

EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE
Monday, 6 July 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee held at
Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 6 July 2015 at 11.00
am

Present

Members:

Alderman Gordon Haines (Chairman)
George Abrahams (Deputy Chairman)
Deputy John Barker
Deputy Stanley Ginsburg
Alderman Sir Paul Judge
Deputy Catherine McGuinness
Barbara Newman
Virginia Rounding
Philip Woodhouse
Verderer Peter Adams
Verderer Michael Chapman DL
Verderer Richard Morris
Verderer Dr. Joanna Thomas
Alderman Ian Luder (Ex-Officio Member)

Officers:

Alistair MacLellan	Town Clerk's Department
Sue Baxter	Town Clerk's Department
Alison Elam	Chamberlain's Department
Alison Hurley	City Surveyor's Department
Sue Ireland	Director of Open Spaces
Paul Thomson	Superintendent of Epping Forest
Andy Barnard	Superintendent of Burnham Beeches, Stoke and City Commons
Esther Sumner	Open Spaces Department
Jo Hurst	Open Spaces Department
Keith French	Open Spaces Department
Hadyn Robson	Open Spaces Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Sylvia Moys and Graeme Smith.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Deputy Catherine McGuinness declared an interest in the Epping Forest Centenary Trust.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2015 were approved as a correct record, subject to Item 7 *Committee Appointments* being amended to read *any two* Verderers to be represented on the Epping Forest Reference Sub Committee.

4. **GRANT GIVING - REPORT OF CROSS-CUTTING SERVICE BASED REVIEW**

The Committee considered a report of the Deputy Town Clerk on grant giving by the City of London Corporation. The Chairman noted the resolution by the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee that suggested the formation of a Working Party comprised of members from each of the open spaces committees and the Finance Grants Sub Committee.

A member noted that there could be sensitivity around merging distinct charities that arose from personal bequests. In response to further comments from members around benefits-in-kind for the Epping Forest Centenary Trust and Field Studies Council, the Director of Open Spaces noted that these will be matters that may be determined by the Working Party.

The Chairman noted that the Committee could mirror the resolution of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee in appointing its Chairman and Deputy Chairman to the Working Party, and canvass its members for the third vacancy.

RESOLVED, that

- Approval be given to a more structured approach to grant giving which was jointly governed by all Open Spaces and which was publicised and managed as part of the City Corporation's suite of grant programmes; and
- That the proposal by the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee for a Working Party comprised of three members from each of the Open Spaces and City Gardens; Epping Forest and City Commons; and Hampstead Heath, Queen's Park and Highgate Wood Committees, one member of the West Ham Park Committee, one representative of the Finance Grants Sub Committee be created to report back to the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee on 7 December 2015, be agreed.
- That the three Epping Forest & Commons Committee representatives to the Working Party be the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and a third member of the Committee subject to expressions of interest outside of the meeting.

5. **EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE REPORTING**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces regarding Committee Reporting practices. The Chairman noted that the recommendations were clear and were designed to ensure Committee business was focused on key strategic matters rather than on operational detail that could be easily communicated outside of Committee meetings, or discussed at local meetings.

He added that a couple of reports on the current agenda could usefully form paragraphs within the Superintendents' updates. Members made a number of comments,

- A member was disappointed that a fundamentally different agenda format was not being proposed, namely 'For Information' items retained and simply taken as read at committee meetings.
- A member agreed to the proposal and suggested that the new approach be reviewed in one year.
- A member noted that the proposals risked lessening the level of member involvement in operational matters, and that often the item that encouraged member involvement was the Superintendents' updates.
- A Verderer agreed that the volume of business did mean that the Committee was often focusing too much on detail and not enough on strategic issues. He added that pictorial material was a great help to understanding written reports.
- A member supported the suggestion that 'For Information' items be included but taken as read.

The Chairman concluded discussion by requesting that the Director of Open Spaces incorporate members' comments into the proposed agenda of the next meeting.

RESOLVED, that

- The Committee note that in future the Superintendents would be submitting written updates to Committee, updating those reports by exception, and incorporating supporting pictorial material into those reports;
- The Committee note that the Superintendents' updates would be supplemented by newsletters and other forms of communication between Committee meetings;
- It be reaffirmed that reports should be submitted to Committee in the following circumstances,
 - Matters that fall outside those matters delegated to the Director of Open Spaces.
 - Where approval from the Committee is required by Standing Orders, Procurement Regulations, Financial Regulations, the Project Procedure or statutory requirement.
 - In cases where there is a proposed new policy or a change to an existing policy.
 - Where the Committee has asked to be kept informed and the use of the Superintendent's Update is not appropriate.

- Where the matter is of a nature such that the involvement of elected Members is prudent (i.e. political, media, sensitivity).

6. REVENUE OUTTURN 2014/15 - EPPING FOREST

The Committee received a joint report of the Chamberlain and Director of Open Spaces on the Revenue Outturn 2014/15 for Epping Forest. In response to a question, the Superintendent of Epping Forest replied that the variation at Chingford Golf Course was largely due to a fall in revenue from membership fees and public play.

A member took the opportunity to note that Oak Processionary Moth had arrived in the North London Open Spaces and that he had requested – as Chairman of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee - additional funding to deal with the issue, and that he would welcome the Committee's support. Members indicated that they were happy to support the proposal.

RECEIVED

7. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest updating them on recent operational activity. In response to a question the Superintendent replied that additional work on failed plantings at the Higham Park Lake Large Raised Reservoir would not present an additional cost as it came under a care maintenance contract associated with the project. In response to further questions, he undertook to update members on the pay bands of litter pickers outside of the meeting, and that the recent rainfall has not presented any issues to dams within the Forest.

In response to a question, the Superintendent replied that trials of enforcement cameras were not capable of capturing the details of number plates effectively and so new equipment would be necessary.

In response to further comments, the Superintendent agreed to include the number of rough sleepers in future updates and that the EC Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme related to a review by the European Union of the effectiveness of the current Special Area of Conservation designation.

RECEIVED

8. PROVISIONAL ADDITIONAL WORKS PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report of the City Surveyor on the Provisional Additional Works Programme 2016/17. In response to comments from a Verderer, the Superintendent of Epping Forest noted that the £20,000 for relining Eagle Pond related to the repair of wharfing opposite the dam, and that the Grotto required investment given its status as a Grade II listed structure that was at risk of further deterioration.

In response to queries from Members, the City Surveyor agreed to circulate a description of design and setting out fees outside of the meeting.

RECEIVED

9. **SEEKING DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO RESPOND TO THE EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL GREEN BELT REVIEW STAGE 1**

The Committee considered a request for delegated authority to respond to Epping Forest District Council's Green Belt Review Stage 1. The Superintendent noted that his principal concern was that some sites close to the Forest were due to be evaluated for their potential for housing development.

A member noted that there was a risk the City of London Corporation would be promulgating conflicting messages given the Policy Chairman's recent statement in support of housing development across London. The Town Clerk noted that an officer-level Housing Steering Group consisting of Chief Officers had recently been convened to address issues such as this.

A Verderer expressed concern that Epping Forest District Council's housing targets were subject to further review, which meant it was difficult to evaluate how at-risk the Metropolitan Green Belt was from planned development.

Members noted reports such as this would benefit from an accompanying map of the local area in question.

RESOLVED, that

- Authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, to approve a response by the Superintendent of Epping Forest to the Epping Forest District Council Stage 1 Green Belt Review.

10. **EPPING FOREST FISHERIES MANAGEMENT UPDATE.**

The Committee considered an update report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest on Fisheries Management. In response to comments from a Verderer the Superintendent replied that the inclusion of Baldwin's Pond in the plan would be reviewed and that charging for fishing was a potential option to redress the loss of Environment Agency funding. In response to a further question he replied that the disabled angling plots were well used.

A Verderer raised concern that Baldwins Pond was referenced within the Strategy but was subject a scoping review that may see its loss. The Superintendent advised that the fishing strategy was agreed by Committee in 2011 prior to the scoping Review for Baldwins Pond.

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11. **EPPING FOREST: DEER MANAGEMENT OF THE SOUTH WEST ESSEX DEER HERD ON THE BUFFER LANDS AND EPPING FOREST**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Epping Forest on Deer Management of the South West Essex Deer Herd on the Buffer Lands and Epping Forest. The Director of Open Spaces noted that the Fallow Cull target was 86 for 2015/16 as per the report, rather than 105 as in the infographic.

RESOLVED, that

- The cull minimum – in line with the Deer Management Plan - of 86 Fallow deer and an unlimited cull of Reeves Muntjac for the 2015/16 season be approved.
- Further meetings between major estate owners of land within the range of the South West Essex Deer Herd – mediated by the Deer Initiative – to encourage increased cooperation on the overall management of the Deer Herd, be approved.
- The adoption of a three-year licensing system in 2016 to help improve the management of infrastructure needed to support the cull be approved.

12. UPDATE ON THE EPPING FOREST VISITOR SURVEY

The Committee considered an update report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest on the Epping Forest Visitor Survey 2014. A Verderer commented that the visitor numbers to the High Beach Forest Centre had arguably not dropped given the centre had been closed for the early part of the year. The Superintendent agreed that a full report would be circulated to Members.

RESOLVED, that

- The publication of the Epping Forest Visitor Survey 2014 be approved.

13. LBWF MINI HOLLAND PROJECT - LAND DEDICATION AT LEA BRIDGE ROAD AND HOSPITAL ROAD

The Town Clerk noted that this report had been withdrawn.

14. WOODFORD GREEN WAYLEAVE

The Town Clerk noted that this report would feature in the non-public section of the agenda.

15. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Committee received an update report of the Superintendent of Burnham Beeches, Stoke and City Commons.

RECEIVED

16. REVENUE OUTTURN 2014/15 - BURNHAM BEECHES, STOKE COMMON & CITY COMMONS

The Committee received a joint report of the Chamberlain and the Director of Open Spaces on the revenue outturn for Burnham Beeches, Stoke Common and City Commons 2014/15.

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17. **MINUTES OF THE BURNHAM BEECHES CONSULTATION GROUP MEETING OF 6TH MAY 2015**

The Committee received the draft minutes of the Burnham Beeches Consultation Group meeting held on 6 May 2015.

RECEIVED

18. **RISK REGISTER**

The Committee received the Risk Register for Burnham Beeches, Stoke Common and City Commons. The Chairman noted that a risk register for Epping Forest would be submitted to a future meeting.

RECEIVED

19. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

20. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was no other business.

21. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED, that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

22. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2015 be approved as a correct record.

23. **CHINGFORD GOLF COURSE**

The Committee considered a request for delegated authority regarding building repairs and the golf professional and booking services contract at Chingford Golf Course.

24. **WOODFORD GREEN WAYLEAVE**

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest regarding the grant of temporary access from Woodford New Road, Woodford.

25. **NON PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no non-public questions.

26. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

Epping Forest Dinner

The Chairman took the opportunity to note that the inaugural Epping Forest Dinner was being held that evening at Guildhall.

The meeting ended at 12.45 pm

Chairman

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