

EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE
Tuesday, 10 March 2020

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee held at
Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Tuesday, 10 March 2020 at
11.30 am

Present

Members:

Graeme Doshi-Smith (Chairman)
Deputy Philip Woodhouse (Deputy Chairman)
Peter Bennett
Caroline Haines
Alderman Robert Howard
Gregory Lawrence
Verderer H.H William Kennedy
Verderer Paul Morris
Verderer Michael Chapman DL
Verderer Nicholas Munday

Officers:

Richard Holt	- Town Clerk's Department
Mark Eyre	- City Surveyor's Department
Colin Buttery	- Director of Open Spaces
Paul Thomson	- Superintendent, Epping Forest
Andy Barnard	- Superintendent, The Commons
Geoff Sinclair	- Head of Operations, Epping Forest
Jeremy Dagley	- Head of Conservation, Epping Forest
Jacqueline Eggleston	- Head of Visitor Services, Epping Forest
Jo Hurst	- Business Manager, Epping Forest

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Alderman Robert Hughes-Penney, Benjamin Murphy and Jeremy Simons.

The Chairman welcomed newly elected Verderers Paul Morris and Verderer H.H William Kennedy to their first meeting of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee. In addition, the Chairman extended the thanks of Members and Officers to Dr Joanna Thomas and Melissa Murphy for their commitment to the role of Verderers of Epping Forest.

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

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

The Committee considered the public minutes and non-public summary of the previous meeting of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee held on the 13th of January 2020.

RESOLVED- That the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee held on the 13th of January, subject to the corrections specified, be agreed as an accurate record.

4. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk on the Committee's Terms of Reference.

The Town Clerk noted that the Verderers listed would need to be changed to reflect the results of the recent election. A Member questioned whether consideration could be given to adjusting the election process for Verderers of Epping Forest. The Chairman noted that he shared the Members' concerns but explained that changes to the election process required primary legislative change as the provisions were mandated in the Epping Forest Act 1878.

RESOLVED: That: -

- I. The terms of reference of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee, be approved for submission to the Court of Common Council in April, and that any further changes required in the lead up to the Court's appointment of Committees be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman; and
- II. The Committee's meeting frequency be approved.

5. **EPHING FOREST AND COMMONS COMMITTEE 2020 DATES**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk which detailed the various dates of Committee and Group meetings related to the Epping Forest and Commons Committee to be held in 2020.

Replying to a question from a member of the Committee the Director of Open Spaces suggested that the dates allocated for the Consultative Group visits be considered for full day visits to the Commons to allow Members a more extensive impression of the site in question.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

6. **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE EPPING FOREST CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING ON THE 29TH OF JANUARY 2020**

The Committee received the draft minutes of the Epping Forest Consultative Committee held on the 29th January 2020. The Chairman noted that location of the meeting should be corrected to list the Hope Centre and not the City of London Guildhall.

RESOLVED- That the draft minutes be noted.

7. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces which summarised the Epping Forest Division's activities across December 2019 to January 2020.

A Member commended Officers for their work to support Epping Forest in a difficult time and requested more information on how to build on best practice at Wanstead Flats to reduce fly tipping across the Forest. The Director of Open Spaces replied that there was a degree of displacement as Officers limit fly tipping at specific sites alternative sites are affected.

Replying to a Committee member's query on deer vehicle collisions the Chairman noted that there would be further discussion on this in the confidential session.

Replying to a question from a Member the Director of Open Spaces noted that the distribution centre planned to be introduced in Waltham Abbey would likely increase the number of vehicles in the area and Officers would be in contact with the land registry to confirm why the City of London Corporation were not consulted prior to this stage.

RESOLVED- That the update be noted.

8. **EPPING FOREST EVENTS TENDER (SEF 06/20)**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Events Tender for Epping Forest. The Report proposed inviting major event organising companies to tender for a up to three-year commercial contract for the use of the land within Epping Forest for the purpose of holding a large-scale event.

The Committee discussed a variety of options for possible sites for holding events within Epping Forest. The Chairman commented that the Committee should consider the suitability of holding specific events as recommended by Officers rather than suggest possible sites directly. In response to a comment from a Member the Deputy Chairman confirmed that Officers would, in line to with the Epping Forest Charity, would look at all possible sites for holding events in the Forest. It was observed that Wanstead Flats site was very unpopular as a location for holding an event by the local community and would possibly not be approved by the local authority.

Replying to a query from a member of the Committee the Director of Open Spaces explained that market interest would be a key factor when understanding the Department's approach to events which was being formalised and professionalised.

A Member commented that it was vital that the communication policy on any events held within the Forest would need to be effective given the extent of public interest.

RESOLVED- That a competitive tender process be approved to invite proposals for a major event at Wanstead Flats, Warlies Park and Chingford Plain with regard to the framework provided by the Open Spaces Events Policy and the constraints indicated in the Environmental Appraisals and the draft Heads of Terms.

9. **IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EXPERIMENTAL TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER ON FAIRMEAD ROAD, HIGH BEACH IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ESSEX HIGHWAYS (SEF 07/20)**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Implementation of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order on Fairmead Road, High Beach in partnership with Essex Highways. The Director of Open Spaces introduced the report and highlighted the fee for Gate.

The Committee supported the report but noted the importance of making Epping Forest accessible for disabled visitors.

Replying to query from a member of the Committee the Director of Open Spaces noted that Officers had attempted to contact local disability groups but none were forthcoming.

RESOLVED- that: -

- I. The introduction of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) at Fairmead Road between the Hill Wood Car Park and the existing vehicle barrier, in line with the aims of the Epping Forest Transport Strategy and in partnership with Essex Highways, for an 18-month period be approved; and
- II. That the preparation of a report on the ETRO at the end of the trial period to assess the impacts of the measure on the Forest, the future status of the public highway and responsibility for long-term maintenance be approved.

10. **WANSTEAD FLATS INDIVIDUAL SITE PLAN (SEF 03/20B)**

The Committee considered a report on the Individual Site Plan (ISP) that was prepared for Wanstead Flats.

RESOLVED- That the Wanstead Flats Integrated Site Plan be approved for public consultation

11. **EPHING FOREST WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2020/2021 (SEF 04/20B)**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Epping Forest Work Programme for 2020/2021.

Replying to a query from a member of the Committee the Director of Open Spaces confirmed the importance of volunteers to the maintenance of sites within the Forest, particularly the lakes and ponds.

RESOLVED- That the annual work programme as summarised in the report be approved.

12. LONDON BOROUGH OF CULTURE 2019 SUMMARY (SEF 08/20)

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the London Borough of Culture 2019 summary. The report updated the Committee on the in-kind support to the London Borough of Culture in its inaugural year and summarises the value to Epping Forest. The Committee commented on the success of the City's engagement with the programme.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

13. EPPING FOREST SAC MITIGATION STRATEGY PROGRESS (SEF 11/20)

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Epping Forest SAC Mitigation Strategy progress. The Director of Open Spaces introduced the report and provided a summary of the key points.

The Committee discussed whether the report should be included in the public section of the Committee Agenda noting issue of making the draft letter response from the Chairman public if the Committee deemed it necessary to make substantive changes. The Director of Open Spaces explained that letters of a similar nature, including the previous reports on the SAC Mitigation Strategy, were included in the public section of Committee meetings. In addition, it was noted that transparency should be considered central to the Committees decisions therefore as many items as possible should be considered in the public session.

RESOLVED- that: -

- I. The text of the three letters at Appendices 3, 4 and 5 of this report be approved for circulation to the relevant Local Planning Authorities; and
- II. Officers' be approved to actively participation in the Epping Forest SAC Mitigation Strategy Oversight Group, chaired by Epping Forest District Council, that has now been re-started to bring together the competent authorities for SAC planning issues.

14. VEGETATION AGAINST PROPERTY: POLICY DEVELOPMENT NOTE SEF 02/20B

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on Vegetation against Property Policy Development. The Report outlined the Policy Development note (PDN)) that had been prepared on the City of London Corporation's management of Vegetation Against Property (VAP) where substantial subsidence compensation claims could arise from the impact of trees on neighbours' buildings.

RESOLVED- That the Vegetation against Property Policy Development Note be approved.

15. DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BURNHAM BEECHES AND STOKE COMMON CONSULTATION GROUP.

The Committee received the draft minutes of the Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common Consultation Group held on the 14th of January. The Director of Open

Spaces noted the offer from the local Parish Councils to provide further support to Burnham Beeches.

A member of the Committee noted that the Chairman was the only City of London Corporation Member in attendance at this meeting and commented that a greater level of representation would be beneficial.

RESOLVED- That the draft minutes of the Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common Consultation Group held on the 14th of January be noted.

16. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Committee received a report from the Director of Open Spaces which provided a general update on issues across the nine sites within 'The Commons' division. The Director of Open Spaces provided a summary of the key features of the report.

Replying to a question from the Deputy Chairman on the how travellers mentioned in the report were able to access the site, the Director of Open Spaces explained that the individuals involved were experienced and proficient commenting that police and bailiffs involved were not as proactive as they could have been.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

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

There were no questions received in the public session.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

It was noted by a Member that the City Volunteer's evening had been well attended by volunteers involved in the management of open spaces, but it was observed that many did not feel well regarded locally. The Chairman reassured the Committee that all volunteers at all open spaces were extremely well regarded and that representatives would be invited to the Epping Forest & Commons Committee Dinner scheduled to take place in July.

19. 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.

20. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

The Committee received the non-public minutes of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee meeting held on the 13th of January 2020.

RESOLVED- That the non-public minutes of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee meeting held on the 13th of January 2020 be approved as a accurate record.

21. REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk on the action taken in accordance with Standing Order 41 (a).

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

22. BUFFER LAND ESTATE AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS ACT TENANCY - RENT REDUCTION REQUEST (SEF 09/20)

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces regarding a Buffer Land Estate Agricultural Holdings Act Tenancy Rent Reduction Request.

RESOLVED- That the report be agreed.

23. SOUTH LODGE - OPTIONS FOLLOWING SUBSIDENCE ISSUES (SEF 10/20)

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the options following subsidence issues at the South Lodge.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

24. TERMINATION OF PART OF A TENANCY TO ENABLE THE SALE OF 2 GREEN LANE BUNGALOW, EPPING FOREST

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Termination of part of a tenancy to enable the sale of 2 Green Lane Bungalow Epping Forest.

RESOLVED- That the report be agreed.

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

There were no questions received in the non-public session.

25.1 Minute Clarification - Woodredon Farm and Red Cottage

The Committee considered a request from the Director of Open Spaces further to a minute from a previous meeting of the Committee held in 2018.

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

The Committee considered one item of further business in the non-public session.

27. FIREARMS LICENSING AT EPPING FOREST

The Committee considered a confidential report of the Director of Open Spaces on Firearms Licenses at Epping Forest.

The meeting ended at 13:25

Chairman

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