

**EPHING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE**  
**Monday, 15 May 2017**

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee held at  
Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 15 May 2017 at  
11.30 am

**Present**

**Members:**

Philip Woodhouse  
Alderman Greg Jones  
Sylvia Moys  
Barbara Newman  
Caroline Haines  
Graeme Smith  
Gregory Jones  
Verderer Peter Adams  
Verderer Richard Morris  
Verderer Michael Chapman DL  
Verderer Jo Thomas

**Officers:**

Natasha Dogra – Town Clerk's Department  
Colin Buttery – Director, Open Spaces  
Paul Thomson – Superintendent, Epping Forest  
Jacqueline Eggleston – Open Spaces Department  
Jeremy Dagley – Open Spaces Department  
Geoff Sinclair – Open Spaces Department  
Hadyn Robson. Open Spaces Department  
Jo Hurst – Open Spaces Department  
Esther Sumner – Business Manager, Open Spaces  
Alison Elam – Chamberlain's Department  
Edward Wood – Comptrollers and City Solicitor's  
Kate Smith – Town Clerk's Department  
Susanna Lascelles – Town Clerk's Department  
Carl Locsin – Town Clerk's Department

1. **APOLOGIES**  
Apologies had been received from Alderman Gifford and Peter Bennett.
2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**  
There were no declarations.
3. **MINUTES**
  4. While the Superintendent of Epping Forest was confident that the recorded figure was correct, it was agreed to review a Members query regarding staff hours in connection with item 11.

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

4. **ORDER OF THE COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL**

**RESOLVED** – that the Order of the Court of Common Council be received.

5. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The Committee were invited to appoint a Chairman in accordance with Standing Order 29. Philip Woodhouse was the only Member to seek election to be Chairman and was therefore appointed for the year ensuing.

**RESOLVED** – it was unanimously agreed that Philip Woodhouse be appointed Chairman for the ensuing.

6. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

The Committee were invited to appoint a Chairman in accordance with Standing Order 30. Graeme Smith was the only Member to seek election to be Chairman and was therefore appointed for the year ensuing.

**RESOLVED** – it was unanimously agreed that Graeme Smith be appointed Chairman for the ensuing

7. **COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

The Committee were invited to appoint the sub-committees for the ensuing year. The Chairman waived the maximum rules against each group to encourage greater Member participation.

**RESOLVED** – that the following appoints be made:

**Epping Forest Management Plan Steering Group**

Philip Woodhouse  
Graeme Smith  
Sylvia Moys  
Verderer Morris  
Verderer Chapman  
Verderer Adams  
Verderer Thomas

**Epping Forest Joint Consultative Committee**

Philip Woodhouse  
Graeme Smith  
Sylvia Moys  
Verderer Morris  
Verderer Chapman  
Verderer Adams  
Verderer Thomas

**Burnham Beeches Consultation Group**

Philip Woodhouse  
Graeme Smith  
Sylvia Moys

Barbara Newman

**Ashted Commons Consultation Group**

Philip Woodhouse

Graeme Smith

Sylvia Moys

Jeremy Simons

**West Wickham, Spring Park and Coulsdon Common Consultation Group**

Philip Woodhouse

Graeme Smith

Sylvia Moys

Jeremy Simons

**Open Spaces and City Gardens Representatives**

Caroline Haines

Verderer Peter Adams

**8. RESOLUTION OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

The Committee received a revised resolution of the Policy & Resources Committee relating to the appointment of Chairmen to Sub Committees.

**RESOLVED** – that the resolution of the Policy & Resources Committee be received.

**9. OPEN SPACES & HERITAGE DEPARTMENT BUSINESS PLAN 2017/18**

Business plans are reviewed annually and cover a three year period. Following incorporation of the Tower Bridge, Monument and Keats House parts of the Culture, Heritage & Libraries Department into the Open Spaces Department on 1 February 2017, the Open Spaces Departmental Business Plan now reflects this broader range of activity under the heading “Open Spaces & Heritage”.

The proposed business plan reflects the changes being made corporately to business planning, in particular the renewed focus on outcomes. Members were also presented with an early draft of the Corporate Plan 2018-23 to give them an opportunity to provide informal feedback before wider consultation on the plan takes place in the autumn with staff, partners and other external stakeholders.

In response to a query regarding the Epping Forest Management Plan Steering Group meetings, the Superintendent agreed to provide Members with a timetable of initial meetings within the month.

**RESOLVED** – that the Committee agreed the Open Spaces & Heritage Business Plan.

**10. RISK MANAGEMENT FOR EPPING FOREST**

The Epping Forest & Commons Committee noted an update on the management of risks faced by the Open Spaces Department and the Epping Forest and The Commons Divisions in particular. Risk is reviewed regularly by the Department's

Senior Leadership Team as part of the ongoing management of the operations of the Department.

In response to a query Members noted that that Trustees were required to confirm in the charity's annual report that any major risks to which the charity is exposed have been identified and reviewed and that systems are established to mitigate those risks. Using the corporate risk register guidance, the management of these risks meets the requirements of the Charity Commission.

The Committee Members raised a query regarding the minimum evaluation under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) required in tenanted refreshment facilities. Officers confirmed that while the FHRS covered 1-5 Stars, a minimum of 3 Stars 'Generally Satisfactory' or above was now required from Epping Forest tenants. Tenants who were rated at 1 or 2 Stars were obliged to implement FHSR recommendations and seek a re-rating visit

**RESOLVED** – that Members approved the Epping Forest and The Commons risk registers.

**11. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received an update regarding the management and operational activities across the section since December 2017. Members were informed that due to the length of the agenda and workload of the meeting a presentation would not be made on this occasion,

The Committee were informed that following the recommendation made by the Opposed Bill Committee in November 2016, the City of London Corporation will now seek powers to issue Community Protection Notices through the Governing legislation. The Opposed Bill Committee considered and approved these amendments on 22 February. The report and third reading stages are due next in the Commons prior to passage to the House of Lords.

In response to a query it was noted that fly tips totalled 126 to the end of March 2017, a 6.6% fall from 135 fly tips for the same period for 2016. The Committee were informed that 20 rough sleeper camps mainly in the Wanstead Flats and Leyton Flats areas have been located and cleared across 2017.

The Chairman extended his thanks to everyone who had been involved with the recent successful Queen's Commonwealth Canopy event involving HRH Prince Harry.

A Member raised concern regarding the recent works at School Green by Thames Water which had seen a large increase in manhole installations. The Superintendent reassured the Committee that permission for the works had not be given and that a claim for restitution was being pursued with Thames Water.

**RESOLVED** – that the update be received.

**12. EPPING FOREST OPERATIONS PROGRAMME FOR 2017/2018**

Members noted the conservation, visitor access and risk management projects proposed in the Forest for the year 2017/18.

The dominant theme of the 2017/18 work programme continues to be the grant funded habitat conservation work, which includes the restoration of the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) wood pasture areas. The rate of work remains at an increased level to ensure that the 10-year commitments under Natural England's Higher Level Scheme are met. A substantial increase in the successful 2016 contractor involvement in wood pasture restoration is proposed for 2017.

Resolved: that Members approve the annual work programme.

**13. EPPING FOREST SPORTS CHARGES 2017/18**

Members noted the reviews the charges for the Association Football facilities that are provided at Epping Forest together with the fees charged for Golf at Chingford Golf Course and seeks approval for the proposed charges for the 2017/18 seasons.

**RESOLVED** – that Members approved the following:

- ☐ the proposed charges for football facilities in Epping Forest for 2017/18 be increased and the proposed charges for golf at Chingford Golf Course for 2017/18 be increased.
- ☐ The Superintendent retains delegated powers to discount or offer promotional rates in order to develop new users and customers and the Superintendent retains delegated powers to revise the current sport charges terms and conditions.

**14. ANCIENT TREE FORUM CONCORDAT SIGNING**

Members noted information regarding the close relationship forged over 24 years between the Ancient Tree Forum (ATF) and the City of London (CoL). It demonstrated how both organisations have furthered the conservation of ancient trees through active management and a number of other initiatives, including training newcomers to the field.

**RESOLVED** – that Members agreed that the Town Clerk, in liaison with the Chairman, of a Concordat between the Ancient Tree Forum and the City of London promoting the long-term protection of ancient trees.

**15. EPPING TOWN GREEN - IMPACT OF PROPOSED HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS ON FOREST LAND**

Discussions ensued regarding the proposal by Essex County Council to close the Lindsey Street spur to traffic, returning 45M2 of Forest Land, in exchange for junction improvements for vehicles travelling south at Lindsey Street / Palmers Hill, Epping which would require the dedication of a corresponding 45 M2 of Forest Land at Epping Town Green. Some Members raised concerns over this proposal as they felt the scheme should be restricted to stopping vehicular

movement over the Lindsey Street spur road fronting the Grade II War Memorial. and returning the road to Forest Land.

In response to a query, Members noted that the junction improvement works at Palmers Hill require Forest Land to be dedicated for highway purposes to allow HGVs to manoeuvre following the closure of the Lindsay Street spur. Essex County Council has also indicated that this junction improvement works may facilitate better traffic flow to a future housing development at nearby Stonards Hill, though proposals are at a very early stage. The Superintendent felt the overall neutral exchange of 45M2 of Epping Town Green between highway improvements and the restriction of the spur road to a footpath would address 35 years of ambition to restrict damage to verges and improve the setting of the war memorial. The Superintendent felt that a request for the closure of the spur road without reciprocal improvement at the alternative junction was unlikely to succeed and risked the loss Local Highway Partnership funding reserved for the current scheme. Members continued to harbour concerns over the proposal and advised the Superintendent to negotiate a way forward with the County Council restricted to the closure of the spur road only.

**RESOLVED** – that Members instruct the Superintendent to negotiate with Essex County Council to secure a Traffic Regulation Order to close the Lindsey Street Spur and return it to Forest Land.

**16. CHANGES TO DOG CONTROL ORDERS AFFECTING EPPING FOREST**

The Committee noted that the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 (CN&EA 2005) gives Local Authorities the power to tackle irresponsible dog ownership and also replaced earlier legislation for dog fouling.

**RESOLVED** – that Members approve the continued use of Local Authority DCO's to September 2017, then PSPOs after their transition in October 2017

**17. DEMOLITION OF DISUSED POULTRY SHEDS, WOODREDON ESTATE, EPPING FOREST**

Members noted that the project was now complete and the demolition of four disused poultry sheds had been done.

**RESOLVED** – that Members approve the closure of the project.

**18. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

Members received the Superintendent's apologies and wished him a speedy recovery.

The Committee received an on management and operational activities across the section since December 2017.

**RESOLVED** – that the update be received.

**19. UPDATE CONCERNING THE EXTENSION OF DCOS AS PSPOS AT BURNHAM BEECHES**

Members noted that at the January 2017 meeting of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee, Members authorised the Superintendent of The Commons to consult on extending the effect of the existing DCOs at Burnham Beeches beyond 30 November 2017 as PSPOs. The Committee noted the brief updated and thanked Officers for their continued hard work.

**RESOLVED** – that the update be received.

20. **SPORTS AND MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES FOR THE COMMONS**

The Committee were provided with a report reviewing the charges for sports facilities and miscellaneous items that are provided by The Commons Division and seeks approval for the proposed charges for 2017-18.

**RESOLVED** – that Members approved the charges.

21. **A REVIEW OF THE CONDITION OF STOKE COMMON SSSI BY NATURAL ENGLAND**

The Committee noted that Stoke Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) was transferred for nil consideration, by South Bucks District Council (SBDC) into the ownership of the City of London in 2007 and is now protected in perpetuity according to the requirements of the City of London Corporation Open Spaces Act, 1878.

**RESOLVED** – that Members noted the update.

22. **THE COMMONS MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES 2017-18**

Members noted that each of the nine open spaces in the division has a comprehensive management plan and detailed work programmes to guide management activity over a 10 year period. The Committee noted the priorities.

**Resolved** – that Members approve the management priorities for The Commons for the period 2017-2018.

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

There were no questions.

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

There was no urgent business.

25. **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.

26. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes be approved as an accurate record.

27. **JUBILEE RETREAT CHANGE OF PROVIDER OF STAFF WELFARE FACILITIES**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces.

28. **EPHING FOREST BUFFER LANDS - ANNUAL AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS REVIEW**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces.

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

There were no questions.

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

There was no urgent business.

**The meeting ended at 12:50PM**

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Chairman

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