said he and the Forest Superintendent would investigate the matter further.

The Forest Superintendent told the meeting of the replacement rate of the coloured marking posts. He said the Car Park notices had had to be put on sleepers and concreted into the ground and something similar would be needed for the riding warnings - something more permanent. He showed the meeting a reinforced concrete "tombstone" of the type he thought should be used. They would not be unsightly. He estimated that 30 would be needed on the Golf Course alone. Mr. Drew considered we could manage with fewer. Mr. Shelford suggested the use of coloured stoned or concrete. Brigadier Scott said that marks painted on trees where possible would be the most permanent and the cheapest. Colonel Lowe said he thought the Commoners should be charged a fee for riding, but that it should be less than that charged to non-Commoners. Horse riding was not a "right of Common". The Chairman said he thought it was more a custom than a right. Major Grubb thought this might be a little perk for Commoners. Mr. Drew considered that Commoners should not be charged. The Forest Superintendent said that between 50 and 100 Commoners rode regularly. The Chairman said that there was no object in further discussion on the cost of riding until the cost of markers was ascertained.

5. FOREST SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT. The Forest Superintendent reported that in addition to routine maintenance, the rangers had been employed

- (a) Felling dead trees.
- (b) Making new fire beaters, renewing beater stands and placing fire beaters.
- (c) Improving car park entrances.
- (d) Constructing new litter baskets.
- (e) Renewing bridges.
- (f) Building the extension to the implement shed.
- (g) Placing pole barriers at access points to firebreaks.
- (h) Placing 12 new seats, the gift of the Friends of Ashdown Forest.

The Land Rover had been fitted with the fire fighting pump, and a water tank fitted at the depot for rapid filling of the Land Rover's tank: with the exception of the nozzle, which it was believed was a casualty of the Post Office strike, the Land Rover was now a fully efficient fire tender.

Gypsies

On 18th January three gypsy caravans were parked on the Forest near Fairwarp. Ranger Arnold, after rough and unpleasant negotiations, arranged their departure within 24 hours. Arnold received moral support from the police, who came to his assistance. On the following day Ranger Linton assisted their departure by towing out the caravan. The Rangers dealt exceptionally well with a very difficult situation. The gypsies had had no intention of moving, and had they succeeded in staying, there can be no doubt that they would have been joined by others, and a serious problem might have arisen. The Forest Superintendent requested that the Press should not report on the question of gypsies. If a feature were to be made of it, he said, there could be embarrassing consequences. Mr. Shelford said he thought the Forest Superintendent and the Rangers should be congratulated on moving them on.

The new seats were now in position mainly along the top of the Forest and the Kingstanding area. One had gone to the Crowborough Recreation Ground because The Friends had said they had been left out there in the past. All seats would be having plaques put onto them saying "Presented by the Friends of Ashdown Forest".

6. FINANCE

I. Bank Balances	1971	1970
General Account	£202.14.0 o/d	£216.18.6
Wages & Petty Cash Acc.	£649.8.9	£215.7.5
Licences Account	Nil	£19.11.5

II. The following amounts have been collected since 1st January 1971:

Forest Rates	Nil
Acknowledgement Rents	£126.10.5
Horse Riding	£22.0.0
Temp. Licences	£13.0.0

III. The following accounts are due for payment.
Clerk's salary and expenses - March Quarter. £425.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Miss Lumsden asked who was responsible for the litter collection on the Golf Courses, as the condition of the new course was bad. The Forest Superintendent said that the responsibility was his for keeping the whole Forest tidy, but that in the past the Golf Club had always looked after its own area, and that this arrangement had worked satisfactorily. He would take the matter up with the Golf Club.

The tip at Nutley. Mr. Gillham said there should be some check on the people who tip at Dodds Bank. He thought they should be granted a licence to tip. He said rubbish had started to pile up. The Forest Superintendent said he entirely agreed and that he and the Clerk had discussed this very matter and had already issued some licences for this and received fees. Tipping is now under control and the site would be tidied up, he said, as soon as weather permitted. Notices about tipping would be put up in a week or so.

8. WORKING PARTY REPORT

The Board went into Committee, and a general discussion took place on points raised at the Board Meeting of 27th January.

Colonel Lowe raised the question of the reorganisation of Local Government, as outlined by the Government the previous day, and its effect on the constitution of the Board. Mr. Shelford agreed that until the details of the new structure had been decided, it was impossible to know for certain who would have the responsibility for the Forest, though he felt that it should be a County matter. It would be some months before anything definite was known regarding the size and financial status of the second tier authority. In the meantime the constitution of the Board might be considered in the general term of Council representation. Much depended on negotiations with the

Countryside Commission. The Officers of the County Council were meeting Mrs. Jones of the Commission in the near future, and the Conservators would be invited to take part in subsequent discussions.

The Chairman concluded that we would have to await developments before the Working Party or the Board could progress on this matter.

There being no other business the meeting was concluded,

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, COLEMANS HATCH ON WEDNESDAY 21ST APRIL AT 2.30 p.m.

1. PRESENT: Mr. G.J. Mountain in the Chair; R. St. G. Clark; Major R.E.W. Grubb, Mr. G.M. Raikes; Mr. J.R. Greenwood; Mr. A.W.C. Dascombe; Mr. J.H. Drew; Mr. R.F.J. Brooke; Mr. W.D. Gillham; Captain D. Armstrong.

2. APOLOGIES WERE RECEIVED FROM: Col. J.H. Lowe; The Hon. C.A.S. Grimston; Mr. C. Shelford; Mrs. U.M. Ridley; Mr. D.J. Stradwick; Miss A. Lumsden; Mr. F.B. Cornwall; Brigadier L.M. Scott; Mr. Ellison.

3. MATTERS ARISING: Horse Riding. The Chairman reported that the Report the Forest Superintendent had been asked to prepare at the previous meeting was not yet finally approved by him and it was therefore decided to place this matter on the Agenda for the next meeting as this would give the Chairman time to inspect certain parts of the Forest and the Report would then be ready to be sent out to Members some time before the next meeting.

4. AUDIT: The Clerk reported that the District Auditor was due to attend at his office to commence the Annual Audit on Monday 17th May.

5. FINANCE: The Clerk reported as follows:-

	1971	1970
(i) Bank Balances		
General Account	1,279.83	749.12.11.0/D
Wages and Petty Cash account	217.54	143.8.9.
Licence account	676.55	386.4.6

(ii) The following amounts are due for payment
Clerk's salary & expenses June Quarter £425.00

6. FIRES. The Forest Superintendent reported that there had been 37 fires to date, burning 65 acres of Forest. Of these fires approximately one-third had been deliberately lighted, mostly in the vicinity of Fairwarp. The Land Rover had been most effective in fire fighting with the newly equipped pump. The use of the Land Rover together with the Fire Service Land Rover had gone a long way towards reducing the acreage burnt and the £50 spent on equipment was an excellent investment. The Forest Superintendent paid tribute to the Fire Service, who had worked hard to prevent the spread of fires, the Rangers, who had turned out at all times of the day and night, and to Mrs. Arnold and Mrs. Linton who had voluntarily manned the radio sets at their houses, thus providing an essential link with the Fire Services. He reported that all the areas of firebreak that had previously been ploughed had now been re-seeded, but it was too early for results to show. Much work had been done on the car parks, and two bridges had been rebuilt. The two new Patrolmen had started work at weekends and were proving satisfactory. Three men were on duty on the Forest at weekends with four on Public Holidays. Even with this increased patrol they were kept fully occupied, as the Forest continued to become more crowded. On Easter Monday there were probably more cars on the Forest than ever before.

The Clerk reported that it was proposed by the Mid-Sussex Water Board to construct a new reservoir adjacent to the existing one at Wych Cross and copies of the site plan were produced for inspection by the Members of the Board. It was proposed by Jar. Greenwood and seconded by Mr. Brooke that the site suggested by the Water Board should be approved subject to a satisfactory equivalent area being handed over in exchange.

8. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND BALANCE SHEET: The Clerk produced the Annual Accounts and Balance sheet and went through them in detail. Capt. Armstrong commented that the cost of Administration was too high

in relation to the total cost, the Chairman stated that the present time was inappropriate to consider any changes and it was proposed by Mr. Drew and seconded by Major Grubb that the Accounts and Balance Sheet be adopted.

9. MRS. FEARMAN, Failure to register Rights of Common: The Clerk reported that Mrs. Fearman had consulted her Solicitor who had asked him to place this matter once more before the Board. He went on to say that he had received correspondence on the subject from Mr. Geoffrey Johnson Smith, Member of Parliament, and had seen letters from Lord Sandford, Under Secretary of State, to Mr. Johnson Smith which ended in Lord Sandford stating that as Ashdown Forest was governed by its own Acts of Parliament he could not comment on the matter. The Clerk advised that no Rights of Common or similar rights could be granted to Mrs. Fearman and it was Resolved that no further action be taken.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS: Major Grubb stated that as a Member of the County Council he was concerned that the Board should be eligible for a 75% grant from the grant from the Countryside Commission. The Chairman replied and informed Major Grubb that the Board was waiting to hear from the County Council Representatives about their meeting with the Countryside Commission and until this report was received the Report of the Working Party could not be finally approved by the Board. Mr. Drew asked if a firebreak could be cut round the Bowling Green at Colemans Hatch and this was agreed but the Forest Superintendent pointed out that if this work was required to be done by the Rangers an appropriate charge would have to be made, Mr. Gillham raised the question of concrete signs indicating the public footpaths which had been placed on the Forest in the Stonehill Road area and asked by whose permission these signs had been placed. The Forest Superintendent stated that he and the Clerk had been approached by the Forest Row Parish Council for permission to place similar signs on the Forest in the Forest Row area and they had both thought this a reasonable request and had granted it. Following upon this permission the Forest Superintendent said that he had granted similar permission in the Nutley area.

The Board then went into Committee.

The Clerk reported that the Uckfield Rural District Council had sent him plans of proposed alterations to a property known as The Hollies, Duddleswell and the erection of a Garage on private land. A copy of the plans were handed round to Members and it was generally agreed that from an aesthetic point of view the alterations to the house would not fit in with the general character of dwelling on Ashdown Forest but the Board also considered that apart from expressing this opinion it had no grounds for opposing the application. It was resolved that the Clerk write to the Planning Office of the Uckfield Rural District Council expressing the Boards views on this subject.

The Board then came out of Committee

There being no other business the meeting was concluded.

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, COLEMANS HATCH ON WEDNESDAY 21 ST JULY AT 2.30 p.m.

1. PRESENT:

Mr. J. H. Drew in the Chair, Mr. St. G. Clark; Mr. R.F.J. Brooke; Mr J.R. Greenwood; the Hon. C.A.S. Grimston; Brigadier L.M. Scott; Mr. W.D. Gillham; Captain D. Armstrong; Lady E. Brind; Miss Lumsden.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from: The Chairman, Mr. G.J. Mountain; Mr. R.W. Wilson; Major R.E. Grubb; Mrs. U.M. Ridley; Mr. D.J. Stradwick; Col. J.H. Lowe; Mr. C.M. Shelford; Mr. F.B. Cornwell; Mr. A.W.C. Dascombe.

3. The Minutes of the previous meeting having been circulated were approved.

4. MATTERS ARISING.

(a) Horse riding. Copies of the Chairman's Report on the subject were before members of the Board and a general discussion took place. The Clerk proposed that the following amendment to the Report should be made after the words bridle paths on page three "and people so doing would automatically become unauthorised persons" It was

proposed by Miss Lumsden and seconded by Brig. Scott and unanimously resolved that the Report be adopted as amended. It was further agreed that the abridged edition of the Report should be submitted to holders of Riding permits and that copies of the maps prepared by the Forest Superintendent should be, sent to the Uckfield Rural District Council and Forest Row Parish Council and the Maresfield Parish Council and that copies should be availed in the Clerk's office

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN ON RIDING ON ASHDOWN FOREST

At the Board Meeting on 17th February 1971 there was a discussion on this subject and he undertook to investigate the matter with the help of the Superintendent.

Commander Angell produced a Report which made me realise the subject was a good deal more complicated I had anticipated. I, therefore invited Miss ***** and Mr. Drew, who have years of experience of riding on the Forest to help us.

The reason for this enquiry is that there has been a conflict of interest between riders and others at three places on the Forest – the Golf Course, Fairwarp and Crowborough.

The following facts are relevant:

The following are permitted to ride on the Forest and are considered to be “authorised persons” under Byelaw 19a.

1. Persons having Rights of Common. Only those riding in pursuance of their Rights of Common *** attending sheep, etc., are entitled to ride as of right, the remainder by consent of the Conservators.
2. Those possessing a permit to ride.
Annual Fee
Single horse £1
Family permit £*
Riding establishments £5

In general, riding is permitted all over the forest but subject to restrictions as to certain areas. A system of marker posts are used:

Yellow posts riding prohibited
White posts riding permitted

This works reasonably well in principal, but has considerable limitations.

There is a note on the back of the riding permits stating these simple rules, but there is no indication as to which areas are affected and no indication that the rules do in fact apply to certain specific areas.

There is no method on informing Commoners of the rules. Many Commoners do not know them and some openly disobey them, considering that, as Commoners, they have a right to ride anywhere.

The Rangers have considerable difficulty in checking who are authorised riders. There is no list of Commoners who ride and many horsemen give incorrect or evasive answers. Some riders state that they have permits and subsequent investigation shows this to be untrue. Permits are seldom carried by riders, although the rule is that they should do. Many riders turn out to be relatives or friends of Commoners. Many Commoners keep several horses and these are ridden by people outside the immediate family.

Riding Establishments, which range from regular riding schools to riding clubs, all pay £5 a year. Due to the continuous use of certain tracks by strings of horses, the damage to the Forest is considerable and is very much greater than would be done by a corresponding number of single horses.

We recommend that:

1. Everyone permitted to ride on the Forest should wear a lapel badge, made of hardboard with a pin at the back similar to those worn by judges and stewards at an agricultural show. The colour of the badges and how often they are changed can be settled if the Board approve the principle.

2. Commoners only should be allowed to ride free of charge whether or not tending their stock. Badges issued free on request.
3. Permits should be required for the family/servants and guests of Commoners riding horses belonging to Commoners - £2 a year.
4. Permit for a single horse belonging to someone other than a Commoner, &3 and for a family, £5. A Riding School £25. Riding Clubs, by which is meant Clubs who use the Forest occasionally and not regularly, at the discretion of the Clerk.

We consider that a distinction should be made between those who ride for pleasure and those who ride for profit and that this should be reflected in the fees. Riding Schools who daily take several horses on the Forest, sometimes more than once a day, do a great deal more damage than most of the other riders combined.

5. Riding on the Forest by permit holders should be unrestricted except in the three defined below and subject to the advice contained on the Permit detailed below.
6. The fees charged should not be fixed with the object of making money out of riding, but they should be adequate to pay for the construction and maintenance of the special bridle paths.
7. Bridle Paths - These should be wide enough for horses to vary their tracks, thus avoiding excessive mud. They should be drained where necessary and clearly marked.

Bridle paths, should be, marked as follows:

At the start a green and white notice on a concrete pillar stating: ASHDOWN FOREST BRIDLE PATH

At intervals of visibility along the paths pairs of concrete posts.

At the finish a green and white notice on a concrete pillar stating:

ASHDOWN FOREST END OF RIDING RESTRICTIONS

Areas where Bridle Paths are required at present are:

1. Golf Course - Between "Shalesbrook" and "The Birches" and between "Wych Warren Road," and "Cherry Orchard".
2. Fairwarp - Between "Cackle Street" and "Jack's Plat" joined by a track from "Seely Cottage".
3. Crowborough - Between Fielden Road and the Horder Centre.

It is possible that other bridle paths may be found desirable at a later date.

8 The following Regulations should be given to all applicants for permits.

REGULATIONS FOR RIDING ON ASHDOWN FOREST

1. Riding is permitted to permit holders only.
2. Permits may be obtained from the Clerk to the Conservators,
3. The permit, which will be issued on payment of the appropriate fee, will take the form of a lapel Badge. This must be worn by all riders on the Forest, except in the case of a riding establishment when the person in charge should carry the badge,
4. Riding is unrestricted on the Forest, except in the following areas:
 - a) Forest Row. The whole area of the Golf Course is restricted. Two bridle paths have been established, one along the east side of the golf course from "Shalesbrook" to "The Birches" the second on the west side from Wych Warren Road to "Cherry Orchard".

b) Fairwarp. The whole area of the village is restricted, both near the church and to the west of the B.2126 road as far as Jack's Plat. A bridle path exists from Cackle Street to Jack's Plat. There are feeder tracks from Seely Cottage leading above the Old School from "Spring Garden" and from the bus shelter at Duddleswell.

c) St. John's Crowborough. The area between Crowborough and the Horder Centre is restricted. A bridle path exists from the bridge on the Glenmore Road to St. John's, and also to the south of the Horder Centre.

Detailed maps may be viewed at the Clerks office.

5. Bridle paths are designated: At the Start: a notice stating:
ASHDOWN FOREST BRIDLE PATH

Intermediate: pairs of concrete posts.

At the Finish: a notice stating:
ASHDOWN FOREST END OF RIDING RESTRICTIONS

6. It is an offence to ride in the restricted areas except on the Bridle paths, and persons so doing will automatically become "unauthorised" persons under Byelaw 19(a), and so render themselves liable to a fine of up to £10. This does not apply to Commoners actually engaged in tending their livestock.

7. In spite of the words "unrestricted riding" all riders are informed that those on foot have an equal right on the Forest.

They are requested to:

- a) Keep a sharp lookout for people walking or picnicing. It is unsafe to gallop, even on the firebreaks, unless the view is completely open.
- b) Keep clear of car parks.
- c) Keep off tracks and roads leading to private property.
- d) Vary their routes so as not to damage the surface of footpaths.

8. Fees for permits for 1972.

Commoners Permit - Free on application to the Clerk.

Commoners Family Permit covering the family, servants and guests of a Commoner riding a horse belonging to a Commoner - £2.

Permit for someone who is not a Commoner - for 1 horse £3.

Permit for someone who is not a Commoner - for a family £5.

Permit for Riding Schools - £25.

9. If you wish to renew your permit please apply in December to the Clerk to the Conservators

The financial implications of the recommendations herein detailed are:

1. We estimate the cost of widening and draining the three bridle paths at about £500.

2. In 1970 fees for permits were:

28 single at £1	£28
24 family at £2	£48
12 Riding Establishments which consist of 3 Riding Schools and 9 clubs at £5	£60
Miscellaneous	£7
	£143

Future income if the above recommendations are accepted, can be no more than a wild guess which might work out as follows:

25 Commoners Family @ £2	£50
28 Single @ £3	£84
24 Family @ £5	£120

3 Riding Schools
Riding Clubs say

@ £25 £75
£45
£374

4.(b) Annual Audit. The Clerk read the following letter from the District Auditor.

District Auditor's Office
19-21 Ashford Road,
Maidstone, Kent
Tel. Maidstone 52678.

No. 9 AUDIT DISTRICT
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1933, SECTION 227

REPORT OF THE DISTRICT AUDITOR OF THE ACCOUNTS OF THE ASHDOWN
FOREST CONSERVATORS.

6th July 1971

TO THE CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

In compliance with the statutory requirements I have to report that the audit of the accounts of the Conservators and of their officers for the year ended 31st December, 1970 has been completed.

No matters arose at the audit to which it is necessary to direct your attention. My thanks are due to your officers for their courtesy and assistance.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,
Signed....

(ERIC FIRTH)
District Auditor.

5. FINANCE:

I. Bank Balances.	1971	1970
General Account	£1653.00	£280.00 0/D
Wages & Petty Cash Account	553.00 0/D	268.00
Licences Account	70.00	NIL

2. The following have been collected since 1st January 1971

Forest Rates	339.25
Acknowledgement Rents	828.25
Horse Riding	37.25
Temp. Licences	56.00

L.A. Contributions 4450.00

Made up as follows:-

Uckfield R.D.C	£1000.00
East Grinstead U.D.C.	200.00
Cuckfield R.D.C	250.00
East Sussex C.C.	3000.00

3. The following amounts are due for payment:		
Clerk's Salary and Expenses September Quarter		£425.00
Return of Deposit K.J. Sinden	5.00	
Cheque for E. Stanford Ltd.		618.55

Proposed by Mr Greenwood and seconded by Mr Clark that the appropriate cheques should be signed and this was unanimously resolved. Mr Gillham suggested that in future Builders and Contractors paying deposits to the Clerk for the use of Ashdown Forest for deposit of building materials etc. should pay a charge in connection with the administration expenses and it was proposed by Capt. Armstrong seconded by Mr Greenwood and unanimously resolved that in future an administration charge of 10% with a minimum of £1 should be deducted from the deposit when it was returned.

6. CAR PARK NEAR OLD WHITES FARM: A map showing the site of the proposed Car Park was passed round to the Members of the Board for inspection. The Clerk reported that he had received a great deal of correspondence on the subject from local Residents, many of whom were Commoners, all of whom objected in the strongest terms to the proposal. The matter was then discussed and it was unanimously resolved that the proposed Car Park should not be permitted.

7. WORKS CARRIED OUT BY THE ROYAL ASHDOWN FOREST GOLF CLUB: NEAR THE SECOND FAIRWAY: Most members of the Board having had an opportunity of inspecting these earthworks expressed the opinion that the works having been carried out without the permission of the Board the Golf Club should take steps to ensure that the unsightly nature of the sleepers supporting the bank of the stream should be remedied in some way or another. Mr. Greenwood was of the opinion that in the course of time the sleepers would weather and become more mellow and would not be so noticeable. After a general discussion it was decided that the matter be referred to the Special Purposes Committee and the Clerk be asked to arrange a meeting between that Committee and the Captain and Members of the Committee of the Golf Club as soon as possible.

8. POP MUSIC FESTIVAL: The Clerk reported on the proposed Festival to be held at Whitehouse Farm, Duddleswell on the 7th and 8th August and informed the Board he had written to Mrs. Harrison the owner of Whitehouse Farm making it quite plain to her that under no circumstances should any part of Ashdown Forest be used, that there should be no breach of the byelaws and that she could not expect any support from the Board for the Festival. He had also informed her in general that it was considered Whitehouse Farm was not a suitable venue for such a gathering of such a large number of people. He also advised the Board that on a similar occasion not concerned with the Ashdown Forest Counsel's opinion had been obtained but it appeared that there was no legal steps a body such as the Board of Conservators could take to prevent such an event. Captain Armstrong reported that the County Council was also concerned and had taken certain steps to ensure that no further Festivals were held on the property and the Uckfield R.D.C. was similarly concerned. It was decided that the Clerk should write to the County Council offering it the support of the Board of Conservators in any steps which could be taken to prevent the repetition of such an event.

9. FOREST MAPS: The Clerk reported that there was a dispute between him and Edward Stanford Ltd., the cartographers over the sum of £51 which they were claiming for corrections to the proof which the Clerk contended were necessary due to their own fault and commissions. The Company had offered to reduce the sum of £51 by £10. It was decided that the sum of £51 or any reduced sum should not be paid and the Company be so informed.

10. GATWICK AIRPORT EXTENSION: The Clerk reported briefly on the latest decisions of the Surrey County Council concerning the extension of the Airport which are contained in a booklet sent to him by that Council.

11. FOREST SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: This mainly concerned the purchase of either a new Land Rover allowed for in the Estimates but which would now cost some £100 more than the estimated price or for the purchase of a second hand Land Rover mileage 5,000, one year old.
After a discussion it was decided to purchase the second hand Land Rover.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS: The Clerk reported that a fun-fair had been held without the permission of the Conservators on the Forest Row Recreation Ground and he had written to the Chairman of the controlling body

the Forest Row War Memorial Committee pointing out that he was not permitted to give permission for fairs to be held on any part of Ashdown Forest and it must not occur again.

Rabbit control. The Clerk reported receiving a copy of a letter written to Mr. Grimston about rabbit control by the Agricultural Committee at Lewes and Mr. Grimston reported that he was dealing with this matter on behalf of the Lord of the Manor.

Forest Road Recreation Ground. Mr Gillham reported that there had been a series of disagreements between the Forest Row Cricket and Football Clubs with the Forest Row War Memorial Committee the controlling body. It was decided that the Clerk should write to the Secretary of the two Clubs telling them that if they wish to make a complaint they should do so formally in writing to him and the matter would then be placed on the Agenda for the next Board Meeting.

IT WAS RESOLVED THAT THE BOARD GO INTO COMMITTEE

The Chairman reported that the Clerk had announced he intended to retire on the 25th March and paid tribute to him for his services for the past 20 years. Mr. Brook a former Chairman wished to be associated with the Chairman's remarks. The Clerk stated that he had enjoyed his period of service in that capacity but he felt that it was time for him to retire. He thanked Mr. Drew and Mr. Brooke for their kind remarks. The Chairman then reported that Mr. Mountain had already called a meeting of the Special Purposes Committee to consider this matter generally, the appointment of a Successor to Mr. Williams, new offices and the general effect the change would have on the estimates for 1972. It was also proposed to call a special meeting of the Board on September 8th at Coleman's Hatch at 2.30 p.m. It was decided that the matter be referred in the mean time to the Special Purposes Committee for report of the Special Board Meeting. Captain Armstrong suggested that it might be possible to accommodate the office of the Conservators in the Uckfield R.D.C offices but after discussion it was resolved that the Board of Conservators should have its own separate offices and Officers and should be entirely independent of any Local Authority.

THE BOARD THEN CAME OUT OF COMMITTEE

There being no other business the meeting was concluded

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, COLEMAN'S HATCH, ON WEDNESDAY, 8th SEPTEMBER AT 2.30 p.m.

1. PRESENT Mr. G.J. Mountain in the Chair: Colonel J.H. Lowe: Mr. J.H. Drew: Mr. E.W. Ellison: Mr. A.W.C. Dascombe: Lady E. Brind: Brigadier L.M. Scott: Mrs. U.M. Ridley: Miss A. Lumsden: Mr. R. St. G. Clarke: Captain D.H.F. Armstrong: The Hon. C.A.S. Grimston: Mr. W.D. Gillham: Mr. R.F.J. Brooke: Mr. D.J. Stradwick.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE WERE RECEIVED FROM Mr. F.B. Cornwell:
Mr. G.M. Raikes: Major R.E.W. Grubb: Mr. C.W. Shelford.

3. The Forest Superintendent was asked to leave the meeting while the appointment of a new Clerk was being considered.

4. The Board had before them the report of the Special Proposes Committee which read as follows

"Terms of Reference As a result of the announcement by the Clerk at the last meeting of the Board of his intention to retire on or before the 25th March 1972, the Committee was asked to make recommendations about the appointment of a successor and the acquisition of new offices with all the necessary furniture and equipment. The Committee have held two meetings and beg to report as follows:

1. New Clerk It is RECOMMENDED that the offices of Clerk and Forest Superintendent be amalgamated. The Committee, having taken into account the service of Commander Angell as Forest Superintendent and his detailed knowledge of the Forest and the fact that he has worked closely with the Clerk in the Clerk's office from time to

time, RECOMMEND that he be appointed Clerk and Forest Superintendent to succeed Mr. Williams. His terms of employment to be as follows:

(a) Salary £2,000 per annum.

(b) The employment to be determinable by six months notice- on either side

(c) Four weeks holiday in a year. Not more than two weeks to be taken at any time- and no leave to be permitted during the Fire Season.

(d) The normal expenses and allowances at present granted to him as Forest Superintendent to be continued, e.g. a proportion of his telephone expenses at his private house and his travelling expenses in connection with his employment to be paid by the Board.

2. Offices At its first meeting the Committee decided to RECOMMEND that the Board should have its own office and equipment and staff and should remain entirely independent of any Local Government Authority. The Clerk was instructed to enquire whether any office accommodation was available in the villages of Forest Row and Nutley, these two areas being considered the most suitable and central for new office accommodation. No accommodation could be found in Nutley but the following accommodation it is believed is still on the market and the details are given below:

(a) The Village Memorial Hall at Forest Row. This is the Hall in which the Board used to hold its meetings. At the northern end of the building there is a large room at present used by the Working Mens Club. This Club is proposing to move to new premises which it is building and the Village Hall Committee desires to let the whole or part of the Club Room as offices. Although in some respects this accommodation would be suitable it is considered by the Clerk and Forest Superintendent, who have inspected it, that it will not be ready for occupation for at least 12 months. The Committee Room on the first floor at the south end of the building which the Board in also occupied in the past for Board meetings and a similar room occupied by the British Legion were also offered but the rooms are separated by a passageway at the head of the stairs which would not be very convenient and both rooms could not be available until the British Legion has moved from the room it occupies to the Working Mens Club which of course would result in a delay of obtaining possession of one of the rooms if not both of them for at least twelve months. The Committee RECOMMENDS that in all the circumstances the offer of accommodation at the Village Memorial Hall at Forest Row be not accepted.

(b) No. 9 The Parade, Forest Row. The Parade is a small group of shops on the north side of the Hartfield Road leading from Forest Row and on the ground floor of No. 9 is a Watch Repairer's shop. As the side of the shop is a separate entrance leading to a small storeroom on the ground floor and to three adequate offices with lavatory and washing facilities on the first floor. Vacant possession can be obtained in the reasonably near future and certainly before the 25th March 1972. The offices are let on a lease which has 11 years unexpired at a rental for the next four years of £340 p.a. after which there is a rent review clause in the Lease and in all probability the rent would be increased. It is impossible to forecast accurately what the rental would be in four years time but it might be £500 p.a. These offices would be suitable.

(c) No. 10 Hartfield Road. This is a small house which, with the adjoining shop, was used as private residence and cafe until quite recently. The house is immediately next to Messrs. Jacksons the electrical and radio engineer and it is painted pink on the outside. This is an old property but it is perfectly suitable for offices having slightly more accommodation than No. 9 The Parade although the individual rooms are very much smaller. At the rear there is a small garden which could accommodate two small cars for parking purposes but in any case the back gate leads directly onto the village car park at Forest Row and would have this considerable advantage over 9 The Parade, which is several hundred yards further down the Hartfield Road from the car park. This property is not to let and is for sale freehold at the price of £4,000. The Clerk has ascertained that, in all probability, the Uckfield R.D.C. would give planning permission for the use of the property as offices by the Board. The Clerk, bearing in mind Section 13 of the Ashdown Forest Act 1937, has applied to the Department of Environment for provisional loan sanction for the purchase price but at the date of the preparation of this Report no communication has been received from the Department as it has in turn to consult the Ministry of Agriculture. It is thought however that loan sanction would be forthcoming and if so the Board would expect to have to pay the current rate of interest on a loan of £4,000 which would be in the region of 8% to 8½%. In the meantime the Clerk has ascertained from the Board's Bankers, Barclays Bank Limited that bridging facilities would be readily available.

A short preliminary report on this property was obtained from Messrs. Wm. Wood, Son & Gardner which did not go into very much detail but considered it rather a poor cottage which seems to have been decorated for sale purposes and it is one that will obviously require constant maintenance. In spite of this report the Committee considered that a more detailed investigation should be undertaken by an architect and Mr. P.J.D. Tetley of Messrs.

R.H. & R.W. Clutton has been asked to make a full and thorough inspection of the property and to report. If this report is not received in time for circulation to Members beforehand copies will be available to Members at the Board meeting on the 8th September at 2.30 p.m. at Colemans Hatch.

Having considered all matters relating to the two properties which are available, the Committee RECOMMENDS the purchase of No. 10 Hartfield Road as although during the first four years the revenue costs may be slightly higher than No. 9 The Parade in the long run it will be a cheaper proposition and the Board will have the additional security of owning its own property. It should be large enough as offices for all the Board's requirements in the foreseeable future. It is centrally positioned in the village with adequate parking facilities and close to Barclays Bank and the Post Office. The provision for a small ***** and sufficient to discharge the loan of £4,000 in 20 year has been *****.

Members of the Board are invited to look at the accompanying Schedule headed 9 The Parade and 10 Hartfield Road and their attention is drawn to the left hand column which shows the present annual expenditure and on the right hand column headed capital outlay and future annual expenditure. In each case there is set out the amount of furniture and office equipment which will be required and the costs thereof. The Board's present capital invested in Stock Exchange securities should prove sufficient if realised to defray the capital expenditure on No. 10 Hartfield Road which requires the greater outlay. It has not been possible in the case of 10 Hartfield Road to give accurate figures concerning the heating but if the generous free offer of a small oil central heating plant by a Member of the Board is accepted, and this depends on the Boiler being suitable for the premises, the heating costs from a capital angle could be considerably less than that stated. Great emphasis must be placed on the fact that office accommodation in the villages bordering the Forest is extremely difficult to find and there can be no guarantee that on the 8th September either of the above mentioned properties will be still be available but if they are available the Committee urges the Board to come to a final decision so that the necessary instructions to implement it can be given to the Clerk forthwith.

ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE ON NEW OFFICES AND ADMINISTRATION

Purchase – 10 Hartfield Road : Rent – 9 The Parade

PRESENT ANNUAL	<u>SALARIES</u>	CAPITAL OUTLAY		FUTURE ANNUAL	
		Purchase/Rent		Purchase / Rent	
600	Clerk				
1,535	Forest Superintendent	2000		2000	
154	National Insurance etc.154			154	
600	Bookkeeper	520		520	
	National Insurance etc.72			72	
230	Secretary	520		520	
	National Insurance etc.	72		72	
40	Office Staff				
	Office cleaner	52		52	
80	Auditor		80		80
	Solicitor	100		100	
	<u>OFFICE</u>				
100	Hire of Office				
	Interest on loan of £4,000 or rent	320		340	
	Redemption of Capital	200			
	Repairs Alterations etc.250 25	100	25		
	Rates, Water Rates, etc.		78	32	
	Legal fees, Survey etc. 100 25				
	Heat and Light 130	30	85	85	
	Telephone and Postage	5	5	90	90
TOTAL(in round figures)		500	100	4500	4300
	<u>FURNITURE</u>				
	<u>Clerk's Office</u>				
	1 Desk , Burndale NSD60	42	42		

1 Desk Chair, Verco 636	22	22
2 Chairs, Verco 638	24	24
1 Steel Cupboard, Bisley C2	19	19
1 Map Table	10	10
Carpet	25	25
W.P.B., Notice Boards etc.	10	10

Secretary's Office

1 Typing Desk, Burndale NSS 48	26	26
1 work table, Burndale NST 54	21	221
1 typists chair Westminster 301	15	15
2 Chairs, Verco 638	24	24
1 steel cupboard, Bisley C4 shelving	20	29
1 typewriter, second hand	60	60
rug	10	10
W.P.B., Notice Boards		10 10
1 Safe, Guardian GS3A		55 55
Cash Box	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
	421	421

TOTAL CAPITAL OUTLAY (in
round figures)

£1000 £1000

NOTE: The figures shown are based on 1971 Estimates and 1971 prices. The other administrative expenses listed in the yearly estimates are not shown here as they will not be affected by the proposed changes.

The Chairman commented briefly on the report. Mr. Ellison stated that in his opinion the affairs of the Board were in a state of flux and although it was considering the appointment of a new Clerk it was right that members should consider at the same time the question of accommodation as these two matters were bound together. In his opinion this was the wrong time to purchase a property and the Board should, if possible, try to rent offices. He said it would be difficult to persuade the Uckfield Rural District Council to contribute to the Boards deficit if it showed an increase of £1,000 more than the present deficit. He considered that at this point in time consideration should be given to having the administration carried out by some Local Authority with an office fully equipped to deal with the collection of rates and other sources of revenue. He asked if the Special Purposes Committee has considered offering the position of Clerk to say a Parish Clerk. In the opinion of his Council he said the administration costs were far too high. The Clerk then pointed out that the main work connected with Ashdown Forest was that of administration and he quoted from a newspaper report the total expenditure of the Park Planning Board in the sum of £175,000 of which £100,000 went on administration. He gave it as his opinion that the administrative costs of Ashdown Forest would always form a high percentage of the total costs of the Forest. Mr. Drew said that he had had conversations with the East Sussex County Council and he had been assured that if the Council took over the administration of the Forest the cost of doing so would greatly exceed the present administrative costs. Mr. Dascombe said that in his opinion Mr. Ellison's remarks, constituted a proposal to refer the whole of the matter back to the Special Purposes Committee and he would second the proposition. He considered it imprudent to embark on any long term administration projects and the present considerations should be viewed in the light of a holding operation only. He further considered that the East Sussex County Council, and the Uckfield R.D.C., should have been consulted before the matter was laid before the Board. He was of the opinion that the administrative costs were too high and that the Uckfield R.D.C were capable of, taking over the administration. Various members including the Chairman gave their opinions concerning the administration being vested in the Local Authority and on a resolution that the report be referred back to the Special Purposes Committee as proposed by Mr. Ellison and seconded by Mr. Dascombe four were in favour and ten were against and the resolution was lost.

Mr. Drew then proposed that Commander J.P. Angell be appointed Clerk in succession to Mr. Williams combining his duties as Forest Superintendent with those of Clerk at a salary of £2,000 per annum. Captain Armstrong seconded the resolution but did not agree to a salary of £2,000 considering it should be less. After a further discussion it was agreed that the salary should be in the region of £2,000 per annum and for the purpose of grading it should be linked to a similar grade in Local Government. Mr. Grimston suggested that one of the ministry of Agriculture grades might be suitable, the figure of £2,000 (£100 either way) was purposely left in this way so this could finally be determined by grading. Captain Armstrong then moved an amendment accorded by Mr. Gillham that the salary should be decided after further consideration. This resolution was put to the vote and there were seven in favour and seven against but the amendment was lost by the Chairman's casting vote. The substantive resolution was then put to the Board and it was carried by eight votes to five.

For the purposes of clarity the resolution was:

(A) The salary to be in the region of £8,000 per annum (£100 either way), the actual figure to be determined in accordance with the grade to which it would be attached.

(B) The employment to be determinable by six month's notice on either side.

(C) Four weeks holiday in a year. No more than two weeks to be taken at any one time and no leave to be taken during the fire season.

(D) The normal expenses and allowances at present granted to Commander Angell as Forest Superintendent to be continued, e.g. a proportion of his telephone expenses at his private house and his travel expenses in connection with his employment to be paid by the Board.

Commander Angell was then called in to join the meeting and was offered employment as Clerk and Forest Superintendent on the terms contained in the resolution. He accepted the offer and thanked the Board for its consideration.

5. OFFICES. Before consideration of the report of the Special Purposes Committee the Chairman reported that Major Grubb had suggested that as in the near future the East Grinstead U.D.C. and the Uckfield R.D.C. would be amalgamated into one Local Authority there would be plenty of cheap surplus accommodation either at East Court or Crowborough and this should be investigated before any further steps in regard to offices were taken. He then reported that he had accompanied Captain Armstrong to Wrens Warren and described that property very shortly. Captain Armstrong considered it was good office accommodation overall being suitable as a Depot.

Colonel Lowe then corrected one omission from the report of the Special Purposes Committee concerning the Village Memorial Hall at Forest Row. He pointed out that one of the two rooms could be available almost immediately and the other room now occupied by the British Legion might shortly be available. On being asked his preference for office accommodation the Forest Superintendent stated that he would be preferred No. 10 Hartfield Road. The matter was then open to discussion and the Clerk read to the meeting a report on No. 10 Hartfield Road Forest Row by Mr. P.I.D. Tetley of Messrs. R.H. & R.W. Clutton which set out in detail the defects of the property and the costs of putting it into a reasonable state of repair. After a further debate Colonel Lowe proposed and Mr. Ellison seconded that the offer by the Forest Row Memorial Hall Committee to rent the two Committee rooms at £520 per annum, inclusive of rates, heating and lighting to be accepted. The resolution was passed by seven votes to five. The Clerk reminded the meeting that the Village Memorial Hall Committee could only offer six months security of tenure at any time and the Board could not get a tenancy agreement of longer duration although he had been assured that the tenancy would be renewed every six months.

It was agreed that if the offices were available by the 31st December Mr. Williams should hand over the office of Clerk and the affairs of the Board to Commander Angell at that date.

There being no other business the meeting was concluded.

PRESENT: Mr. G.J. Mountain in the Chair; Col. J.H. Lowe; Mr. J.H. Drew; Mr. A.W.C Dascombe; Lady B. Brind; Miss A. Lumsden; Mr. R. St.G. Clarke; Cpt. D.H.F. .Armstrong; The Hon. C.A.S. Grimston; Mr. W.D. Gilham; Mr. R.F.J. Brooke; Mr. D.J. Stradwick; Mr. J.R. Greenwood; Mr. G.M. Raikes; Major R.E.W. Grubb; Mr. C.W. Shelford,

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Mrs. U.M. Ridley.

MINUTES: The Minutes of the meetings held on the 21st July and 8th September having been circulated were approved subject to one small amendment.

MATTERS ARISING:

(a) Horse riding. The Chairman made a brief report on a meeting which had been organised by the Clerk at Fairwarp Village Hall at which he had attended together with some 30 other local residents. Although there was some criticism of the new riding regulations on the whole the meeting was amiable and provided for a frank exchange of views. As a result of the meeting the Chairman recommended a slight alteration in the regulations which concerned the main proposed approach bridle path from the south and he recommended that this should be varied so that horse riders could ride freely on that part of the Forest without keeping to one track but as sum as they reached the area where there were several dwelling houses they should keep to the bridle path already recommended. After a brief discussion the Chairman's recommendation was adopted and the Clerk was instructed to alter the horse riding regulations.

(b) The Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club. The Chairman reported that following the meeting on the 21st July the Special Purposes Committee had considered what should be done about the earth works constructed by the Golf Club Committee without permission and that they had taken the opportunity of meeting members of that Committee. The Special Purposes Committee finally decided that the unsightliness of the earth works would be sufficiently removed if the sleepers were cut horizontally just above the metal strips which bound them together and the whole of the top of the bank above were lowered and re-turfed. He further reported that this work had been carried out and completed and generally the position was now satisfactory. The Board confirmed the action of the Chairman and Special Purposes Committee.

(c) Pop Festivals at Duddleswell and Nutley. The Clerk reported that neither of these Festivals had had any adverse effect on Ashdown Forest.

(d) Purchase of a second hand Land Rover. The Forest Superintendent reported the purchase of a second hand Land Rover approved by the Board at the meeting on the 21st July and the vehicle was satisfactory.

(e) New offices at Forest Row Village Hall. The Clerk read a letter to the Board from the Secretary of the Forest Row Village Memorial Hall Committee confirming the letting of two rooms to the Board for use as offices. One room was to be available on the 15th November and the second room, now occupied by the British Legion, to be available on the 1st January next.

The Clerk advised that a written tenancy agreement should be prepared and this was agreed to.

FINANCE:

Financial Statement as at 20th October 1971

	1971	1970
Bank Balances		
General Account	3,042.87	2516.00
Wages and Petty Cash Account	321.25 0/D	575.00
Licence Account	NIL	NIL
	2.	

The following amounts have been collected since January 1st 1971

Forest Acknowledgement Rates	Temporary Licences	Horse L.A. Riding Contributions
£844.79	£1105.81	£79.50 £163.75 £8660.44

East Sussex County Council	£7,210.44
Uckfield Rural District Councils	1,000.00
Cuckfield R.D.C.	250.00
East Grinstead U.D.C.	<u>200.00</u> <u>£8660.44</u>

Cheques for £10 in favour of Messrs. R.H. & R.W. Clutton for their survey fee on 10 Hartfield Road and for Messrs. Wm. Wood, Son & Gardner £20 were presented and it was resolved they be signed. The Clerk explained that the Wages & Petty cash account was overdrawn because the monthly transfer had not been altered for more than 12 months and it therefore did not take account of the last increase in wages and salaries or the increasing costs of petrol and repairs. He suggested that the matter could be adjusted if the Board resolved to transfer £1000 from General account to Wages and Petty cash account and further resolved as from the 1st January next to transfer a sum equal to the annual income of the Board less the Clerk's salary by equal monthly instalments. As Bank statements were produced at each Board Meeting the Board would have control over the Clerk's expenditure but the Clerk would not be able to pay himself his own salary. It was resolved as follows:

- (a) To transfer £1000 from General account to wages and petty cash account and a cheque was signed accordingly.
- (b) As from the 1st January 1972 the revenue of the Board according to the estimates should be divided by 12 after the Clerk's salary had been deducted therefrom and a standing order from Barclays Bank Ltd. be given for 12 monthly transfers of the balance. Mr. Shelford reported that the East Sussex County Council was now ready to resume discussions on the future constitution of the Board of Conservators arising out of the report of the Working Party and as the Council would be willing to meet representatives of the Board at a date to be agreed, it was resolved that the Chairman, Col. Lowe, Mr. Drew and Mr. Grimston be appointed to represent the Board and the Lord of the Manor.

THE FOREST SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: The Forest Superintendent stated that there was little to report. The two Patrolmen who had been on duty during the Summer were now off for the Winter and both Mr. Collinson and Mr. Hampner had given very good service. The re-seeded firebreaks were now growing very well.

This year as in other years there have been several bonfires built on the Forest and as is usual the small boys cut Birch without authority. It is impossible to stop this but in general very little lasting damage is done.

FOREST ROW RECREATION GROUND. The Clerk read a letter from Mr. C.E. Cook who represented the Forest Row War Memorial Recreation Ground Management Committee (a copy of which is set out below). He then read a letter from Mr. Shoebridge (a copy of which is set out below). The Clerk suggested that as the parties did not seem to be able to agree on working together the only solution was to set up two Committees, one the existing Forest Row War Memorial Recreation Ground Management Committee and another Committee consisting of representatives of the Cricket and Football Clubs and any other games clubs which used the ground, on which Committee it would be necessary for a member of the Board to sit to represent the Board. He further suggested that two Licences should be drawn up on the lines of the existing licence for the Colemans Hatch Bowls Club and these licences should regulate the cricket and football pitches and the pavilion and the use to which it could be put. After a general discussion the Clerk's proposal was adopted and instructions were given to proceed.

Letter from Mr. Cook.

FOREST ROW WAR MEMORIAL RECREATION GROUND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Tile Barn,
Forest Row,

Mr. P. Williams,
Clerk to the Conservators
1 & 2 Judges Terrace,
East Grinstead, Sussex.

23rd August 1931

Dear Mr. Williams,

Further to our discussion on Friday 20th last. During the years I have been associated with this Committee. I have attempted to put the running of the Recreation Ground and Pavilion on a firm footing and we have had some successes but we are now at the stage where the fundamental problems have been uncovered. The problem is basically finance - who is to be responsible for the Recreation Ground and the Memorial Pavilion and where is the money to come from?

Many Memorial Halls and the like qualify for charitable status: if the Pavilion only serves sports then this status is denied the Management and fund raising cannot have the benefit of covenants and capital expenditure does not get the benefit of grants. Similarly because the user clubs do not have a lease or other formal document guaranteeing tenure they too cannot obtain grants and subsidies from the recognised sports promoting bodies.

On top of this is the fact that the present Management Committee lacks authority and cannot enforce proper charges and rates for the facilities.

I believe it is now important for the Conservators to review the situation and update their arrangements which relate to the Forest Row Recreation Ground: it seems to me that the Conservators must decide who is to be responsible for the Recreation Ground, its maintenance, management and usage and to whom they will grant a licence for the management and operation of the Pavilion: it could, of course, be the same body in each case but my personal view is otherwise. You will be aware that the only licence granted by the Conservators in relation to the Memorial Pavilion is that to three named Trustees of the War Memorial Fund which has long since been spent - for the laying and maintenance of underground services.

I would like to put before the next Management Committee - which will be held on the 20th September - several possibilities and to this end would welcome your replies to the following specific questions.

1. Are the Conservators prepared to grant a licence to the existing Committee making this Committee responsible for the running of the entire Recreation Ground and endowing the Committee with the right to charge users of the facilities as they see fit?
2. Would the Conservators grant to a Memorial Management Committee the right to maintain and operate for the public good the tennis courts, Pavilion, car park and levelled area of the Recreation Ground (bowling green) with, of course, the absolute right to decide who shall use those facilities and at what rates?
3. Are the Conservators prepared to grant a licence to the Forest Row Football Club giving them the exclusive right to arrange organised football matches on the Recreation Ground and endowing them with the responsibility for the provision of the necessary facility?
4. Are the Conservators prepared to grant a similar licence in respect of cricket to the Forest Row Cricket Club?

I envisage that the Conservators would wish only to grant licences in respect of Organisations which have a Constitution of which they approve the present Management Committee has a Constitution which is not entirely satisfactory I believe that neither the Cricket nor Football Clubs have formal Constitutions, Rules or Bye-laws.

Whilst many may say that the Recreation Ground always has operated satisfactorily this is by no means true. There have been repeated financial crises since 1945; the Parish grant (at one time non-existent) is now running at 10% of the entire Parish rate, a special penny rate had to be raised to renovate the tennis courts and the ground has had the benefit of the occasional Windfall, e.g. contribution from the Festival Committee, sale of Forest Row Silver Band instruments etc. It should also be appreciated by the Conservators that changing social patterns and habits and the increased pressure on recreational space both mean that what was satisfactory ten, twenty, thirty or forty years ago will not necessarily be satisfactory today let alone in ten or twenty years time. It is time to up-date the arrangements. It is no longer sufficient simply to appoint a Superintendent of the Recreation Ground and leave it as that.

If I can be of further assistance in any way please let me know but I would very much welcome your answers to the specific question above in time for the next Management Meeting.

Yours sincerely,
C.E. COOK

Letter from Mr. Shoebridge.

28 Post Horse Lane,
Forest Row, Sx.

30th August 1971

Dear Sir,

In replying to your letter, we the Forest Row Cricket and Football Clubs would like the Board of the Conservators of Ashdown Forest to clarify for us our position with the Forest Row War Memorial Committee who in the past few months have tried to lay down certain conditions which we the above Clubs find totally unacceptable, and, as no agreement can be reached between the two parties concerned, would you please advise us whether they have the power to impose these conditions on us.

- (1) Can the War Memorial Committee charge the Cricket and Football court rent for the use of the Forest Row Cricket and Football Pitches? ?
- (2) Can this Committee state what hours the above Clubs can play or practise?
- (3) Can this Committee let these pitches out to any other Clubs for a fee?

Yours faithfully,

G. SHOEBRIDGE

FENCING THE A.22 The Clerk read a letter from the East Sussex County Council Surveyor:

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL
Roads and Bridges Department.

Southover Road,
Lewes , Sussex..
21st July 1971

Dear Sir,

Suggested Fencing on Ashdown Forest.

You will recollect, that in December 1967, the Conservators approved a suggestion that the east side of A.22 should be fenced from Pippingford Park to Fords Green and that a contribution of £S00 would be available towards the cost if the County Council accepted the suggestion and carried out the work.

At their meeting in January 1969, the Roads and Bridges Committee decided to take no action at that time but to ask the Conservators to give further consideration to the scheme in the light of observations which are set out in my Deputy's letter to you dated 22nd January 1968.

In view of a number of accidents involving animals which have been reported, the Roads and Bridges Committee has now given further consideration to this question. I enclose two copies of Drawing No. T/043 showing suggested positions for the fencing, gates and cattle grids which would be necessary and I should be obliged if you would now place the scheme before the Conservators for consideration.

When the Conservators put forward the original suggestion it was understood that if it was accepted the Commoners would forego their grazing rights on that part of the Forest west of the A22. This would still be necessary to make the present scheme effective, and I should be grateful if you would ascertain whether it is acceptable.

To the extent that Section 194 of the Law of Property Act 1925 may apply to the suggested fencing it would be necessary to obtain the consent of the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. For this purpose it would be proper to take into account not only the public benefit but also the benefit to private interests. At your meeting with my Deputy on 14th August 1967 you expressed the view that such a scheme would be beneficial to the grazing of the Forest, by allowing larger numbers of sheep to be safely grazed and I should be glad to know whether in the view of the Conservators this is still the case.

Could you also inform me whether any contribution towards the cost of the scheme would still be available.

I should be grateful if you would inform me of the Conservators' views as soon as you are able so that I can report them to an early meeting of the Roads and Bridges Committee.

Yours faithfully,

SIGNED....M. Cheney
County Surveyor

The Clerk reported that a similar proposal had been before the Board three years ago and had also been discussed at the Commoners Meeting that year. It would be necessary to place this new proposal before the Commoners and he advised the Board to delay any decision on the matter until the views of the Commoners had been ascertained.

After a general discussion the Clerk was instructed to clarify the following points with the County Council.

- (1) The Type of Fencing to be used.
- (2) The responsibility for maintenance of the fencing

and to point out that the fencing would not entail Commoners foregoing their rights of common to the west of the fence line but that it would act in such a way as to improve grazing on the east side.

ESTIMATES:- The proposed estimates for 1972 were considered, It was agreed that

- (a) The Clerk's Salary should be in accordance with the Local Government rate for Administration and Professional Officers Grade 4 commencing at the £2,055 level.
- (b) The wages of the Rangers, Tractor Driver and Patrolmen should be increased by 9 1/2% in line with the agricultural workers wages award announced on the 19th October
- (c) The Head Ranger should be awarded an additional £1 per week in view of his increased responsibilities
- (d) The sum of £300 for office furniture etc. should be left in the estimates and, as a result the sundry receipts increased to £60 (representing the income on investments which would not now be realised)

CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOR ST 1972 ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE
AND INCOME

October 20th 1971

1971 ESTIMATES	EXPENDITURE	1972 ESTIMATES
	<u>Salaries and Wages</u>	
2,174	Clerk and Forest Superintendent	2,055
600	Bookkeeper	520
230	Secretary	520
40	Office Staff	-
(Office Cleaner	52
(Rangers	2,872
4,321	(Tractor Driver	1,871 (a)
(Petroleum	387
7,365	Nat Insurance, Superannuation etc.	554 8121
	<u>Office Expenses</u>	
100	Hire	520
50	Heat and Light	-
	Re-decoration	25
80	Post and Telephone	90
80	Auditor	80
	Solicitor	100
30	Room Hire and Travel	30
5	Bank Charges	20
20	Advertising	30
50	Insurance	50
400	Printing and Stationery	150
35	Audit Stamp Duty	35
30 880	Sundries	30 1160

Equipment of New Office

Furniture, Telephone and Radio

Installation 500 500

Forest Expenses

30	Forest Superintendent Expenses	30	
185	Rangers Telephone, Uniform and misc.	135	
600	Transport	700	
600	Machinery running expenses	700	
150	Hire of Machinery	250 (b)	
400	Forest improvements	400	
60	Notice Boards		
	Litter Baskets	180 (c)	
100	Sundries	205 (d)	
210	Radio Equipment Maintenance		230
75	Depot - Rates, Electricity, Tel	75	
100	2570 Depot Buildings	15	2920

Capital Expenditure

575 Replacement Mini-Pick-Up (Old one 55,000 miles) 487

25 Irrecoverable Acknowledgement Rent and rates 25

£11415£13213NOTES

Establishment of riding rates	(a) Casual Labour	60	
	(b) Hire of Machinery	150	
	(c) Notices	60	
	(d) Sundry Materials	<u>105</u>	
		375	
		=====	

1971 ESTIMATES	INCOME		1972 ESTIMATES
	Estimated Normal. Income		
194	Rate at 6	194	
1058	Acknowledgement Rents		1115
123	Temporary Licences	123	
144	Horse Riding	450	
60	1579 Sundry Receipts	60	1942
	<u>931</u> Additional Rate Income		<u>931</u>
	<u>2510</u>		<u>2873</u>
11415	Total Estimated Expenditure	13213	
2510	Total Estimated Income	2873	
£8905	Estimated Deficit	£10940	

The Clerk was instructed to make these amendments. The Chairman proposed the adoption of the Estimates, this was seconded by Captain Armstrong and the Resolution was carried.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS: There being no other business the meeting was concluded.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMONERS OF ASHDOWN FOREST HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL, HARTFIELD, ON 7TH DECEMBER, 1971 AT 7.30 P.M.

PRESENT: Anne Sheldrick; C.S. Tile; D.E. Tile; David Evatt; C.E. Cook; W.J. Shearing; D.H.F. Armstrong; N.W. Elms; R.K. Stinton; R.L. Stinton; R.L. Ridley; R.E.W. Grubb; F.B. Cornwell; W.D. Gillham; H.S. Stevenson; D.C. Baker; Derek Evatt; A. Lumsden; R.J. Lumsden; A.B. Bodd; P. Gray; A.C. Squarey; E. Squarey; A.K. Harvey; R. Brooke; J. Williams; F. Kennard; J.S. Struthers; E.C. Huntley; E.R. Glover; Reg. Glover; M.M. Sibley; B.T. Sibley; Mr. & Mrs. Perring; Mrs Mary Keith; Miss CH. Wood; Miss P.M. Shaw; Mrs. C.H. Blakiston; Mr, & Mrs Howell; Barbara Willard; Donald S. Carter; W.S. Hoath; Christopher R. Stephens; H. Osborne; W. Gent; Mrs J. Balfour-Smith; Edward Fariday; Mrs. Fariday; T. Townsend; M. Tomkinson; L.H. Smith; B.S. Evans; Mrs. H.W. Mance; H.W. Mance; V.W. Beedles; M. Hall; Mrs. A.O. Chambers; Basil H. Chambers; Sylvia Philip; N.L. Philip; Keith Hunter; Michael Hall; Edward Twentyman.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from: Mr. J.H. Drew; Colonel J.H. Lowe; Lady Ross and Miss Ryder.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN.

The Clerk, after welcoming the Commoners to the 85th meeting, called for proposals for election to the office of Chairman. Mr. Townsend proposed and Mr. Evatt seconded that Mr. Mountain should take the chair and this proposal was carried unanimously.

4. NOTICE CONVENING MEETING.

The Clerk then read the notice convening the meeting.

5. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

The Clerk read the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting, which were approved and signed by the Chairman.

6. ELECTION OF CONSERVATORS.

The Chairman reported that Mr. J.H. Drew, Mr. R.F.J. Brooke and Mr. G.J. Mountain had retired from the Board by rotation, but offered themselves for re-election. There had been no other nominations and he therefore declared them re-elected.

7. ELECTION OF RECREATION GROUND SUPERINTENDENTS. The Recreation Ground Superintendents were elected en bloc as follows:-

	Forest Row	Col. J.H. Lowe
Colemans Hatch	Mr. J.H. Drew	
	Nutley	Mr. W.D. Gillham
St. Johns Crowborough	Mr. E.W. Ellison	
	Fairwarp	Mr. A. K. Harvey
	Chelwood Gate	Mr. R.St.G. Clarke or Miss A. Lumsden.

8. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman reported that the year had been relatively uneventful on the Forest. The Conservators had pursued their policy of running the Forest for the maximum enjoyment of all. The proposal to re-seed the ploughed strips on the firebreaks, which he had mentioned last year, had been proceeded with and he reported a very satisfactory take of the grass seed. This re-seeding had only been possible due to the generosity of the Friends of Ashdown Forest, who had donated over £300 for the purpose. Other gifts during the year included the provision of new maps of the Forest and of 12 seats. Contributions by the Friends must now total some £10,000, which was a remarkable achievement and deserving all our thanks.

The Chairman went on to tell the meeting of the appointment of the Working Party to plan the future of the Forest, but regretted that he was unable to give details of their report because it had not yet been adopted by the Board. He stated that after adoption a summary of the report would be circulated to all Commoners, and that the full report would be available for perusal at the office.

He would then call a special meeting of the Commoners to discuss the report and urged all Commoners to attend. The Chairman concluded with tributes to Lt. Cdr. Angell, Rangers Arnold and Linton, Mr. Kemp and the two patrolmen.

9. PROPOSAL TO FENCE A PORTION OF THE A.22 HIGHWAY

The Clerk read correspondence with the East Sussex County Council and said that the Commoners were being asked to give their approval or otherwise for the general principle of fencing one side of the main A.22 highway from Pippingford Park to the southern extremity of the Forest at Cackle Street. He stressed that those present could express their own opinions on the limitations of grazing, but they could in no way commit others or those who came after. The right to graze the whole Forest would remain. Their views were particularly requested to take into consideration:

(a) The Prevention of Accidents

(b) The Safety of Grazing

Mr. Stevenson said that he would not like to see fencing and that accidents were better prevented by improvements to the road. Mr. Ridley stated that Ashdown Forest was as the Romans left it and it should remain so with no fencing. Mr. Humphrey considered that no decision should be taken without a written vote being taken from every Commoner, he himself was against fencing. Mr. Lumsden pointed out that the Forest had been retained by the Commoners insisting on their rights in the past, but that the present day Commoner was prevented from exercising those, rights due to the danger to livestock. The only way to preserve the rights of the Commoners was to fence, and he thought that the experiment should be tried to see if it brought more stock back to the Forest. Mr. Gent thought that fencing was essential. Lack of grazing combined with the limitation of fires was causing the Forest to become overgrown. Heavier stocking, which would be encouraged by fencing, would help to solve this. Mrs. Balfour-Smith agreed with this and stated that she for one would put out stock if the roads were fenced. Mr. Perring, while personally disliking the thought of fences on the Forest, considered that the farmers should be asked to state if they would graze more if the road was fenced. Miss Lumsden stated that she would do so and Mr. Osborne stated that he would greatly increase the number of sheep he turned out. Mr. Humphrey said he would not put out more stock and he considered that more sheep were killed at the Forest Row end of the Forest and that the proposed fence would not solve anything.

Miss Willard suggested that a ha-ha could be used instead of a fence but the sheep farmers considered this to be impracticable. Mr. Glover was afraid that a fence might induce some people to put out sheep and neglect them. Mrs. Tomkinson was worried about the dangers that might be caused by the fencing in case of fire. Other Commoners felt that slowing the traffic would be as great a contribution to safety as fences.

A vote was taken by a show of hands and the Commoners declared their support in principle to fencing this section of the roadway by 37 votes to 17.

Mr. Gent expressed the view that fencing this section of the A.22 would not help the overall problem of safety on the roads due to animals. He considered that the County Council should be asked to try and slow the traffic down. Various speakers suggested methods of doing this and the following proposal was put to the meeting:-

"That the County Council be asked to look into all methods, including the use of notices and cattle grids, of slowing down traffic on all roads across Ashdown Forest."

This was proposed by Mr. Twentyman, seconded by Mr. Evatt and adopted by a show of hands by 40 votes to 2.

10. GENERAL BUSINESS

Mr. Tile asked if the Conservators were able to stop future Pop Festivals being held on the Forest area. The Chairman explained that the Board had no power to interfere with any activities on private land but that they considered that such functions were out of keeping with the Forest and had adopted a policy of denying help and co-operation. Mr. Stevenson asked about the recent meeting on horse-riding at Fairwarp and why the Commoners had not been informed of it. The Chairman replied that the meeting had been called to answer specific complaints about the horse-riding regulations from people in Fairwarp and that the Board had been able to go some way towards satisfying those complaints.

The Chairman then paid a handsome tribute to the retiring Clerk, Mr. P.A. Williams. Mr. Williams has been Clerk for 20 years and Mr. Mountain stated that no man had worked, longer or harder for the Forest. As a Commoner himself, Mr. Williams had always had the interests of the Commoners in mind when advising the Board but had,

none the less, always given sound and impartial advice. He trusted that Mr. Williams would be present at Commoners meetings for many years to come and that his views would be expressed from the floor.

Mr. Williams thanked the Chairman for his kind words and said how much he had enjoyed the Commoners Meetings over the years. He was glad that his last meeting as Clerk was a lively one in the old tradition of Commoners.

There being no other business the meeting was concluded.

MINUTES OF A TESTING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST, HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, COLEMANS HATCH, ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15TH 1971, AT 2.30 P.M.

PRESENT: Mr, G.J. Mountain (in the Chair); Lady E. Brind; Mrs U. Ridley; Miss A. Lumsden; Lord Buckhurst; Major R. Grubb; Col. J.H. Lowe; Capt. D.H.F. Armstrong; Messrs: R.St.G. Clarke; R.F.J. Brooke; D.J. Stradwick; E.V. Ellison; A.W.C. Dascombe; C.W. Shelford; F.B. Cornwell; G.M. Raikes; J.R. Greenwood and W.D. Gillham. Also present was Lord Buckhurst's representative The Hon. C.A.S. Grimston.

THE CHAIRMAN welcomed LORD BUCKHURST. to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE;

Apologies for absence were received from Brigadier L.M. Scott and Hr, J.H. Drew.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Fencing the A22 highway

The Clerk read a letter written to the East Sussex County Council on instructions from the Board asking for further details of the proposed fencing and the Council's reply.

(a) Letter to the County Surveyor, East Sussex County Council dated 21st October 1971

Dear Sir,

Suggested Fencing on Ashdown Forest

I am now in a position to reply to your letter of 21st July last which was placed before the Board of Conservators at their meeting yesterday. Subject to what I have to say below I am instructed to place this matter now before a special meeting of Commoners which will take place on the 7th December and if the Commoners approve of this proposal it will then come before the Board of Conservators on the 15th December and I shall probably have instructions to write to you immediately afterwards.

The Conservators would wish to know in advance what type of fencing it is proposed to erect and who will be responsible for its maintenance, I am told that the County Council cannot accept responsibility for maintaining a fence bordering a motorway and enclosing common land but whether this is so I cannot say but I think this matter should be investigated. The Conservators would certainly not have sufficient funds of their own to maintain the fence and even if they attempted to do so the costs would eventually fall on your Council because it is the chief contributor to the Conservators' annual deficit.

This matter has not been discussed since 1968 with the Commoner who was prepared at that time to contribute £500 towards the cost of the fencing and I do not feel inclined to approach him again until all the outstanding matters have been resolved,

The fourth paragraph in your latter is not quite correct because the Commoners did not agree to forego their grazing rights on the Forest to the west of the A.22. The Commoners grazing on the coast side of the road agreed to the fence being erected because it would improve their grazing rights as it afforded much greater security and protection for the animals. There have not been any flocks of sheep or cattle on the west side of the A.22 except in the Forest Row area for many years and it is not envisaged that anyone will wish to graze animals on the west side south of Wych Gross, but I cannot be sure that in the future some now landowner with common rights will not exercise his rights.

Yours faithfully,

SIGNED: P.A. Williams

Clerk to the Board of Conservators of Ashdown Forest

(b) Letter from County Surveyor. East Sussex County Council, to the Clerk to the Conservators of Ashdown Forest dated 15th November. 1971:

Dear Sir,

London - Eastbourne Road A.22 - Fencing of Ashdown Forest.

Thank you for your letter of the 21st October, and I note your proposal to place this matter before a special meeting of the Commoners on the 7th December.

The scheme, particulars of which were included with my letter of the 21st July, was considered by the Roads and Bridges Committee of the County Council whose decision was that in the first instance, the proposals be submitted to the Conservators of Ashdown Forest to obtain their views and that a further report should be made. I think that I should make it quite clear that my Committee are not in fact pressing the matter but are prepared to consider it.

I rate that you feel the Conservators may wish to be satisfied on various matters of detail and those can no doubt be resolved by our representatives when the question of the provision of fencing has been resolved.

When submitting my further report to the Committee, I would like to be in a position to furnish then with the information on such matters as:-

- (a) If the Commoners will support the scheme in principle.
- (b) The County Council can expect any contribution towards the cost of providing the fence.
- (c) If the Commoners are willing to forgo any grazing rights on the west side of the road.

Your observations will be of value to the County Council and any remarks you may feel able to give, such as the total of animals at present being grazed on the Forest, the number of Commoners at present exercising their rights, and those who may be entitled to do so etc., would be much appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

COUNTY SURVEYOR.

The Clerk then reported that the question had been discussed at length at the Commoners Meeting held on 7th December, and that by a show of hands the Commoners had accepted in principle that this limited section of the A.22 highway could be fenced. This did not involve the Commoners in any reduction of their grazing rights but merely expressed the opinion of those present that they themselves were prepared to accept the limitations of grazing which the fence would cause, in the interests of road safety and safety of stock. Mr. Brooke stressed that any fence should be sited well back from the highway otherwise it might cause more to be an even greater hazard to road traffic. Captain Armstrong objected to the introduction of fences on the open Forest and suggested that if it has to come, the possibilities of a ha-ha should be investigated. The Chairman agreed that this would be considered when details of the fencing were decided. Major Grubb stressed that only by fencing would cattle be encouraged back on to the Forest and that increased grazing was an essential part of the conservation of the area.

It was AGREED that the Clerk should write to the County Council stating that the Commoners were in favour of the proposal in principle.

4. COMMONERS MEETING

The Clerk reported that at the Commoners Meeting on 7th December the following had been re-elected to the Board:

Mr. G.J. Mountain

Mr. J.H. Drew

Mr. R.F.J. Brooke

5. FOREST RATE

It was proposed by Captain Armstrong and seconded by Miss Ridley that the Forest Rate be fixed for the year 1972 at the following rates:-

£0.50 for an area of less than 2 acres.
£3 for an area of less than 15 acres but not less than 2 acres.
£5 for an area of less than 100 acres but not less than 15 acres.
£6 for an area of less than 200 acres but not less than 100 acres.
£7 for an area of less than 300 acres but not less than 200 acres.
£8 for an area of less than 400 acres but not less than 300 acres.
£9 for an area of less than 500 acres but not less than 400 acres.
£10 for an area of less than 600 acres but not less than 500 acres.

Mr. Cornwell contended that the rate was an undue burden on those Commoners with large acreages situated away from the Forest boundaries, who had no opportunity to exercise their rights of Common. The resolution was adopted by 18 votes to 1.

6. FINANCE

Financial Statement as at 15th December, 1971:-

1) Bank Balances:

	1971	1970
General Account	867.58	1477.00
Wages and Petty Cash Account	111.17	336.00
Licence Account (Conservators only)	170.41	NIL

2) The following accounts have been collected since January 1st, 1971:-

Forest Rate	Acknowledgment Rents	Horse Riding	Temp Licences	L.A. Contribs
£1049.54	£1125.77	£169.25	£122.00	£8660.44

3) The following amounts were due for payment:-

Clerk's salary and expenses £425.00

7. TENDER FOR SALE OF ICE CREAM OF THE FOREST

The Clerk reported that he had received a tender for the sale of ice cream on the Forest for two years 1972-1973-1974 from F.W.W. Ice Cream Supplies for the payment of:

1972 - £400

1973 - £425

1974 - £450

He informed the Board that this Firm held the Licence to sell Ice Cream for the current year, and that they had proved a satisfactory firm in every way. It was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Mr. Gillham that the tender for three years ahead be accepted and this was unanimously AGREED.

8. DATES OF BOARD MEETING FOR 1972

It was AGREED that Board Meetings be held at the Parish Room, Colemans Batch on the following dates:- 16th February; 19th April; 19th July; 18th October; 13th December.

9. BURGLARY AT THE DEPOT

The Forest Superintendent reported that there had been a break-in at the Depot on the night of Friday, 3rd December. A quantity of tools and equipment had been stolen, but the majority of these had already been recovered by the Police and the resultant loss would be small, an insurance claim had been filed.

10. RETIREMENT OF MR. P.A. WILLIAMS as Clerk to the Board of Conservators. Mr. Mountain reminded the Board that this was the last meeting which Mr. Williams would be attending as Clerk to the Board, a position he had held for some 20 years. He paid a generous tribute to Mr. Williams for his unstinted service to the Board and to the welfare of the Forest; for his sound and impartial advice and unfailing good humour. Mrs. Ridley, as one of the long-standing members of the Board, added to this tribute.

Mr. Williams replied thanking the Chairman and Mrs. Ridley for their kind remarks. He said that during his tenure of office the Forest had undergone great changes and that he had always endeavoured to exercise a liberal interpretation of the rules to meet new situations and he hoped that his efforts had gone some way to promote a spirit of harmony amongst the many people of different interests who had come to use the Forest. He had enjoyed his time as Clerk and would continue to take an active interest in its affairs.

THE BOARD THEN WENT INTO COMMITTEE.

11. ADOPTION OF THE WORKING PARTY REPORT

The Chairman explained that, although the Report was written by the Working Party, it must go out as the Report of the Board. He pointed out that if, on any points there was not unanimity, it was important for everyone to vote. He believed that no-one present was authorised to consult the people they represented. In voting, members were only saying that they thought the recommendations they supported were reasonable ones to put before all parties concerned.

PART 1.

The Board approved Part 1 of the Report, subject to certain amendments to historical facts which were written into the Report.

PART 2.

1. The Main Objective.

The Board unanimously approved the objective of "The Constitution and System of Management should be the protection of the Forest from encroachments and trespasses and its preservation as a quiet and natural area of outstanding beauty."

The Board further AGREED that this objective be written into the proposed new Act of Parliament.

2. Ownership of the Forest.

Lord Buckhurst proposed that the third and fourth paragraphs of this section be deleted and that the following paragraph be substituted:

"Whilst he is determined not to give up the ownership he is prepared that Ashdown Forest should be put into an existing Family Trust or a new such Trust. The ownership of the Forest, with the rights and obligations hereafter envisaged, would, therefore, become part of the Family settled states, and thus remain under control of responsible Trustees."

This was AGREED.

3. Rights of the Lord of the Manor.

It was AGREED that the following amendments be made –

Page 15, Line 7:-

The right to dig and work for minerals, e.g. stone quarries, (ADD; "but so as not to prejudice the rights of the Commoners".)

The right to cut and carry away heather and gorse. (DELETE; the words "heather and gorse" and substitute "all other things growing on the Forest except brakes, heather, fern, litter or turf.")

4. Constitution of the Board.

The Chairman explained that before the Report was quite finished there had been unofficial discussions with the County Council, who had asked for a majority on any future Board. He said that the Working Party had considered the Council's arguments and had altered the original recommendation to bring it nearer to the Council's view. The Working Party was unanimous that it was undesirable for the Council to have a majority on the Board,

The Chairman said that in recent weeks there had been further unofficial discussion with the Council, who had asked for the following Constitution-

8 members appointed by the County Council

1 member appointed by Uckfield R.D.C.

3 Commoners

The Lord of the Manor

2 further members co-opted by the Board.

The Chairman pointed out that this would give the Council a majority of 8 to 5, so that they would be able to co-opt two people likely to support their policies and thereafter they would have a majority of 10 to 5.

He said that he bore no animosity towards any of the present Council representatives, but he was apprehensive of the people who might succeed them.

He had asked the Council why they wanted Management Control in addition to financial control which had already been conceded. The reply was that although they were asking for a constitution which would give them Management Control, they envisaged delegating management to a sub-Committee with a substantial proportion of local people on it. The Chairman pointed out that the Management Committee would be powerless as the Board would be supreme.

He had also asked why the Council wished to have supreme control and was told that when the Board's estimates were considered by the Council's Finance Committee they would stand a much better chance of being passed if it could be said that the Council had a majority on the Board,

The Chairman remarked that he thought this was a flimsy excuse for tearing up an arrangement which had served the community well for over 80 years and for handing over the Forest to the Council, especially as the Working Party had recommended that the Council should have no less than 7 members on the Board,

He said that if the Board considered it right to hand over control of the Forest to the Council, they should carry that to its logical conclusion and let the Council run the Forest as they thought fit, including the office, the correspondence, the controversies and the Chairmanship.

He pointed out that 580 Commoners had taken the trouble to register their rights. He believed that the vast majority had done so, not to maintain their rights to cut bracken and firewood but because they love the Forest and wish to have a hand in preserving it. He also drew the Board's attention to a remarkable local Society - The Friends of Ashdown Forest - with a membership of about 420, which had from their voluntary subscriptions given nearly £10,000 worth of equipment to the Board.

He begged the Board not to underestimate the strength of local opinion, and he said that to lose the sympathy of all these people would be **** and stupid. If their antagonism was aroused, running the Forest would become a difficult and unpleasant task. He believed therefore that any proposed Constitution must be one that would be acceptable to the local population.

Mr. Shelford explained the attitude of the East Sussex County Council. The position was that of the Conservators budget of £11,465, the Commoners only found a sum of £1125 and that the local authorities were providing most of the residue. As the Conservators budget inevitably increased, in future years the proportion provided by the East Sussex County Council would increase, for it was unlikely that the Forest Rate could be substantially increased. In spite of their overwhelming share of the finances, the County Council considered that the Forest should still be run by a separate body, namely a Board of Conservators. This should have a majority of the County Council, but further than that the Council would have no wish to co-opt those likely to support their policies. They would wish the co-opted members to be those best qualified and able to help manage the Forest. Mr. Shelford considered it unwise to lay down the constitution of the proposed Sub-Committees. It should comprise those considered most

suitable by the Board. He hoped that the Board and the Management Committee would both consist of members sitting together as Conservators and not taking sides. The County Council were fully in agreement with the main objective of the report and would not wish the Forest to be run in any other way. The County Council would like to put any proposed legislation in hand in the very near future. It might be easier to get full agreement from the present County Council than from the enlarged one that will result from the Local Government re-organisation.

The Council would like to see the proposal adopted for a constitution as follows:

8 County Council

1 Lord of the Manor or his representative

3 Commoners

2 co-opted by the Board.

There should be Management Sub-Committees to manage the day to day running of the Forest appointed by the Board.

Major Grubb pointed out that the constitution which was tentatively approved by the Board at their meeting on January 27th, but which was agreed would not be binding was not satisfactory to the Countryside Commission. The Commission had stated that in order to qualify for a grant which in some fields of expenditure was 75%, the Conservators would have to be under the control of the Council. This meant overall control as well as financial. Their other stipulation was that the public should have access to the Forest.

Mr. Dascombe thought that any fears of the County Council misuse of the Forest could be discounted if the main objective was enshrined in the Act. Mrs. Ridley considered it very important that the Conservators should qualify for a grant from the Countryside Commission. She pointed out that a high proportion of those who use the Forest once from outside East Sussex and it would therefore be fairer if money came from the taxpayer rather than the ratepayer. Lord Buckhurst pointed out that unless the Forest was protected by a new Act, there was a danger that it might be taken over by a non-local body. It was necessary that the income be guaranteed. The ex-gratia payments by the Councils were not a sound method of financing the Forest. He considered that if the County Council was prepared to accept an obligatory responsibility for forest finances and was also prepared to sponsor the new Act, he felt bound to say that he came down very strongly as favour of the County Council being granted overall control. There was no alternative. Colonel Lowe stated that he was worried about the number of Commoners proposed. He felt that it would be difficult to explain to the Commoners why their representation was cut from 9 to 3. He thought that there should be 5 Commoner members in addition to two co-opted members who would not have a vote on financial matters. Major Grubb was in agreement with this idea.

Mr. Shelford asked for a realistic approach. Within a few years the Council would be paying fifteen times as much as the Commoners. The Council must therefore have a majority on the Board, but in order to avoid creating sides, he felt strongly that the composition of the Management Committee should not be laid down. The Chairman agreed with this last proposal. Captain Armstrong felt that the Board should appoint its Committees as it desired and that they should be left out of the Act. Mr. Gillham said that the Council had had control of the Board since 1937, and he could see no point in continuing the argument. Lord Buckhurst and others stressed the importance of writing the main objective into the new Act, not as a preamble, but as part of the Act.

Mr. Shelford then put a new resolution for the Constitution of the Board, namely that the Board should consist of:

8 appointed by the County Council

1 appointed by the Uckfield R.D.C.

1 Lord of the Manor or his representative

5 Commoners

That there should be no members co-opted on to the Board, but that the Board should set up a Management Committee, which would have power to co-opt up to $\frac{1}{2}$ of its members from outside the Board.

Mr. Gillham was of the opinion that the Board should consist of 9 County Council members, 5 Commoners and the Lord of the Manor. This was not put as an amendment. The resolution was proposed by Mr. Shelford and seconded by Mr. Cornwell and was carried by sixteen votes in favour to one against, Mr. Gillham voted against the resolution and the Chairman abstained,

5. POWERS OF THE BOARD

A. Plant trees.

Major Grubb considered that this section was too restrictive, but it was agreed that no amendment be made.

B. Acquire land.

Lord Buckhurst proposed that this section should be amended as follows:

After "this land" "if it was not purchased by the Lord of the Manor"

After "Forest" "The Lord of the Manor should be consulted by the Conservators before a purchase, and may have the option to purchase the land himself, provided that it then becomes part of the Forest."

This was unanimously AGREED.

C. Golf Courses.

Lord Buckhurst considered that the recommendation of power to take over existing golf courses did not give sufficient protection to the Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Course. It was agreed that the Clerk should draft an amendment to this recommendation giving such protection, subject to the Club being run in a satisfactory manner and that this should be worded to include other recreational areas.

The amendment should be submitted to the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Lord Buckhurst, who would be empowered to approve it.

6. RIGHTS OF THE PUBLIC

It was agreed that on page 24, line seven, the words we feel" should, be deleted and "It is essential" substituted.

Management

Mr. Ellison thought that the Board should have power to construct or alter watercourses, and it was agreed that this power and others of a similar nature could best be incorporated in a new clause f) to take general powers for maintenance and improvement of the Forest within the scope of the main objective. This clause should be drafted by the Clerk for submission to the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Lord Buckhurst who would be empowered to approve it.

Finance.

It was agreed that the Clerk should add the figures for expenditure and income up to 1972.

It was proposed by Mr. Shelford had seconded by Colonel Lowe that the report (as amended) should be adopted. This was carried unanimously.

Lord Buckhurst stressed that the Board should now preserve its unanimity before all pressures.

It was agreed to submit the report to East Sussex County Council, Uckfield R.D.C., Cuckfield R.D.C. and East Grinstead U.D.C. for their observations and that they be asked to consider it in Committee.

The Report would not be submitted to the Commoners until the Council's observations had been considered and that its contents would not made public before then.

THE BOARD THEN CAME OUT OF COMMITTEE.

There being no other business the meeting adjourned.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST, HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL, FOREST ROW, ON WEDNESDAY, 16TH FEBRUARY, 1972. AT 2.30 P.M

PRESENT: Mr. G.J. Mountain (in the Chair); Lady Brind; Mrs U.M. Ridley; Miss A. Lumsden; Brigadier L.H. Scott; Major R.B.W. Grubb; Capt. D.H.F. Armstrong; Messrs. J.R. Greenwood; C. Shelford; R.F.J. Brooke; F.B. Cornwell,

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. J.H. Drew; Col. J.H. Lowe; Messrs. G.M. Raikes; W.D. Gillham; D.J. Stradwick; A.W.C. Dascombe; R. St.G. Clarke; E.M. Ellison and the Hon. C.A.S. Grimston,

2a) APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN FOR 1972

Capt. Armstrong proposed that Mr. Mountain be re-elected as Chairman for the coming year. This was seconded by Mr. Brooke, put to the vote and carried unanimously. Mr. Mountain then took the Chair,

The Chairman said that he wished to say a special word of welcome to Lt. Cdr. Angell on his taking over the office of Clerk and he felt sure that the Board would join him in wishing him well and would co-operate in every way possible.

b) APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN FOR 1972

Major Grubb proposed that Colonel Lowe be re-elected as Deputy Chairman. This was seconded by Captain Armstrong, put to the vote and carried unanimously.

c) APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN FOR 1972

Mrs Ridley proposed that Mr. Drew be re-elected as Vice Chairman. This was seconded by Major Grubb, put to the vote and carried unanimously.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 15TH DECEMBER 1971

The Chairman asked the meeting to approve the Minutes of the previous meeting, which had been circulated, and they were approved and signed, subject to one small amendment to the figure for the ice cream tender for 1973 in Item 7, to read £425.

4. MINUTES ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

a) Fencing of A.22 Highway. The Clerk reported that the following letter had been received from the County Surveyor, East Sussex County Council, Roads and Bridges Department dated 31st January, 1972.

Dear Sir,

LONDON – EASTBOURNE ROAD A22. SUGGESTED FENCING OF ASHDOWN FOREST

With reference to my letter of the 13th December addressed to your predecessor, this proposal was only considered by the Roads and Bridges Committee of the County Council at their recent meeting. The Committee resolved to take no action in the matter for the time being.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours faithfully,

H.C. LE**Y

County Surveyor

Commander P. Angell

Discussion followed, and Major Grubb said that he felt very strongly that action should be taken to have the proposed fencing put in hand, in order that more stock could be put to graze on the Forest, as the only really effective means of controlling scrub and keeping the Forest clear. Other members held the view that no useful purpose would be served by re-opening the matter at this stage, as although the Commoners had in the main agreed to raise no objection to fencing where necessary, it did not seem practicable to carry out the project until more details were known of the proposed new roads and how they would affect the Forest boundaries.

After further discussion it was agreed to leave the matter for the time being.

b) Burglary at the Depot

The Clerk reported that all the items stolen had been recovered by the Police, with the exception of one set of spanners, valued at £8, for which an insurance claim had been made. It was agreed that the Police were to be congratulated on the skilful way in which they had succeeded in recovering the items, and Captain Armstrong

suggested that the Clerk should write to them on behalf of the Board, to thank them for their efforts and this the Clerk agreed to do.

c) The Report of the Board of Conservators

The Clerk reported that copies of the Report (which were laid on the table for members use) had been sent to the four Councils concerned, and reminded members that it had been agreed to keep the Report as confidential until the Councils had given their views on the proposals contained in it. Commander Angell said that he had asked the County Council to let him know in advance if they wished the report to be discussed in open Council. Mrs Ridley asked if a special meeting of the Commoners would be called to appraise them of the contents of the Report, and the Chairman said that a summary of the Report was being prepared and would be put before the Commoners at a special meeting at an appropriate time. Mr. Shelford suggested that it might be helpful if about 3 members of the Board could meet the County Council, to discuss details of the Report at some early stage. He also proposed that Mr. Williams be officially appointed as Legal Adviser to the Board. This proposal was seconded by Captain Armstrong, put to the vote and carried, and the Clerk was asked to write to Mr. Williams and confirm this. Major Grubb suggested that the sub-Committee of the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Vice Chairman and the Clerk, should remain in action to keep in touch with the County Council on special matters concerning the Report and this was agreed.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

a) Mr. Frank Haydon. Training of Hackney Coaches on the Forest.

A letter received from Mr. Haydon was read and discussed and it was agreed that his request to use the Forest for training purposes for the special event in May should be granted, provided the exercises were carried out under the supervision of the Clerk. Some members expressed doubts on the advisability of allowing these exercises, as it was felt this might lead to other requests of different kinds, but after discussion it was agreed that it might be tried provisionally in the first instance, and possibly reviewed later in the light of experience. The Clerk was asked to get in touch with Mr. Haydon about this.

b) Nature Conservancy The Clerk read a letter from the Nature Conservancy enclosing a map delineating new areas of special interest regarding flora and fauna on the Forest, and said that he had written to the Nature Conservancy informing them that their letter and map would be brought to the notice of the Board and that they would co-operate in helping to preserve the areas mentioned in their overall policy of maintaining the Forest.

6. MILITARY TRAINING OF THE FOREST

The Clerk reported that the Military Authorities had said that they no longer needed to use the Forest for training purposes, and would therefore not need to renew their licence. He said that he felt, however, that in actual fact it was quite probable that the Forest would be used for map reading exercises and that the military forces did in fact have to cross the Forest in the course of certain exercises and he would therefore suggest that the licence be continued to cover any possible future activities.

After discussion it was agreed that the Military Authorities should be approached, and urged to continue their licence.

7. FINANCIAL STATEMENT as at 15TH FEBRUARY 1972

The Financial Statement was laid before the Board as follows:

1. Bank Balances:	1972	1971
General Account	£201.26 o/d	£202.70
Wages & Petty Cash Account	£596.72	£649.44
Licence Account	Nil	Nil

2. The following amounts had been collected since 1st January 1972:

Forest Rates	Ack. Rents	Horse Riding	Temp. Licences
Nil	£245.49	£312.00	£20.75

3. The following bills were presented for payment:

F. Smith & Co. - New Office Equipment - £114.00
Wadham Stringer Ltd. - Row Mini Van - £579.85

also

Clerk - Payment due for collection of Acknowledgement Rents due to Lord of the Manor - £24.58

8. ACCOUNTS

Copies of the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st December, 1971 were laid before members present and the Chairman explained that owing to unforeseen delay at the Accountants end, it had not been possible to circulate the accounts before the meeting.

After detailed discussion of the Accounts, Major Grubb proposed their adoption, seconded by Mr. Brooke. This was put to the vote and carried unanimously.

The Chairman said that he felt that Mr. Williams and Commander Angell were to be congratulated on their achievement with the finances for the year under review.

Other Financial Matters

a) The Clerk raised the question of the fees paid to the Clerk as commission on the collection of Acknowledgement Rents for the Lord of the Manor (i.e. the Lord of the Manor's share of total fees collected). Discussion followed and it was agreed to defer a final decision for further discussion by the Board at their next meeting.

b) The Clerk asked the Board to approve expenditure on office tea and allied sundries (milk, sugar etc.). It was proposed by Mr. Greenwood, seconded by Mr. Mountain that this expenditure should be authorised and this was agreed by the Board.

c) Grant from County Council

The Clerk explained the need for a larger contribution from the County Council earlier in the year, to meet the heavy expenses in early weeks of the year. Major Grubb said that if the Clerk would write to Mr. Atkinson, the Clerk to the County Council on these lines, he would do all he could to see what could be done.

9. REPORT BY THE CLERK ON FOREST ACTIVITIES

The Clerk reported that:

a) The new offices in the Village Hall, Forest Row, were in full operation and working smoothly.

b) Forest Riding Route - This was to be started on during the following week under the Clerk's supervision. 167 riding permits had been issued so far.

c) New Van - The purchase of a new van was reported.

d) Save our Environment Society. The Society are continuing work in clearing the pond at the bottom of Priory Road. They are now also commencing a programme of planting trees for amenity purposes in some of the Forest car parks. This is being done according to a plan prepared by the Clerk, and under supervision,

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) Brigadier Scott asked if the Calendar could be issued after the first Board meeting of the year, so that the appointed officers could be indicated on it in future and the suggestion was noted.

b) Major Grubb mentioned complaints from Mr. Kenneth Quicke on riding school licence charges. A letter from Mr. Quicke on the subject which had appeared in the East Grinstead Courier was referred to by the Clerk, who read a letter he had written to the Courier in reply. Members agreed that the Clerk's letter was a very good reply and expressed the hope that it would also be published in the Courier.

It was agreed that the Clerk should exercise some discretion in the issue of riding permits for limited use of the Forest.

c) Mr. Gillham - Mr. Cornwell suggested that a letter be sent to Mr.

Gillham from the Board, expressing sympathy during his present illness and it was unanimously agreed that this should be done. The Clerk was asked to write to Mr. Gillham on behalf of the Board.

There being no further business, the meeting then adjourned.

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST
HELD AT PARISH ROOM, COLEMANS HATCH ON WEDNESDAY 19TH APRIL 1972 at 2.30 p.m.**

Present: Mr. G.J. Mountain (in the Chair); the Hon. C A.S. Grimston; Brig. L.M. Scott; Col. J.S. Lowe; Capt. D.H.F. Armstrong; Mrs. U. Ridley; Messrs. R.F.J. Brooke; R.St.G. Clarke; F.B. Cornwell; A.W.C. Dascombe; E.W. Ellison; J.R. Greenwood and D.J. Stradwick.

MR. GILLHAM

Before turning to the Agenda the Chairman spoke of the great loss caused by the death of Mr. Gillham and said that he felt that he spoke for all who had known Mr. Gillham, paying tribute to the invaluable service he had rendered during his long association with the Board. Members of the Board had attended Mr. Gillham's funeral.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Lady Brind, Major Grubb (who was attending Lord Aberdeen's funeral that day) and Mr. Drew.

2. THE MINUTES of the previous meeting held on 16th February. 1972. which had already been circulated, were unanimously approved, and signed by the Chairman.

3. MATTERS ARISING

a) Appointment of Mr. P.A. Williams as legal adviser to the Board

It was confirmed that Mr. Williams had been approached and had agreed to serve as legal adviser to the Board.

b) Training of "Four-in-Hand" on the Forest by Mr. Frank Haydon

It was reported that although Mr. Haydon had received the Board's permission to train his Four-in-Hand on Ashdown Forest, he had now decided not to go ahead with this as he had received an offer of a suitable training area nearer his home.

c) Lord of the Manor's fee for collection of Acknowledgement Rents

The Chairman explained the present position regarding the fees which had previously been collected under an arrangement which had been inaugurated many years ago in Mr. Roper's time. The question at issue, now was whether the arrangement for the Clerk to receive the fees due for collecting these rents should stand, or whether some other arrangement be made in view of the changes following the retirement of Mr. Williams from the office of Clerk and the setting up of new offices in Forest Row, under the administration of Lt. Cdr. Angell the new Clerk.

A full discussion followed, some members speaking strongly against the continuation of paying the fees to the Clerk, others in favour of some compromise solution. Mr. Grimston proposed that the proportion of fees previously allocated to the Clerk should now be included in the Lord of the Manor's share of dues received, and that it should be left to the Lord of the Manor to make the final decision as to how the matter of **** should be dealt with. It was finally AGREED that this would be the best way of dealing with the problem and the proposal put forward by Mr. Grimston was seconded by Mr. Greenwood and carried.

4. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

In presenting the Financial Statement, the Clerk mentioned that the District Auditor had been to check the Accounts for the year ending 31st December, 1971, and read the following letter received from his reporting on the Audits:-

District Auditor's Office,
19-21 Ashford Road, Maidstone, Kent.
No. 9 Audit District - Local Government Act 1933, Section 227.

REPORT OF THE DISTRICT AUDITOR ON THE ACCOUNTS OF THE ASHDOWN FOREST
CONSERVATORS

14th April, 1972.

To the Conservators of Ashdown Forest

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In compliance with the statutory requirement I have to report that the audit of the accounts of the Conservators and of their Officers for the year ended 31st December, 1971 has been completed.

No matters arose at the audit to which it is necessary to direct your attention, My thanks are due to your officers for their courtesy and assistance.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Your Obedient Servant,
(Signed) ERIC *****

The Clerk then presented the Financial Statement as follows:

Financial Statement - 19th April 1972

1) Bank Balance	1972	1971
General Account	2455.07	1279.83
Wages & Petty Cosh Account	190.72	217.54.
Licences Account	101.66	676.55

2) Local Authority Contributions,

The following sum have been received from Local Authorities:

East Sussex County Council	4,000
Uckfield Rural District Council	1,000
E. Grinstead Urban District Council	200
Cuckfield Rural District Council	Nil

3) The following sums have been collected since 1st January 1972:

F				
Forest Rates	Ack.Rents	Horse Riding	Temporary	Licences
Nil	£301.20	£443.50		£50.25

The Clerk explained that the increase in the amount in the General Account was due to larger advances from contributing Councils. It was noted that the Wages and Petty Cash balance was down on 1971.

LICENCE ACCOUNT

The Clerk asked for the Board's authority to close the existing Licence Account, as it was no longer necessary to have a separate account for the Acknowledgement Rents collected, which could more conveniently be paid into the General Account in future. The Board unanimously AGREED to the closing of the Licence Account as suggested.

5. CLERK'S REPORT ON FOREST ACTIVITIES

Fires – It was reported that there had been 21 fires this year to date, 19 of which had been during the dry period of weather in March and a total of 30 acres had been burned. The fires had been got under control more quickly since the Land Rover had been fitted as a fire tender. 12 of the fires were probably due to vandalism and the rest accidental.

Firebreaks - All ploughed areas were re-seeded last year. The two trial areas which had been experimentally sown the previous year were looking very well, and growing a considerable amount of clover. Tests were being carried out for liming requirements and estimates will have to be put in for liming later this year.

Horse Riding - Income received: £443.50. 263 permits had been issued this year to date. Work is well advanced on the bridlepath round the Golf Course at Forest Row.

Patrolmen - The two seasonal part-time patrolmen had started work a week earlier than originally intended (i.e. the week before Easter), as the exceptionally dry spell of weather at that time had brought many more visitors to the

Forest. The Clerk spoke here of the problem of patrolling in general, explaining that the present arrangements were no longer adequate, with the growing problem of having sufficient staff on patrol at any one time. The Clerk said that a report was being prepared, and would be circulated to members of the Board in due course, setting out the problem in detail.

Sawing on the Forest - At this point Mr. Brooke raised a point about the noise of the motor saw being used at present by the staff on the Forest, and the matter was discussed at some length. It was finally decided to approach the Friends of Ashdown Forest and the Clerk was asked to write on the Board's behalf, to see if the Friends would be willing to purchase a more silent type of saw for use on the Forest. Mr. Brooke suggested that the "Solo" model, of which he had practical knowledge, might be a good type to acquire. The Clerk said that he thought the purchase of a "Solo" model might present problems, as none of the local suppliers had spares available, Edenbridge being the nearest place where an agent could be found. Mr. Clarke raised the point as to whether the Conservators were justified in having a second saw. The Clerk said that it was not practicable to use contractors for work undertaken on the Forest.

After further discussion the Chairman suggested that the Clerk should obtain estimates for the cost of another saw and then approach the Friends of Ashdown Forest regarding the possibility of their providing one. Mr. Brooke said that the "Solo" saw costs £130 and it was mentioned that a buss saw would cost £78. It was AGREED that the Clerk should write to the Friends of Ashdown Forest about this and report back to the Board.

Litter Bins - The Clerk reported that 30 new plastic litter containers had been placed on the Forest, using plastic bags, wire mesh screened. 24 of these had been donated by the Friends of Ashdown Forest. They were proving very satisfactory and were of a very smart and tidy appearance.

5. REPORT OF PROGRESS OF THE ASHDOWN FOREST REPORT

The Chairman reported that there had been a special meeting between representatives of East Sussex County Council and a sub-Committee of the Board for further discussion on the Report and that the County Council were prepared to accept the Report in principle.

The Clerk read a letter from the Clerk to East Grinstead Urban District Council as follows:

East Grinstead Urban District Council
6th March, 1972.

Dear Commander Angell,

The Council have considered the report enclosed with your letter of the 31st January in the absence of the press and have agreed with its recommendations, but they wish the Conservators to reconsider the question of representation so as to allow a Member of this Council, or its successor, under local government reorganisation to sit as a Member of the Board.

Yours sincerely,
H.C. JONES
Clerk of the Council.

Lt. Commander J.P. Angell,
Clerk to the Conservators of Ashdown Forest,

The Chairman then spoke on the effect of the coming re-organisation of local government areas as they would affect the authorities concerned with the Forest, and the fact that East Grinstead would be part of West Sussex and also merged with Cuckfield. Mr. Strudwick said that he had pointed out all the points raised to East Grinstead Urban District Council, and explained the reasons why East Grinstead still wished to be represented on the Board. It was agreed after further discussion that the Board's original decision that East Grinstead should not be represented on the new Board should stand.

The Chairman said that a summary of the Report was being prepared to circulate to all Commoners in due course.

It was reported that Mr. Williams was arranging to see the Lord of the Manor regarding the special Trust which was under consideration.

The Chairman reported on a special meeting of Commoner members of the Board which had been held to discuss various matters, connected with the Report, and mentioned 4 points which had been specially discussed:

(i) Financial Year - As in the now Act it had been planned to start the Financial Year on 1st April in future, it had been suggested that the term of office of Elected Members of the Board should coincide with this date. i.e. also starting on 1st April each year. This was unanimously AGREED.

(ii) Commoners on Board

It was proposed that the Commoners be empowered to elect one member of the Board who is not a Commoner as one of their representatives. This was AGREED.

(iii) Voting - Every commoner has one vote for every commonable or part of commonable acre owned. The suggestion was put forward that the system of voting should be altered to allow more flexibility in future and that this should be allowed for in the new Act.

Colonel Lowe pointed out that the question of voting had been left out of the Report and had never been fully discussed by the Working Party.

Mrs. Ridley thought that the rule for one vote per Commoner should be laid down definitely now.

Discussion followed during which various points of view were expressed and points raised. Mr. Dascombe mentioned the problem of commonable estates which were sold to developers and how this might effect the voting.

Mr. Greenwood suggested that the Board should approach Mr. Williams now acting as the Board's Legal Advisor, and got his views on the subject.

Mr. Grimston said that as the Commoners had the right to elect 5 members of the Board he suggested that the Commoners should be allowed to elect them by whatever system they wished. This was AGREED by the Board.

(iv) The Chairman then raised the question of voting by proxy for electing members to the Board, and mentioned that this had been done in the past. The Clerk explained that it was written into the Award that Commoners could only vote by being present at meetings. Discussion followed, and Mr. Ellison suggested that this ruling should be left out in future. This was AGREED, subject to legal advice which might be given by Mr. Williams.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Captain Armstrong said that he felt that the rangers should be congratulated on the way they had tackled the fire fighting with the new equipment on the forest and the Clerk was asked to convey a message of appreciation to them.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, COLEMAN HATCH ON WEDNESDAY 19th JULY 1972 at 2.30 p.m.

Present: Mr. G.J. Mountain (in the chair); Miss A. Lumsden; Lady E. Brind; Brig. L.M. Scott; Col. J. Lowe; Capt. D.H.F. Armstrong; Major R.E.W. Grubb; the Hon. C.A.S. Grimston; Messrs. J.W. Drew; R.F.J. Brooke; R. St. G. Clarke; C.V. Shelford; J.R. Greenwood; A.W.C. Dascombe.

MR. S.J. MARSH

Before turning to the Agenda the Chairman spoke of the death of Mr. Marsh, who had served the Board as a member for many years, including 12 years as Chairman. Mrs. Ridley had represented the Board at the funeral.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Mrs. U. Ridley, Mr. E. Ellison and Mr. G.M. Raikes.

2. THE PROPOSED EAST GRINSTEAD BY-PASS

The Chairman started that the Board had had the opportunity to study the E.S.C.C. proposals re the By-pass; and now had to make recommendations to the County in respect to its effect on the forest.

Firstly, on the general principle of a by-pass road being built across the forest. There appeared to be no opposition from any member of the Board. The Chairman proposed and Mr. Shelford seconded a resolution that the Conservators should not oppose the scheme in principle. This was unanimously adopted.

The Chairman then invited the Board to discuss the pros and cons of the various alternative routes, and to ask any questions of the representatives of the County Surveyor's Dept., Mr. Hill and Mr. Marsh, who were present at the meeting.

The following information was given to the Board in answer to questions.

- (a) The roadway would be fenced.
- (b) The roadway was to be of motorway standard, but would not be classified as such,
- (c) The width between fences on level ground would be 80 feet, but rather more on embankments or in cuttings.
- (d) The earliest date for starting construction would be 1976, and construction would take 2 years.
- (e) The area of Forest land that would be required would be as follows.

Route 1	-	48 acres
Route 2	-	29 acres
Route 3	-	30 acres
Route 4	-	53 acres
Route 5	-	50 acres
Engineers Favoured Route		52 acres

The Chairman asked if, in view of the much smaller acreage of forest that would be required for route 2, were there any known disadvantages to this route. The representatives of the County Surveyor stated that the main disadvantage from their point of view was that the A.275 would still run through the existing crossroads at Wych Cross, although the A 22 traffic would be completely clear of this. Col. Lowe expressed concern about the destruction of woodland in Broadstone Warren that this route would necessitate.

There was unanimous dislike of the two western routes.

The Chairman proposed and Major Grubb seconded a motion that the Board of Conservators favoured the Engineers Favoured route as far as Hindleap Warren, but route 2 (yellow) from Hindleap Warren southwards passing to the East of the Cross". Captain Armstrong proposed an amendment that the Board favoured the Engineers Favoured route across the forest, Mr. Shelford seconded. The amendment was defeated by seven votes to six, and the motion was then unanimously adopted. The Chairman stated that when the final route had been decided, he would set up a sub-Committee to look into such matter as underpasses for commonable animals and for deer, fencing etc.

3. THE MINUTES of the previous meeting held on 19th April 1972, which had already been circulated were approved, subject to the following amendment.

P.5. Paragraph 4 - delete and substitute "Mr. Grimston said that as the Commoners had the right to elect 5 members of the Board, he suggested that the Commoners should be allowed to elect them by whatever system they wished. This was agreed by the Board.

4. MATTERS ARISING

The Clerk reported that he had not yet approached the Friends of Ashdown Forest for a new quiet power saw, as he had been advised by the distributors, that the only model available was of doubtful reliability, and he did not consider that the expenditure of £130 was justified in these circumstances. It was agreed by the Board that the project should be dropped,

5. CLERK'S REPORT ON FOREST ACTIVITIES.

The Clerk reported that:

(a) The Tractor driver, Mr. D. Kemp, had handed in his notice and had left the employment of the Board. This was due to his obtaining employment at a considerably increased salary. Mr. O.E. Streeter had been employed as tractor driver/workman. He had held this post up to two years ago, and had proved in every way satisfactory, and the Clerk was pleased to see him back.

(b) There had been 23 fires on the forest this year, burning only 30 acres. This was the smallest number of fires and lowest acreage burnt on record. While the wet spring must be largely responsible, the Clerk felt sure that another factor must be a greater show of responsibility on the part of the public.

(c) The War Department had renewed their licence to exercise troops on foot and without arms on the forest, at an increased acknowledgement rent of £100.

(d) The number of horse riders using the forest was greater than ever before, bringing an increase in revenue over that which had been anticipated. The Bridlepath at Forest Row had been completed and was proving satisfactory.

(e) A letter had been received from the Forest Row Parish Council requesting that the Conservators supply more seats and tables on the forest. After some discussion the Board directed that the Clerk should ask the Friends of Ashdown Forest, if they would be prepared to pay for three new combined tables and seats.

(f) His report on the manning requirements of the forest which he had mentioned to the Board at their last meeting would be distributed at the end of the meeting. This was to bring to the attention of the Board the problem as it was at present, and as was likely to exist in the next few years, in order that any finances which the Board might think fit could be included in next year's estimates.

The Clerk then presented the Financial Statement as follows:

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 19 July 1972

1. <u>Bank Balances:</u>	1972	1971
General Account	4931	1653
Wages & Petty Cash		
Account	221.10 O/D	553

2. The following have been received from Local Authorities	
East Sussex County Council	8390
Uckfield Rural District Council	1000
East Grinstead Urban District Council	200
Cuckfield Rural District Council	Nil

3. The following have been collected since 1st January 1972:

Forest Ack. Rents	Horse	Temporary	Misc
<u>Rates</u>		<u>Riding</u>	<u>Licences</u>
961.89	356.67	521.50	58.19
		85.06	

4, The following accounts are outstanding, awaiting payment on the General Account:

To: Forest Row Village Hall Management Committee
(Rent of Offices July to December 1972) 260

Fee to Turner Rudge & Turner for draft agreement on Windy Ridge
Lodge Cottage 10

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Captain Armstrong asked if any progress had been made with the erection of direction indicators at viewpoints on the forest. The Clerk reported that he and Colonel Lowe had been into the matter in great detail, and that plans were prepared for the erection of one such indicator. Due to the unexpectedly large cost, well over £200, it has been agreed to shelve action for the time being. Capt. Armstrong suggested that an economy might be achieved by

using triangulation points, but the Clerk reported that the cost of engraving a suitable plate alone would be in the nature of £80. The Board decided to let the matter rest pending further thoughts on the subject.

The Board then went into Committee

8. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT ON THE PROPOSED NEW ACT OF PARLIAMENT

The Chairman reported that there had been some difficulty over the constitution of the Board.

He stated that the Uckfield R.D.C. had received our report on 1st February this year, with a request for their comments. Since then nothing had been heard from them direct. The Uckfield Council had, however, invited the E.S.C.C. to a meeting on the subject, from which the Conservators were excluded, and at this meeting they had proposed that the Uckfield representation be increased to three, that the Commoners representation be reduced to three, and stated that their council might be prepared to shoulder part of the financial responsibility if they had this increased representation.

The E.S.C.C. had then called a meeting of members of the U.R.D.C. Board of Conservators, and the Lord of the Manor to discuss the position. The Board were represented by the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Deputy Chairman and the Clerk. It was agreed by all present at this meeting, that representative would recommend to their respective authorities that the new Board of Conservators should consist of.

9 Members of the East Sussex County Council

5 Commoners

2 Members of Uckfield Rural District Council

1 Lord of the Manor or his representative

The Chairman also said that after consultation with the Commoner members of the Board, he would propose that the Commoner members should serve for five years, one member being elected each year. It was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Mr. Shelford that the report should be amended as follows:

Page 13. line 11 for 8 read 9

Page 13. line 12 for 1 read 2

Page 13. line 14 delete the words "To hold office for three years".

The resolution was carried by 13 votes to one.

Mr. Dascombe stated that it was important that there should be no disagreement on the new Act of Parliament, and although his council has not yet considered this new amendment, he could state that his Chairman was prepared to recommend it to his council. Mr. Grimston stated that the Lord of the Manor had accepted the amendment. Lady Brind stressed that members of the U.R.D.C had the interests and feeling for the forest as much at heart as all other members of the Board. The Board then came out of Committee. There being no other business the meeting concluded.

MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING OF THE COMMONERS OF ASHDOWN FOREST HELD AT THE FOREST ROW VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30 PM ON THURSDAY, 17TH AUGUST 1972.

1. PRESENT: G.H.M. Arnold, G.W.H. Osborne, Mr. & Mrs. L.S. Laycock, M.G. Hall, Derek Evatt, P.A. Williams, A.W.D. James, H.C. Lowcock, R. J. Cossens, G. Philipson, W.P. Hoath, T. Townsend, Miss C.H.I. Wood, Miss P.M. Shaw, G.F. Perring, G.J. Mountain, J.B.I. Lowe, R. Brooke, T.H. Draw, H.L. Philip, Michael S. Hall, Mrs. Ruth B. Hunter, Ron S. Clarke, Hrs S.R. Knight, D.E. Tile, C.S. Tile, C. Milas, B.G. Beedle, V.W. Beedle, M.M. Sibley, R.A. Waters, Mrs. C.H. Maudslay, Mrs. N.W. Elms, Mrs. P.H. Stinton, R.L. Stinton, D.G. Keeley, H.F. Kirk, V.G. Facer, W.J. Shearing, C. Osborne, H.S. Stevenson, Mrs. C.A. Hudson, Frances Howell, Mrs. Audrey Clark, Tina Fearman, L.B. Smith, Miss P.B. Stude, J. E. Chitty, Mrs. E.D. Collins, Brigadier A.D.P. Campbell, Mr. & Mrs. D. Keeble, J.R. Thompson, D.E. Harman, Mrs. R. Glover, R. Glover, Mrs. K.M. Hewett, E.P.L. Hewett, D.W. Law, D.R. Watson, M. Watson, S. Harris, C.W. Howard, E. Philpott, A.K.L. Harvey, A.A.M. Batchelor, Anne J. Sheldrick, E. Place, N. Keeys, David Markham, Nancy A. McNair, Philippa Ryder, Mary Keith, Mr. & Mrs. Peter Dickinson, M. Tomkinson, V.G. Hunt, Mrs. M.V. Hunt, J.M. Hulsken, J.P. Field, Mrs. G.B. Cook, C.E. Brennan, J.M. Brennan, R.E. Weekes, D.S. Carter, David Fox, G.A. Johnson, G.W. Marchant,

E.F. Feltwell, William Fraser, Diana Fraser.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCES. had been received from:

Admiral Sir Peter Cazalet

Mr. Cornwell

Miss Lewis

Miss Willard

The Clerk opened the Meeting by welcoming the large number of Commoners present, and explaining that the Meeting had been called for two purposes:

1) To fill a vacancy on the Board of Conservators

2} To discuss the Report of the Board of Conservators on the

Laws, Regulations and Administration of Ashdown Forest, and the proposed new Act of Parliament.

The Clerk pointed out to the Meeting that the Report was made by the Board of Conservators, and that the Commoners did not have the power to veto or alter this report. There were several Members of the Board present at the Meeting who represented the Commoners and they would not only explain the Report and answer any queries, but would no doubt take note of any views expressed by the Commoners. If the Commoners present held any strong views on any parts of the Report, then their representatives could, if they thought fit, try and persuade the Board to alter the Report accordingly.

This statement caused considerable comment from some Commoners present, who regarded the procedure as dictatorial, and an attempt to bulldoze the Report through without sufficient consultation.

3. ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING.

It was proposed by Mr. Drew and seconded by Mr. Evatt that Mr. Mountain should take the Chair. This aroused considerable opposition, based on the premise that as author of the Report, Mr. Mountain could not be an unbiased Chairman. The Clerk asked that this suggestion should be withdrawn, as he considered that any ruling from the Choir that Mr. Mountain might make would be completely unbiased. This was not fully accepted and it was proposed and seconded that the Clerk should take the Chair. The election of Chairman was put to the vote, and Mr. Mountain was elected by 54 votes to 24. Mr. Mountain then took the Chair.

4. NOTICE CONVENING MEETING

The Clerk then read the Notice convening the Meeting which had been posted on 30 notice boards at churches and Post Offices. Mr. Howard then challenged the validity of the Meeting by querying as to whether notice had been published in two local newspapers. The Clerk apologised for the oversight but stated that, in addition to the 30 notices, every Commoner had had a letter in the post giving notice of the Meeting. It was proposed by Mr. Williams and seconded by Colonel Lowe that the question of the notice in the newspapers be disregarded. This was put to the vote and carried by 33 votes to 19.

5. ELECTION OF CONSERVATORS

Election of one Conservator to fill a vacancy caused by the death of Mr. W.D. Gillham. Mr. Mountain paid a tribute to Mr. Gillham, after which voting slips were handed out, collected, and counting continued during the remainder of the Meeting.

6. DISCUSSION ON THE REPORT

Mr. Mountain outlined the draft of the proposed new Act, emphasising its focal points, the 'Main Objective' as paramount with all other recommendations subject to it. He explained the 'Main Objective' of the Constitution and System of Management should be the protection of the forest from encroachments and its preservation as a quiet and natural area of outstanding beauty. He went on.

You will see that the Board is asking for a great many new powers, and you may wonder what it has in mind. I can assure you that all it wants to do is stick to the 'Main Objective.'

He said they had no revolutionary plans, but hopes were high that this new Act would last at least 50 years, and in promoting the Act, they were thinking of the 'powers which might be needed by our sons and grandsons.'

Mr. Mountain quoted two examples of how the power could serve them, 'A depot is essential' he said, 'we must have somewhere to keep our vehicles, machinery and tools. We might find it convenient to build one in the forest and we must have the power to do so.'

We must also be able to make regulations controlling the use of the forest, subject to Commoners' rights. It may not be generally realised that, except for a few clumps of trees, the public has no right at all to be on the forest. This provides us with a very potent weapon against the unruly.

Mr. Mountain added, 'Most people who think about this would agree that this is a pretty antiquated state of affairs and that the public ought to have a right to walk over the forest. He are proposing to give them this right but at the same time we must be given powers to control them. No one, I think, would want an agricultural show, a point-to-point, or a hippy happening in the forest.'

He explained that the existing Act provided, a complicated formula for meeting the Board's expenses, the crux of which is that the combined contributions of East Grinstead Urban Council, Uckfield and Cuckfield Rural Councils and East Sussex County Council, need not exceed £500 a year. They may make larger contributions, and during the last 20 years the local authorities have used these discretionary powers. But in recent years he said, the main burden of local authority support has fallen on and been met by the County Council.

The Report now recommended that the East Grinstead, Cuckfield and Uckfield Councils should be relieved of their financial liability towards the expenses of Ashdown Forest and the East Sussex County Council should have the statutory liability to accept the Board's excess of expenditure over income in any one year.

The estimate for the cost of running the forest for 1972 is £13,000 he said. Our own resources are about £3,000, so £10,000 will have to be found by the Councils. It is pretty obvious, too, that the cost is going to increase substantially in the next few years. The County Council are getting restive and this restiveness was one of the main reasons for setting up the working party which produced the Report. It is only natural that the County Council, who have to foot the bill, should have financial control, and this we propose to give them. But this is nothing new, they have had it for years.

When discussing the constitution of the Board, the County Council asked for an overall majority able to out-vote all the other members combined, he said. This we refused because firstly we had conceded financial control, which we felt was all they needed; and, secondly, we felt that a Board consisting largely of County Councillors was not the right sort of body to run the forest. However, they eventually produced an argument which we felt was so strong we had to give way.

Mr. Mountain explained, 'The County Council told us that the Countryside Commission was prepared to pay up to 75 percent of most of the items which make up our budget, provided the County Council had a majority on the Board. This argument alone persuaded us to agree, but a recent letter from the Ministry of the Environment had thrown some doubt on the ability of the Commission to make the promised grants. If this is not to be so, then we reserve our right to re-negotiate the constitution of the Board.'

A very lively and frequently acrimonious discussion then followed. Among the views expressed and points made were:

Mr. Harman stated that contrary to the remarks of the Chairman, he had been informed that the Countryside Commission would be able to pay grants to the Board of Conservators constituted as at present without a majority of County Councillors. This proposed majority in effect handed the forest over to the East Sussex County Council, and this proposal was viewed with apprehension. This view was echoed by many speakers and recurred at intervals for the following two hours. Mr. Mountain stated that the County Council had informed him of these requirements of the Countryside Commission. Mr. Drew stated that he had had two meetings with the Countryside Commission in London, and that their senior Civil Servant had been down to view the forest and address the Board, and that he had been definitely informed that the present Board would not receive grants.

Mr Williams stated that he and the Clerk had had further discussions with the Ministry of Environment and the Countryside Commission only the previous week, as a result of which the question of amending Section 5 of the Countryside Act was still fluid. Grants under Section 43 of the Act would be under conditions which would not be acceptable to either the Board of Conservators or the County Council.

Mrs. Hunter raised the question as to whether all the proposed nine Members of the County Council on the Board need be Council Members. Mr. Mountain replied that they need not, and he was urged to ask the County Council to appoint local people. He replied that he would ask them to do so.

In answer to Mr. Townsend, Mr. Mountain stated that the Bill to be put before Parliament was being promoted by the East Sussex County Council at the request of the Conservators. Although progress was being made in drafting the Bill, nothing was at a stage when it could not be altered.

A very heated discussion took place on common rights, led by Mr. Townsend, with Mr. Carter and Mr. Howard being prominent among many speakers, and with Mr. Markham speaking strongly in behalf of his swine. Mr. Mountain explained the reason behind the Board's wish to substitute sheep for swine. Although swine had been traditional on the forest, they had hardly been seen for many years, and were not entirely in keeping with the forest as it is today. Where as sheep, which in the past were not commonable, were now the main grazing animal. The view from the floor was that the removal of swine was the thin end of the wedge to oust the Commoner and his rights. Mr. Mountain assured that this was no wedge but that he was prepared to recommend to the Board that swine should be retained and sheep added.

On the question of estovers, there was a general objection to the Board having powers to control whose estovers could be cut, in spite of the fact that a form of voluntary control was generally accepted at present. Several Commoners pointed out that if estovers were cut by traditional means, namely ***** and hand saw, this would in itself control the amount of cutting. Colonel Lowe spoke in favour of the proposed control, stating that the preservation of the beauty of the Forest must be paramount. Mr. Howard accused the Board of putting the preservation of the forest before the rights of the Commoners. Mr. Mountain considered that there should be a compromise in these priorities - that the Board's duty was to the Forest - but he undertook to put the views which had been so strongly expressed about estovers before the Board of Conservators.

In answer to a talk from Mr. Stevenson against the evils of fire breaks, car parks, etc., Mr. Mountain stressed that if the Conservators did not move with the times and co-operate with the reasonable needs of the public, there was a very real danger that we would be taken over.

Mr. Keeble considered that the Board had acted too hastily, and that all negotiations should be held up until the question of finances had been settled beyond any doubt. There were other ways of raising money, such as a "Trust the Motorist" scheme with collection boxes in all the car parks, Mr. Williams pointed out that this would be too precarious; a method of obtaining £10,000 income, quite apart from the problems of collection from 80 car parks. Mr. Keeble asked if any other means of raising money had been considered. Mr. Mountain replied that this problem had been studied for 2½ years by the Working Party of the Board. All solutions which had been proposed either had difficulties which could not be overcome or strings attached which could not be accepted. Mr. Evatt undertook to approach the Friends of Ashdown Forest to see if they were prepared to help with the idea of collecting boxes.

Views were expressed by many on the dangers of taking wide powers in a new Act, such as power to build and power to enclose, which would be open to misuse if the County Council had control of the Board. Mr. Mountain pointed out again that these powers would be subject to the general objective, but the Commoners in general showed a marked distrust of the County Council. Mr. James was not satisfied that the Board had done all it could to raise money from sources other than the County Council. The deficit could be made up by charging the Commoners only £20 per head. Some concurred with this suggestion, others obviously did not.

Mr. Williams warned the Meeting of the dangers of trying to keep the forest for the Commoners only. He stated "If any of you think that any government of the future is going to allow 587 Commoners in a small area like this to keep control of Ashdown Forest, then you are crying to the moon. If you oppose it and this Act is not completed by 1974, you will lose the forest completely and utterly".

The following motion was proposed by Mr. Keeble, and seconded by Mrs. Hunter:

That the Meeting recommends that further work on the proposed Act of Parliament be held up until a firm answer is obtained from the Countryside Commission as to whether they will give grants to the Board, and that alternative methods of raising extra funds should be considered. This was carried by an overwhelming majority.

A second resolution was proposed by Mr. Stinton and seconded by Hr. Markham "to ask the Board to reconsider their recommendations as to the future constitution of the now Board, together with the objects of maintaining and furthering the rights of the Commoners". This was also carried by an overwhelming majority.

Various clarifications of other points in the Report were sought, and explanations were given by Mr. Mountain.

7. ELECTION OF MR. V.G. FACER.

The Chairman announced that Mr. V.G. Facer had been elected, by a majority of 74 votes, to the Board of Conservators.

Mr. Howard then raised the question of the rules for Commoners voting under the proposed now Act of Parliament. Mr. Mountain explained that it was intended that the Act should be so worded that the Commoners should be able to determine and alter their methods of voting as they themselves thought fit.

It was proposed by Mr. Stevenson and seconded by Colonel Lowe that Mr. Facer should be elected as Superintendent of Fords Green Recreation Ground, Nutley. This was carried.

Mr. Harman then thanked the Chairman and the Board of Conservators for the immense amount of voluntary work which they had put in to the preparation of this Report.

The Meeting then adjourned.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, COLEMANS HATCH, ON WEDNESDAY, 15TH OCTOBER, 1972 at 2.00.M.

PRESENT: Mr. G.J. Mountain (in the Chair); Miss A. Lumsden, Lady E. Brind, Brig. L. M. Scott, Capt. D.H.F. Armstrong, Messrs. J.B. Drew, R.J. Brooke, J.R. Greenwood, G.M. Raikes, F.B. Cornwell, V.G. Facer.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Mrs. D.M. Ridley, Messrs. R.St.G. Clarke, C. W. Shelford, E. W. Ellison, A.W.C. Dascombe, Col. J.H. Lowe, Hon. C.A.S. Grimston and Major R.E.V. Grubb.

2. THE MINUTES of the Meeting held on 19th July, 1972, which had already been circulated were approved subject to the following amendment. Page 4 last line for "adjourned" substitute "was concluded".

3. MATTERS ARISING

The Clerk reported that the Friends of Ashdown Forest had agreed to the purchase of three combined seats and tables. These had been supplied. There had been two complaints from members of the public that the preservative used in the wood had ruined articles of clothing. The Clerk reported that the Manufacturer had compensated for the damaged clothing, and had replaced the defective wooden slats. Mr. Greenwood requested that The Clerk should write a letter of thanks to the Friends of Ashdown Forest. This was agreed.

4. FINANCIAL STATEMENT. The Clerk then presented this as follows:

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 18TH OCTOBER 1972

1. <u>Bank Balances</u>	1971	1972
General Account	3,501	3,042
Wages & Petty Cash Account	40	321 0/D

2. The following have been received from Local Authorities

East Sussex County Council	8,390	7,210
Uckfield Rural District Council	1,500	1,000
East Grinstead Urban District Council	200	200
Cuckfield Rural District Council	<u>NIL</u>	<u>250</u>

3. The following have been collected since 1st January ,1972,.

	Forest Ack. Rents.		Horse	Temporary	Sundries.
	<u>Rates</u>		<u>Riding</u>	<u>Licences.</u>	
1972	1,156	1,222	647	115.45	37
1971	844	1,105	163	79.00	NIL

4. The following accounts were presented for payment:

The Hon. C.A.S. Grimston -
Lord of the Manor Acknowledgement Rents £97.00

5. ESTIMATES. The Chairman presented the proposed estimates for 1973.

He explained that a figure of £3 increase per week had been included for all wages, based on the possible outcome of the Government's present discussions on national wage increases.

A motion to approve the Estimates was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Brew, and unanimously adopted,

FOREST RATE.

The Clerk proposed that the Board should now consider the Forest Rate. It had been the custom of the Board to consider this at their December Meeting, but in view of the fact that the Estimates were based on the receipt of Forest Rates, he thought it appropriate for the Board to change their accustomed procedure and consider the Rates at the same time as the Estimates. It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Captain Armstrong, that the Forest Rate for 1973 should be unchanged from that raised in 1972. This was unanimously adopted.

6. CLERK'S REPORT ON THE FUTURE MANNING & CONTROL OF THE FOREST.

The Chairman stated that he thought that the Clerk's report should be considered by the Board, but he thought that the best way to tackle it was for a Committee to study the report, and make recommendations to the Board. He proposed that the Special Purposes Committee should undertake this. It would be necessary to appoint an additional Member in the place of the late Mr. W.D. Gillham, Lady Brind thought that a Member of the Uckfield Rural District Council should be appointed, and it was agreed that Mr. Ellison should be asked to serve. It was agreed that this procedure should be adopted.

The Clerk reported as follows:

- (a) Work on the Forest. As was usual during the Summer months the Staff had been fully extended in their routine tasks of patrolling, cutting firebreaks and maintenance. There had been no work of a constructive nature.
- (b) Riding Regulations. The Clerk asked approval of the Board to implement the same regulations and scale of charges for 1973 as was approved for 1972. The Board agreed. The question of a different type of riding badge was discussed but it was decided to keep to the existing badges, but using a different coloured tape.

7. EAST GRINSTEAD BY-PASS.

The Clerk reported that there was a Meeting organised by the East Grinstead Urban District Council on 20th October when views on the proposed By Pass routes could be expressed. It was agreed that the Conservators should not be represented at that Meeting but that the Clerk should send a copy of letter giving the Board's decision on the By pass to the East Sussex County Council, to the East Grinstead Urban District Council for their information.

The Board then went into Committee.

The Chairman reported to the Board that at a Meeting of the Commoners on 17th August 1972 to discuss the proposed Ashdown Forest Bill, considerable opposition had been encountered on the following points:

- 1) The control of the cutting of Estovers
- 2) The substitution of the right to graze "sheep" for that of "swine".
- 3) The constitution of the Board in so far as it gave a clear majority to the East Sussex County Council.

After discussion on the first two points, the Chairman proposed that the Board should drop these two recommendations. This would mean that the Board would have to rely on the voluntary co-operation of the Commoners with regard to the cutting of Estovers. If this did not materialise, the Board would, if it was thought desirable, be able to introduce a Bye Law giving the necessary powers.

There were very few Commoners who had in fact registered the right to graze swine, and by dropping the recommendations the Board would do much to placate the Commoners.

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Drew, and unanimously agreed that the recommendations in Section 6 of the Report should be withdrawn.

The Chairman then reported that he had had further discussions with Members of the County Council with regard to the constitution of the Board, and had been informed that

- 1) The County Council would not undertake to promote the Ashdown Forest Bill unless they were given a majority on the new Board.
- 2) That the existing County Council could not commit the new Council to be formed in 1974 to continue payments to Ashdown Forest, and that, in order to safeguard the position of the new Council, they would have to give formal notice of the cessation of payments.

In these circumstances he would not propose any change in the Conservators recommendations as to the constitution of the Board, and he would undertake to face the Commoners with full explanations of the position, and hoped he would be able to gain their support.

The County Council had undertaken to allow the appointment of some representatives other than Councillors to the Board, and this should do much to ensure local control of the Forest.

The Chairman also reported that correspondence with the Countryside Commission had indicated that although it would not be necessary for the Board to have a majority of County Council Members. The Commission would strongly favour this. Grants to the Board would in any case be subject to the amendment of Section 5 of the Countryside Act. At the present time the Department of the Environment were not altogether in favour of amendment to this Act.

The Clerk stated that the draft Bill should be circulated to the Board by Saturday, 25th October. It was agreed that the Board should meet at 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 1st November 1972.

Agreement had been reached on nearly all points in the draft Bill between the East Sussex County Council and the Lord of the Manor. One outstanding question was regarding roadside verges. The East Sussex County Council wished a clause in the Bill clarifying the status of the verges as part of the Highway. The Lord of the Manor was concerned over this clause. The object was to enable the East Sussex County Council to make minor extensions to the highways, such as bus lay-bys, without a complicated legal procedure. After some discussion it was agreed that if lay-bys could be constructed under licence, and the matter be left out of the Bill, this would be the most satisfactory solution.

The Clerk then enumerated various clauses which had been incorporated in the Draft Bill which were additional to the recommendations of the Board of Conservators. Specific approval of those items was not sought, as the Draft Bill was not yet available, but on one point the Board raised an objection, namely that a quorum for meetings of the Board should be 6 Appointed Conservators.

It was agreed that the Clerk should inform the East Sussex County Council that the Board considered that this should read "6 Conservators".

The Clerk also gave details and explanations of several omissions from the Bill of points recommended in the Report. There being no further business the meeting was concluded.

CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST
ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE AND INCOME

OCTOBER 1972

1972	ITEM	1973	+ or -	%	NOTE
	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>				
	<u>Salaries & Wages,</u>				
2055	Clerk	2388	+335		1 & 2
1040	Sec/Bookkeeper	1196	+156		
52	Office Cleaner	52	-		
2872	Rangers	3180	+308		
1181	Tractor Driver	1272	+91		
367	Patrolmen	450	+83		3
554	N.I. Superann., etc.	780	+226		
8121		9318	+1197		
	<u>Office.</u>				
520	Hire	520	-		
25	Redecoration	25	-		
	(Post	80	+40		
90	(Telephone	50			
80	Auditor	100	+20		
100	Solicitor	100	-		
30	Room Hire & Travel	30	-		
20	Bank Charges	25	+5		
30	Advertising	30	—		
50	Insurance	50	—		
150	Printing & Stationery	200	+50		
35	Audit Stamp	50	+15		
30	Sundries	50	+20		
500	New Equipment	100	-400		
1660		1410	-250		-152
	<u>Forest Expenses.</u>				
30	Forest Supt. Expenses	40	+10		
135	Rangers	180	+45		
700	Transport	770	+70		
700	Machinery running Exp,	850	+150		
250	Hire	200	-50		
400	Foxes t H'tco & Imp,	400			
180	N. Boards & L. Baskets	140	-40		
205	Sundries	120	-85		
230	Radio maintenance}	280	+50		
90	Depot	100	+10		
2920		3080	+160		+5%
	<u>Capital Expenditure,</u>				
487	Mini Pick-up	600			
	Rotary Slasher	328			

25	Irrecoverable.			
13213	Total Expenditure	14761	1548	+12%

INCOME

Estimated Normal Income.

194	Rate at 2½p.	194	
1115	Ack. Rents	1248	+133
123	Temp. Licences	123	
450	Horse Riding	600	+150
60	Sundry Receipts	60-	
1945		2225	+283

Additional Rate Income.

945 +14

Total Income. 3170 +297 +10%

Total Expenditure. 14761 1548

Estimated Deficit. 11591 1251 +12%

NOTE 1.

All salaries and wages have been calculated on the principle of a £300 flat rate increase per week with the exception of the part-time Patrolmen who have been calculated at a rate of 8%.

NOTE 2. Local Government Officers AP grade 4.

NOTE 3. 2 Patrolmen employed for 30 weekends instead of 26 this year

NOTE 4. Addressograph Machine

NOTE 5. New Tractor tyres.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, COLEMANS HATCH, ON WEDNESDAY, 1ST NOVEMBER, 1972 AT 3.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Mr. G.J. Mountain (in the chair), Lord Buckhurst, Mrs. U.M. Ridley, Brig. L.M. Scott, Capt. D.H.F. Armstrong, Col. J.H. Lowe, Messrs. J.R. Greenwood, R.F.J. Brooke, J.H. Drew, A.W.C. Dascombe, G.M. Raikes, E.V. Ellison and V.G. Facer.

Also present were:-

Mr. J.V. Balfour, Solicitor to the Lord of the Manor.

Mr. P.A. Williams, Solicitor to the Board of Conservators.

Mr. J.F. Hemmings, Assistant Clerk to the East Sussex County Council.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Lady E. Brind, Miss A. Lumsden, Major R.E.V. Grubb, Messrs. C.W. Shelford, R.St.G. Clarke and F.B. Cornwall.

The Chairman welcomed Lord Buckhurst to the Meeting which had been called to consider the Draft Ashdown Forest Bill. He also welcomed Mr. Balfour, Mr. Williams and Mr. Hemmings.

The Chairman stated that he would deal with the Draft Bill, section by section, and invited Members of the Board to comment on each section as it occurred.

It was agreed that the square brackets on page 2, line 15, should be deleted. Mr. Ellison raised the question of the description of the Uckfield Council with reference to the Local Government Act of 1972. The Clerk stated that all references to Acts of Parliament would be brought up to date with existing legislation. The Chairman considered that the determination of the periods of service of Commoners laid down in Section 7 (3) should be done at meetings of the Commoners and not the Conservators. This was agreed.

Captain Armstrong considered that the provision in Section 7 (4) for the Commoners to elect as their fifth representative "a person whether a Commoner or not" was wrong, and that all the elected representatives should be Commoners. There was a lengthy discussion on this point, with Mr. Ellison and Mr. Dascombe supporting this view, while Brig Scott, Era. Ridley. Col. Lowe. Mr. Drew and the Chairman all supported the sub-clause as written. The consensus of opinion was that this could result in someone being elected to the Board, who, while not being eligible as a Commoner or Local Government representative, could be of immense service to Ashdown Forest, the object being to get the best Board of Conservators possible.

Captain Armstrong proposed and Mr. Ellison seconded that the sub-clause should be amended so that all the Elected Conservators were Commoners. This was defeated by 9 votes to 3.

The discussion on Section 7 (4) ranged to the question as to whether all the appointed Members need be Members of the Local Authorities, and while some considered that they should be so, in order that the County Council should have the majority on the Board which they had asked for, others stated that it was normal County Council practice to co-opt suitable people outside the Council to sit on specialist Committees, and that this principle should be extended to the Conservators. The Clerk reported that there was considerable local feeling, not confined to the Commoners, that the County Council should appoint people living in the district, to the Board, and this clause would enable this to happen. Mr. Hemmings stated that the County Council wished this clause to be amended to ensure that six out of the nine people appointed by title County Council should be Members of that Council. The Board agreed to accept this amendment. It was agreed to delete the square brackets in Section 9 (1) line 19.

A lengthy discussion took place on Section 12. Captain Armstrong wanted the square brackets removed so that the quorum would be six Appointed Conservators, and he doubted if this number was high enough to ensure a County Council majority at all meetings. Many Members pointed out that the record of attendance of Appointed Members in the past had been such that a quorum of this nature might well invalidate many Board Meetings, and that in any event no single meeting of the Board could or would pass any drastic resolutions in the absence of County Council representatives, and that the system of submitting estimates to the County Council would ensure their financial control.

It was proposed by Mr. Drew, seconded by Mrs. Ridley, that the word "appointed" be struck out. This was carried by 9 votes to 3.

Mr. Hemmings informed the Board that while respecting the views of the Board, the County Council might well ask for the quorum to be amended to read "six Conservators, of whom not less than four shall be County Councillors".

Captain Armstrong considered that Section 14 (3) (b) should be altered so that a proxy must be a Commoner. Mr. Williams pointed out that in Company Law a proxy need not be a shareholder, and that he considered that the same principle should apply here. This was agreed. It was agreed to substitute the word "on" for "in" in Section 14 (4) line 39.

Mr. Ellison and Captain Armstrong expressed misgivings on the broadness of the drafts of parts of Section 17, particularly sub-sections (1)(b) and (1)(f). The Clerk, Mr. Williams and Mr. Hemmings all drew attention to the fact that any powers granted under clause 17 were subject to the duties laid down in clause 16, and that this was very limiting as to what the Conservators could or could not do. Mr. Balfour pointed out the danger of being too specific in an Act of Parliament. If a clause stated exactly what was allowed, it followed that nothing else could be permitted. This would tie the hands of the Conservators in future years when new problems might arise which cannot be foreseen at present.

Captain Armstrong thought that Section 17 (c) should be amended so that no building should be allowed on the forest. The Chairman pointed out that whilst at present no building was envisaged, the need might arise in the future to build houses for Rangers, and that he considered it wise to keep the clause in.

The Clerk pointed out that houses for Rangers would not only be subject to the consent of the Secretary of State, but also of the Local Planning Authority and both the East Sussex County Council and the Countryside Commission who would probably pay for the houses, so there were many safeguards. Mr. Ellison thought that the clause could be improved by the addition of the words "and occupation by employees of the Conservators".

Captain Armstrong considered that the Conservators should take powers to finance housing for employees but not to build. It was proposed by Mr. Brooke, seconded by Mr. Raikes, that the clause should remain as drafted. This was carried by 8 votes to 2.

Captain Armstrong considered that in Section 17 (l) (g) the words "and lavatory accommodation" should be deleted. The Clerk stated that this had been inserted because in some circumstances the Countryside Commission make it a condition of their grants that lavatories should be provided. After a discussion on the desirability of placing lavatories in the surrounding villages, it was agreed to delete those words.

Mr. Balfour explained the need for the amended Section 18. This section as drafted did not safeguard the interests of the Lord of the Manor in respect of the Mineral Rights and the Golf Course, The Board accepted the new section.

Mr. Williams pointed out that under Section 18 (l) it would be possible for the Conservators to authorise the exercise of rights which were exclusive to the Commoners. The Board instructed the Clerk to arrange an amendment to this section to ensure that the Commoners' exclusive rights were protected.

The Clerk reported that the Parliamentary Agents were considering redrafting Section 20. The alterations would be of a minor nature, in no way affecting the meaning of the Section, but they felt that as drafted the Section did not fully cover the various different ways in which land could be acquired and held.

Mr. Drew said that he did not agree that in Section 27 the County Council should give prior consent to capital expenditure. Mr. Hemmings explained that in most cases any capital expenditure by the Conservators would be with money provided by the County Council, and they must have control of that expenditure. Mr. Drew pointed out that there were circumstances where money might be forthcoming from other sources, in particular the Friends of Ashdown Forest. It was agreed that this Section should be re-worded so that the consent applied only to capital money provided by the County Council.

Captain Armstrong proposed that Section 28 (1) should be amended so that the Conservators should keep their Accounts in a manner prescribed by the County Council. Nobody was prepared to second this resolution.

The Clerk reported that Section 28 would be amended to authorise the District Auditor to audit the Accounts of the Conservators for the period 1st January 1974 to 31st March, 1974.

It was agreed that in Section 30 (1) (c) line 39 the words in square brackets should be deleted.

The Clerk reported that Section 32 would be altered to incorporate the authority to raise a Forest Rate at present set out in the Award in the last paragraph on page 23. This was due to the need to substitute approval by the Secretary of State for Land Commissioners.

The Chairman reported that there was some doubt as to whether Parliament would accept Section 35, in view of opposition by the Department of the Environment. The County Council, after consultation with the Parliamentary Agents had decided to leave the Section in, and it was hoped that it would become part of the now Act.

It was proposed by Colonel Lowe and seconded by Hr. Greenwood that the Chairman be authorised to agree any minor amendments to the final draft. This was carried unanimously.

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Lord Buckhurst, and agreed without dissent that the Draft Bill be approved as amended.

There being no further business the Meeting was concluded.

MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING OF THE COMMONERS OF ASHDOWN FOREST HELD AT THE FOREST ROW VILLAGE HALL AT 7-30 P.M. ON FRIDAY, 10TH NOVEMBER, 1972.

1. PRESENT. Mrs. Arnold, R. Osborne, W.F.J. Fussell, H.E. Brown, P. Friend, L.H. Smith. B.S. Evans, A. Lumsden, C.M. Gabriel, H.B. Pillinger, H.C. Lowcock, W.S. Hoath, D.S. Carter (also representing Michael Hall School) R. Richards, Patricia Coldsmith, Mrs. Ferraby, E.G. Huntley, Evelyn R. Glover, Reg. Glover. J. Hale, A.T.L. Harvey, A.A.M. Batchelor, Dorothy Ross, Nancy A. McNair, Phillippa Ryder, D.M. Law, E.D. Collins, E.S. Stevenson, R. de V. ***ph, David Markham, F. Kennard, E.P.L. Hewett, E.M. Evett, E.G. Hopkins, C.M. Maudslay, J.A. Cotton, David Pratt, Anthony Gee, C.M. Raikes, J.M. Raikes. W.C. Hunt, K. V. Punt, R.S. Luff, W.L. Philip, Derek Evett, E ***** , Diana Fraser, R.G. Evans, R.S. Evans, Brian E. Hale, Mr. and Mrs. T.F. Keating, Linda Scotson, Kevin O'Kane, Mr. H. Lightly, Mrs. J. Lightly, B.T. Rogers, Judith Kelley, Edward Fox. Alan Barr, Susan Barr, A.O. Chambers, B.H. Chambers, R.D. Knight, W. Fraser, Anne Sheldrick, T.J. Corke, B. Twentyman, G. Baker, G.H. Baker, R. Gladwell, T. Fearman, D.C. Irvine, C.R. Stephens, D.E. Harman, amongst others.

2. ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING.

The Clerk called for nominations for election of a Chairman for the Meeting. The following were nominated:
Mr. Mountain - proposed by Mr. Brooke, seconded by Mr. Owen,
Mr. Markham - proposed by Mr. Hall and seconded by Mr. Townsend.

The Clerk then called for an election by a show of hands and Mr. Mountain was elected by 45 votes to 33. Mr. Mountain then took the Chair.

3. NOTICE CONVENING MEETING.

The Clerk then read the Notice convening the Meeting.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING.

The Chairman asked the Meeting if they wished the Minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting held on August 17th to be read in full. The Meeting decided that the two resolutions passed at that Meeting should be read out, and that the remainder of the Minutes should be taken as read. The Clerk then read out the two resolutions.

5. MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman stated that this Meeting had been called to continue discussion on the Report of the Board of Conservators on the Laws, Regulations and Administration of Ashdown Forest and the Amendments required thereto, and to consider the following resolution which he proposed

“That this Meeting approves the action of the Board of Conservators in supporting the proposed new ASHDOWN FOREST BILL”

Colonel Lowe seconded the resolution.

The Chairman informed the Meeting that the Board of Conservators had withdrawn their proposals that 1) The right to graze sheep should be substituted for the right to graze swine, and 2) That the quantities and places where estovers may be gathered should be under the direction of the Board and that the Commoners should forego their right to gather estovers anywhere they wished.

He also stated that in addition to ensuring statutory financial support for the Conservators it was important to give the public rights of access to the Forest. Without this no grants would forthcoming from the County Council.

The Chairman then invited discussion of the Bill from the floor of the Meeting.

Mr. Kirkham asked why the Commoners had not been able to see the draft Bill. The Clerk explained that the final draft of the Bill was not yet in print. The Bill was being promoted by the East Sussex County Council, based on the recommendations of the Board of Conservators, and until the County Council was satisfied on the drafting of every clause, it was not possible to make the draft public. The Chairman stressed that the Bill was being drafted to cover

the points recommended in the Report of the Board of Conservators, a summary of which had been circulated to every Commoner.

Considerable discussion led by Mr. Howard followed on the availability of grants from the Countryside Commission; it was variously stated that grants were available to the Conservators now, to the East Sussex County Council, or to the Uckfield Rural District Council, with or without amendments to the Countryside Act. The Clerk stated that it would require an Act of Parliament to amend the Countryside Act 1968, and that the Countryside Commission had stated that they would favour the amendment of this Act by the proposed Ashdown Forest bill, but that the Department of Environment had serious reservations on this amendment, due to the impending Local Government Finance Bill, which was to be published shortly.

Mr. Glover reported on a Meeting of the East Sussex County Council held on Tuesday 7th November, when the promotion of the Bill was approved by that Council. He stated that Captain Armstrong had recommended that the Bill be postponed for six months, on the grounds that the Uckfield Rural District Council were not fully satisfied with all the clauses; there now appeared to be no great need for a Bill at all, and that Lord Buckhurst, the Lord of the Manor, had withdrawn his support for the Bill.

The Chairman asked Mr. Shelford, Chairman of the Finance Committee of the County Council to reply to this statement. Mr. Shelford read out a letter from Lord Buckhurst stating firmly that contrary to what had been stated at the County Council Meeting, he was in favour of the proposed Bill, which had his wholehearted support. Mr. Shelford went on to explain the position of the County Council, namely that as in recent years the Uckfield Rural District Council, the East Grinstead Urban District Council and the Cuckfield Rural District Council had limited their payments to the Conservators the County had had to shoulder an increasing burden, paying for a higher percentage of the Conservators' expenditure each year. The present Council were prepared to accept the responsibility for supporting the Forest, provided that they were suitably represented on the Board, so that they could protect the ratepayers' interests. If the Bill did not go through the present Council felt bound to protect the interest of the new Council to be formed in 1974 by giving notice of withdrawal of voluntary support.

If this happened it was possible that the new Council would renew support or, alternatively, that the Conservators would find themselves in dire financial difficulties. The new Council might not, however, see fit to support an independent Board of Conservators but might wish to treat the Forest as a direct responsibility of the Council. The object of the County Council was not to take over the Forest, but to save it. The best people to save the Forest from outside pressure was a strong Local Authority.

Mr. Glover then asked the Chairman if Captain Armstrong could be asked to the Meeting to act as spokesman for some of the Commoners. After some discussion it was agreed to do so.

Mr. Gee asked further about the veiled threats of the County Council withdrawing support. Mr. Shelford elaborated on the County Council's position, stating that his Council did not wish to threaten the Conservators in any way, but that in order to give the new Council a completely free hand, he must advise the present Council to give six months' notice of withdrawal of support if the Bill did not go through.

Mr. Carter and other speakers again stressed their worry about not having seen the draft Bill.

Mr. Williams stated that he put the preservation of the Forest over [and] above the financial position, and stressed that Clause 16 of the draft Bill clearly set out the duties of the Conservators to conserve the Forest as a quiet and natural place of outstanding beauty, and that all the new powers being given to the Board were subject to this duty. Mr. Kennard stated that as a ratepayer he considered it necessary for the County Council to have a majority on the Board to protect the ratepayers' interests, and although he had reservations on some details in the Bill in balance he was strongly in favour.

Mrs. Hill queried who would pay for the upkeep of the Forest if the County Council did not. She could not see other alternatives.

Colonel Lowe thought that it was important that the control of the Forest should be as broad based as possible. If the Forest remained in local control there was a very real danger that we might be too weak to resist possible pressures such as the building of new towns, etc. The more national our control was, the safer the Forest would be. The County Council was not the perfect solution in this respect, but was the best compromise.

Mr, Evans thought that the Bill was well thought out and presented an excellent plan for the continued preservation of the Forest. He praised the Conservators for the way they had looked after the Forest so far, and could see nothing in their proposals to suggest that anything would change.

Captain Armstrong stated that he considered that the Bill should be delayed for at least six months. Part of it was unsatisfactory and the Uckfield Rural District Council would wish changes. It was even doubtful if legislation was needed at all. He thought that the Public had a right of access at present, so it was not necessary to give them one, and the financial problems could be settled by agreement with the Councils.

A number of speakers spoke against the Bill, mainly on the grounds that they had not had the opportunity to read it - that they had not been adequately consulted - that the Conservators were selling out the Forest to the County Council, and that grants would be available without legislation.

Mr. Humphreys, Mr. Osborne and Mr. Hale accused the Conservators of doing nothing for the Commoners and put forward various suggestions to improve the grazing.

The Chairman pointed out that some of the points they had raised could be considered if the Bill was passed, for the Conservators would then have powers to help the grazers which they did not have at present.

The Chairman then stated that the vote would be taken on the resolution which he had put to the Meeting. Mr. Hall stated that proxy voting was illegal, and that proxy votes could not be counted. Mr. Williams, as Solicitor to the Conservators, stated that there was no legislation on the matter of proxy voting, but read out a Minute of the Commoners' Meeting held on 6th December, 1961, as follows:

Voting by Proxy: Mr. Owen stated that as very few people could get to the Meeting and vote, he suggested Voting by Proxy. The Chairman stated that Notices could be placed with the Assessments asking people who wanted to vote to write to him for a form. This would be the easiest and least expensive method of voting. A proposal by Mr. Wolfson and seconded by Mr. Evatt that Voting by Proxy be permitted in the future was carried. He stated that in the absence of legislation the Commoners had themselves instituted a procedure, and that this could not be challenged.

The vote was then taken and the Chairman declared the Meeting closed.

After a period of about twenty minutes the Chairman asked the Clerk to declare the result of the vote, which was as follows:

For the Motion 3920
Against the Motion 678

The Clerk gave the following additional information. The number of Commoners who had voted were

For the Motion 192
Against the Motion 70

And the numbers of Voters recorded at the Meeting were

For the Motion 71
Against the Motion 70

At a check of the voting figures carried out on the following day the accurate voting figures were found to be

FOR 3980 cast by 194 Commoners
AGAINST 605 cast by 69 Commoners.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE COMMONERS OF ASHDOWN FOREST HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL, NUTLEY, ON TUESDAY 12TH DECEMBER, 1972 AT 7.30 P.M.

1. PRESENT: F.E.N. Arnold, Tina Freeman, G.J. Mountain, P.R. Kelley, A. Richardson, D.C. Watson, F.P.L. Gray, P.H. Shaw, Ruth Blyth, R.B. Waters, Joan Waters, Anthony Gee, W.J. Shearing, J.H. Drew, R.E.W. Grubb, I.R. Mitchell, B.G. Ball, J. Hale, Ella G. Huntley, T. Townsend, J. Porter, G.W. Eley, Evelyn R. Glover, R.J. Glover, David Evatt, E.S. Stevenson, R. Edwards, F. Kirby, N. Keays, W.J. Rush, J.W. Penfold, J. Williams, P.A. Williams, Anthony Evans, A.M. Halpers, C. Osborne, C.R. Stephens, S. Rudolph, F.B. Cornwell, R.L. Stinton, P.M. Stinton, A. Hood, V.G. Facer, C.R. Balfour-Smith, Jane Balfour-Smith, S.R. Knight, Andy Clark, W.K. Oliver, R.J. Cossens, Linda Scotson, Kevin O'Kane, A. Lewis-Gray, D. Mumford, David Markham, R. Place, S.H. Sainsbury, C.M. Maudslay, Derek Evatt, Anne Lumsden, Donald Baker, G. Lawrence, C.H. Blakiston, G.F. Perring, Campbell Singer, Gillian Singer, H. Lightly, J.E.S. Lowe, B.W. Law, J.R. Thompson, D.S. Carter (also representing Michael Hall School), H.L. Lowcock, A.B. Pillinger, F. Kennard, G.E. Hopkins, P.B. Stride, H.W. *****, D.J. *****, B. St.G. Clarke, Elizabeth Walker, B.F. Ball, H. Laportes, W.G. Hunt, H. Hunt, amongst others.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Clerk reported that he had received apologies for absence from Hr. G M. Raikes.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING

The Clerk asked for nominations for Chairman. The following nominations were made:

Hr. Howard. Proposed by Mr. Carter. Seconded by Mr. Lightly.

Mr. Mountain. Proposed by Mr. Brooks. Seconded by Mr. Waters.

The Clerk then took a vote by a show of hands, and Mr. Howard was elected by 47 votes to 29. Mr. Howard then took the chair.

4. NOTICE OF THE MEETING

The Clerk read the Notice convening the Meeting.

At this stage Hr. Hall queried the matter of proxy voting as set out on the Notices of Nomination for election of Conservators, and this sparked off a lively discussion. The Clerk read out the Minute of the Commoners' Annual General Meeting of the 6th December, 1960, at which the Commoners had voted in favour of proxy voting, and reported that this Minute had been duly confirmed at the Annual General Meeting in 1971. Despite this, some speakers considered that proxy voting was not allowed and was illegal.

In response to a question from the Chair the Clerk reported that proxy voting had been used for the election of Conservators after 1960. Other speakers considered it wrong and even immoral that the system of proxy voting should be challenged for the election of Conservators at this Meeting in view of the fact that public notices had been displayed stating that this system could be used, and that the system was as agreed by an Annual General Meeting of Commoners.

It was proposed by Hr. Gee and seconded by Mr. Hall that

- 1) Proxy voting should not be allowed at this Meeting
- 2) Proxy voting should not be allowed at future meetings of the Commoners.

The first part of the resolution was defeated by 42 votes to 36 and the second part was carried by 55 to 27.

5. MINUTES OR PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 7th December 1971 were read by the Clerk and approved by the Meeting who authorised the Chairman to sign them as correct.

The Minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting held on 10th November were not put to the Meeting. The Chairman stated that there were factors he wished to discuss later and he would postpone taking the Minutes. He asked the Clerk to read out any resolutions put to the Meeting; this was done and the Minutes were then left.

6. ELECTION OF CONSERVATORS.

After considerable discussion on the manner of counting votes, and the desire of the Chair to appoint tellers, the voting slips were duly collected and counting took place while other items on the Agenda were discussed. There were no volunteers to act as tellers.

7. ELECTION OF RECREATION GROUND SUPERINTENDENTS.

The Chairman decided that he would take this item after the election of Conservators was announced. The item was never taken.

8. REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS

Hr. Mountain stated that he thought one of the main points of interest on the Forest this year had been a marked reduction in the number and size of fires. There had been only 23 fires this Spring, burning 30 acres of Forest. He considered that this was in part due to a greater sense of responsibility on the part of the Public, coupled with improved fire fighting facilities. The Land Rover with its fire pump called swiftly to the scene of a fire by the radio, had proved its worth time and again.

Mr. Mountain praised the generosity of the Friends of Ashdown Forest who, besides providing the money for reseeded fire breaks, which had proved a very successful operation, had this year provided a number of seats and a large number of litter baskets. These were of a new design on the Forest, and they not only looked good, but had proved an effective deterrent to crows, squirrels and stray dogs.

Mr. Mountain gave a generous tribute to all the Staff who ran the Forest, and included in this the wives of the Rangers who, in a voluntary capacity, do so much to link up the communications on the Forest.

Questions were then put to Hr. Mountain. Mr. Humphrey asked what had been done for the Commoners. Mr. Mountain replied that one example was the improved grazing on the re-seeded firebreaks. Mr. Osborne stated that there was increased trouble with dogs worrying and killing sheep. After some discussion on the problem, Mr. Mountain undertook to consult the Board of Conservators with a view to placing special notices in car parks near where the danger existed, and to look into the powers available under the Bye-laws.

Mr. Stevenson raised the question of the pole barriers and ditches and banks which were used to stop the motorists from driving over the Forest. He was assured that facilities for entry on to the Forest would be given to every Commoner about his commonable business, and that steps would be taken to ensure safe passage on a footpath off the Stonehill Road.

Mr. Townsend stated that the fence round the Kennedy Clump had only been approved for 7 years and should now be removed. Mr. Mountain undertook to look into this.

Mr. Stevenson referred to an encroachment near the windmill at Nutley. The Clerk reported that he had no reply to letters but had now a new address to contact and hoped that the fence would soon be removed voluntarily. If not, the Conservators would have to consider throwing down the fence. Hr. Stevenson also raised a question of safety with regard to the electricity poles alongside the footpath at Fords Green, Nutley. The Clerk undertook to look into this.

A debate developed on the question of the Golf Club rent. The Chairman of the Meeting stated that this was disgracefully low and should be increased immediately. The Clerk pointed out that the terms of the agreement with the Conservators were for a 5 year period, and no action could be taken to increase the rent of £300 until 1975. He stated that the Lord of the Manor had a separate licence with the Golf Club, so that the overall payments by the Club were in the nature of £700.

10. ASHDOWN FOREST BILL.

Discussion on the Bill opened with a request to Mr. P.A. Williams, the Board of Conservators, to make a statement. Mr. Williams declined to do so at this stage. Mr. Mountain stated that although Uckfield Rural District Council had shown signs that they might oppose the Bill, discussions had been taking place with the East Sussex County Council, and there was now a sporting chance that they would support it.

Mr. Oliver thought the time had come for the Commoners to spell out their objections to the Bill and to propose amendments. He considered that the words "as far as possible" should be deleted from Section 16. The Chairman decided not to pursue this proposal, and called upon a Mr. Dressner to address the Meeting. Mr. Dressner was introduced as the legal adviser to Mr. M. Hall.

Hr. Dressner attacked the Bill on a number of grounds including: It was basically a takeover by the East Sussex County Council. It was drafted by people who did not have the interests of the Commoners at heart. That the Board were in breach of their statutory duty in supporting it. That it was a bad Bill and that you could drive a coach and horses through parts of it. That the Commoners were not consulted in the drafting, and he asked for discussions and delays. He further stated that he had asked the Department of the Environment for an enquiry into the conduct of the Conservators, but this had not been granted.

Mr. Williams replied that the drafting had been carried out by Solicitors for the East Sussex County Council, the Lord of the Manor, the Parliamentary Agents and the Conservators and as far from a careless haphazard piece of drafting. It was untrue that the interests of the Commoners had not been looked after. The Bill enjoins the Conservators to protect the rights of the Commoners, and those rights are as registered under the Commons Registration Act, and the Bill does nothing to alter these. He pointed out that 9 out of 20 of the Conservators were Commoners themselves, elected by the Commoners. Both Hr. Williams and Major Grubb pointed out that the reason why the Bill was being placed before Parliament in the present session was, namely, that with the forthcoming Local Government re-organisation it was either a case of now, with the existing County Council, or a probable delay of up to 5 years with a new County Council. Nobody knew what line the new County Council would take, nor in the meanwhile the finances of the Conservators.

The Chairman stated that the Conservators should withdraw their support for the Bill and that they and the Commoners should draw up new proposals. Mr. A. Evans considered that this criticism was not representative of the majority of the Commoners who had shown themselves to be in support of the Board of Conservators by voting on 10th November. He pointed out that this was a majority of people as well as votes.

Numerous speakers raised points including the system of acreage voting - proxy voting, the lack of consultation, the possibility of houses being built on the Forest, the proposed powers of the Conservators with regard to selling land, and eventually Mr. Gee proposed:

"That a Committee of Commoners be formed to meet with the Conservators to discuss amendments to the draft Bill with a view to making such amendments before the Bill is considered by Parliament"

This was seconded by Mr. Oliver and carried by a large majority.

Mr. Mountain undertook on behalf of the Conservators to arrange meetings with this Committee.

After discussion as to who should sit on this Committee, it was agreed that all those who wished to do so should stand. A Committee of 12 Commoners was formed and Mr. Hall undertook to co-ordinate it.

ELECTION OF CONSERVATORS

The Clerk then announced the result of the election of Conservators as follows:

Col. Lowe	2811
V. Facer	2711
G.M. Raikes	2690
R. Glover	484
M.G. Hall	378

11. NEXT MEETINGS

It was proposed by Mr. Hall that there should be a Meeting of the Commoners on 16th January, when the Committee could report the result of the talks with the Conservators. This was carried with a large number in favour.

It was agreed that the next Annual General Meeting of the Commoners should be at Forest Row at 7-30 p.m. on the 11th December, 1973.

The Meeting was then concluded.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, COLEMANS HATCH, ON WEDNESDAY, 15TH DECEMBER, 1972 AT 2-30 P.H.

PRESENT: Mr. G.J. Mountain (in the Chair), Lady E. Brind, Miss Lumsden, Mrs. U. Ridley, Col. J.H.B. Lowe, Brig. L. M. Scott, Capt. D.H.F. Armstrong, Major R.E.W. Grubb, Messrs. J.H. Drew, R.F.J. Brooke, F.B. Cornwell, V.G. Facer, C.W. Shelford, R.V.C. Dascombe, R. St. G. Clarke, E.W. Ellison and Hon. C.A.S. Grimston.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Mr. G. Raikes and Mr. J.R. Greenwood.

MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS held on 18th October and 1st November, 1972 which had been circulated were approved and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING.

The Clerk reported that no meeting of the Committee to study his report on running the Forest had been held, due to pressures on the Ashdown Forest Bill. It was agreed that this Committee would not meet until more progress had been made on this Bill.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

The Clerk then reported the financial statement as at the 13th December, 1972 as follows:

Bank Balances	1971	1972.	
General Account		1477	1930
Wages & Petty Cash Account	366	239	

The following had been collected since January 1st:

	Forest Rates	Ack. Rents.	Horse	Temporary Riding	Sundries. Licences.
1971	£1094	£1125	£169	£122	
1972	£1236		£1246	£701	£177 £92

The following had been received from Local Authorities:

East Sussex County Council	£8390
Uckfield Rural District Council	£1500
Cuckfield Rural District Council	£250
East Grinstead Urban District Council	£200
	<u>£10340</u>

The Clerk reported that although the Bank balances were normal for this time of year, he anticipated that he would overspend on certain items this year, principally on Postage, Telephone, Stationery, Printing and Advertising. These items had been very heavy but the unavoidable expenditure could not be foreseen at the time the estimates had been prepared. He hoped that the overall deficit for the year would not be great, due partly to a saving in other items and to a slightly larger income than had been anticipated.

ESTIMATES FOR THE PERIOD 1ST JAN 1974 TO 31ST JAN 1974

The Chairman stated that the County Council had asked for Estimates for this period. It was obviously impossible to forecast expenditure accurately so far in advance, and for a limited period. The Board unanimously approved the provisional estimates for the period involved.

CLERK'S REPORT ON FOREST ACTIVITIES

The Clerk reported that he has, with the Chairman's authority, sold a Mini Pick-Up van for £50. The vehicle was due for replacement and allowance for a new vehicle had been made in the estimates for 1973. The vehicle had

failed to pass its M.O.T. test and the cost of repair was out of proportion to its value. The Rangers were able to carry on with one vehicle short until a new one was provided.

Activities on the Forest had been much of a routine nature, but a start had been made on the bridle path at Fairwarp.

The Clerk asked the Board to authorise a continuation of the Riding Regulations and charges in 1973 as for 1972. This was agreed.

DATES OF BOARD MEETINGS IN 1973

The following dates were agreed:

14th Feb. 18th Apr. 18th July 17th Oct. 12th Dec.

THE CHAIRMAN REPORTED ON THE COMMONERS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT NUTLEY ON 12TH DECEMBER 1972 AS FOLLOWS:

The Meeting had been somewhat disorganised and unruly. For the first time in history the Chairman of the Board of Conservators had not been elected to the Chair.

The Meeting had failed to elect Recreation Ground Superintendents, but it was hoped that this would be done at a further meeting of the Commoners to be held on 16th January, 1973.

The matter of sheep worrying by loose dogs had been raised and the Chairman asked the Board to consider the question of placing notices warning the Public of the presence of sheep, and the penalties involved. After some discussion the Clerk was instructed to investigate the question of putting notices in car parks in the areas of the Forest affected, and to look into the powers the Board had under the Byelaws to take action against any offenders.

The Commoners had voted in favour of a notion that proxy voting was not to be permitted in any future voting by the Commoners. This was a reversal of a resolution passed in 1960 permitting proxy voting. Major Grubb queried the position as regards proxy voting if the Ashdown Forest Bill was to become law. The Clerk undertook to clarify the position as to whether, as at present worded, the Commoners had the right to decide whether to vote by proxy or not, or whether the choice lay with the individual Commoner. It was agreed that a note should be printed on the Rate Demands this year drawing the Commoners' attention to the Commoners' decision.

There being no other general business, the Board then went into Committee.

The Chairman then gave the Board a brief resume of the Commoners Extraordinary General Meeting held on 10th November, 1972, when the Ashdown Forest Bill had been discussed. He reported that he had given full explanations of the Conservators' views. Mr. Shelford had explained the County Council's case, and Captain Armstrong had spoken on behalf of a group of Commoners on the need to delay the Bill. The Commoners had voted on the following resolution:

"That this Meeting approves the action of the Board of Conservators in supporting the proposed new ASHDOWN FOREST BILL."

This motion was carried by 3980 votes cast by 192 Commoners to 605 votes cast by 69 Commoners.

The Chairman went on to report that a group of Commoners had continued their opposition to the Bill by organising a petition to the Department of the Environment, by statements in the Press, on the radio and on television, and even by accusations of fraud on the question of the voting.

At the Commoners' Annual General Mooting on 12th December, 1972, there had been a heated verbal assault on the Bill and on the Conservators. It was alleged that the Conservators had acted contrary to their statutory duty in supporting the Bill, and it was stated that the Department of the Environment had been requested to hold an enquiry into the activities of the Conservators and their officers. This had been refused. The Commoners had, at

that Meeting, set up a Committee to meet the Conservators and the Chairman had given his undertaking that the Conservators would meet this Committee.

After much discussion the Board appointed the following Committee to meet the Commoners:

The Chairman
Colonel Lowe
Mr. Drew
Mr. Shelford - as a County Council Member
Mr. Ellison - an Uckfield Member of the Board
Captain Armstrong

It was agreed that the Clerk, Mr. Williams and Mr. Hemmings, Assistant Clerk to the County Council, should attend.

Mr. Shelford told the Meeting that negotiations were still proceeding between the East Sussex County Council and the Uckfield Rural District Council, but that he would prefer not to make a detailed statement on these at this time. Certain amendments would be made to the Bill, and the Board would be informed as soon as agreement had been reached. In the meanwhile Uckfield Rural District Council had decided to oppose the Bill, but it was understood that this opposition would be withdrawn if the negotiations were satisfactory.

Mrs. Ridley considered it important that the Press should be informed of the Board's agreement to talk with the Commoners, and the Clerk was instructed to issue a statement to this effect to all the media.

Captain Armstrong considered that the Board should ask the County Council to withdraw the Bill in its present form.

RANGERS WAGES

The Chairman stated that the Rangers wages had for some years been allied to these of agricultural workers. When the National Union of Agricultural Workers were awarded a pay increase, the Rangers were given the same percentage rise. At the present time the N.U.A.W. had been awarded a substantial increase, although this was at present frozen by the national pay standstill. When this increase was finally granted, he considered that the Rangers should be given the same percentage increase as the Farm workers. With the present rates of pay of the Rangers this system of fixing the Rangers' wages could lead to excessive increases in the future, and he considered the time had come to consider a new pay structure.

After some discussion it was agreed that the Clerk should investigate the Local Government employees' salary and wages grades, and find out if there was a grade which matched the Rangers' wages and conditions of service, and report back to the Board.

The Board then came out of Committee.

There being no further business the Meeting was concluded.

1 Jan to 31 March 1974

EXPENDITURE

Salaries & Wages

Clerk	647	
Sec/Bookkeeper		338
Office Cleaner	15	
Rangers		873
Tractor Driver	358	
Patrolman		-
N.I., Superann. etc.	<u>190</u>	
		<u>2421</u>

Office.

Hire		130
Redecoration	5	

(Post	20	
(Telephone		15
Auditor		100
Solicitor		25
Room Hire & Travel	10	
Bank Charges	5	
Advertising	10	
Insurance		-
Printing & Stationery	50	
Audit Stamp		-
Sundries		20
New Equipment		=
		<u>390</u>

Forest Expenses

Forest Supt. Expenses	10	
Rangers		160
Transport		200
Machinery running Exp.		200
Hire		50
***** Imp.		150
N. Boards & L. Baskets		75
Sundries		30
Radio maintenance	125	
Depot	<u>30</u>	
		<u>1030</u>

Capital Expenditure

Mini Pick-up	600	
Rotary Slasher	600	
Total Expenditure	<u>4441</u>	

Estimated Normal Income.

Rate at 2 ½ p	-	
Ack. Rents		1000
Temp. Licences		30
Horse Riding	400	
Sundry Receipts		<u>15</u>
		<u>1445</u>

Additional Rate		
Income	-	
Total Income	1445	
Total Expenditure		4441
Estimated Deficit		£2996

NOTE A. Salaries and Wages have been calculated on the same principle as in the 1973 Estimates.

NOTE B. No allowance is made for Patrolmen as these are not normally employed at this time of year.

NOTE C. These Estimates are not based on one quarter of a year's expenditure but upon a guess as to what may be required to be spent and what may be received during the first three months of the year.

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST
HELD AT THE PARISH ROOM, COLEMANS HATCH, ON FRIDAY, 19TH JANUARY, 1973 AT 2.00
P.M.,**

PRESENT: Mr. G.J. Mountain (in the Chair), Lady Brind, Mrs. U.M. Ridley, Miss Anne Lumsden, Col. J H. Lowe, Brigadier L.M. Scott, Major R.E.V. Grubb, Capt. D.H.F. Armstrong, The Hon. C.A.S. Grimston, Messrs. J.H. Drew, R.F.J. Brooke, F.B. Cornwell, R. St.G. Clarke, G.M. Raikes, V.G. Facer, C.W. Shelford, J.R. Greenwood, B.W. Ellison and A.W.C. Dascombe.

Also present were:

Mr. J. Atkinson, Mr. J.F. Hemmings, Mr. C.R. Winser and Mr. P.A. Williams.

1. The Board went into Committee.

The Chairman explained that the meeting had been called in the first instance to consider amendments to the Ashdown Forest Bill, but that 20 Commoners had convened a Special Meeting of the Board in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Award of 1887. He had therefore invited 3 of the 20 signatories of that request for a meeting to appear before the Board at 3 p.m. to make their representations. They would, with his consent, be accompanied by their legal adviser. He obtained agreement from the Board that their representations should be made in front of the Press.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Atkinson, Clerk to the East Sussex County Council, Mr. Hemmings, Assistant Clerk, Mr. Winser representing Messrs. Sherwood & Co., the East Sussex County Council Parliamentary Agents, and Mr. P.A. Williams to the Meeting in an advisory capacity.

The Board then came out of Committee.

2. The Chairman asked Mr. Atkinson to inform the Board of the state of negotiations between the East Sussex County Council and the Uckfield Rural District Council, who were still in disagreement with parts of the Ashdown Forest Bill. Mr. Atkinson stated that the following points had been agreed:-

Clause 8(4) That all appointed Conservators should be Members of their respective Councils.

Clause 12. That the quorum should be "6 appointed Members."

Clause 17(1)(b) That the words "improve and" should be deleted.

Clause 17(1)(e) That reference to dwellings should be struck out.

After some discussion the Board agreed that the reference to buildings in this section should be worded in such a way as to include only buildings directly concerned with the management of the Forest, namely an office or a depot.

Clause 17(1)(f) That the Clause should be amended so as to exclude buildings, structures and caravans. The Board agreed with this, subject to it not being made to apply to cricket pavilions, etc., at the village recreation grounds.

Clause 18 (e). This clause was still under consideration. Uckfield Rural District Council wished to see it deleted.

There was a lengthy discussion on the desirability of retaining this power, in view of the fact that the Board had had the power since 1937, and it might be desirable to use it if circumstances changed in the future.

It was proposed by Mr. Shelford, seconded by Mr. Greenwood, that this Clause should be retained. This was carried by 12 votes to 3.

Clause 20(l) The wording of this clause was still under consideration as Uckfield Rural District Council wished to delete the word "within". After a general discussion it was agreed that the Board would like to see "within" retained. Section 14 and Schedule (1) Uckfield Rural District Council had still not accepted that the voting at Commoners Meetings should not be altered by the Bill to be on a basis of one man one vote. They have been informed that it is not now possible to alter the Bill to allow this change.

Clause 16. Uckfield Rural District Council still did not accept the inclusion of the words "as far as possible" in this clause. The need for these words had been explained, and the County and Rural Districts respective Parliamentary Agents were looking into the possibility of alternate wording which would still have the effect of giving the Conservators scope to use the powers conferred on them by Sections 17 and 18.

3. The Chairman reported to the Board on a Meeting held on 5th January, 1973 between the Committee appointed by the Board and a Committee representing some of the Commoners.

Clause 7. It had been agreed in principle that the first meeting of the Commoners under the new Act should be on 1st April, 1974 in order that any change in the acreage voting system permitted under Schedule 1, para. 1, could be considered. The first elected Conservators could then be elected under any voting system then agreed.

Clause 16. The Commoners' Committee had been given the same information as Mr. Atkinson had just given to the Board.

Clause 17(1). The Commoners' Committee had requested an alteration to this and other sections of the Bill to the effect that the elected Conservators would have a power of vote over certain sections of the Bill. They had been informed that this could not be recommended to the Board.

Clause 17(c). The Commoners' Committee had been informed of the proposed alterations to this clause as had been outlined by Mr. Atkinson, and had accepted the principle.

Clause 17(2). The Commoners' Committee maintained that the clause as written would permit successive enclosures of 100 acres to be made. It was agreed that the wording of this clause should be examined to ensure that at no time could a total of more than 100 acres of Forest remain enclosed.

Clause 18(1)(a). The Commoners' Committee wished this and other clauses to be specifically subject to Section 16. It was agreed that there was no objection in principle to this, but that the desirability would be examined by the Parliamentary Agents.

Clause 18(1)(c). The Commoners' Committee had requested that this clause should be deleted. After explanations they had withdrawn this request.

Clause 18(1)(e). The Commoners' Committee had requested that this clause should be deleted. This clause had already been discussed at this meeting.

Clause 18(2). The Commoners' Committee had requested that an additional clause 18(2)(c) should be added in respect of the rights of common exclusive to the Commoners. There was now a proposal to insert words to this effect in Clause 18(1)(a) which would render the addition of the proposed clause 18(2)(c) unnecessary, and probably could also result in Clause 18(2)(b) being superfluous. The Parliamentary Agents were considering this.

Clause 20. The Commoners' Committee had requested various alterations to this clause, and as a result the possibility of redrafting to deal with land "within" and "outside" the Forest separately is being considered.

Clause 22. The Commoners' Committee had requested amendments to this clause. It was pointed out to them that this was a re-enactment of the 1949 Act, and at the request of the Ministry of Defence this clause must remain as drawn.

Clause 32. The Commoners' Committee had requested extensive alterations to this Section which would have the effect of limiting the powers of the Conservators to fix the Forest Rate. The Conservators' Committee had stated that this would be unacceptable. A proposal by the Chairman of the Board that a Committee of Commoners be set up to consider any alterations to the system of acreage voting, and that possibly any new system could be allied to the Forest Rate seemed an acceptable idea to the Commoners' Committee, and could well settle their worries about Schedule 1, para. 1.

Schedule 1. The Commoners' Committee had requested extensive alterations to this schedule, which were not acceptable to the Conservators' Committee. The proposals above appeared to be an acceptable solution.

4. The Chairman then invited Mr. Atkinson to explain to the Board the implications of Section 9 of the Countryside Act. Mr. Atkinson stated that under this Section Local Authorities would have powers to provide amenities for the Public in the nature of lavatories or restaurants. These could only be used on land taken out of the Forest. This in turn would involve a compulsory purchase procedure, with notices of intent, investigation by the Secretary of State and probably a Public enquiry. The Secretary of State had the power to order land to be added to the Forest in exchange, with rights of common attached. This system was an excellent safeguard. He further pointed out that the County Council would be in a very difficult position if they tried to make use of this procedure, when they had just promoted an Act of Parliament to protect the Forest from encroachments, to preserve the rights of the Commoners and to conserve the Forest as a place of quiet and natural beauty. The County Council had no plans to use powers under this section of the Countryside Act.

Mr. Atkinson went on to state that in his personal view there was a very real danger that if the present Bill did not become law then the present County Council would be unable to promote a new Bill in the immediate future. The new County Council to be formed in April, 1974 would probably not be able to consider a new Bill for a few years, and that a possible outcome could well be that Ashdown Forest might finish up by being made into a Country Park. This would inevitably lead to the extinguishment of Rights of Common.

5. The Chairman invited the delegates representing the signatories of the Commoners' request for a Meeting to enter and to make any representations they wished to the Board. Mr. M.G. Hall, Mr. W.K. Oliver, Mr. R. Balfour-

Smith and Mr. P.B. Stride, with their legal advisor, Hr. Dressner, took their places. Mr. Dressner addressed the Board and made the following observations.

At the Commoners' Meeting on 16th January, 1973 95 Commoners had voted in favour of a resolution requesting the Board to withdraw their support for the Bill.

The Conservators had a statutory duty to protect the rights of the Commoners. The Bill as drawn was against the interests of the Commoners and did not protect their rights, and was not in the best interests of the Forest. His clients were not against a new Bill, but considered that this Bill was a bad one and should be withdrawn. A new Bill could be drawn up with the assistance of the Commoners and presented to Parliament in the near future.

The Commoners' Committee had requested several amendments to the Bill, many of which had been acceptable to the Conservators but not to the County Council.

The Department of the Environment had indicated that they would not support the amendment of Section 5 of the Countryside Act, as Local Government finance was under review at the present time and there might be provisions which would allow grants to be paid to Ashdown Forest. There was no need for the Bill in order to obtain grants.

Section 9 of the Countryside Act presented a serious threat to the Forest. Because the Public were being given rights of access, the County Council could use their powers under this section to develop parts of the Forest and the Commoners could lose their rights over that part. This could be the start of eating away at the Forest. In fact it could be the beginning of the end of Ashdown Forest.

The Conservators were guilty of over expenditure and this in spite of the fact that the County had financial control at present. On the financial side, Hr. Dressner talked of the inequality of the Forest Rate and the need for the Conservators to put their house in order. He stated that if the Bill was withdrawn the Forest would not suffer as the East Sussex County Council would not withdraw their grant, which in any case was a minute proportion of the County Rate.

He suggested that a solution to the threat caused by Section 9 of the Countryside Act would be to give the Public right of access only over part of the Forest. In his opinion the Public did not use the whole Forest.

He stated that the Commoners were spending a great deal of money to oppose the Bill and would continue to do so. If needs be they would petition Parliament. He urged the Conservators to withdraw support for the Bill.

Mr. Atkinson explained the need for the Bill if the County were to continue paying the greater part of Forest expenditure, and the need for County Council control through the Board of Conservators of this expenditure. He stated that the Bill was being amended so that caravans could not be permitted, and explained to the delegation, as he had to the Conservators, the true position as regards Section 9 of the Countryside Act. He drew Mr. Dressner's attention to Section 11 of the Countryside Act, couched in similar terms to Section 16 of the Ashdown Forest Bill. He told Mr. Dressner of his personal fears that without an Act the Forest could well become a Country Park with the extinguishment of Common Rights. In his opinion this Bill was the safest method of preserving Ashdown Forest for the Commoners and as a place of natural beauty.

Mr. Shelford replying to the statement that the County would continue to pay stated firmly that the present County Council must give formal notice that in the event of there being no new Act, the County would cease the voluntary contributions to the Forest. This did not mean that the new Council in April, 1974, would not continue payments, but if they did there could be no guarantee as to how much they would pay, or under what conditions.

Major Grubb stated that as Chairman of the Countryside Committee of the County Council, he foresaw great difficulties in allocating sufficient money to Ashdown Forest in the future, on a voluntary basis. The now County Council would be responsible for three Country Parks, and the pressures from the urban areas for money for these Parks would be very great. At present Ashdown Forest was allocated 50% of the money available to the Countryside Committee. He could not see this position continuing. He also stressed that there would be very many fewer Councillors from the immediate vicinity on the new Council to fight for the interests of Ashdown Forest. This could well influence decisions in favour of allocation to Country Parks near the coastal towns. If the County had a statutory obligation to pay for the Forest this situation would not arise.

Mr. Williams drew the attention of the Board and of Mr. Dressner to Section 7(4) of the Countryside Act under which the Local Authorities already have the power to make Ashdown Forest into a Country Park, using compulsory purchase. This was a far greater threat to the Forest than that which had been painted under Section 9. This power under Section 7(4) was there whether or not the Public were given rights of access and whether or not the Bill became law.

Mr. Grimston stated that the Lord of the Manor had always supported the Bill and still did so. He realised that there might be some dangers to the Forest under this or any now Bill, but these were minimal compared with the dangers without the Bill. Lord Buckhurst was voluntarily giving up many of his rights and much of his income from the Forest. He would not do so unless he wholeheartedly supported the Bill.

Mr. Oliver thought that the constitution of the Board under the new Bill should remain as at present. The County Council had in any event financial control. He thought that this was a thoroughly bad Bill, and that everyone should be given time to amend it.

Mr. Hall asked for a letter from the Department of the Environment to be read out giving the reasons why they were unable to support the amendment to Section 5 of the Countryside Act and contended that the Bill was therefore unnecessary in order to obtain grants from the Countryside Commission.

Mr. Balfour-Smith contended that the Bill had been hurried through without consultation of the Commoners, and that more time should now be taken to ensure that a good Bill was presented.

Mr. Stride considered that there were insufficient safeguards in the Bill. That the priorities of the Bill were wrong, namely that the Public were being catered for at the expense of Commoners' rights, that the Forest was being financed for the Public and not for the Commoners and that the whole question of income and expenditure required an urgent review.

6. The Delegates were then asked to withdraw and the Board went into Committee.

Captain Armstrong spoke in favour of the Conservators withdrawing their support for the Bill. He stated that opposition was spreading, not only amongst the Commoners, but amongst many people who had the interests of the Forest at heart. If the Bill was withdrawn from the present session it should be possible to reach agreement with all those who disagreed with the Bill at present. He saw no reason why the Conservators should not remain an independent body with the same constitution as at present. He considered the Forest to be perfectly safe under the existing Acts, so there was no hurry. The Bill had been too hastily drawn up and parts of it were dangerous. He considered the expansion of the Crawley Urban area as being a threat under the Bill. There would be a temptation to develop Ashdown Forest.

Captain Armstrong then proposed the following resolution:

"The Conservators being mindful of the widespread and well-founded opposition to the Ashdown Forest Bill withdraw their support from this Bill as at present presented."

The Clerk pointed out that this resolution was contrary to Standing Orders in that

- 1) No written notice had been given.
- 2) It had the effect of rescinding a resolution approving the Bill which had been passed within the previous three months.

The Chairman proposed that the Standing Orders should be suspended in order to permit this resolution to be token. This was unanimously approved.

Mr. Ellison considered that there was a very great deal of anxiety as to the effect of Section 9 of the Countryside Act once the Public were given right of access to the Forest. That on the question of financial aid to the Conservators from the Countryside Commission there was by no means a 100% certainty, so that on both the main objects of the Bill, security of the Forest and Finances, the position had been considerably eroded. There were still

many drafting queries and there were great objections on behalf of the Commoners. Uckfield Rural District Council were at present opposing the Bill and it was by no means certain that they would withdraw this opposition.

There remained very reasonable doubts on the wisdom of the Bill, and Mr. Ellison considered that more time should be taken. He therefore Seconded the resolution.

Mr. Shelford stated that the County Council would not be in a position to withdraw the Bill, redraft it and put it up again. The new County Council in 1974 may not be able to pick it up again, and this would involve restarting everything from the beginning at some later date, with a conclusion that could not be foreseen. He personally would have liked more time, but the fact of the case was that there was not time.

Mrs. Ridley stated that she considered that the Bill was the correct way to ensure the protection of the Forest, and she considered that the Board should proceed with it.

On the question of delay, Colonel Lowe stressed that a delay of possibly five years in proceeding with a new Bill was dangerous.]We had not got five years - action was needed now.

Mr. Atkinson again stressed that to shelve the Bill at this stage would be disastrous.] The whole project would be dropped by the County Council.] Mr. Grimston expressed the view that if we do not get this Bill to guarantee the secure future of the Forest it was probable that we would never get one. Brigadier Scott and Colonel Lowe both spoke strongly about ensuring the safety of the Forest. Mr. Dascombe asked why this point was now being stressed when the main objective of the Bill appeared to be financial.

The Clerk stated that he had attended every meeting of the Working Party who wrote the Report on which the Bill was based, and that all the earlier meetings had been on the subject of the security of the Forest in the future. It was not until that aspect had been dealt with that the question of finance was considered. Although the two were closely bound up together, the security of the Forest had always come first.

Mr. Atkinson said that the question of building development on the Forest had been raised, with reference to the growth in population in the Crawley area. This Bill did not give any power of development to the County Council, and in fact would make it far more difficult for them to use compulsory powers which already exist. The Council in promoting this Bill subscribed to the principles of Section 16 of the Bill which were directly contrary to development.

Mr. Raikes doubted if delay would do anything to bring the opposing factions together. Those who wished to delay the Bill were asking for Utopia if they really considered that the many widely divergent opinions on the future control of the Forest could be easily agreed by more discussions.

The motion was put to the Meeting and defeated by 14 votes against, to 4 votes in favour. The Chairman did not cast his vote.

Captain Armstrong raised the question of the correctness of the Lord of the Manor or his representative voting, but the Meeting did not think there was anything in this suggestion and the matter was not pursued.

The Board came out of Committee.

The Chairman said that the Bill had involved a great deal of extra work by Clerk who had made numerous journeys to Lewes and London. Cdr. Angell had a remarkable grasp of every line of the Bill and he had been of immense help to the County Council, The Lord of the Manor and the Parliamentary Agents. All this work had disrupted his office routine and disorganised his private life and the Chairman felt that the Board would wish to congratulate and thank the Clerk for his intelligent and cheerful contribution to the negotiations.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CONSERVATORS HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL, HARTFIELD ON TUESDAY, 16TH JANUARY, 1973 AT 7-30 P.M

PRESENT: Mrs. M. Campbell, A. Wall, T. Townsend, B.N. Beedle, R.E. Loraine, R.B. Cooke, D. Jeffries, W.S. Hoath, P.J. Warner (Solicitor), A. Lumsden, S. Wright, J.A. Cotton, R. Glover, H.A.R. Dodd, H.C. Arnell, K.A.

Macdonald, R.J. Durnell, J. Osborne, I.R. Mitchell, R. Richards, B.S. Evans, P.R. Kelley, R. Blyth, T.P. Keating, L.S. Laycock, W. Fraser, D. McDonnell, W.W. Barley, D.B. Norton, M.I. Corbett Ashby, L. Scotson, L.H. Smith, P.B. Stride, H.B. Pillinger, G. Pillinger, E.M. Gabriel, Campbell Singer, E.D. Collins, F.H.H. Arnold. R.E. Weekes, Evelyn R. Glover, E.G. Hunter, J.H.B. Lowe, N. Keays, Derek Evatt, P.D. Cooper, V.M. Bursey, S. Goudge, E. Cazalet, Eley, E. Philpott, P. Kirby, D. Devaris, H. Davenport, W.N. Allan, P.M. Shaw, E.R. Rust, M. Engley, D. Humford, E. Walker, W.J. Shearing, S. Ellis, R. Gray, D. Baird, T. Fearman, G.H. Raikes, P.M. West, W.J. Le May, D.E. Tile, H.C. Lowcock, I. Fariday, P.J. Creak, E.M. Taylor, B.S. Twentymen, T.J. Corke, E. Corke, P. Hill, P. Stinton, S.R. Knight, A. Spencer, F. Kennard, V.H. Wakefield, D.S. Carter, H. Lightly, G.J. Mountain, A. Gee, J.H. Drew, V.W. Beedle, P. Gray, D.W. Law, J. O'Brien, Anthony Evans, D. Markham, I.P. King, C.R. Clark, R. Richardson Gardner, M. Ryder, V. Ryder, C.M. Maudslay, H.S. Stevenson, J.A. Buckland, M.V. Hunt, F.G. Sheard, L.C. Graham-Dixon, M.G. Hall, C.R. Stephens, R.J. Cossens, C. Osborne, Mrs. Formby, A. Lewis-Grey, A. Richardson, M. Harman, Mrs. M. Denis, P.A. Williams, E.H. Sainsbury, G.A. Dunnett, F.B. Cornwell, R.G. Fairbairn, E. Place, G.F. Heal, A.S. Buckingham, R.F. Hovenden, J.M. Barley, Olive Whicher, J.W.L. Adams, Anne J. Sheldrick, Donald Baker, T. Cracroft, J.E. Hale, Mrs. J.M. Raikes, M. Willcock, Joan Waters, W.G. Hunt, P. Riddiford, R.E.W. Grubb, David Evatt, Mary Keith, D.B. Baker, G.S. Hall, D.C. Cruickshank, W.E. Oliver, D. Oliver, D.F.B. Miller, R. Barley, E.Y. Feltwell, & Representatives for Emerson College and Michael Hall School, amongst others.

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN:

The Clerk called for nominations for the election of a Chairman for the Meeting. Mr. Mountain and Mr. Howard were both nominated and seconded. On a show of hands Mr. Mountain was elected by 69 votes to 49. Mr. G. J. Mountain then took the Chair.

ELECTION OF RECREATION GROUND SUPERINTENDENTS.

This item had been left over from the Annual General Meeting held on 12th December, 1972. The Superintendents were re-elected en bloc by an unanimous vote as follows:

Forest Row	Colonel Lowe,
Chelwood Gate	Miss Lumsden
Nutley	Mr. Facer
St. John's	Mr. Ellison.
Colemans Hatch	Mr. Drew
Fairwarp	Mr. Harvey

MINUTES OF THE COMMONERS EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING HELD ON THE 10TH NOVEMBER 1972

The Chairman stated that approval of these Minutes had not been put to the Meeting on 12th December, and he asked that they should now be approved.

The Chairman of that Meeting, Mr. C.W. Howard, stated that he had deliberately not put them to the Meeting, and various Commoners protested that the Meeting had not been valid. The Chairman explained that the Minutes were a record of what took place, and as such asked this Meeting to approve them. This was put to the vote and the Minutes were approved by 60 votes to 28, and signed by the Chairman.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 12TH DECEMBER 1972.

The Chairman explained that these Minutes would be presented at the next Annual General Meeting but, at the request of this Meeting, the motion put to that Meeting was read out.

"That a Committee of Commoners be formed to meet with the Conservators to discuss amendments to the draft Bill with a view to making such amendments before the Bill is considered by Parliament."

This had been carried by a large majority.

REPORT OF THE MEETING BETWEEN A COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF CONSERVATORS AND A COMMITTEE OF THE COMMONERS.

Mr. Mountain reported that this Meeting had lasted 4 hours and all the amendments put forward by the Commoners' Committee had been discussed at length. It was not possible to go over all the arguments again at this Meeting but he summarised the results as follows.

Clause 17(e). It was agreed that the Board of Conservators would be recommended to delete all references to dwellings and re-word the clause so that buildings on the Forest should only be for the specific purpose of housing Conservators' machinery, equipment, etc.

Clause 18(2)(b). It was agreed that the Board of Conservators would be recommended to reconsider this clause to make it clear that the Conservators could not grant rights or licences for "rights exclusive to the Commoners".

Clause 18(e). The Conservators present did not feel strongly about the retention of this clause, and agreed to consider its deletion at the Board Meeting on 19th January. 1973.

Clause 18(e). The Commoners' Committee had agreed not to press for the deletion of this clause.

Clause 35. The proposal of the Commoners' Committee that Sections 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the Countryside Act 1968, should not apply to Ashdown Forest was receiving consideration by the Board and their legal advisers, particularly with reference to Section 9. This would be further discussed at the Board Meeting to be held on 19th January. This meeting would hear representations from three Commoners and their legal representative, who could put their views on this matter to the whole Board.

Mr. Mountain reported that there had been one fundamental difference between the Committee of Commoners and the Conservators' Committee, namely that on many matters the Commoners' Committee wished to see the elected Members of the Board have what amounted to a power of veto over the whole Board. The Conservators' representatives could not agree to this, and Mr. Mountain saw no prospect of agreement. This same principle the Commoners' Committee wished to apply to Clause 17 (2). The Conservators had agreed to look at their wording of this clause to ensure that the power to enclose up to 100 acres could not refer to successive enclosures, but to an overall total of not more than 100 acres.

On the system of voting Mr. Mountain explained that Schedule 1 of the Bill perpetuated the present acreage system of voting, but that it gave the Commoners power to alter that system themselves if they so wished. He had suggested to the Committee of Commoners that a Special Committee should be set up before the Bill became law, which would consist of Commoners with large, medium and small acreage votes. This Committee would draw up a new voting formula which they thought would be acceptable to the majority of Commoners. This suggestion had been well received, particularly if a new voting system could be allied to the forest rate. He would recommend to the Conservators that the date of the first election of Commoners under the new Act should be altered to 1st April, so that any new voting system agreed by the Commoners could be used for that election.

Clause 16. The Committee of Conservators had noted the objection to the wording of this clause, and the question of alternate wording was under consideration.

Mr. Mountain stressed that any final decision on altering any clause must be made by those responsible. Decisions by the Conservators must be made by the whole Board who could make representations to the East Sussex County Council, who in turn must make their decisions on the Conservators' recommendations.

Mr. Markham spoke on behalf of the Commoners who had attended the Committee Meeting. He largely agreed with Mr. Mountain's report on what had happened but stressed that the East Sussex County Council representations had been far more inflexible than the Conservators. The suggested changes had been largely recommended to compensate for the absolute majority that was being given to the County Council, and to deal with the inequality of the voting and rating systems.

Mr. Mountain explained his fears of an influx of townspeople into the area. If development of land which carried rights of common took place, it could well be that 500 or 600 new Commoners could be created, and if one man, one vote, was adopted, a complete set of newcomers to the district would be able to outvote all the existing Commoners.

He told the Meeting that the Uckfield Rural District Council were not in agreement with some provisions of the Bill, and one of their main points concerned Commoners' voting. He asked the Meeting to tell him if they supported his view that the Commoners should be allowed to decide their own matters free from pressure or

interference from Uckfield Council, the County Council or the Board of Conservators. On a show of hands the Meeting approved this attitude by an overwhelming majority.

Mr. Stride gave a lengthy lecture on the unfairness of the present voting system and Forest Rates, and alleged discrimination by the Conservators in favour of the large acreage voter.

A general discussion then took place, largely centred on Section 9 of the Countryside Act, with widely differing interpretation of the working and implications of this Act. There were considerable fears of the powers which the East Sussex County Council would have under the Bill, and fearful examples of what had happened to Devon beauty spots were quoted as warning as to what the County Council would do to Ashdown Forest.

Major Grubb explained the County Council's case for having a majority on the Board, and Mr. Dressner, Solicitor to some of the Commoners, spoke at length on his interpretation of the weaknesses of the Bill.

Mr. A. Richardson proposed the following motion:

"That this Meeting recognises the main objective of the Conservators is to preserve the Forest in its present state and that this is most likely to be achieved in the future by a Board with a majority of Conservators from the Forest or its vicinity. It therefore calls upon the Conservators to re-open the discussions with the East Sussex County Council on the question of representation."

This was seconded by Mr. Kelley and carried without dissent.

Mr. M.G. Hall proposed the following resolution:

"That this Meeting disapproves the action of the Board of Conservators in supporting the proposed Ashdown Forest Bill."

This was seconded by Mr. Markham and carried by 95 votes to 26.

The Meeting then closed.