



Epping Forest Heritage Trust

EPHING FOREST HERITAGE TRUST (Company no. 01339783) (the "Company")

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Company held at Murray Hall, Loughton on Saturday 11th October 2025 at 10.30am.

1. Chair's welcome and introductions

James Harrington introduced himself and welcomed people to the meeting.

He shared how proud he was of the achievements of the Trust over the last year, the first year of his Chairship. He specifically mentioned the Big Walk and the Trust's growing reach; the launch of our Strategy 2025-30 and our successful new corporate partnership scheme.

He said his priorities for the upcoming year were to strengthen the relationship with the City and to make sure we have a strong policy voice, especially in relation to the Buffer Lands.

He thanked all of the Trust's volunteers, our funders and partners.

The following apologies had been received: Gail Scott Spicer, Jo Blackman, Tim Pribul
43 members were in attendance.

2. Minutes of the Annual General meeting of 19th October 2024.

The minutes of the meeting of the Annual General Meeting of 14th October 2023 were proposed to be agreed by Stephen Murray, seconded by Tricia Moxey.

The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting by unanimous vote.

3. Presentation of Annual Report and Accounts.

Jo Richardson and Peter Lewis presented the Annual Report and Accounts, setting out the achievements of the year and the financial position.

Jo noted that the deficit for 2024-25 was lower than budgeted at £44k, that the Trustees had released the designated funds and that we were aiming for a break even budget in 2025-26 with reserves equal to between 6 and 9 months operating costs.

A special vote of thanks was given to all of our volunteers who are absolutely at the heart of our work running the Visitor Centre, leading and supporting our guided walks, acting as Trustees, and supporting our policy work, delivering our conservation activities.

The following was noted as part of the questions and answers with members:

- Councillor Stephen Murray noted that, unlike in much of the rest of the charity sector, this was not managed decline but progress and growth in impact. He said that the

reputation of the Trust with EFDC Council and councillors was as high as it has ever been; that the planning responses were of a very high quality, and that, as a refreshment volunteer on the Big Walk he was impressed by the number and diversity of participants. He also praised the wonderful social media presence of the Trust.

- In answer to a question from Councillor David Wixley it was noted that the Trust had good relations with Waltham Forest and Redbridge Councils.
- It was also noted that it was a huge shame that Debden Campsite was up for sale by Newham Council, and that the Trust's preferred solution would be for it be acquired by the City of London Corporation.
- In response to a question from former Verderer Jo Emms, it was noted that it was really good to see the City of London's Epping Forest team get back up to strength, with more conservation work being undertaken, a larger conservation team and a fuller complement of Keepers in place.
- It was further noted by the Chair that there was active engagement with the Trust from the new Chair of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee, Caroline Haines, who has a long experience of the Forest and the Committee, and who was meeting with the Chief Executive and Chair on a monthly basis.
- The Chair further noted that what the City's final position on the Buffer Lands will be key, but that we are not expecting to know what that is until early 2026, and the Trust will be watching closely.
- It was noted by two members that in some areas around the Forest public transport was not good enough to easily enable a reduction in car parking spaces in new developments as many people still relied on their cars to get around.

The meeting voted unanimously to receive the Annual Report and Accounts as presented by the Trustees.

4. Votes of thanks to Gail Scott Spicer, Louise Vacher and Georgina Green

The meeting received votes of thanks to Trustees Lousie Vacher and Gail Scott Spicer who were stepping down.

The meeting also received a vote of thanks to member and volunteer Georgina Green who had given so much time and expertise to the Trust over the years, as a local historian, walk leader, Visitor Centre volunteer and volunteer rota manager. She would be moving away from the Forest before the next Annual General meeting and the Trust wanted to recognise her immense contribution.

The meeting closed at 11.40am.