

EPPING FOREST JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Friday, 26 April 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest Joint Consultative Committee held at the Field Studies Centre, IG10 4AF at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Graeme Smith (Chairman)
Sylvia Moys
Anthony Thomas (FSC representative)
Jennifer White (FSC representative)

Officers:

Richard Holt	- Town Clerk's Department
Paul Thomson	- Superintendent, Epping Forest
Jacqueline Eggleston	- Open Spaces Department
Jo Hurst	- Open Spaces Department
Helen Robertson	- Centre Manager, FSC
Simon Ward	- Head of London Region, FSC

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Gregory Lawrence, Deputy Phillip Woodhouse and Geoffrey Brown.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

The Committee considered the minutes of the last meeting of the Epping Forest Joint Consultative Committee on the 5th of December 2018. A Member noted that within the minutes section (ii) of any of business should read 'Wide Horizons' not 'Wider Horizons'.

RESOLVED- That the minutes of the last meeting of the Epping Forest Joint Consultative Committee on the 5th of December 2018 be agreed an accurate record.

4. FSC EPPING FOREST: 2018 UPDATE

The Forest Studies Centre (FSC) Manager introduced a report which summarised the work of the FSC Epping Forest in 2018. The report was produced to provide further detail to the report received by the Committee in December 2018.

The Centre Manager provided a summary of the key components of the FSC visitor metrics for 2018 and it was noted that the number of visitors exceeded the FSC target for the year. In addition, the Centre Manager provided a presentation to the Committee which explained the relative breakdown of visitors by area, age group and subject. It was noted that focus on the relationship between the City of London Corporation and Epping Forest remained of key importance to the FSC.

The Committee received the FSC Epping Forest 2017-2019 Financial report and Members noted the £329,200 income listed would likely be surpassed in 2019. The FSC Director of Infrastructure informed the Committee that the increased expenditure was, in part, due to the cost of improved technology at the FSC in Epping Forest and explained that the full extent of some employment costs was not yet fully clear. The Chairman requested further details on the projected 2019 growth in income for the Epping Forest FSC. The Centre Manager confirmed that £7500 had been received in grants from the City of London Corporation and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Replying to a question from the Chairman the Centre Manager confirmed the grant from the City of London Corporation had been provided for education services.

A Member commented that the field work included in the GCSE Geography curriculum was limited largely to research to streams and requested further details on the streams present within Epping Forest. The Centre Manager confirmed that Loughton Brook stream was the primary focus of the water studies within the Epping Forest and noted that the Suntrap brook was also used as an alternative site.

The Chairman queried the methodology for the marketing of the FSC to potential visitors. The Centre Manager explained that engagement with schools remained a key part of the marketing of the FSC. A Member raised the issue of mental health and the role that the open space of Epping Forest could have in improving visitor's wellbeing. The Centre Manager confirmed that that reference to wellbeing would be included in the FSC's 2025 strategy. A member of the Committee commented that a commitment to limiting carbon emissions should be also included in this strategy. The Epping Forest Business Manager explained that the maintenance of Epping Forest FSC was managed centrally by the City of London Corporation's City Surveyor's department with a 20-year plan reviewed annually. In addition, it was noted that there was currently a formalised agreement document being drafted to outline the relative responsibilities for the FSC Epping Forest buildings. Replying to a question from the Chairman it was confirmed that the drafting of this agreement had experienced some delays, in part due to the changeover of staff, but was on target to be ready for the next meeting of the Epping Forest Joint Consultative Committee in the autumn of 2019. Members noted that issues around sustainability should be incorporated in this agreement.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

5. **FSC EPPING FOREST REPORT ON 2019 TO END MARCH**

The Committee received a report of the FSC Epping Forest Centre Manager which updated the Committee on the key achievements of FSC Epping Forest in the period January to March 2019. The Centre Manager highlighted to Members that the income budgeted for 2019 was on course to be achieved with a 12% increase on the previous year. It was explained that this increase was, in part, due to the new regional of the FSC which also improved support facilities available. In addition, the Committee noted the engagement between the City of London Corporation and the FSC Epping Forest, in particular the Wanstead Parklands Project and promotion via social media.

A Member of the Committee questioned the extent to which the visitor statistics were available for the remainder of 2019. The Centre Manger explained that 75% of autumn term bookings had been received which are usually planned a term in advance of the booking.

The Chairman asked for further information on the community engagement of the visitor centre. Replying to this, the Centre Manager informed the Committee that the Visitor Centre would be taking part in the 'City Nature Challenge' which was taking place across London in the week of the meeting. In addition, it was noted that the Visitor Centre was due to be included Waltham Forest London Borough of Culture 2019. The Epping Forest Head of Visitor Services also noted that report on the Waltham Forest London Borough of Culture 2019 would be received by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee.

Replying to a query from a Member of the Committee the Director of Infrastructure explained that the FSC would be considering and pursuing a number of different funding avenues including tendering for Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs funding.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

6. **QUESTIONS**

A Member of the Committee questioned if the Epping Forest Joint Consultative Committee should consider moving from a biannual meeting basis to meeting one annually. The Centre Manager confirmed that FSC and the City of London Open Spaces department would be considering the frequency of the Committee's meetings and its Terms of Reference. The Epping Forest Head of Visitor Services informed the Committee that a draft agreement between the FSC and City of London Corporation would be ready for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee.

7. **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

The Committee considered one item of urgent business.

The Centre Manager informed the Committee that the Epping Forest Skills Centre would be celebrating its 50 year anniversary in 2020 and that details of the celebratory events would be provided in due course.

The meeting closed at 12.08 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer:

Richard Holt