

EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE
Monday, 12 July 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee held remotely
on Monday, 12 July 2021 at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Graeme Doshi-Smith (Chairman)
Benjamin Murphy (Deputy Chairman)
Peter Bennett
Caroline Haines
Alderman Robert Hughes-Penney
Deputy Edward Lord
Alderman Nicholas Lyons
Jeremy Simons
Verderer Michael Chapman DL
Verderer Paul Morris
Verderer Nicholas Munday
Verderer H.H William Kennedy

Officers:

Richard Holt	- Town Clerk's Department
Sarah Phillips	- Town Clerk's Department
Fiona Mckeith	- City Surveyor's Department
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain's Department
Edward Martin	- City Surveyor's Department
Colin Buttery	- Director of Open Spaces & Heritage
Paul Thomson	- Superintendent, Epping Forest
Andy Barnard	- Superintendent, The Commons
Jacqueline Eggleston	- Head of Visitor Services, Epping Forest
Jeremy Dagley	- Head of Conservation, Epping Forest
Jo Hurst	- Business Manager, Epping Forest
Gerry Kiefer	- Business Manager, Open Spaces Department
Tristan Vetta	- Planning Officer, Epping Forest

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Deputy Phillip Woodhouse and Gregory Lawrence.

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 10th of May 2021.

The Director of Open Spaces highlighted to the Committee a number of matters arising from the minutes including comments received in relation a decision of the Committee at the previous meeting regarding the membership of the Epping Forest Consultative Committee. It was noted that this matter would be addressed at Item 14 of the Committee's agenda.

RESOLVED- That the public minutes of the previous meeting of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee held on the 10th of May 2021 be approved as an accurate record.

4. **EPPING FOREST AND COMMONS COMMITTEE 2022 DATES**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk on the dates for 2022 relating to the Epping Forest and Commons Committee.

In response to a query from a Committee member the Chairman and Town Clerk explained committee meetings were planned to be held in a hybrid format after the summer, subject to social distancing guidance and the decision of the Policy & Resources Committee.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

5. **EPPING FOREST AND THE COMMONS RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on risk management regarding the Epping Forest and the Commons Divisions.

The Committee discussed risk OSD EF 002 Decline in Assets condition. It was suggested by a Member that the target for this risk should be changed to list an improvement of the assets condition even if resources mean that this is currently unachievable. The Director of Open Spaces responded by explaining that the reductions in the Cyclical Works Programme (CWP) funding meant that there was not room within the current budget. It was added that it was hoped that an increased CWP budget next year would allow for an improved position for this risk. Responding to a Committee member's query on Warren House the Director of Open Spaces explained that ownership of this building was complex but different options for future maintenance would be explored appropriately including working more closely with partnership organisations.

The Deputy Chairman noted the risks caused by the policy of fixed term staffing contracts and the effect on staffing resource. In addition, it was observed that some short term mitigation of this would need to found if this were not to have a detrimental effect on the operation of the Department.

The Chairman requested further information on the actions needed to remain compliant with required risk score cards. The Director of Open Spaces explained that mitigation actions for these risks which were identified included

extended periods for works, noting that some factors influencing this were outside of the Department's control, and allocation of further funding from the CWP budget. The Deputy Chairman suggested that an achievable risk target be agreed for the current year with more stretching target established for next year with clear factors explained for what would be required to achieve these targets.

RESOLVED-That: -

- I. The Epping Forest Risk Register included at Appendix 2 be approved; and
- II. That the Commons Risk Register included at Appendix 3 be approved; and
- III. That the removal of one green risk, TC 011 – Riddlesdown Quarry, as explained in paragraph 18 be approved; and
- IV. That the removal of one amber risk, TC 012 – Farthing Downs Cattle Grid, as explained in paragraph 19 be approved.

6. OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS PLAN 2020/21 - YEAR END PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Open Spaces Departmental Business Plan for 2020-2021.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

7. REVENUE OUTTURN 2020/21 - EPPING FOREST AND COMMONS

The Committee considered a joint report of the Chamberlain and Director of Open Spaces on the Epping Forest and Commons Revenue Outturn 2020-21.

The Chamberlain introduced the report and commended Officers for limiting the unfavourable variance to only £146,000 given the budgetary context and the position in the previous year.

A Member raised the matter of root barriers and potential related insurance claims highlighting that effective resolution of this issues represented a good spend to save opportunity when considered across the City of London Corporation managed open spaces. Officers agreed to consider how best to request funds to finance this spend to save opportunity.

Responding to a query from the Deputy Chairman's question the Director of Open Spaces confirmed the position at Epping Forest with regard to the reopening of revenue activities subject to the lifting of social distancing restrictions.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

8. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces which summarised the Epping Forest Division's activities across April to May 2021.

A Member commented on the contribution of volunteers to Epping Forest during the pandemic. The Director of Open Spaces agreed and explained that an appropriate event to acknowledge the contribution of the volunteers to Epping Forest which was hoped to be possible in autumn.

Responding to a question from the Deputy Chairman the Director of Open Spaces informed the Committee that phase two of the Epping Forest Car Parking Project was expected to begin in September.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

9. **EPPING FOREST CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE DRAFT MINUTES**

The Committee noted the draft minutes of the Epping Forest Consultative Committee meeting held on 16 June 2021.

A Committee member raised an error that was made in the description of the Theydon Bios Rural Preservation in a report considered at previous meeting of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee on the membership of the Epping Forest Consultative Committee. The Chairman acknowledged that an error had been made noting that the matter would be addressed under Item 14 of the agenda.

RESOLVED- That the draft minutes be noted.

10. **CHINGFORD INDIVIDUAL SITE PLAN**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Chingford Individual Site Plan.

The Deputy Chairman thanked Officers for their work on the project and highlighted that the Epping Forest Consultative Committee had reacted positively to the plans at their meeting in June.

The Chairman questioned if an appropriate format for storing this site plan, and other similar site plans, in an easily accessible place could be established. The Director of Open Spaces confirmed that this would be addressed in a report on the communications policy for Epping Forest which was due to be considered by the Committee in September. The Deputy Chairman requested that the Director of Communication attend the meeting in September to hear the Committee's concerns.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. The comments from the Epping Forest Consultative Committee be noted; and
- II. The Committee approved Option 1 where it is proposed that the Chingford ISP be adopted as the operational plan for the Chingford Area.

11. **COPPED HALL PARKLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Copped Hall Parkland Management Plan.

A member of the Committee commented that the report represented the correct direction of travel for the project however the specific details of the report would be vital to understanding the success of the project. It was added that stakeholders, including the Committee, would need to be kept appropriately informed at each stage of the project. The Director of Open Spaces confirmed that there would be extensive consultation with all stakeholders noting that a carbon removals officer was due to be hired which would help with the delivery, including communication, of this project. It was added that a committee visit to the site was also being considered. Moreover, the Director observed that a balance between dialogue and progress was required on this project.

In response to a Committee member's query the Director of Open Spaces explained that the budgetary breakdown was provided in appendix seven of the report.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. Option 1 be approved, to allow work to begin at Copped Hall, from September 2022, using the allocated CAS *Carbon Removals* Project funding; and
- II. That the Committee approved the development of a CSS application based on the wood-pasture and parkland proposals in, and as appended to, this report, plus further development of their detail alongside development of heritage protection proposals and additional visitor access enhancement, including a future report on car parking. The details of the application to be presented for approval at future Committee prior to any application in April 2023.

12. **WANSTEAD PARK PERMISSIVE CYCLING EXTENSION**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Wanstead Park Permissive Cycling Extension.

Responding to a Committee member's question the Director of Open Spaces confirmed that electric bicycles were included in the cycling permitted at Wanstead Park, but the Cycling Strategy did not deal with the issue of electric scooters.

Following concern from a member of the Committee regarding cycling related damage to Epping Forest the Director of Open Spaces explained that areas of the Forest could be closed to cyclist if required.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. The comments from the Epping Forest Consultative Committee be noted; and
- II. The public consultation exercise results be noted; and
- III. The extension of permissive cycling across the Wanstead Park byelaw area be approved.

13. **CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGY - OPEN SPACES "CARBON REMOVALS" - SITE PLANS 2021**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Climate Action Strategy Carbon Removals 2021 Site Plans.

The Deputy Chairman asked whether Gifford's Meadow can be considered as charitable land. The Director of Open Spaces undertook to confirm this point. A Member noted that the use of Gifford's Meadow in this project was a fitting tribute to Sir Roger Gifford who had sadly passed away.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. The Option 1 plan for Netherhouse and approve the revival of the fieldname to 'Patmore's Field' be approved; and
- II. That the Option 1 outline plan for Gifford's Meadow/Bottom and approve a final name for the site be approved.

14. **EPPING FOREST CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE - REQUEST TO CO-OPT A FURTHER MEMBER**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the co-option of a further member on the Epping Forest Consultative Committee. The Director of Open Spaces introduced the report and apologised for the error in the previous report.

The Deputy Chairman commented that diversity and inclusion needed to be appropriately considered in the framework for co-option to the Epping Forest Consultative Committee.

RESOLVED- That the Committee acknowledge the error in the previous report to Committee regarding the application from Theydon Bois & District Rural Preservation Society and co-opt them to attend the Epping Forest Consultative Committee until the next full selection process

15. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of 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 informed the Committee that work had started in the week preceding the meeting on the Kenley Revival project. The Committee expressed disappointment with the Kenley Revival signs have been vandalised but noted the local support highlighted.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

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

A Member asked for further information on the issue caused by an increased license fee for Epping Forest Cricket Club and asked if the club had been consulted prior to being issued the license fee increase. The Director of Open Spaces confirmed that the Epping Forest Cricket Club had been informed five

years previously of the fee increase and explained that the City of London Corporation had a responsibility to the Epping Forest Charity to review leases. It was added that there was a problem at many sports clubs where they hold old leases and have difficulties adjusting when fees increase. The Chairman requested that the specifics of this situation be explored noting that it was important to ensure the charge was reasonable.

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

There was no other business considered urgent.

18. **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.

19. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The Committee considered the non-public minutes of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee meeting held on the 10th of May 2021.

RESOLVED- That the non-public minutes of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee meeting held on the 10th of May 2021 be approved as an accurate record.

20. **LONG STREET - DEED OF GRANT EASEMENT**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Deed of Easement Long Street.

RESOLVED- That the report be approved.

21. **WAYLEAVE FEE VALUATION**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on a Wayleave Fee Valuation.

RESOLVED- That the report be approved.

22. **WOODREDON FARM (RIDING SCHOOL) DISPOSAL**

The Committee received a report of the City Surveyor on Woodredon Farm (Riding School).

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

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

Two questions were received in the non-public session.

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

There were no items of urgent business considered.

The meeting ended at 13:22

Chairman

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