

EPPING FOREST CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 13 June 2018

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest Consultative Committee held at the Hope Centre, 201 High Rd, Loughton, IG10 1BB at 7.00 pm

Present

Members:

Deputy Philip Woodhouse - Chairman	Robert Levene - Buckhurst Hill Community Association
Graeme Smith - Deputy Chairman	Paul Morris - Epping Forest Forum
Judith Adams - Epping Forest Heritage Trust	Sylvia Moys
Jo Blackman - Friends of Wanstead Parklands	Carol Pummell - Epping Forest Riders Association
Martin Boyle - Theydon Bois & District Rural Preservation Society	Gordon Turpin - Highams Park Planning Group
Jill Carter - Highams Residents Association	Enid Walsh - Open Spaces Society
Susan Creevy - Loughton Residents Association	Steve Williamson - Royal Epping Forest Golf Club
Matthew Frith - London Wildlife Trust	Tim Wright - Orion Harriers
Tim Harris - WREN Wildlife & Conservation Group	Verderer Michael Chapman DL
Andy Irvine - Bushwood Area Residents Association	

Officers:

Colin Buttery	- Director of Open Spaces
Paul Thomson	- Superintendent, Epping Forest
Jeremy Dagley	- Head of Conservation
Jo Hurst	- Business Manager, Epping Forest
Leanne Murphy	- Town Clerk's Department
Geoff Sinclair	- Head of Operations, Epping Forest
Jacqueline Eggleston	- Head of Visitor Services, Epping Forest
Martin Newnham	- Head Forest Keeper, Epping Forest

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Verderer Dr Joanna Thomas, Benjamin Murphy and Verderer Melissa Murphy.

The Chairman asked for a moment of reflection in respect of the sad loss of Verderer Peter Adams in April

2. DECLARATIONS

Mr Paul Morris declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Tea Hut at Fairmead Road, Hill Wood which would be discussed at item 13.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2018 be approved as a correct record.

The Chairman hoped that Members would be able to see the sequence of how reports proceeded from the Consultative Committee to the Epping Forest and Commons Committee.

4. **MINUTES OF THE EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE**

a) **15 January 2018**

The Committee noted the minutes of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee held on 15 January 2018.

b) **12 March 2018**

The Committee noted the minutes of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee held on 12 March 2018.

c) **14 May 2018**

The Committee noted the minutes of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee held on 14 May 2018.

5. **EPPING FOREST - SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE FOR DECEMBER 2017 TO MARCH 2018 (SEF 25/18)**

Members received a presentation from the Superintendent of Epping Forest and noted his report summarising the Epping Forest Division's activities across December 2017 to March 2018. The following comments were made.

Staff and Volunteers

- The Superintendent advised Members that a number of positions have now been filled.
- The Epping Forest Chingford Golf Course and Wanstead Flats Sport turf teams have been successfully restructured to provide more structure and assist with management.

Budgets

- It was noted that indications suggested that Epping Forest was likely to record a small overspend of £70,000 rather than the £46,000 (1.69%) outlined in the report.

Weather

- The Superintendent advised that wet winter weather and unseasonable storms had had an impact on the Forest. The cold and wet conditions

extended the Closed Riding season which moved to Open Riding from 5 May.

Open Spaces Act 2018

- The Superintendent advised Members that the Bill received Royal Assent on 15 March 2018 and that work was now underway to explore and prioritise new powers of enforcement and licencing letting of vacant premises.

Forest Services

Fly tipping

- Members were advised that fly-tipping for the period of December 2017 – March 2018 had had a 42.4% reduction in comparison to the same period 12 months ago and this impact was attributed to poor weather, the enforcement of fines and car park improvements.

Rough Sleepers

- Members were advised that the number of rough sleepers had fallen dramatically by 80% and that the City of London Corporation is continuing to work closely with the Police, homeless organisations and the local authorities to resolve rough sleeping on the Forest.

Buffer Land deer count

- Members were advised that the buffer land deer count was lower, and the cull figure was moving proportionally down.

Licences

- It was noted that a total of 62 licences for events were issued during the four months being reported.

Heritage, Landscape and Nature Conservation

Agri-environment scheme

- Members were advised that another area in the series of wood-pasture restoration had been completed (50.6 acres) and that 300 acres had now been cleared.

Grazing

- Members were advised that there had been three significant investments in equipment for the grazing project: a new Nissan Navara truck, a tractor-mounted straw chopper / blower and a staff welfare cabin which has been installed at Great Gregories.
- The Superintendent noted that the hedge laying had successfully taken place on the buffer land and new fences were installed at Hornbeam Lane and Fairmead car park providing an area to round up and hold cattle before going into the pound.

Heritage

- The Superintendent advised Members that good progress has been made with the Copped Hall Parkland Plan and a final draft prior to consideration by the Consultative Committee and the Epping Forest and Commons Committee was being prepared. Of particular significance was the confirmation of the size and importance of the Tudor Square Pond at Rookery Wood and its part in the historic landscape.

Biodiversity

- Members were advised that three statutory notices had been received from the Animal & Plant Health Agency regarding Oak Processionary Moth (OPM). Surveys have been commissioned and, so far, the team has avoided the spraying of chemicals to control OPM in preference to the manual removal of nests in the Forest. This continues to be monitored and the team are looking to recruit volunteers to help find OPM nests next spring.
- It was noted that the cold weather during March saw increased numbers of winter migrant birds stay on in the Forest and spring arrivals were very limited. A large influx of different birds has since become apparent across Epping Forest.

Land Management

Town & Country Planning

- **Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) Local Plan.** A 6-week consultation by Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) took place on its new Local Plan and negotiations will lead up to a Section 19 consultation to inspectors prior to the Plan's submission. A major response to the Epping Forest District Council is being pursued on the soundness of the proposed Local Plan.
- **London Borough of Redbridge (LBR) Local Plan.** A report was published on the main modifications to the London Borough of Redbridge's Local Plan. Epping Forest Officers continue to engage with LBR to ensure concerns by the City of London Corporation are considered.
- **London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF) Local Plan.** Epping Forest Officers await a response to a request for an early meeting with LBWF about its Local Plan review and its role as a competent authority in protecting the Forest.
- **Woodberry Way.** An application has been made for a property to develop the gardens at the rear of these properties into nine additional houses. Concerns raised by Officers were rejected by planners but will be appealed.

Operations

Habitat Works

- It was noted that wood pasture restoration work continues at the Forest with the final measurement of the areas worked this winter due to take place.
- The Superintendent advised that the refilling of the lakes at Wanstead Park has continued with daily pumping; however, water levels have not risen above the -0.75-metre level in Ornamental Water. More investigation is to take place.
- Members were advised that the 2018 tree safety assessment has been completed across the Forest.
- The City of London Corporation is seeking advice following a series of subsidence claims from homeowners. A review is currently being undertaken into all tree root nuisance claims made against the Forest and, upon completion, the department will work with the insurance team to identify possible strategies for reducing the City's significant financial liabilities in this area.
- It was noted that UK Power Network have offered a contribution towards the costs to repair the sink hole on St Peters Green and contractors have been contacted.

Access Works

- It was noted that car parks improvement works at various sites have taken place which would be a huge improvement going forward and all car parks were now open.
- Staff and volunteers have completed a survey of the promoted paths in the Forest with the findings to be compiled into a Work Programme.

Visitor Services

- Members were advised that there had been significant social media growth and as of 19 April 2018 was as follows - Twitter followers: 6,371 (54% year on increase); Facebook likes: 1,302 (82% increase); Instagram followers: 886 (169% increase).
- Members were advised that there has been a number of well received publications including the Forest Focus ezine winter and spring editions, 'Short walks in Epping Forest' and the new, revised Official Epping Forest map. It was also noted Dr Jeremy Dagley, Head of Conservation, was interviewed and introduced by David Attenborough for Epping Forest's feature in the Queen's Green Planet documentary which aired on ITV on Monday 16 April 2016.

Events and Activities

- Members were advised that there had been a number of successful events including the Epping Forest Christmas Grotto, the 'Printing inspired by Nature' taster session craft event at The View, Half Term Winter Trees, the Hunting the King's deer: Epping Forest Poaching in the 16th and 17th centuries exhibition and the 'You can't see the trees for the woods' exhibition.
- The Superintendent was sad to advise Members that Alan Cornish, the former Chair of the Friends of Wanstead Parklands, had passed away and highlighted his important contribution to Epping Forest.
- In response to a query regarding the gaps caused by the new style oak bollards installed on the green on the corner of Nursery Road and Smarts Lane in Loughton, the Superintendent confirmed that the logs would be repositioned to allow pedestrians to pass through.
- A Member highlighted the fantastic work of volunteers who clear rubbish at the Forest following sport events.
- In response to a query concerning the annual number of deer related road accidents, Members were advised that there had been 73 since January and the average was approximately 150 to 200 accidents per year.
- A Member noted complaints from horse riders regarding future access for horse riding on Forest Land given the developments on the Woodredon Estate, and the concern regarding the continued use of quiet roads by horse riders. The Superintendent advised that the Woodredon Estate was on buffer land rather than Forest land and is not subject to the obligations of the Epping Forest Acts. Moreover, there were clear development restrictions for property in the Metropolitan Green Belt. In response to a comment regarding whether access would be ensured for people, the Superintendent advised that the cost of maintaining the private road which is open to public access was shared by the existing properties through a regular charge for the cost of track maintenance and all new owners would be informed of all costs and the expectations required.
- Members voiced concerns over the City of London Corporation's decision to sell freeholds with development opportunities rather than long leaseholds and queried why this decision was made as it would bring a long-term loss of property income. The Superintendent advised that an Operational Property Review had been underway across the City for some time to address the high cost of maintaining a large property portfolio, including 109 properties at Epping Forest. Currently, over £40 Million of essential maintenance was deferred each year. Consequently, the City Corporation had made some difficult decisions with regard to the rationalisation of the estate.

- The Chairman noted that the decision was debated for over two years and, as the City Corporation had inherited a number of poorly maintained buildings on the estate from the GLC, a difficult decision was made to dispose of the properties. Members were advised that the freehold should have been maintained by tenants and the decision to sell was made reluctantly due to a lack of funds to repair the building. Members felt that there needed to be a better internal process for the poor maintenance of properties and hoped this would be monitored better in future. The Chairman noted that a report would be going to the Policy & Resources Committee regarding this matter.
- Members were concerned that the Savills website and others advertised the freehold with development opportunities. Members were advised that just the building was freehold, but the land would be subject to clear restrictions on development. Members were keen that the public be made aware of the restrictions involved and the Chairman agreed to seek clarity on this matter.
- In response to a comment regarding potential future issues caused by the 'High Risk' Large Raised Reservoirs at Wanstead Park, the Superintendent noted the £1.8m cost of repairing the large Raised Reservoir at Highams Park Lake and advised that there were potential liabilities from all six Large Raised Reservoirs at Epping Forest due to unreliable construction dating back to the 1700s together with more recent war damage. Wanstead Park's three reservoirs have been identified as requiring work and this would be a significant project to manage alongside the Park's 'Heritage at Risk' status since 2009. The City of London Corporation will be obligated to address the recommendations of the Consulting Engineer's report and will respond accordingly.

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6. CYCLICAL WORKS PROGRAMME BID - 2019/20

Members noted a report of the City Surveyor regarding the 2019/20 Cyclical Works Programme Bid which set out a provisional list of cyclical projects being considered for properties under the management of Epping Forest & Commons Committee under the "cyclical works programme".

The Superintendent advised that the bid (totalling £823,700 at Epping Forest) would be a significant three-year investment and, if approved, would continue the on-going programme in the maintenance of the property and infrastructure assets.

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7. LONDON BOROUGH OF CULTURE OPENING EVENT (SEF 28/18)

Members considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces regarding the London Borough of Culture Opening Event (SEF 28/18) and the following points were made.

- Members were advised that the first ever London Borough of Culture has been awarded to London Borough of Waltham Forest for 2019. The Borough would like to host the opening event on Epping Forest at Chingford Plain, which falls within Waltham Forest.
- Members were pleased that this event would be in the north of the borough.
- A Member queried whether this would be a one-off event. The Head of Visitor Services stated that only one event was in discussion but there was potential for ancillary installations in the future.
- In response to a query regarding who was managing the event, stalls, etc, Members were advised that the London Borough of Waltham Forest would be managing everything. A Member suggested involving the Chingford Common community and the Head of Visitor Services saw this as a good opportunity to work with the north of the borough.
- A Member raised concerned over the date (1 January 2019) and the high potential for a large footfall in the area. Members were advised that the London Borough of Waltham Forest were being made aware of the practical concerns involved with this event and were looking at issues concerning numbers and infrastructure.
- In response to queries regarding whether this free event could cope with the high numbers it would attract, Members were advised that the organisers have worked on a number of successful big events and ticketing was being considered. It was noted that all decisions would be scrutinised by the Safety Advisory Group and the City of London Corporation would insist on regular updates.
- Members requested an approximate capacity figure as this free event would attract people from not just the London Borough. The Head of Visitor Services advised that capacity was set at 10,000 as this was the capacity of the site.
- Members queried whether there enough adequate parking was available and shuttle buses were suggested. It was noted that the event would be held close to a train station and that parking would be managed.
- A Member noted that this event could be the first of many in the area offering a great opportunity for the City of London Corporation to make money in the future. The Head of Visitor Services stated that the Events Policy provides a framework for future events whilst protecting the forest.
- A Member highlighted the importance of conservation and urged the City of London Corporation to be robust with London Borough of

Waltham Forest on conservation sensitivities. Members were advised that London Borough of Waltham Forest had already been given strict constraints and onsite meetings were planned to discuss how the event would be managed.

- A Member suggested using screens at the event to advertise the Forest.
- The Director of Open Spaces advised that the Head of Visitor Services was on the committee for the year on culture which would ensure that all conservation needs were considered as the City of London Corporation were regarded as the experts. He noted that Brent Council would be the next authority to receive London Borough of Culture status and that the City of London Corporation would also be working with them closely.

RESOLVED – that Members support the:-

- Agreement for the London Borough of Waltham Forest use of Chingford Plain for an opening event for the inaugural year of the London Borough of Culture, on 1st January 2019.
- Instruction to the Comptroller and City Solicitor to undertake any necessary documentation.

8. THE JUBILEE LONDON PLANE AVENUE, WOODFORD GREEN: FUTURE MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS (SEF 27/18)

Members considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces regarding future management proposals for Jubilee London Plane Avenue in Woodford Green (SEF 27/18). The following points were made.

- The Head of Operations advised Members that action was required following an arboricultural assessment of the trees on Jubilee Avenue. The assessment established that the Black Poplars were near the end of their lifespan and the longer-lived London Plane trees had not established well and were of poor form making them increasingly susceptible to Massaria Disease in the future.
- Members were advised that the assessment recommended a staged replanting of Jubilee Avenue over ten years as the most effective method of maintaining this landscape feature which would cost £20,000. This would require public consultation and Conservation Area consent.
- The suggestion to set up a public sponsorship scheme to fund replanting of the renamed Churchill Avenue was noted.
- The Head of Operations asked the Committee for recommendations on which type of tree should be planted and noted that there was no policy on tree species at Epping Forest.

- Members received an update on potential tree options for their information which considered the different impacts of different species including: the aesthetic of the tree, seasonal elements, native versus exotic species, height and density, disease and climate, root growth and fruit and allergen concerns.
- A Member noted that local sponsorship of trees was sought at Theydon but that locals were upset when they did not receive acknowledgement of this as promised. It was recommended that there be clarity on what is involved and promised. The Head of Operations understood the emotional investment of sponsorship and agreed this needed to be managed and acknowledged properly.
- A Member felt that it should be a local decision on the tree species decision, particularly if this was to change from what was already there, and recommended consulting residents.
- A Member recommended including other residents in neighbouring roads of Redbridge in consultations. Members were advised that any residents that wished to be involved when management were onsite were encouraged and welcomed.
- The Superintendent stated that the local community would be involved throughout through public consultation and all decisions would be made in conjunction with the Forest community.
- A Member felt that the avenue was enjoyed by a much wider community and felt that input should include a wider pool to ensure groups/people are not disenfranchised. The Superintendent stated that all 84 of the Statement of Community Involvement's web-based stakeholders would be included in the consultation process.
- A Member highlighted the unknown history regarding Winston Churchill in the area which was addressed in the report and suggested better interpretation which would help promote the avenue's significance.
- A Member queried why the name change of the avenue was necessary and felt that the original name should be kept.

RESOLVED – That Members support:-

- Public consultation on a staged approach to replacing the Jubilee Avenue, as set out in option 5,-to maintain as much visual continuity as possible;
- Public consultation on the choice of replacement species based on a shortlist of appropriate native hardwood species: English Oak, Hornbeam and Flowering Cherry;
- That the Jubilee Avenue be formally renamed the Churchill Avenue given its clear association with the Churchill statue;

- The establishment of a sponsorship appeal to raise funds to meet the cost of replacement trees and their establishment.

9. **THE WOODFORD GREEN CHESTNUT AVENUE: FUTURE MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS (SEF 29/18)**

Members considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces and Heritage regarding future management proposals for Woodford Green Chestnut Avenue (SEF 29/18).

Members were advised that the City of London Corporation were working in collaboration with London Borough of Redbridge, who is responsible for the maintenance of the Avenue, to act on the deteriorating condition of the Woodford Green Horse Chestnut Avenue where only 64% of the original planting now survives.

It was noted that further work is planned to raise public awareness over the plight of the Chestnuts, together with public consultation, to initiate a discussion on potential replanting options for existing gaps and likely future tree failures.

RESOLVED – That Members support:-

- The joint commission with the London Borough of Redbridge of an Arboricultural Assessment of the Chestnut Avenue, considering options for the future management and possible replacement of the Avenue;
- Public consultation, alongside similar engagement on the Jubilee London Plane Avenue, on preferred options for the future management of the Chestnut Avenue;
- The inauguration of a sponsorship appeal in partnership with the London Borough of Redbridge to raise funds to meet the cost of replacement trees and their establishment.

10. **WANSTEAD & MANOR FLATS SCRUB MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (SEF 26/18)**

Members considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces regarding the Wanstead & Manor Flats Scrub Management Strategy (SEF 26/18). The following comments were made.

- The Head of Operations advised Members that scrub forms an important part of the biodiversity heritage and aesthetic at Wanstead Flats. However, ongoing problems with scrub associated anti-social behaviour and rough sleepers has caused a need for a revised scrub management regime and strategy to deal with issues in the area.
- A Member was pleased that the focus on aesthetic remained important but was unsure regarding the percentages presented in the report and what the impact of change would be. Members were advised that not all areas of the community required scrub and 25% was an approximate figure based on the overall structure which varied.

- It was noted that it was hard to get the balance right at the Flats and difficult to manage as the scrub area provides an important biodiversity resource.
- A Member suggested finding imaginative ways to reduce antisocial behaviour in the scrub by ensuring that it people would be visible through sight lines through the scrub.
- In response to queries, the Head of Operations confirmed that habitat scrub work would be more gradual, and the structured approach of the plan would ensure scattered work each year.
- A Member noted that Friends of Wanstead Parkland would appreciate an update on this matter.

RESOLVED, that Members support the introduction of a revised scrub management strategy for Wanstead and Manor Flats.

11. **EPPING FOREST PLAY POLICY (SEF 31/18)**

Members considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces and Heritage regarding the Epping Forest Play Policy (SEF 31/18). The following comments were made.

- The Head of Visitor Services advised Members that Epping Forest provides a valued (and in some cases the only) green space for a range of communities which has led to ongoing requests for facilities such as play areas on Epping Forest land to service these local communities.
- It was noted that there was currently no policy statement regarding the position on play facilities on the Forest but that most locations would go against the statutory obligation to preserve natural aspect of the land where possible.
- Members were asked to consider a Play Policy for Epping Forest in an attempt to interpret the sometimes-contradictory intentions of the Epping Forest Acts and set out a policy position for the Committee to use in relation to future requests.
- Members welcomed clarity of the policy and guidance on the restrictions.
- A Member asked if the policy should mention partnership arrangements as well as facilities under licence. The Head of Visitor Services confirmed that all existing partnership agreements also had corresponding licences but would revise the wording were necessary.
- A Member highlighted the need to ensure that the Forest/City of London Corporation does not become liable for any problems that occur and must therefore ensure that licenses require that the site will be returned to its previous condition at the licensee's expense if such issues were to occur.

- A Member suggested publicising natural trees falling down for dens. Members were advised that there were plans for guides to be published.

RESOLVED, that Members support approval of the Play in Epping Forest Policy Statement attached as Appendix 1.

12. **PROPOSAL FOR A PLAY AREA AT WANSTEAD PARK (SEF 30/18)**

Members considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces and Heritage regarding the proposal for a play area at Wanstead Park (SEF 30/18). The following comments were made.

- The Head of Operations explained that this report presented an exceptional case for the construction of a natural play area on Forest Land at Wanstead Park and this progress proposal outlined the commitments that would be involved. He made it clear that a decision had not been made and that the Committee was being asked for consent in principle for the proposal before it develops.
- It was noted that local authority play policy had previously identified a lack of play provision in the Ward, together with a lack of suitable Local Authority Public Open Space on which a play facility could be sited. The formal parkland setting of Wanstead Park was considered to be a more appropriate setting for a children's play area and would be funded and maintained by the London Borough of Redbridge under a licence agreement. The play area would complement proposals for an improved visitor offer around the Temple and meet long standing community desires for a play area in the vicinity.
- A Member noted that Wanstead Park was the logical choice for a play area, but Woodford Green would not be suitable. The Head of Visitor services replied that the community at Woodford Green had yet to submit any play proposal for consideration.
- Some Members felt that the Forest itself was a play area and that it should be made clear that it is a Forest and not a park. A Member felt that energies should be focused on teach children how to play in the Forest and engage with natural structures rather than building a park.
- A Member queried whether there was a policy to prevent the development of playgrounds. Members were advised that there was no such policy on playgrounds and it was noted that the City of London cannot ignore the high demand for a park which would encourage visitors to the Forest.
- A Member felt that a park would be valuable for parents as a safe environment to take children but did not like the design being offered. It was noted that a park would be used as an area for gathering and ultimately encourage people into other areas of the Forest.

- It was stated that Friends of Wanstead Parklands fully supported the proposal and saw this as a good site that would not impact on nature whilst addressing the lack of natural play areas concerns in the area.
- In response to a query surrounding the costs of developing a play area, Members were advised that this was dependant on funding from Redbridge plus other pots but initial develop costs would be in the region of £60-80K with opportunity to expand.
- In response to a query regarding whether the park would be fenced, Members were advised that it would be natural enclosed.

RESOLVED, that Members support the request for officers and local stakeholders undertake the work to prepare a detailed proposal for a play area at Wanstead Park for submission to them for consideration for full consent.

13. **PROPOSAL FOR EXPERIMENTAL TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER ON FAIRMEAD ROAD, HIGH BEACH IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ESSEX HIGHWAYS (SEF 32/18)**

RESOLVED - *With two hours having elapsed since the start of the meeting, in accordance with Standing Order No. 40 the Committee agreed at this point to extend the meeting by up to thirty minutes.*

Members considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces and Heritage regarding the proposal for Experimental Traffic Regulation Order on Fairmead Road, High Beach in partnership with Essex Highways (SEF 32/18). The following comments were made.

- Members were advised that the Epping Forest Transport Strategy (2009-2016) proposed the closure of selected minor roads within Epping Forest to reunite areas of Forest previously dissected by highways, making more of the Forest both tranquil and safety accessible to the public. The proposal to close Fairmead Road was modified in September 2013 to leave 500m open to motor traffic to retain access to the Fairmead Bottom Car Park. The partial closure has seen fly tipping and Anti-Social Behaviour previously experienced along the length of the road concentrated across the remaining 500 metres open to motor traffic.
- Members were asked to approve the proposal to introduce an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) on the remaining section open to motor traffic to extend the benefits seen upon the 700m of highway closed under a Traffic Regulation Order in 2012, to the entirety of the road length. This action would improve visitor experience, increase safety for the Forest cattle and enhance protection of the SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and SAC (Special Area of Conservation).

- A Member voiced concerns that closure would be a detriment to disabled visitors who park here and view this as a key area. The Head Forest Keeper advised that professional advice had been sought regarding all-ability access and other areas, such as the Connaught Waters easy access trail, were deemed to be more suitable for disabled visitors.
- A Member noted that local residents had requested that the road remain open as this would result in the loss of 30 car spaces. A suggestion was put forward to keep the car park open during the day and close it at night. The Superintendent advised that because of the existing Highway status, he had been informed that the road could only be permanently open or closed.
- A Member noted that the pros of closure far outweighed the negatives due to the crime and speeding that occurs in the area which would be avoided if the road was no longer accessible.
- The Head Forest Keeper advised Members that he had done numerous patrols of the area in conjunction with the Police and drugs, fly tipping and public sex acts were a big problem. He added that they had a duty of responsibility to deal with the persistent issues.
- In response to a query regarding where the gates would be, the Head Forest Keeper advised that local highways support was conducting a survey looking at the design and, when completed, would develop a short and long-term plan.
- A Member queried whether the gate would impact the tea hut car park. Members were advised that this would be considered during the design process.
- A Member suggested making the road a bridleway way and saw a potential opportunity to add this to the network of surfaced rides. The Superintendent advised that this proposal would be considered at the end of the closure process.

RESOLVED – That Members support:-

- Approval for the 18-month Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) at Fairmead Road in line with the aims of the Epping Forest Transport Strategy and in partnership with Essex Highways;
- Approval of the preparation of a report on the ETRO at the end of the trial period to assess the impacts of the measure on the Forest and to consider future action;
- Approval of the development of costed proposals, for the permanent closure of Fairmead Road as a highway for vehicular traffic, as part of the negotiated Mitigation Strategy for Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation.

14. QUESTIONS

A Member queried if there had been any changes to the Committee's Terms of Reference since the last meeting. The Epping Forest Business Manager advised that there had been a suggestion to allowing any member of a represented organisation to attend. However, as Members must undertake certain obligations, and for administration to be managed efficiently, it was decided that this could not be incorporated but that the Town Clerk would try to accommodate changes if a Member was unable to attend on individual occasions. Members were encouraged to make comments regarding the Terms of Reference as these would be considered at the next meeting.

Following a query from a Member, the Town Clerk advised that any suggested agenda items for Committee meetings be sent to the Town Clerk who would liaise with the Chairman for their approval.

A Member queried the licensing scheme fee issue with Theydon Bois regarding the Donkey Derby and the short notice provided. Members were advised that there had been ongoing dialogue on this matter for three years and a proposed fee had been part of those conversations. The next step will be to inspect the accounts and take this to the Licensing Committee for approval. A Member voiced the Theydon Bois & District Rural Preservation Society's support for the Donkey Derby.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Epping Forest Business Manager noted, following the sad death loss of Verderer Peter Adams, the Committee would be asked to approve the recruitment of an Epping Forest verderer (South) at their next meeting. It was noted that Verderer Murphy had been successful in being selected for the previous post which was advertised at the beginning of the year.

Members were advised that the person must be a resident of a Forest Parish and cannot be a member of the City of London Corporation's Court of Common Council. The role would be advertised in the summer on the Verderer page of the City Corporation website and Members were asked to contact the Epping Forest Business Manager if they had any queries regarding the role.

Members were advised of the month-long event celebrating 130 years of golf at Epping Forest taking place at the Royal Epping Forest Golf Club and Chingford Golf Course starting 16 June 2018.

Members were advised of a biodiversity event taking place at the Wanstead Flats with 14 different activities.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is 10 October 2018 at 7.00 pm.

The meeting closed at 9.24 pm

Chairman

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