

EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE
Monday, 7 September 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee held at
Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 7 September 2015 at
11.00 am

Present

Members:

Alderman Gordon Haines (Chairman)
Deputy John Barker
Deputy Stanley Ginsburg
Deputy Catherine McGuinness
Sylvia Moys
Barbara Newman
Virginia Rounding
Philip Woodhouse
Verderer Peter Adams
Verderer Michael Chapman DL
Verderer Richard Morris
Verderer Dr. Joanna Thomas
Graeme Smith (Ex-Officio Member)

Officers:

Natasha Dogra	Town Clerk's Department
Sue Ireland	Director of Open Spaces
Andy Barnard	Superintendent, the Commons
Paul Thomson	Superintendent, Epping Forest
Esther Sumner	Business Manager, Open Spaces
Jeremy Dagley	Head of Conservation, Epping Forest
Andy Thwaites	Head Ranger, Burnham Beeches
Jo Hurst	Business Manager, Epping Forest
Alison Elam	Group Accountant, Chamberlain's
Roger Adams	Senior Principal Surveyor, City Surveyor's

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Deputy Chairman, George Abrahams and Alderman Ian Luder.

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

Deputy Catherine McGuinness declared an interest in the Epping Forest Centenary Trust. Deputy Ginsburg declared an interest in an item regarding the City Bridge Trust.

3. **MINUTES**

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

Matters arising:

Epping Forest and Commons Committee Reporting

A Member raised a query regarding the proposed changes to the agenda and how to ensure that best use was made of the Committee's time. The Chairman informed the Member that although this would be dealt with as part of the main agenda of the meeting, Members were always able to raise relevant issues at meetings and would be given every opportunity to discuss items which were being considered by the Committee.

Superintendent's Update

The Superintendent of Epping Forest informed Members that the salary for litter pickers was Non-residential Grade A ranging from £13,200 to £14,400 per annum + Outer London Weighting of £3,300. Weekend working attracts a further 7.5% Unsocial Hours payment

Epping Forest District Council Green Belt Review Stage 1

A Member queried whether the Chief Officers Housing Steering Group would be considering a report in relation to the Green Belt. The Director informed Members that she was a Steering Group member and confirmed that the Group is not considering Green Belt issues at the present time. The Director agreed to raise the matter of communications with at the next meeting of the Group.

4. BUSINESS PLAN OUTCOME REPORT - QUARTER 1 2015/16

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces regarding the outcome of the first quarter of 2015/16-2017/18 business plan.

RECEIVED.

5. EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE REPORTING

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces in relation to proposed changes to the agendas of future Committee meetings. Members were in agreement that the use of starred items in the future would result in better use of Member and officer time and would promote a balance of information considered by the Committee which would substantially enhance the amount of time Members devote to consider key strategic matters.

Resolved – that approval be given for minor, non-controversial or procedural items to be marked with a star to indicate that discussion is not anticipated, inviting the Committee to agree or receive item without discussion if no Members wishes to raise any issues.

6. OPEN SPACES LEARNING PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces regarding the wide variety of learning services offered across the Open Spaces Department which helped further the departmental objective of enriching the lives of Londoners. Members' attention was drawn to a related report on the non-public agenda.

Members were in agreement that they must offer an outcome-based learning programme to ensure guidance was given to partner organisations that helped to deliver these services. The Committee agreed that the City of London Corporation logo should be included wherever possible to help promote the City's link with the various services.

RECEIVED.

7. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest updating them on recent operational activity. In response to a question the Superintendent advised that although 729 users had registered on the Epping Forest Management Plan Consultation website, only 122 responses had been submitted to date. The Superintendent hoped that the remaining registered users were taking advantage of the long consultation period and would submit their responses by the deadline.

The Chairman and Members of the Committee congratulated staff at Epping Forest, Burnham Beeches and the Commons on securing Green Flag and Green Heritage certification in awards announced during Love Park Week 2015.

In response to query regarding the overall strategy for farming; grazing and harvesting, the Superintendent replied that the general agricultural approach has been set out in the Grazing Expansion Business Plan adopted by Members in February 2013 and through the annual Work Programme which is reviewed each year. Good progress had been made on rectifying Boviguard™ barrier less fencing loops and more cattle would soon be actively grazing on the Forest. In relation to another query, Members noted that Forest Keepers actively patrolled the forest on foot, on bicycles and in vehicles to identify issues such as rough sleepers in the immediate area.

RECEIVED.

8. EPPING FOREST TRUSTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

The Committee considered a report of the Chamberlain regarding the Trustee's annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2015.

The Director agreed to speak outside the meeting with a Member regarding concern over the content of report on the Trust Selection Method.

RECEIVED.

9. EPPING FOREST GATEWAYS - FINAL DESIGN & LOCATIONS

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent regarding the details of action taken in accordance with delegated authority granted in respect of gateway designs in the forest. Members suggested that the 'Thank You for Driving Carefully' message on the reverse of signs leading out of the Forest could be better utilised as an advertising opportunity. The Chairman

emphasised that the final design had been through a thorough evaluation process and achieved the outcomes set in the Forest Transport strategy.

RECEIVED.

10. THE CONDITION OF EPPING FOREST SSSI

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest regarding recent assessments of five units within Epping Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and progress made towards the Government's Biodiversity 2020 Strategy target. Officers informed Members that seven units currently fell below the desired habitat condition threshold.

RECEIVED.

11. EPPING FOREST DIVISION RISK REGISTER

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces regarding the division's risk register. A Member queried whether 'corporate manslaughter' should be added as a further risk; however, the Director stated that this was already incorporated within Increase in Health & Safety Incidents/Catastrophic Health & Safety failure under "prosecution".

RECEIVED.

12. EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL GREEN BELT REVIEW STAGE 1 - UPDATE

The final sentence of paragraph 9 was incorrect and was deleted. The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest regarding Stage 1 of the Green Belt Review. Members noted that although Epping Forest District Council Cabinet had considered the review on 3rd September 2015, their comments were not yet known. Officers were scheduled to meet with the Epping Forest District Council Planning Officers on 15th September 2015 to discuss the review. Members expressed concern over the way in which some parcels of Buffer Land had been negatively assessed in terms of their contribution to the Green Belt. Members agreed that any further response from the City would need to be robust, while reflecting the City's wider concerns on housing supply.

Resolved – that further engagement by Officers with Epping Forest District Council be approved to make the case for the protection of Epping Forest and its surrounding Green Belt units in the forthcoming Stage 2 Green Belt Review Process.

13. LBWF MINI HOLLAND PROJECT - LAND DEDICATION AT LEA BRIDGE ROAD

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest regarding the Mini Holland project and Whipps Cross/Lea Bridge Road remodelling works. In response to a query, the Superintendent agreed to amend paragraph 8 removing the reference to active the support of recreational cycling.

Resolved – that:

- the design amendments for the remodelling of Whipps Cross junction with use of Forest land at Lea Bridge Road be received;
- the dedication of land at Lea Bridge Road (24m²) for highways purposes be approved, to facilitate the borough's aspirations to improve the Whipps Cross junction for pedestrians and cyclists and as a consequence improve Forest access, subject to 1875m² to the east of the junction ceasing to be highway and being returned to Epping Forest;
- all deeds and agreements with the highway authority as are required to dedicate the land at Lea Bridge Road (24m²) as highway, and to secure the return of the formerly dedicated land (1875m²) to the Forest, be authorised.

14. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of the Commons updating them on recent operational activity. In response to a query regarding a recent jail sentence given for fly tipping in Burnham Beeches, the Superintendent agreed to provide Members with the details via email after the meeting.

RECEIVED.

15. BURNHAM BEECHES AND STOKE COMMON TRUSTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

The Committee considered a report of the Chamberlain regarding the Trustee's annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2015.

RECEIVED.

16. CITY COMMONS TRUSTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

The Committee considered a report of the Chamberlain regarding the Trustee's annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2015.

RECEIVED.

17. GATEWAY 5 - AUTHORITY TO START WORK: KENLEY REVIVAL PROJECT

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces regarding the delivery of the Kenley Revival Project. Members noted that a second round application had been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund which would be considered on 17th September 2015.

In response to a query, Officers informed Members that the total project delivery cost was £1,102,422 and that the City's financial contribution to the project costs was £40,000. The ongoing maintenance cost for five years was

£35,190. There was a predicted cost of ongoing maintenance over a 10 year period. This was partly due to the deterioration of the restored heritage assets which would be stabilised.

Resolved – that:

- authority to accept the HLF grant, should it be offered, be delegated to the Director of Open Spaces in consultation with the Chairman of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee and the Chairman of the Projects Sub-Committee; and
- Authority to appoint the Conservation Consultant and Conservation Contractor is delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Projects Sub-Committee and the Chairman of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee.

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

The Warren Conservatory

A Member raised a query regarding the condition of the conservatory at the Warren. The Superintendent informed Members that Officers were currently seeking tenders in order for work to be carried out on the site to facilitate the work required on the listed building.

19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT
Appointment of Wanstead Park Working Party

The Committee considered one item of urgent business which was the appointment of the Wanstead Park Working Party, to which the following Members were appointed:

- Alderman Haines
- Mr Abrahams
- Mrs Newman
- Mrs Moys
- Mr Woodhouse
- Verderer Adams
- Verderer Chapman
- Verderer Morris
- Verderer Thomas

20. 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 ground that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

Item Number	Paragraph
21 - 25	3

21. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

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

22. DEED OF EASEMENT - FOREST ACCESS CROSSOVERS

The Committee considered and approved a report of the City Surveyor regarding the Deed of Easement of forest access crossovers.

23. REFRESHMENT FACILITIES - LEASE RENEWALS

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces regarding the lease renewal of a refreshment facility.

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

There was one non-public question.

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

There was one item of urgent business.

26. SERVICE BASED REVIEW

Members considered a confidential report regarding the Service Based Review.

The meeting ended at 1.20 pm

Chairman

**Contact Officer: Natasha Dogra
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