

EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE
Monday, 17 January 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee held Remotely
on Monday, 17 January 2022 at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Graeme Doshi-Smith (Chairman)
Benjamin Murphy (Deputy Chairman)
Deputy Philip Woodhouse
Peter Bennett
Caroline Haines
Alderman Robert Hughes-Penney
Deputy Edward Lord
Alderman & Sheriff Nicholas Lyons
Jeremy Simons
Oliver Sells QC (Ex-Officio Member)
Verderer Michael Chapman DL
Verderer H.H William Kennedy
Verderer Paul Morris
Verderer Nicholas Munday

Officers:

Richard Holt	- Town Clerk's Department
Joseph Anstee	- Town Clerk's Department
Kristina Drake	- Town Clerk's Department
Natalie Williams	- Chief Operating Officer's Department
Graham Nickless	- Chamberlain's Department
Beth West	- Director of Open Spaces, Environment Department
Paul Thomson	- Superintendent, Epping Forest
Andy Barnard	- Superintendent, The Commons
Jeremy Dagley	- Head of Conservation, Epping Forest
Jo hurst	- Business Manager, Epping Forest
Jacqueline Eggleston	- Head of Visitor Services, Epping Forest
Gerry Kiefer	- Business Manager, Environment Department
Martin Newnham	- Head Forest Keeper, Epping Forest
Hadyn Robson	- Business Manager, The Commons
Sarah Reid	- Environment Department

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies received from Members in advance of the meeting.

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 public minutes of the previous meeting of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee held on the 19th of November 2021.

A member of the Committee asked for an update on the discussion between the open spaces committee chairmen and the Chamberlain. The Deputy Chairman explained that, following this meeting, Officers had confirmed that a dashboard would be prepared for Committee which would provide clarity on the budgetary position, forecasting and key metrics for risk mitigations to make clear the financial risks for the relevant charities under the Committee's purview.

Responding to a query from a member of the Committee the Superintendent explained that an update on the Sesquicentennial Celebrations Epping Forest Working Group would be readied for the Committee shortly.

Replying to a Committee member's query the Superintendent explained that a meeting would be held with the graziers for Epping Forest would be held in May of 2022.

RESOLVED- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee held on the 19th of November be approved as an accurate record.

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

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

The Committee discussed the need to appropriately balance committee business in a long-term outlook to ensure meetings cover the required information. The Deputy Chairman explained that discussions had been held on the governance of the Epping Forest Charity and that a report on this would be prepared for the Committee's consideration on this matter.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

5. **OPEN SPACES BUSINESS PLAN FOR 2022/23**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director Environment on the Open Spaces Business Plan 2022/23.

A member of the Committee requested that future versions of this report highlight matters which are specific to the Epping Forest Charity. The Deputy Chairman agreed and explained that this will be addressed as part of a larger review of the charity governance.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

6. OPEN SPACES BUSINESS PLAN 2021/22 - SIX MONTH PERFORMANCE UPDATE: APRIL TO SEPT 2021

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director Environment on the Open Spaces Business Plan 2021/22 Six-month performance update April to September 2021.

The Committee discussed the need for a more dynamic and interactive reporting dashboard for charities under purview of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee.

A Member of the Committee commented on a relative underspend in Epping Forest in comparison to other open spaces to the Business Plan. The Superintendent explained that there was planned to be a larger spend in the later part of the year and but noted that it had been cautious year in terms of spending. Responding to Member's query the Superintendent explained that the level of spending was partly due to the staff recruitment moratorium but added there were issues also contributing.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

7. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director Environment which provided the Superintendent's update for Epping Forest in the period from October to November 2021.

Responding to a query from a Committee member the Director of Open Spaces explained that a meeting was being held with the appropriate Highway Officers of the relevant local authorities on the afternoon of the 17th and the Head Keeper of Epping Forest after which a full response will be provided to the Committee on the subject of temporary traffic restrictions in Epping Forest.

Following a suggestion from a Committee member the Chairman requested that Officers should add the date of completion on committee reports and ensure reports are as up to date as possible.

The Deputy Chairman informed the Committee that discussions were being held on the relevant response to the damage to the Epping Forest War Memorial.

The Superintendent answered a Committee member's question by confirming that a meeting with relevant stakeholders would be held on the recent horse collision incidence.

Responding to a Committee member's query the Director of Open Spaces confirmed that Cooped Hall buffer lands would not be used as a SANG.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

8. **LICENCES, SPORTS AND PRODUCE FEES AND CHARGES**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director Environment on the Licences, sports and produce fees and charges for Epping Forest.

A Committee member questioned the validity of charging for a horse-riding license. The Superintendent explained that other similar organisations charged for the horse-riding facilities and as the activity causes considerable damage to the Forest therefore the charge was viewed as appropriate. In response to a comment from the Chairman the Superintendent confirmed that a report on the relative damage to the Forest by the various users would be prepared for Committee consideration.

A Committee member commented that there needed to be a combined approach to income streams for the Epping Forest Charity. The Chairman added that this needed to be covered under the wider governance and data presentation framework. The Deputy Chairman added that the Target Operating Model also impacted this and needed to be incorporated correctly.

A Committee member noted that charges for filming seemed relatively low. The Chairman explained that the City of London Corporation had agreed to take a pan London approach for filming charges however there was concern from some Members with regard to this matter so Officers would be instructed to report back to committee.

RESOLVED- That the proposed charges for 2022/23 as itemised in Appendix A and C, and the continued subsidy for association football be approved.

9. **SIR ROGER GIFFORD MEMORIAL PROJECT**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director Environment on the Sir Roger Gifford Memorial Project.

The Chairman noted that he was keen to see this built into the wider Queen's Green Canopy initiative.

The Committee discussed the suitability of the Lord Mayor's Bottom for the celebratory memorial to the life and work of Sir Roger Gifford. It was agreed that the name was a fine testimony to Sir Roger's sense of humour.

Responding to a Committee member's query the Director of Open Spaces explained the arrangements for maintenance funding going forward.

RESOLVED- That the Committee agreed to support the hosting of the celebratory memorial event in honour of Sir Roger Gifford along with the naming of the lower meadow as Lord Mayor's Bottom.

10. **LARGE EVENT APPLICATION**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director Environment on a Large Event Application which had been made. The Chairman noted that a report in the non-public session would also deal with this matter.

RESOLVED- In principle that the application for a large event be approved, subject to:

- (a) Prior consultation being undertaken by the applicant. Consideration of the consultation responses to be delegated to the Superintendent of Epping Forest (in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee) and the license for the event to be issued only if, after such consideration, the Superintendent of Epping Forest (in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee) is satisfied that the consultation responses do not disclose any matter which in his opinion should lead to the license being withheld.
- (b) The provision of an environmental impact assessment by the applicant. Consideration of the environmental impact assessment to be delegated to the Superintendent (in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee) and the license to be issued only if, after such consideration, the Superintendent of Epping Forest (in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee) is satisfied that the event will not cause material injury to the amenity of Epping Forest or significant impairment to the public enjoyment of Epping Forest.
- (c) The terms and conditions of any license ensuring that the event will not cause material injury to the amenity of Epping Forest or significant impairment to the public enjoyment of Epping Forest. The terms and conditions to be delegated to the Superintendent (in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee).
- (d) The granting of the Premises Licence by the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

11. WANSTEAD PARK: SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE NATURAL GREEN SPACE PROJECT

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director Environment on the Wanstead Park Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space Project.

The Director of Open Spaces explained, in response to a query from Committee member, that the Project had been appropriately considered in connection to other associated plans for the area.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. The acceptance of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGs) infrastructure funding of up to £100,000 from the London Borough of Redbridge, using developer-funded contributions, to progress visitor access improvements in Wanstead Park and its exchange lands be approved; and
- II. That the completion of any necessary suitable legal agreement with the London Borough of Redbridge for the transfer of monies and delivery of infrastructure to ensure SAC mitigation be authorised, the final terms to be delegated to the Superintendent

12. WANSTEAD PARK NATURAL PLAY AREA

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of the Wanstead Park Natural Play Area.

Responding to a query from a Committee member the Director of Open Spaces confirmed that all the required health and safety concerns would be completed in this project. In addition, it was explained the natural play features planned for the site were projected to last in the region of ten years.

RESOLVED- That:-

- I. The provision of a joint Epping Forest Charity and community managed natural play area at Wanstead Park be approved; and
- II. That the joint AFA and EFCT funding applications and fundraising arrangements to fund the construction of a natural play area at Wanstead Park.

13. EFSAC SAMM MITIGATION PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director Environment on the EFSAC SAMM Mitigation Partnership Agreement. The Director of Open Spaces explained that a draft agreement was very nearly complete and made the distinction that the City of London Corporation was a party to the agreement rather than a partner.

Noting it was the last meeting of the Committee which Jeremy Dagley, Head of Conversation for Epping Forest, would be attending as he was leaving the City of London Corporation the Committee thanked Jeremy for this work and huge contribution to Epping Forest.

The Deputy Chairman confirmed the funds paid to the City of London Corporation needed to be ringfenced for the Epping Forest budget. The Director of Open Spaces confirmed that the Chamberlain would make the necessary arrangements to ensure this, adding that the allocation of these funds to Epping Forest was a legal requirement.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. It was approved that the City Corporation (as The Conservators of Epping Forest) acting as the Delivery Body and, thereby, being a party to the EFSAC SAMMS Partnership Agreement (a working draft of which is appended to this report); and
- II. That authority be delegated for the negotiation and completion of the draft EFSAC SAMMS Partnership Agreement to the Executive Director in consultation with the City Solicitor and Chamberlain, and in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, subject to the final terms reflecting the arrangements as set out in this report.

14. CAR PARKING REVIEW

The Committee received a late report of the Executive Director Environment on the Epping Forest Car Park Charging Review.

A Committee member highlighted that it was vital to explain that the income from car parking charges were to be used to cover existing costs not to secure further income.

A Committee member commented that he would be bring a report to Officers on his concerns regarding the operational activities of the parking enforcement officers as he believed that best practice was not being followed. The Director of Open Spaces explained that any tickets issued by parking enforcement officers not appropriately dressed had been cancelled. The Chairman confirmed that it was not currently a systemic issue, but it was vital that the provider was performing in accordance with best practice. It was added that further reports would be coming to the Committee which would address concerns on the following of best practice by parking enforcement officers.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

15. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director Environment on the Superintendent's update which provided a general update on issues across the nine sites within the Commons.

Responding to a Member's enquiry the Superintendent confirmed the final costs of the remedial costs of cement.

The Superintendent, replying to a query from the Deputy Chairman, provided an update on the proposed extension of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in relation to the City of London Corporation managed open spaces.

It was explained that a schedule of visits to the relevant open spaces would be prepared for consideration at the May Epping Forest and Commons Committee meeting which would include the Commons sites.

At 1pm Members agreed to extend the business of the agenda beyond two hours, in accordance with Standing Order 40, in order to conclude the business on the agenda.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

16. THE COMMONS - LICENCES, SPORTS, WAYLEAVES AND PRODUCE FEES AND CHARGES

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director Environment on the Commons Licences, sports, wayleaves and produce fees and charges.

Noting that this was the last meeting of the Committee that Hadyn Robson, Business Manager in the Commons Division, would be attending the Committee thanked Hadyn for his years of service and contribution to the management of the Commons.

RESOLVED- The proposed charges for 2022/23 as itemised in Appendix A approved.

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

Following a suggestion from a member of the Committee the Director of Open Spaces arranged a meeting with the Verderers.

The Deputy Chairman drew the Committee's attention to the upcoming Corporate Asset Sub-Committee visit to the Woodredon Estate.

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

There was no urgent business considered in the public session.

19. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: That under Section 100(A) 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 considered the non-public minutes of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee meeting held on the 19th of November 2021.

RESOLVED- That the non-public minutes of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee meeting held on the 19th of November 2021 be approved as an accurate record.

21. **NON-PUBLIC LARGE EVENT APPLICATION**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director Environment on the Non-Public Large Event Application.

RESOLVED- That the report be approved.

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

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

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

No items of urgent business were considered in the non-public session.

The meeting ended at 1.21 pm

Chairman

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