

## EPHING FOREST CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 10 February 2021

**Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest Consultative Committee held remotely at 7.00 pm**

### **Present**

#### **Members:**

Graeme Doshi-Smith (Chairman)	Deborah Morris, Epping Forest Forum
Benjamin Murphy (Deputy Chairman)	Carol Pummell, Epping Forest Riders Association
Caroline Haines	Tim Wright, Orion Harriers
Judith Adams, Epping Forest Heritage Trust	Steve Williamson, Royal Epping Forest Golf Club,
Martin Boyle, Theydon Bois & District Rural Preservation Society	Sylvia Watson, Bedford House Community Association
Pippa Bryce, Open Spaces Society (Mark Squire substitute)	Verderer Michael Chapman DL
Susan Creevy, Loughton Residents Association	Verderer Nicholas Munday
Matthew Frith, London Wildlife Trust	Verderer H.H William Kennedy
Tim Harris, Wren Wildlife & Conservation Group	Verderer Paul Morris
Andy Irvine, Bushwood Area Residents Association	

#### **Officers:**

Richard Holt	- Town Clerk's Department
Antoinette Duhaney	- Town Clerk's Department
Colin Buttery	- Director of Open Spaces
Paul Thomson	- Superintendent of Epping Forest
Jeremy Dagley	- Head of Conservation, Epping Forest
Jacqueline Eggleston	- Head of Visitor Services, Epping Forest
Geoff Sinclair	- Head of Operations, Epping Forest
Martin Newnham	- Head Forrest Keeper, Epping Forest
Julianne Heinecke	- Epping Forest Team

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Jill Carter, Robert Levene, Mark Squire and Gordon Turpin.

### **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 minutes of the previous meeting of the Epping Forest Consultative Committee held on the 21<sup>st</sup> to October 2020.

A member noted a correction on the spelling of his name.

**RESOLVED-** That the minutes of Epping Forest Consultative Committee meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> of October 2020, subject to the correction specified, be approved as an accurate record.

4. **EPPING FOREST - SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE FOR OCTOBER TO NOVEMBER 2020 (SEF 01/21)**

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent which summarised the Epping Forest Division's activities across October to November 2020.

**RESOLVED-** That the report be noted.

5. **REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR EPPING FOREST CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (SEF 06/21)**

The Committee discussed a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Revised Terms of Reference for the Epping Forest Consultative Committee. The Director of Open Spaces introduced the report and clarified the aims for the revised Terms of Reference. The Chairman noted that a balanced approach would be undertaken to reach the best position, but commented that a perfect member composition would be difficult to achieve.

A member suggested that, in future, separate agenda item documents be issued in advance of the main agenda to the Committee, where possible, to allow time for members to share with the groups they represent. In addition, it was suggested that reports be put to the vote by a show of hands and the majority response recorded in the minutes and that committee members be allowed to suggest items of business for discussion. The Chairman responded to this by explaining that the Epping Forest Consultative Committee was a non-decision making body and, therefore, did not vote on the endorsement of items noting that it was evident from the minutes of the meeting the opinion of the members present. Further to this it was noted that specific comments or informal votes against reports would be recorded only on request from the member in question.

Responding to a query from a Committee member the Director of Open Spaces explained that it was not clear the exact format that the equality statement would take in the future however it was important that equality considerations are factored into applications for Epping Forest Consultative Committee membership.

**RESOLVED-** That the report be noted.

6. **DEER MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (SEF 07/21)**

The Committee noted a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Deer Management Strategy. The Director of Open Spaces introduced the report and highlighted the requirement to affect an overall reduction in the numbers of deer in Epping Forest due to the damage the animals were having on the Forest. In addition, it was noted that the report was due to be considered by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee in March. The Committee commented on the apparent need to manage deer numbers within Epping Forest and thanked Officers for the report.

Responding to a query from the Director of Open Spaces explained the discrepancy between the numbers of deer within the boundary of City of London Corporation land in Epping Forest and the wider locality. In addition, a species by species breakdown and associated effects was provided.

The Committee discussed the need for a succinct public facing document to explain the proposed action on deer population management. Further to this a Committee member offered to work with City of London Corporation staff to publicly fund electronic signage to help with communication.

The Director of Open Spaces, responding to a query from a Committee member, confirmed that options for Officers using body worn cameras would be explored. The Chairman confirmed that the shooting of deer would be undertaken in a safe and controlled manner. A Committee member thanked Officers for agreeing not to sub-contract this action noting the increased cost associated.

Responding to a Chairman's invitation to comment on the future of the Deer Sanctuary members of the Committee noted that the site offered a valuable for income which was vital at this time.

**RESOLVED-** That the report be noted.

7. **HIGH BEACH INDIVIDUAL SITE PLAN (SEF 08/21)**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the High Beach Individual Site Plan.

The Committee discussed options for engagement with the local community in the High Beach area. It was noted that the parish councils, church and primary school should be included in the consultation process. The Director of Open Spaces confirmed that a more structured approach for engaging with the local community would be explored.

It was noted that resolving access issues were key to the success of the High Beach Individual site plan. The Director of Open Spaces informed the Committee that a report for consideration by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee on the High Beach Individual Site Plan would address the issues of access and, in addition, how best to preserve biodiversity.

**RESOLVED-** That the report be noted.

8. **WANSTEAD PARK: WETLAND IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Wanstead Park Wetland Improvement Proposals. It was commented by a number of Members that the report represented a positive approach for the area, but it was noted that water levels would remain the central concern.

**RESOLVED-** That the report be noted.

9. **CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGY - OPEN SPACES "CARBON REMOVALS"**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Department's contribution to the delivery of the City of London Corporation's Climate Action Strategy (CAS). The Director of Open Spaces introduced the report and highlighted that the aim of the CAS was for the City of London Corporation to achieve carbon neutrality by 2027. It was added the CAS was an exciting opportunity and a flagship project for the City of London Corporation in which Epping Forest was projected to play a key role.

The Committee noted that it was important that Epping Forest's role in the City of London Corporation CAS would not affect the stated aims of the Epping Forest Charity. The Director of Open Spaces clarified that the biodiversity maintenance was key to achieving the carbon offset aims of the CAS.

In response to a query from a Committee member the Director of Open Spaces informed the Committee of the scientific reasoning behind the policy and how the City of London Corporation mechanics effect the CAS. In addition, it was confirmed that the maintenance of biodiversity, as well as the other stated aims of the Epping Forest Charity, would be supported by the CAS noting the important of monitoring and audit to this process.

**RESOLVED-** That the report be noted.

10. **QUESTIONS**

The Committee received the following questions. A member of the Committee provided a statement from the Loughton Residents Association:

*Referring to Page 17 paragraph 42 of the Superintendent's Report. The Loughton Residents Association does not agree that Natural England approved the Mitigation Strategy for immediate use. Natural England have said that "for air quality mitigation to be fully compliant with relevant case law, the strategy must include specific policy wording that explicitly links the unlocking of development with the Local Plan to the actual delivery of the planned mitigation". The published strategy does not meet this test.*

The Director of Open Spaces responded by confirming that the policy wording would be included the relevant local plan documentation and would still need to be confirmed to require the required breaks and mitigation in any development. It was added that a SAC oversight group would be established to confirm the recipient of the mitigation funds received in regard to future development.

Responding to a question from a Committee member the Director of Open Spaces explained the current position regarding the introduction of Car Park charging noting that the consultation period would last until the 15<sup>th</sup> of February and that a further report which would detail all the required information for the Epping Forest and Commons Committee to consider would be produced for the March meeting. In addition, it was confirmed that volunteers would be contacted directly regarding special solutions for car park charging and that specific arrangements for horse carts parking could be discussed further.

**11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business received.

**21:00**

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Chairman

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