

**EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE**  
**Monday, 21 November 2022**

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee held at  
Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 21 November 2022  
at 11.00 am

**Present**

**Members:**

Benjamin Murphy (Chairman)  
Deputy Graeme Doshi-Smith (Deputy Chairman)  
George Abrahams  
Caroline Haines  
Jaspreet Hodgson  
Gregory Lawrence  
Deputy Philip Woodhouse  
Verderer H.H. William Kennedy  
Verderer Paul Morris

**Officers:**

Sally Agass	- Natural Environment Department
Jako Beatrix	- Chamberlain's Department
Deborah Cluett	- Comptroller & City Solicitor
Jacqueline Eggleston	- Natural Environment Department
Elisabeth Hannah	- Natural Environment Department
Joanne Hill	- Natural Environment Department
Jo Hurst	- Natural Environment Department
Juliemma McLoughlin	- Natural Environment Department
Simon Owen	- Chamberlain's Department
Blair Stringman	- Town Clerk's Department
Paul Thomson	- Natural Environment Department

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received by Lord Mayor Nicholas Lyons, Andrew McMurtrie, Michael Chapman, Nicholas Munday and Deputy Madush Gupta.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. MINUTES**

Members were informed that the Public minutes and Non-Public Summary of the meeting held on 13 October 2022 would be approved at the next meeting.

**4. \*ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S UPDATE (SEF 31/22)**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Environment concerning Epping Forest's activities between August and September 2022.

Members were informed by the Executive Director, Environment that a positive confirmation from DEFRA had been received regarding the presence of avian influenza in the Forest. It was noted that 67 dead animals had been recovered from three lakes, Eagle Pond, Hollow Pond and Jubilee Pond. Members were informed that the situation continues to be monitored and the public were being encouraged to be cautious and not feed birds.

In response to a question raised by a Member, the Executive Director confirmed that Government messaging and signage was being used to inform members of the public of the current avian influenza issues and would consider making signs multilingual.

The Chairman praised the efforts of the staff in trying to help reduce the spread of avian influenza in the Forest and noted the difficulties in following DEFRA guidance.

The Executive Director confirmed that the Epping Forest District Council Local Plan modifications were subject to a six-week consultation between 28<sup>th</sup> October and 9<sup>th</sup> December, it was noted a committee report would be brought to the meeting in January.

**RESOLVED** – That, the report be noted.

5. **COVID-19 DAMAGE TO SHARED USE TRAIL NETWORK GATEWAY 2 PROJECT PROPOSAL (SEF 33/22)**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment concerning for decision concerning a Gateway 2 project proposal for COVID - 19 damage to Shared Use Trail network.

**RESOLVED** – That,

- a) Members approve the proposal to progress the evaluation and design to undertake the path repair proposals.

6. **ROOKERY WOOD - PROPOSAL TO SUBMIT SCHEDULED MONUMENT APPLICATION (SEF 32/22)**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment concerning an application for Rookery Wood to be considered for entry on to the schedule of ancient monuments of national importance.

**RESOLVED** – That,

- a) Members approve that a fast-tracked scheduling application be submitted at the current time to Historic England to assess the Rookery Wood earthworks for Scheduled Monument status to increase the grant funding potential for historic feature protection.

7. **\*OPEN SPACES BUSINESS PLAN 2022/23 - PROGRESS REPORT (MID-YEAR, APRIL-SEPTEMBER 2022)**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Environment, concerning an update on progress made against the 2022/23 High-Level Business Plan of the Open Spaces Department.

**RESOLVED** – That, the report be noted.

8. **CREATION OF UNRESTRICTED DESIGNATED RESERVE FUND FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF THE ANCIENT TREES AT EPPING FOREST**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment concerning approval for proposed creation of an unrestricted designated fund for ancient tree maintenance at Ashted Common.

**RESOLVED** – That,

- a) Members approve on behalf of the Trustee the creation of an unrestricted designated fund for the maintenance of the ancient trees at Ashted Common (over 2,300 ancient trees).

9. **ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update of the Executive Director, Environment concerning matters relating to the Commons.

The Executive Director, Environment informed the Committee that in future the Directors and Assistant Directors report would be combined.

**RESOLVED** – That, the verbal update be noted.

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

There were no questions.

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

There were no items of urgent business.

12. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** – That, the following matters relate to business under the remit of the Court of Common Council acting for the City Corporation as charity Trustee, to which Part VA and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 public access to meetings provisions do not apply. The following items contain sensitive information which it is not in the best interests of the charity to consider in a public meeting (engaging similar considerations as under paragraphs 3 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act) and will be considered in non-public session.

13. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

Members were informed that the Non-Public minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2022 would be approved at the next meeting.

14. **DEPARTMENTAL AND SERVICE COMMITTEE BUDGET ESTIMATES 2023/24**

The Committee considered a report of the Chamberlain.

15. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Environment.

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

There were no questions

17. **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.

**The meeting ended at 12.45pm**

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Chairman

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