

EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE
Monday, 4 July 2016

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee held at
Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 4 July 2016 at 11.00
am

Present

Members:

Alderman Gordon Haines
Deputy Stanley Ginsburg
Deputy Catherine McGuinness
Barbara Newman
Philip Woodhouse
Verderer Peter Adams
Verderer Michael Chapman DL
Verderer Richard Morris
Graeme Smith (Ex-Officio Member)
Jeremy Simons

In Attendance

Michael Welbank (Chief Commoner)

Officers:

Natasha Dogra	- Town Clerk's Department
Sue Ireland	- Director of Open Spaces
Alison Elam	- Chamberlain's Department
Roger Adams	- City Surveyor's Department
Natasha Dogra	- Town Clerk's Department
Andy Barnard	- Superintendent, The Commons
Paul Thomson	- Superintendent, Epping Forest
Jeremy Dagley	- Open Spaces Department
Jacqueline Eggleston	- Open Spaces Department
Sue Rigley	- Open Spaces Department
Alison Hurley	- City Surveyor's Department
Andrew Cusack	- Comptrollers & City Solicitor's Department
Jo Hurst	- Open Spaces Department
Susanna Lascelles	- Public Relations Office

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Alderman Paul Judge, Sylvia Moys, Virginia Rounding and Verderer Jo Thomas.

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

Deputy McGuinness declared an interest in the Epping Forest Centenary

Trust. Mr Simons declared a pecuniary interest in item 18 and retired from the room when this item was discussed.

3. **MINUTES**

In response to a query, a Member asked that a letter which had been sent from the Chairman to a Verderer regarding the membership of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee be circulated to the Committee.

In relation to the proposed highway dedication at Hemnall Street, a Member highlighted a recent conversation with a District Council Planning Officer regarding an uncompleted footpath which should connect the School to Tower Road. The Member undertook to discuss the matter with the Superintendent.

Resolved – that the minutes be agreed as an accurate record.

4. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received the report of the Superintendent of the Commons which updated Members on activities in and around Burnham Beeches and the Commons.

Resolved – that the update be received.

5. **UPDATE REPORT: DOG CONTROL ORDERS AT BURNHAM BEECHES**

Members noted that at the September 2014 meeting of this Committee approved the introduction of Dog Control Orders at Burnham Beeches commencing 1 December 2014. As part of that approval Members requested that the Superintendent produce a report in July 2016 to provide an update on the implementation of the Dog Control Orders (DCOs).

Officers were generally encouraged by the outcome of this early data set and the apparent change in dog related behaviours it indicates. Monitoring would continue over the coming months and the extended data base would be further analysed to produce the January 2017 report and to draw conclusions where that was possible.

The Committee conveyed their thanks to the Superintendent and his team for their hard work which helped to implement the DCOs successfully.

Resolved – that the report be received.

6. **PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES**

Following this committee's approval of the Consultative Committee merger report dated March 2016, Members noted the procedure to arrange additional Consultative Committee/Group meetings or site visits should circumstances require. This procedure would require amendments to each Consultative Committee's Terms of Reference.

Resolved – that Members agreed the amendment to the Consultative Committee/Group Terms of Reference.

7. REVENUE OUTTURN 2015/16 - BURNHAM BEECHES, STOKE COMMON & CITY COMMONS

The Committee noted the revenue outturn for the services overseen by the Committee in 2015/16 with the final agreed budget for the year. Members noted that the Director's better than budget position of £23,000 (Local Risk) has been aggregated with budget variations on services overseen by other committees, which produces an overall better than budget position of £903,000 (Local Risk) across all Open Spaces. It is proposed to carry forward £500,000 of this underspend. These requests will be considered by the Chamberlain in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Resource Allocation Sub Committee.

The City Surveyor's better than budget position of £61,000 is mainly due to an underspend in the Additional Works Programme. In the tables, figures in brackets indicate income or in hand balances, increases in income or decreases in expenditure.

Resolved – that the update be noted.

8. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Committee received an update from the Superintendent of Epping Forest informing Members of activities which had taken place in and around the forest. Of particular note was the restoration of Open Riding on 7 May; falls in the number of reported fly tipping and rough sleeper incidents; the submission of the annual Basic Payment Scheme application; the close of the 2015/16 football season with 3,260 games played, an increase of 12%, and the Period for Representation meeting under the Flood and Water Management Act Regulations with the Environment Agency regarding the provisional high risk designation for three Large Raised Reservoir dams at Wanstead Park.

In response to a query regarding the Psychoactive Substances Act, Members were informed that the Police had the right to act when finding an individual who appeared to be under the influence of drugs. In response to a query regarding fly tipping, Members noted that the locking of gated car parks may help tackle anti-social behaviour such as fly tipping in the forest. Currently 15 of the 52 car parks in the Forest were locked at night, with plans to lock a further 3 over the next year. Members requested that in future fly tipping statistics should be presented to show the extent of car park fly tipping.

Members noted that Officers had received negative feedback from residents regarding the hosting of a circus on George Green. Members noted that this had been reported in the local paper and Officers confirmed that given the time commitment involved they do not routinely consult on individual events with residents in the immediate vicinity. Officers were working with colleagues in the London Borough of Redbridge to address further bookings and the Public Relations Office would contact the Chairman regarding the possibility of commenting further on recent coverage.

Members also noted that the 'high risk' classification of the dams was currently being challenged. In response to concerns regarding the cost of strengthening

cascade dams if the classification remained at 'high risk' Officers reassured Committee that they would work with the Panel Engineers to assess any work which may be required.

Discussions ensued regarding two Land Registry issues which the Committee were informed about. The Superintendent informed Members that both issues may need to be defended at the Lands Tribunal. In response to a question on the wider issue of Highways Dedication registrations the Superintendent informed the Committee that he was unable to provide a timescale for resolution as the process needs to be led by the individual Highway Authorities.

The Superintendent also added to his report the recent recorded presence of Chalara Dieback of Ash in the Forest and the notification of a Forestry Authority Containment order for an outbreak of Oriental Chestnut Gall Wasp on George Green; Bush Wood and Wanstead Park.

Resolved – that the update be received.

9. REVENUE OUTTURN 2015/16 - EPPING FOREST

Members noted the comparison of revenue outturn for the services overseen by the Committee in 2015/16 with the final agreed budget for the year. In total, there was a better than budget position of £256,000 for the services overseen by your Committee, including £84,000 for Epping Forest, compared with the final agreed budget for the year. Members noted that the figures did not represent the full amount of work carried out, though Officers explained this in the annual report and charity accounts considered by the Committee.

Resolved – that the update be noted.

10. CYCLICAL WORKS PROGRAMME BID - 2017/18

The Committee received a provisional list of cyclical projects being considered for properties under the management of Epping Forest and Commons Committee under the umbrella of the "cyclical works programme". Members noted that the draft cyclical project list for 2017/18 totals approximately £1.35m and if approved will continue the on-going programme in the maintenance of the property and infrastructure assets.

In view of the recent extensive works at Highams Park Lake, the Assistant Director for Corporate Facilities Management agreed to respond Member's concerns regarding the proposed £24,000 of wharfing/lining at Highams Park Lake.

Resolved – that the report be received.

11. EPPING FOREST CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Further to the Committee's agreement of March 2016 to create a Consultative Committee, Officers presented the report which set out issues and options for consultation on arrangements.

It was considered that a group size of up to 16 is the most manageable and

effective arrangement for such a Consultative Committee. Given that there are over 74 organised groups who have expressed an interest in the Forest through the Statement of Community Involvement, some mechanism for selection and assurance of representation must be established.

The Chairman and Verderers will be proposed as core members of the Committee and will be supported by nominated Epping Forest Officers. Therefore a maximum of 16 places are to be offered to external groups and organisations. The Committee agreed that it would be beneficial for meeting dates to be scheduled and confirmed for a minimum of one year.

Members agreed that the following categories of representation are put forward, with contributors being asked to prioritise in order of perceived importance. This can then be mapped to the agreed attendance numbers to give the required balance.

- a. Conservation - *Conservation groups in Forest, or with wider remit.*
- b. Friends/Voluntary - *Formal working groups eg litter pickers groups, 'Friends of' etc*
- c. Heritage – *Historical societies, rural preservation etc*
- d. Informal or general users - *Schools, Youth groups, families associations, local forums and interest bodies.*
- e. Recreation - *Specific recreational user groups – eg walkers, riders, cyclists.*
- f. Sports - *Formal organised sports on Forest eg Golf, Football, cricket running etc.*
- g. Other – *as suggested by respondees*

Resolved – that Members agreed the proposed options to be included in the public consultation to inform the establishment of an Epping Forest Consultative Committee

12. **EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN PARKLIFE FOOTBALL HUBS PROGRAMME**

The Committee noted that the Parklife Football Hubs programme is a new grassroots football funding scheme supported by The Football Association (FA), Premier League, Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), Sport England, the Mayor of London (MOL) and the Football Foundation. Building on a pilot scheme in Sheffield the scheme aims to create a number of football „hubs“ across London before the programme is rolled out nationwide.

The Football hubs aim to be financially sustainable sites catering for football that will encourage more people to play more regularly or become more active. In return for capital investment of up to 60% and advice on a tested business model the Parklife programme is seeking consortia partners to deliver the programme on the ground.

A Member alluded to very strong concerns over a commitment at this stage. The Chairman clarified that at this stage this was only an agreement for an expression of interest to be submitted.

Resolved – that Members approved the expression of Interest submission, on behalf of the City of London and London Borough of Redbridge consortium, to the Football Foundation’s Parklife Football Hubs Programme.

13. IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME FOR ENGLAND'S NATURA 2000 SITES (IPENS)

Epping Forest’s beech forest and heathlands are recognised for their importance internationally; the beech forest with its ancient trees having a scientifically recognised “global status”. Recognition takes the form of protective designation as Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) within the EU *Natura 2000* network, under the legal framework of the Bern Convention 1979.

Resolved – that Members instructed Officers to incorporate the SIP targets into the Epping Forest Management Plan, prioritise and examine the resource implications of the proposed actions that might pertain to the Conservators and identify funding mechanisms and potential partnerships for these actions.

14. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no urgent business.

16. 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 Local Government Act.

17. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

Resolved – that the non-public minutes be agreed as an accurate record.

18. ISSUE REPORT: HIGHAMS PARK LAKE - PROJECT COST VARIATIONS

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest.

19. DECLARATION OF BUILT ESTATE AS SURPLUS TO OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest.

20. ACCESS REPORT

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest.

21. EPPING FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN - PROPOSED MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest.

22. COMMERCIAL UPDATE

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest.

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

There were no questions.

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

There were two items of urgent business relating to the work of Epping Forest.

The meeting ended at 12.45 pm

Chairman

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