

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Epping Forest and Commons Committee	15 January 2018
Subject: Appointment of a Verderer of Epping Forest	Public
Report of: The Town Clerk	For Decision
Report Author: Lorraine Brook (Principal Committee and Member Services Manager) and Natasha Dogra (Committee and Member Services Officer)	
<p>Summary</p> <p>Following the resignation of Richard Morris OBE who has served as a Verderer of Epping Forest since 1998, the Committee is asked to note the vacancy for one northern Forest Parish Verderer and, taking into account that the septennial elections are not scheduled to take place until 2020, approve the commencement of an appointment process to result in the selection of a new Verderer of Epping Forest.</p> <p>In accordance with Section 30(7) of the Epping Forest Act 1878, the Committee must make a recommendation to the Court of Common Council in respect of the appointment of a Verderer of Epping Forest who will serve as such until the septennial elections in 2020 when all four of the Epping Forest Verderers will be elected.</p> <p>This report seeks the Committee's approval in respect of a number of practicalities relevant to the appointment process, specifically the appointment of a Working Party to oversee the interview stage of the process and which will make recommendation to this Committee on a preferred candidate for appointment as a Verderer.</p> <p>This report additionally sets out the timetable for the appointment process and Members' views are sought on the proposed timescales.</p>	

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

1. note the vacancy for a Verderer of Epping Forest;
2. approve the commencement of an appointment process to select a northern Forest Parish Verderer of Epping Forest (in line with the requirements of the Epping Forest Acts 1878 & 1880) for a tenure of Office to conclude in 2020 ahead of the septennial elections of all four Verderers of Epping Forest;
3. to approve the composition of a Working Party to consider applications for the position of a Verderer of Epping Forest; and
4. to approve the proposed timetable for the appointment process.

Main Report

Background

1. The Town Clerk was advised on 23rd October 2017 that Verderer Richard Morris OBE wished to resign, with immediate effect, from his position as a northern Forest Parish Verderer of Epping Forest. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman were advised immediately.
2. In advance of this meeting of the Committee, the appointment process has been researched with specific reference to the last casual vacancy in 2009. As the Verderer elections which are held every seven years are not scheduled to take place until 2020, the Epping Forest Act 1878 provides that the Corporation as the Conservators of Epping Forest shall appoint a Verderer to fill the casual vacancy until those elections. The last such appointment was made in 2009, with a recommendation put forward by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee to the Court of Common Council for the appointment of Michael Chapman. The term of office of a newly appointed Verderer would run from the date of appointment by the Court of Common Council until the 2020 elections.
3. Taking into account the appointment process that was followed in 2009 the Committee is asked to approve the arrangements for the appointment of a new Verderer of Epping Forest and the timescales for the appointment process.

Criteria to be appointed as a Verderer

4. Section 30 of the Epping Forest Act 1878 is set out in Appendix 1. The most important subsections for present purposes are:

“(5) A person shall not be qualified to be elected a Verderer unless he is resident within one of the Forest parishes, or if he is a member of the

Court of Common Council of the City of London; and if a person elected a Verderer ceases to be so resident or becomes a member of that Court he shall thereupon cease to be a Verderer.”; and

“(7) Casual vacancies among the Verderers caused by death, resignation, disqualification, or otherwise shall be filled by the Conservators from among persons qualified to be elected Verderers; but a person appointed to fill a casual vacancy shall be entitled to hold office so long only as the vacating Verderer would have been entitled to hold office.”

5. It is important to note that to qualify for appointment as a Verderer of Epping Forest a person (male or female) must reside within one of the twelve Forest parishes of Epping, Theydon Bois, Loughton, Waltham Holy Cross, Chingford, Chigwell (now Buckhurst Hill), Woodford, Walthamstow, Leyton, Wanstead, Little Ilford (now East Ham) and West Ham (with no distinction between North and South as is the case for voting purposes) and must not be a member of the Court of Common Council of the City of London. The successful candidate will also be expected to have a detailed knowledge of the Forest, the principles under which it must be managed and the pressures operating on it. Taking into account all of those requirements, anyone wishing to be appointed would need to demonstrate that they meet all of the criteria during the application process.
6. All advertising in respect of the appointment will be very clear about the criteria for appointment and how these elements will need to be demonstrated in the application and interview process.

Proposed Appointment Arrangements

The Appointment of a Working Party

7. It is proposed that a Working Party be appointed by the Committee for the purposes of conducting interviews with applicants. In 2009 it was agreed that a Working Party consisting of the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and all serving Verderers be created.

The Appointment Timetable

8. The Committee is also asked to comment on and approve the proposed timetable (Appendix 2) for the appointment process which will commence with advertisements being placed in various media in order to profile the vacancy.
9. The proposed timetable for the appointment process would mean that a recommendation to the Court of Common Council in respect of an appointee would not be considered until 19th April 2018.

Advertising

10. An advertisement will be approved by the Director of Open Spaces and Director of Communications. In-line with the proposed timetable all advertisements will be placed by no later than 18 January 2018. It is proposed that the deadline for applications be 5 February 2018.
11. Section 52 of the Epping Forest Act 1878 states that any notice required to be published by the Conservators must be advertised in both a City of London and an Essex newspaper, displayed on lodge noticeboards, and kept for inspection at the Warren Offices.
12. Although there is no specific statutory requirement to publish a notice in relation to a casual vacancy for a Verderer, it is therefore proposed that notices shall be placed as follows:
 - City of London Corporation webpages/ Open Spaces webpages
 - The Guardian Series of Newspapers – covering Wanstead & Woodford; Waltham Forest; Chingford and Epping Forest editions (as was in 2009)
 - The City AM.

Application Process

13. All persons that are interested in being considered for the appointment will be asked to contact the Town Clerk's Department and request an application pack (Appendices 1-4) and submit a supporting statement. All completed applications will need to be received by the Town Clerk's Department by no later than midday on 5 February 2018. Upon this deadline, all statements will be passed to the Director of Open Spaces for your officers to consider whether applicants meet the relevant criteria referred to in paragraphs 4-5 of this report.
14. The Committee is asked to consider whether all applicants who meet the criteria should be invited to interview or if, subject to the number of statements received, the Director of Open Spaces should be instructed to undertake an initial sift of the applications and put forward a short-list for consideration by the Working Party based on relevant skills and experience Members should note that in 2009, the Committee chose to interview all valid applicants.

Interviews

15. It is proposed that interviews take place in week commencing 12 February 2018. The advertisements will need to give some indication of when interviews will be held although this could potentially be subject to some change depending on availability of applicants.
16. Subject to the number of applicants that are invited for interview, this is most likely to require a visit by all Members of the Working Party to The Warren, Loughton over a period of hours. It is proposed that the Director of Open Spaces develop a series of questions for the interview stage and that these be agreed with members of the Working Party ahead of the interviews. Each interview would be expected to last approximately 30 minutes and would focus on why the applicant wishes to undertake the appointment and what skills/experience they can bring to the Committee.

17. On conclusion of the interview stage, a report will be drafted for your meeting scheduled to take place on 12th March 2018 and a recommendation in respect of the preferred candidate submitted to the Committee for consideration. Thereafter, subject to the view of the Committee, a recommendation will be submitted to the Court of Common Council on 19th April 2018. If it is felt that the delay in a decision being taken in respect of the appointment is detrimental, the appointment could, with appropriate justification, be sought in accordance with urgency procedures. However, at this stage, it is not felt that there is an urgency to the matter.

Legal Implications

18. Contained within the body of this report.

Financial Implications

19. The cost of advertising the appointment will be met from Epping Forest Local Risk.

Communications implications

20. The Communications Department is aware of the appointment process and the attention this vacancy may generate in the local press.

Conclusion

21. Following the resignation of Richard Morris OBE who served as a Verderer of Epping Forest since 1998 the Committee is asked to note the vacancy for one Verderer and, taking into account that the septennial elections for the election of all four Verderers are not scheduled to take place until 2020, approve the commencement and details of an appointment process to result in the appointment of a new Verderer of Epping Forest. In accordance with the Epping Forest Act 1878, the Committee will need to make recommendation to the Court of Common Council in respect of the appointment of a Verderer who will serve as such until early 2020, at which point the all-out Verderer elections will take place.
22. This report seeks the Committee's approval in respect of various practicalities relevant to the appointment process, specifically the appointment of a Working Party to oversee the interview stage of the process and which will make recommendation to this Committee on a preferred candidate for appointment as Verderer. Based on the proposed timetable before Members it is anticipated that a new Verderer's appointment commence as of 19th April 2018.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Section 30 of the Epping Forest Act 1878
- Appendix 2 – Proposed timetable for the appointment process
- Appendix 3 – Verderer Job Description

- Appendix 4 – Map of Forest Parishes.

Background Papers:

- Advertisement – Wanstead and Woodford Guardian - September 2009.
- Minutes of the Epping Forest Committee – 14/09/09.
- Report of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee to the Court of Common Council - 09/11/09.

Contact:

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Extract of the Epping Forest Act

30.—(1.) There shall be four Verderers of Epping Forest.

(2.) The first verderers shall be Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, of Warlics, in the parish of Waltham Holy Cross, Baronet; Sir Antonio Brady, of Maryland Point, in the parish of West Ham; Thomas Charles Baring, of High Beech, in the parish of Sewardstone, Esquire; and Andrew Johnston, of the Firs, in the parish of Woodford, Esquire.

Verderers
of the
Forest.

(3.) They shall hold office until the twenty-fifth day of March one thousand eight hundred and eighty.

(4.) Succeeding verderers shall be elected by the persons for the

[Ch. ccxiii.] *Epping Forest Act, 1878.* [41 & 42 VICT.]

A.D. 1878. — time being on the register of commoners provided for in the Fourth Schedule to this Act, and in manner prescribed in that Schedule.

(5.) A person shall not be qualified to be elected a verderer unless he is resident within one of the Forest parishes, or if he is a member of the Court of Common Council of the City of London; and if a person elected a verderer ceases to be so resident or becomes a member of that court he shall thereupon cease to be a verderer.

(6.) The elected verderers shall come into office on the twenty-fifth day of March next following the day of their election, and shall hold office for seven years beginning on that day; but shall be re-eligible.

(7.) Casual vacancies among the verderers caused by death, resignation, disqualification, or otherwise shall be filled by the Conservators from among persons qualified to be elected verderers; but a person appointed to fill a casual vacancy shall be entitled to hold office so long only as the vacating verderer would have been entitled to hold office.

Appendix 2

Proposed Timetable for the Appointment of a Verderer

Action	Date	Lead Officer
Epping Forest and Commons Committee approves the process for the appointment of a new Verderer and the appointment of a Working Party.	15/01/18	Town Clerk's Department
Advertisements to be placed in all relevant media and notices.	By no later than 18/01/18	Town Clerk's Department/ Open Spaces Department
Applications period open for a period of five weeks, closing at midday on 5 th February 2018.	Midday on 05/02/18	Town Clerk's Department
Sifting process by the Director of Open Spaces and consultation with the Working Party about the applications.	08/02/18	Director of Open Spaces
Applicants invited to interview with the Working Party and the Director of Open Spaces in the Irish Chambers.	09/02/18	Town Clerk's Department
Interviews.	14/02/18 15/02/18	Director of Open Spaces/ Town Clerk's Department/ Working Party
Working Party to make recommendation in respect of a preferred candidate to the Epping Forest and Commons Committee.	12/03/18	Town Clerk's Department
Recommendation of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee to the Court of Common Council in respect of a preferred candidate to be appointed as a Verderer of Epping Forest.	19/04/18	Town Clerk's Department
Newly appointed Verderer's term of office commences until 2020. Candidate to be advised and invited for an induction with the Director of Open Spaces and the Committee Chairman.	19/04/18	Town Clerk's Department

Appendix 3

Epping Forest

Epping Forest has been owned and managed by the City of London Corporation since 1878 when the Epping Forest Act protected it in perpetuity for the recreation and enjoyment of visitors. You can download a copy of the Epping Forest Act (1878) here: <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/epping-forest/about-us/Documents/1878-Epping-Forest-Act.pdf>

The Forest has a rich and diverse history stretching back long before 1878, which has left its mark on the environment, from the Iron Age earthworks to Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge to the 50,000 pollarded trees. Today, the City of London continues to support Epping Forest as a charitable trust, which is increasingly seeking additional sources of funding to maintain its stewardship of the Forest and protect it for future generations. The pressures of development and the needs of increasing population growth in London that faced Parliament in the 1870s remains an ever-present challenge for the Forest.

Epping Forest is managed by a team of over 80 full time and part time staff including Information Assistants, Forest Conservation Workers, Ecologists, Litter Pickers, Forest Keepers, Playing Fields Staff, Green Keepers and Administrative Staff, all led by the Superintendent of Epping Forest, Paul Thomson.

Managing the Forest

The Epping Forest management team has the task of maintaining the natural habitats developed over more than 1,000 years for use by people and their grazing animals. These traditional uses have created a diverse landscape that includes areas of historic wood-pasture, green lanes, ancient pollarded trees and grassy plains.

Epping Forest is still a wonderfully natural landscape, rich in wildlife and history. The forest is internationally renowned for its ancient pollarded trees - primarily oak, beech and hornbeam. Such trees are many hundreds of years old and support a wealth of insects and fungi including many quite rare and vulnerable species.

The importance of nature conservation to the forest has resulted in more than two thirds of it being designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation. There are around 500 rare and endangered insect species in the Forest.

Conservation is a multi-faceted task as much concerned with clearing ponds as it is with rediscovering the lost art of pollarding trees. The City of London's skilled forest workforce is assisted on many conservation projects by enthusiastic groups of local volunteers including the Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers and the Wren Group.

The Verderers of Epping Forest

The office of the Verderer was first introduced almost 1,000 years ago by Saxon and Norman Kings. Verderers administered the Forest Law over the 60 forests used for hunting. The Verderers protected the 'vert' (all the vegetation in the forest) and the 'venison' (the hunting animals, principally deer and wild boar which relied on the habitat) of the forest.

The Epping Forest Act 1878 removed the Royal status of the forest, swept away the obligations of Forest Law and established the City of London as the Conservators of Epping Forest. Recreation and enjoyment of the public became the principle purpose of the Forest. The Act recognised the value of the post of Verderer and confirmed the customary four posts. The role and importance of the Verderers had declined substantially over the centuries as had that of the Royal Forests over all. However, the Verderers played an important role in the fight to save Epping Forest and the 1878 Act perpetuated the position albeit with a reduced role.

The Act provides for the Forest to be managed by the Epping Forest Committee as if it were a Committee of the Corporation of London. This Committee, now called the Epping Forest and Commons Committee, is made up of the four Verderers and twelve Aldermen and Common Councilmen of the City of London. All sixteen members have the same rights, powers, authorities and privileges, though the scrutiny of the Verderers is restricted to Epping Forest business only.

Verderers are elected every seven years by the commoners of the Forest – grazing is the only remaining common right. There is no provision for by-elections but the Committee may appoint a replacement to serve until the next septennial election. The number of active commoners is very limited and the Verderers have increasingly broadened their role to facilitate the better management of the Forest, not only on behalf of the commoners but also for both visitors and residents living around the Forest.

The present incumbents have a considerable knowledge of the Forest, its wildlife and history, past and present management, and the communities around the Forest. They show their commitment to role, by the amount of time they put in and the respect in which they are held by the rest of the Committee. The position is a voluntary, unpaid one but is very demanding in terms of the amount of time it takes to do it effectively.

The workload of a Verderer falls into a number of different parts.

- i) The formal meetings are set out below. In addition to the meetings themselves there is preparatory work to be undertaken. Although they are not entitled to vote on matters relating to the City Commons they are encouraged to take an active part, and regularly do so. Most of these meetings take place during the working day. *Take in the spreadsheet excluding the "Other regular events"* but adding reference to the Enfield, Essex & Herts Border Liaison Committee and perhaps even my role on the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee.
- ii) Maintaining liaison with community and special interest groups and individuals, including responding to telephone calls, emails, letters and

face to face communications about the Forest. This liaison can take a number of different form.

- iii) Liaising with City officers on a formal and informal basis about the management of the Forest.
- iv) Giving talks, leading walks and writing articles about the Forest and its management.
- v) Keeping up to date regarding the state of the Forest and how it is used/misused by regularly going out into it. Reading up about the Forest, its wildlife management and history.

Formal Commitments

Committees and meetings	
Epping Forrest & Commons Committee	Six meetings per year at Guildhall (Monday mornings)
Epping Forest Local Meetings	Six meetings at The Warren, Loughton (usually Friday's /occasional Monday)
Epping Forest Joint Consultative Committee (with Trustees of Field Studies Council)	2 biannual meetings including 2 of the 4 Verderers, one at Guildhall and one at Field Studies Centre, High Beach
London Borough of Redbridge & Newnham Liaison Meetings	2 biannual meetings taking place prior to an EFCC Local Meeting at The Warren
Epping Forest District Council Liaison Meetings	2 biannual meetings taking place prior to an EFCC Local Meeting at The Warren
London Borough of Waltham Forest Liaison Meetings	2 biannual meetings taking place prior to an EFCC Local Meeting at The Warren
Epping Forest Consultative Committee	This has just been established and is expected to meet 4 evenings each year at The Warren
Various Working Parties/Sub-Committees, currently EF Management Plan Working Group Land Registration Working Group Wanstead Park Working Group Wanstead Flats Playing Fields Committee	Occasional
EF&C Committee visits (Saturdays / 9.00am - 2.30pm)	
Epping Forest	March
Epping Forest	May
West Wickham, Coulsdon & Ashted Commons	June
Burnham Beeches	September
Epping Forest	September
Epping Forest	November

Other regular events	
Volunteers' Supper	Evening in March
Epping Forest Dinner/Ladies Day	Morning or evening in June or July
EF Centenary Walk	Sunday in September
Burnham Beeches Lord Mayor's Pollarding visit, and Dorneywood	Day in October
Friends of Epping Forest Annual Dinner	Evening in November

In addition to other regular consultation, the Verderers meet together with the Head of Operations on a regular basis.

City of London

The City of London is also known as the Square Mile, the financial district and historic centre of London. In addition to being a Local Authority, the City of London Corporation has responsibilities beyond the Square Mile, including ownership and management of almost 4,500 hectares of historic and natural open space for public recreation and health. Our green spaces, most of which are charitable trusts, are run at little cost to the communities that they serve. They are funded principally by the City of London, together with donations, sponsorship, grants and trading income. Our spaces in and beyond the Square Mile have over 23 million visits each year. They include important wildlife habitats, sites of scientific interest and national nature reserves for the public to enjoy.

The 1878 Act required the Corporation of London to purchase the land of Epping Forest and in their new role of Conservators to take over responsibility for its management. We still have to manage the Forest as an open space, unenclosed and un-built on, for the recreation and enjoyment of the public. In doing so we are required, as far as possible, to preserve the natural aspect.

Epping Forest & Commons Committee

The Epping Forest & Commons Committee meets 6 times a year to take decisions relating to Epping Forest and the City Commons to the south and east of London. Additionally, Committee members are invited to Forest and events visits.

Applications

The deadline for applications to be submitted is midday on 5th February 2018. Applicants are requested to submit a statement in support of their application either via email to Natasha.Dogra@CityofLondon.gov.uk or by post to:

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