

## **EPHING FOREST CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, 20 October 2021**

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

### **Present**

#### **Members:**

Benjamin Murphy (Deputy Chairman)  
Robert Smith, Butterfly Conservation  
Cambridgeshire and Essex Branch  
Valerie Jones, West Essex Ramblers  
George Lund, Epping Forrest Transport  
Action Group  
Bruce Mackie, Lee Valley Youth Cycling  
Club  
Elizabeth Burn, Theydon Bois & District  
Rural Preservation Society  
Judith Adams, Epping Forest Heritage  
Trust  
Susan Creevy, Loughton Residents  
Association  
Tim Harris, Orion Harriers

Andy Irvine, Bushwood Area Residents  
Association  
Gill James, Friends of Wanstead Parklands  
Carol Pummell, Epping Forest Riders  
Association  
Gordon Turpin, Highams Park Planning  
Group (inc Snedders)  
Tim Wright, Orion Harriers  
Steven Williamson, Royal Epping Forest  
Golf Club  
Verderer Nicholas Munday  
Verderer Paul Morris

#### **Officers:**

Richard Holt	- Town Clerk's Department
Jacqueline Eggleston	- Head of Visitor Operations, Epping Forest
Geoff Sinclair	- Head of Operations, Epping Forest
Paul Thomson	- Superintendent, Epping Forest
Jeremy Dagley	- Head of Conservation, Epping Forest

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from the Chairman Graeme Doshi-Smith, Tim Wright and Verderer William Kennedy.

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

There were no declarations received.

#### **3. MINUTES**

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the previous meeting of the Epping Forest Consultative Committee held on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 2021. The Town Clerk noted an update to the attendance with Nick Owen being signified as a representative of the Epping Forest Forum.

**RESOLVED-** That, subject to the correction specified, the minutes of the previous meeting of the Epping Forest Consultative Committee held on the 16th of June 2021 be approved as an accurate record.

4. **MINUTES OF THE EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE**

The Committee received the draft minutes of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September 2021.

Further to the sale of Woodredon estate a committee member expressed concern that horse riders were being forced out of Epping Forest with the likely loss of livery yards and the City of London Corporation were unduly disposing of a valuable asset. The Superintendent confirmed that the City of London Corporation was mindful of the potential loss of horse riding facilities but noted that the City, as corporate trustee, held a responsibility to make decisions in the best financial interests of the Epping Forest Charity. It was added that an appropriate covenant for part of the property would be included in the lease to limit its potential usage. It was commented by a member of the Committee that from the view of the Verderers it is important to test the market regarding this sale and to encourage the rural aspect of the Forest by protecting the estate. It was added that this would, reluctantly, need to be achieved by working with an appropriate partner organisation and asked if this matter was due to be considered by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee. The Superintendent responding to this confirmed that the Committee had declared the property surplus in 2018 and, therefore, ultimately responsibility for its future management was held with the Corporate Asset Sub-Committee. The Deputy Chairman noted that the Committee were aware that there was, to some extent, differing interests between the Epping Forest and Commons Committee and other City committees confirming that there was an ongoing conversation with the Corporate Asset Sub-Committee on this matter.

**RESOLVED-** That the draft minutes be noted.

5. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE FOR APRIL TO MAY 2021 (SEF 29/21)**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Environment providing the Superintendent's update for February to March 2021.

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

6. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE FOR JUNE TO JULY 2021 (SEF 34/21)**

The Committee received the Executive Director of Environment providing the Superintendent's update for June to July 2021.

Responding to a query from a committee member the Superintendent confirmed that the majority of car parks in Epping Forest would be involved in the move to charging for parking spaces. The Deputy Chairman added, following a committee member's comment, that the cost benefit analysis for the introduction of car parking charges had been completed and was outlined within Superintendent's report. It was suggested that the Habitat Assessment from Natural England should be shared to support the reasoning for the move to car parking charges.

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

7. **OPEN SPACES LEARNING PROGRAMME REVIEW**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Environment on the Open Spaces Learning Programme Review.

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

8. **WANSTEAD PARK PONDS PROJECT UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director Environment on the Wanstead Park Ponds Project.

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

9. **FOREST OPERATIONS: PATH CONDITION ASSESSMENT FEB-MAR 2021 (SEF 45/21)**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director Environment on the Forest Operations Path Condition Assessment February to March 2021. The Superintendent confirmed that the report focused on the impact to the Epping Forest paths by the factors associated with the COVID19 Pandemic whilst the other path maintenance being covered under the annual maintenance works. The Deputy Chairman confirmed that this matter had been highlighted to the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee as a matter of high importance for the management of the Epping Forest.

In response to a query from the member of the Committee the Superintendent explained that the aim was to create high quality paths that would deter Epping Forest users from damaging the Forest by creating alternative pathways. A committee member highlighted that the West Essex Ramblers had provided assistance to local authorities to repair paths previously and suggested volunteer assistance be explored for this project.

The Committee discussed the governance of the Epping Forest Charity and some committee members expressed concern that this was not fully compliant with the Epping Forest Acts. The Deputy Chairman confirmed that this point would be followed up with Officers and an appropriate response provided.

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

10. **CONSERVATION GRAZING ACTION PLAN FOR EPPING FOREST & ITS BUFFER LANDS (SEF 46/21)**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Environment on the Conservation Grazing Action Plan for Epping Forest and its Buffer Lands.

The Committee noted their support for the grazing at Grazing Action Plan for Epping Forest and its Buffer Lands.

A Committee member commented that they were pleased to see Leyton and Wanstead Flats included in the Plan and requested further information on the

winter grazing context. The Superintendent explained that autumn grazing was more likely but that continuing grazing in the winter would be explored. Answering a further query the Superintendent confirmed that the effected gates would still need to be closed in the winter period.

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

**11. PROPOSALS FOR POSSIBLE SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS OF THE CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION'S PROTECTION OF EPPING FOREST (SEF 48/21)**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Environment on the Proposals for possible Sesquicentennial celebrations of the City of London Corporation's protection of Epping Forest. The Superintendent explained that any celebrations arranged would be used as an important fundraising opportunity.

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

**12. RESIDENTS PETITION OPPOSING THE RETURN OF POLICE HELICOPTERS TO THE LIPPITTS HILL AIRBASE, HIGH BEACH (SEF 49/21)**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Environment on the Residents Petition opposing the return of Police Helicopters to the Lippitts Hill Airbase.

The Superintendent highlighted that this was a difficult issue as the Metropolitan Police had requested the return of the helicopter to Lippitt's Hill but the local authorities were opposed. Adding to this the Superintendent explained that the longer term policy was to encourage alternative flight paths and less disturbing aircraft to mitigate the impact on local residents.

A member of the committee expressed concern that the impact to the forest referred to in the report had not been adequately justified. He added that the Metropolitan Police had an operational need to operate helicopters from the Lippitt's Hill site so there was, unfortunately going to be an impact on the local residents. The Deputy Chairman noted that the Epping Forest and Commons Committee would appropriately consider how best to continue the dialogue on this matter.

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

**13. EFSAC MITIGATION FOR LOCAL PLANS: ON-SITE SAMM PROPOSALS PROGRESS AND UPDATE (SEF 47/21)**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Environment on the EFSAC Mitigation for Local Plans: on-site SAMM Proposals progress and update. The Superintendent informed the Committee that, unfortunately, the decisive meeting has not been held but that the report to be considered by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee in November would have a more substantive update on this matter.

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

**14. RED ROUTE REVIEW (SEF 50/21)**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Environment on the Red Route Review.

A committee member stated that he was deeply disappointed in the quality of the website provided by the Epping Forest District Council and encouraged all those interested to make their feelings clear through the appropriate channels.

The Committee discussed the merits of the retention of the Red Routes in Epping Forest and expressed the concern that making these Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders permanent would not be an appropriate measure.

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

**15. QUESTIONS**

A member of the Committee highlighted research being completed regarding the historical habitation of Epping Forest.

Responding to a Committee member's query the Superintendent confirmed that future options for Loughton Golf Club were being explored and would be reported back once confirmed.

A Committee member questioned the insurance reimbursement policy of the City of London Corporation with regard to volunteers. The Superintendent apologised for the lack of clarity on the issue of insurance but confirmed that funds have been allocated for the reimbursement of volunteer's insurance and that a correct process will be established going forward. The Deputy Chairman confirmed that a solution on this needed to be found as volunteers added huge benefit to the Epping Forest Charity and needed to be properly supported not disadvantaged.

**16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business considered.

**The meeting closed at 8.34 pm**

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Chairman

**Contact Officer: Richard Holt**

**richard.holt@cityoflondon.gov.uk**