



Epping Forest

Registered Charity

Verderer of Epping Forest Role Description

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About Epping Forest

Epping Forest has been held in trust and managed by the City of London Corporation since 1878 when the Epping Forest Act protected it in perpetuity for the recreation and enjoyment of visitors. You can download a copy of the Epping Forest Act (1878) here:

<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/epping-forest/about-us/Documents/1878-Epping-Forest-Act.pdf>

The Forest has a rich and diverse history stretching back long before 1878, which has left its mark on the environment, from the Iron Age earthworks to Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge to the 50,000 pollarded trees.

Today, as London's largest Open Space receiving 4.2 million annual visits, the City of London continues to support Epping Forest as a charitable trust, which is increasingly seeking additional sources of funding to maintain its stewardship of the Forest and protect it for future generations. The pressures of development and the needs of increasing population growth in London that faced Parliament in the 1870s remains an ever-present challenge for the Forest.

Epping Forest is managed by a team of over 80 full time and part time staff including Information Assistants, Forest Conservation Workers, Ecologists, Litter Pickers, Forest Keepers, playing fields staff, Green Keepers and administrative staff, all led by the Superintendent of Epping Forest.

Managing the Forest

The Epping Forest and Commons Committee has the task of maintaining public access for recreation and enjoyment while conserving the natural habitats developed over more than 1,000 years. The traditional use of commoning rights has created a diverse landscape that includes areas of historic wood-pasture, green lanes, ancient pollarded trees and grassy plains.

Epping Forest is still a wonderfully natural landscape, rich in wildlife and history. The forest is internationally renowned for its ancient pollarded trees - primarily oak, beech and hornbeam. Such trees are many hundreds of years old and support a wealth of insects and fungi including many quite rare and vulnerable species.

The international importance of Epping Forest for nature conservation has resulted in more than two thirds of it being designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation. There are around 500 rare and endangered insect species in the Forest.

Conservation is a multi-faceted task as much concerned with clearing ponds as it is with rediscovering the lost art of pollarding trees. The City of

London's skilled forest workforce is assisted on many conservation projects by enthusiastic groups of local volunteers including the Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers and the Wren Group.

The Verderers of Epping Forest

The office of the Verderer was first introduced almost 1,000 years ago by Saxon and Norman Kings. Verderers administered the Forest Law over the 60 forests used for hunting. The Verderers protected the 'vert' (all the vegetation in the forest) and the 'venison' (the hunting animals, principally deer and wild boar which relied on the habitat) of the forest.

The Epping Forest Act 1878 removed the Royal status of the forest, swept away the obligations of Forest Law and established the City of London as the Conservators of Epping Forest. Recreation and enjoyment of the public became the principle purpose of the Forest. The Act recognised the value of the post of Verderer and confirmed the customary four posts. The role and importance of the Verderers has changed over the centuries as had that of the Royal Forests over all. The Verderers played an important role in the fight to save Epping Forest. The 1878 Act perpetuated the Verderers position with a stronger governance role.

The Epping Forest and Commons Committee

The Act provides for the Forest to be managed by the Epping Forest Committee as if it were a Committee of the Corporation of London. This Committee, now called the Epping Forest and Commons Committee, is made up of the four Verderers and twelve Aldermen and Common Councilmen of the City of London. All sixteen members have the same rights, powers, authorities and privileges, though the scrutiny of the Verderers is restricted to Epping Forest business only.

The election of Verderers

Verderers are elected every seven years by the commoners of the Forest - with grazing being the only remaining common right. The Act makes no provision for by-elections allowing the Committee instead to appoint a replacement to serve until the next septennial election where a vacancy is "*caused by death, resignation, disqualification or otherwise*". The number of active commoners is very limited and the Verderers have increasingly broadened their role to facilitate the better management of the Forest, not only on behalf of the commoners but also for both visitors and residents living around the Forest.

Requirements

Under the terms of the 1878 Act the qualifications to be a Verderer are that they:

1. Must be resident within one of the Forest parishes of Epping, Theydon Bois, Loughton, Waltham Holy Cross, Chingford, Chigwell (now Buckhurst Hill), Woodford, Walthamstow, Leyton, Wanstead, Little Ilford (now East Ham) or West Ham. Boundaries and names of these parishes have changed since the Act was written in 1878. A

map of these original parishes, contained within the perambulation (walking inspection) of King Charles I (1642) is available via a link at www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/efverderers

2. Must not be a member of the Court of Common Council of the City of London

There is no requirement for Verderers to hold the status of Commoner of Epping Forest.

The present incumbents have a considerable knowledge of the Forest, its wildlife and history, past and present management and the communities around the Forest. They show their commitment to role, by the amount of time they put in and the respect in which they are held by the rest of the Committee. The position is a voluntary, unpaid one but is very demanding in terms of the amount of time it takes to do it effectively.

Workload

The workload of a Verderer falls into a number of different parts:

The formal meetings are set out below. In addition to the meetings themselves there is preparatory work to be undertaken. Although Verderers are not entitled to vote on matters relating to the City Commons they are encouraged to take an active part, and regularly do so. Most of these meetings take place during the working day.

- i) Maintaining liaison with community and special interest groups and individuals, including responding to telephone calls, emails, letters and face to face communications about the Forest. This liaison can take a number of different forms.
- ii) Liaising with City officers on a formal and informal basis about the management of the Forest.
- iii) Giving talks, leading walks and writing articles about the Forest and its management.
- iv) Keeping up to date regarding the state of the Forest and how it is used by regularly going out into it. Reading up about the Forest, its wildlife management and history.

Formal commitments

Committees and meetings

Epping Forest and Commons Committee	Six meetings per year at Guildhall (Monday morning)
Epping Forest Local Meeting	Six meetings at The Warren, Loughton (usually Friday /occasional Monday)
Epping Forest Consultative Committee	Two meetings at The Warren, Loughton per year in the evening.
Various Working Parties/Sub-Committees	Occasional

Epping Forest and Commons Committee visits (Saturday 9.00am - 2.30pm)

Epping Forest	March
Epping Forest	May
West Wickham, Coulsdon and Ashted Commons	June
Burnham Beeches	September
Epping Forest	September
Epping Forest	November

Other regular events

Volunteers' Celebration	Evening in March
EF Centenary Walk	Sunday in September
Burnham Beeches Lord Mayor's Pollarding visit, and Dorneywood	Day in October

About the City of London

The City of London is also known as the Square Mile, the financial district and historic centre of London. In addition to being a Local Authority, the City of London Corporation has responsibilities beyond the Square Mile, including ownership and management of almost 4,500 hectares of historic and natural open space for public recreation and health.

Our green spaces, most of which are charitable trusts, are run at little cost to the communities that they serve. They are funded principally by the City of London, together with donations, sponsorship, grants and trading income. Our spaces in and beyond the Square Mile have over 23 million visits each year. They include important wildlife habitats, sites of scientific interest and national nature reserves for the public to enjoy.

The 1878 Act confirmed the City of London Corporation's purchase of Epping Forest and established the City Corporation as the Conservators to take over responsibility for the Forest's management and regulation. The City Corporation has statutory obligations to manage the Forest as an open space, unenclosed and un-built on, for the recreation and enjoyment of the public. In doing so the Conservators are required, as far as possible, to preserve the natural aspect.

About Epping Forest and Commons Committee

The Epping Forest and Commons Committee meets 6 times a year to take decisions relating to Epping Forest and the City Commons to the south and east of London. Additionally, Committee members are invited to Forest and events visits.

N.B: Members and Verderers give their services in an entirely voluntary capacity and receive neither fees nor expenses, whether for travel or any other purpose, although for many of the formal meetings meals are provided.

Applications

The deadline for applications to be submitted is 12noon on 3rd September 2018.

Applicants are requested to submit a statement in support of their application either via email to jo.hurst@cityoflondon.gov.uk or by post to:

Jo Hurst, Business Manager – Epping Forest
The Warren
Loughton, Essex,
IG10 4RW