

MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 18th April at 9.30 a.m. in the Library, The Queen's House, Lyndhurst.

PRESENT: Mr O Crosthwaite Eyre Official Verderer
Mr J Adams Elected Verderer & Chairman of the Staff Committee
Mr P Frost Countryside Agency Appointed Verderer
Mr A Gerrelli Elected Verderer
Cllr Mrs K Heron National Park Authority Appointed Verderer
Mr J F Kitcher Elected Verderer
Miss D Macnair Elected Verderer
Mr A H Pasmore Elected Verderer
Mrs P Thorne DEFRA Appointed Verderer

IN ATTENDANCE: Miss S Westwood Clerk to the Verderers
Mr J R Gerrelli Head Agister (first two items only)

APOLOGIES: The Hon R Montagu Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer

IN COMMITTEE

The Official Verderer advised the Court that the Deputy Surveyor would be bringing Mr Simon Weymouth (FC Ecologist) to the meeting after the Open Court to answer questions on the document he has produced listing SSSI compartments and their current condition.

The Head Agister was present for the first three items.

2007/2924 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

DISCHARGE

The Minutes of the Court held on Wednesday, 21st March 2007 were approved.

2007/2925 CONDITION OF STOCK

RESUME

The Head Agister reported that stock looks reasonably well. A few foals are now being born. One or two mares which have just foaled look a little poor. These will be closely monitored. Some mares which have yet to foal will look thin once they have had their foals. However, as a general rule it is unacceptable on welfare grounds to attempt to catch heavily in-foal mares unless they can be walked in quietly.

A few ponies which were removed earlier in the year due to deteriorating condition have been turned out again too soon. These have been caught and returned to their owners who have been told to keep them off the Forest until their condition improves.

It was reported that a yard in Fritham may have strangles and it is hoped the infection will not spread to the Forest.

Miss Macnair remarked that a lot of animals seem to be infested with lice and some have had rain-scald. The Head Agister said these things are always a problem and they do have an effect on the condition of stock, particularly young ponies.

The Official Verderer reminded the Court that the Welfare Tour will take place on 29th May which is a little later than usual.

The Head Agister left the meeting.

Mr Adams said that from what he has seen, the vast majority of the animals look well and he is quite encouraged. He added he hoped that the grass starts growing soon.

2007/2926 STRANGLES

RESUME

The Official Verderer drew the Court's attention to the project which has been set up by the British Horse Society in conjunction with the Animal Health Trust to develop an effective vaccine against strangles.

The Official Verderer added that he has been approached by Mrs Pam Harvey Richards who has asked if the Court is prepared to make a donation towards the research and development of a vaccine.

The New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society has reportedly donated £1,000 and the Court has been asked to match this sum.

After careful consideration, the Court agreed that a donation should be made but felt unable to match that of the Pony Breeders. The sum of £250.00 was felt to be an appropriate amount and a cheque will be handed to the BHS representative at the forthcoming Welfare Tour.

2007/2927 ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS

RESUME

The announcements and decisions were approved.

It was reported that Sir Michael Heathcote, former MAFF Appointed Verderer, died recently and it was considered appropriate that the Official Verderer should extend condolences to his family on behalf of the Court.

2007/2928 RECREATION/CAMPING REVIEW

RESUME

Mr Frost suggested the Court should contribute to the Review currently being carried out by the National Park Authority. This was considered to be a good idea and the Official Verderer offered to start drafting a suitable paper.

Cllr Mrs Heron said she recently heard someone suggest that as the Forest is so well visited as it is, there is no need to keep adding things, especially those which will spoil its uniqueness. The Court agreed this was a good point.

2007/2929 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESUME

The Elected Verderers and Mrs Thorne declared an interest in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.

Mr Gerrelli declared an interest in any items concerning Campsites.

Mr Kitcher declared an interest in the Forestry Commission's charges for access to commoners 'dwellings.

2007/2930 FINANCIAL STATEMENT RESUME

The Financial Statement for March 2007 will be circulated. Queries should be raised with the Clerk.

2007/2931 REPORT ON MARKING FEES RECEIVED AS AT THE END OF FEBRUARY 2007 RESUME

Ponies	4219	Pigs	18		
Cattle	891	Sheep	0		
Donkeys	93				
TOTAL	5203	TOTAL ALL ANIMALS	5221		

2007/2932 ANIMALS REMOVED FROM THE FOREST FEBRUARY 2007 RESUME

SICK OR WANTED
POOR INJURED BY OWNER OTHER TOTALS

MARES WITH YEARLINGS	19	2	1	0	22
MARES	15	1	2	1	19
FILLIES	18	1	2	1	22
COLTS	0	0	0	0	0
GELDINGS	0	0	0	0	0
CATTLE	4	1	6	1	12
CALVES	0	0	2	0	2
DONKEYS	1	0	0	0	1
PIGS	0	0	0	0	0
PIGLETS	0	0	0	0	0
SHEEP	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	57	5	13	3	78

TWO YEAR OLD COLTS **3**

SUMMARY BY SPECIES

PONIES	66
CATTLE	14
DONKEYS	1
PIGS	0
SHEEP	0
TOTAL	81

2007/2933 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT RESUME

The Cooper family - A satisfactory pre-trial review in respect of the Cooper trial was held in Fareham Magistrates' Court. Certain admissions were accepted meaning witnesses should not be needed. This should greatly reduce the length of the trial which is set for the 3rd and 4th May.

Two Year Old Colts – The precise age of two colts which may be illegally depastured is being sought.

OPEN COURT – 10.00 a.m. in the Verderers' Hall

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Mike Seddon, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest
Mr Will Parke, Area Land Agent (New)

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS BY THE OFFICIAL VERDERER

2007/2934 HOLLANDS WOOD AND ROUNDHILL CAMPSITES

In late 2004 the Forestry Commission asked us for our consent under the New Forest Acts for major re-development of the facilities at their two campsites at Hollands Wood and Roundhill. After detailed consideration we withheld our consent on the basis that the proposed developments were contrary to our policies on conservation and recreation.

At the same time the FC also applied to the National Park Authority for planning permission for these development works. Some two years later the FC has decided to withdraw the application, and we welcome that decision in the hope that this will be an end to the matter.

We are pleased to note that one of the reasons given by the FC for its withdrawal is identical to one that we gave for our decision to refuse consent under the New Forest Acts, namely that it would be inappropriate to consider a recreational development of this scale before the National Park Authority has completed its strategic review of recreational needs for the whole Forest. That review will not be ready until mid 2008.

2007/2935 LEVY ON CAMPERS

In his presentment on behalf of the NF Commoners' Defence Association Mr Mike Cooper suggested that the FC should levy a £1 charge on all campers coming to stay in the Forest. This is not a new idea, and not much has changed since it was first suggested. We discussed this with the Deputy Surveyor in depth in Committee last month, and our conclusion was that such a charge would not be possible for various legal reasons. We have written to the CDA and made some alternative suggestions, and we look forward to receiving their further thoughts on the topic.

2007/2936 CHARGE FOR ACCESS OVER CROWN LAND

Mr Mike Cooper went on to ask us to investigate the possibility of reducing or even removing the charge that is currently made by the FC for access to dwellings built under the existing Commoners Housing Scheme, which is administered by the National Park Authority.

This too was discussed with the Deputy Surveyor in depth, and he was at pains to point out to us that the charge that is made for access to commoners' new dwellings is very heavily discounted already, and represents a significant benefit. We have asked the DS to provide us with details of how the charge is calculated so that we can see for ourselves how big the discount actually is, and form our own opinion on the matter.

ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

2007/2937 ACCIDENT REPORT FOR MARCH 2007

The Agisters attended 5 accidents, which compares with 8 for the same period last year.

1 cow was killed. 1 pony, and 1 donkey were injured; the donkey was wearing a collar. 2 cattle were hit, but nothing was found injured at either location.

3 accidents occurred during the hours of darkness and 5 involved private cars or light commercials.

3 involved local motorists.

The total killed and injured for the year to date is 21 compared with 26 for the same period last year.

PRESENTMENTS BY THE DEPUTY SURVEYOR OF THE NEW FOREST

None

PRESENTMENTS

2007/2938 NEWLY CONSTRUCTED ENCLOSED AREA – SETTHORNS CAMPSITE

We wish to bring to your attention a recently constructed enclosed area adjacent to the Wardens Office on Setthorns Campsite. It is gravel based and has an electrical hook-up. Photographs are attached. For all intents and purposes, this appears to have been constructed on open Forest. However, this may well be set inside the old perimeter line of the enclosure, and could therefore, be subject to special dispensation. We would be grateful if the Verderers could look into the matter, and advise us accordingly in due course.

The Official Verderer responded, saying that the Deputy Surveyor is aware of the enclosure and it will be discussed in committee later.

IN COMMITTEE in The Library

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Mike Seddon, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest
Mr Will Parke, Area Land Agent (New Forest)
Mr Simon Weymouth, Forestry Commission Ecologist

CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS

2007/2939 NEWLY CONSTRUCTED ENCLOSED AREA – SETTHORNS DISCHARGE CAMPSITE

The enclosure was built by the new assistant manager of the site without authority. The assistant manager is new and did not realise that permission must be obtained for such structures which is intended to contain his caravan. The Deputy Surveyor will speak to Forest Holidays to explain the position and asked if the Verderers would be prepared to consent to the enclosure if they were asked. The Verderers response was no, on the grounds that they considered such enclosures to be undesirable and approving this one may set a precedent for other campsites.

Mr Frost remarked that there is a large enclosure on Ashurst campsite as well. The Deputy Surveyor pointed out that traditionally the site manager's have static caravans in fenced enclosures. The assistant managers' vans are not in enclosures.

The Deputy Surveyor said he will contact Forest Holidays and then write to the Clerk in order that she may respond to Mr Cooper.

SUBMISSIONS BY THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2007/2940 GAS SERVICE PIPE TO LEAFY SCREEN COTTAGE, COTT LANE, DISCHARGE
BURLEY

The proposal to lay a 25mm diameter service pipe in the gravel track (not the verge) in order to serve Leafy Green Cottage was approved subject to the usual conditions regarding reinstatement, safe working conditions, compensation for loss of grazing etc.

2007/2941 OBER LODGE, RHINEFIELD ROAD, BROCKENHURST – DISCHARGE
SOUTHERN ELECTRIC

Southern Electric's request to install some extra cabling to Ober Lodge and nearby properties, whereby the additional cabling will be put underground were approved subject to the usual conditions.

2007/2942 PARKING OPPOSITE BOLTON'S BENCH DISCHARGE

Proposals to alter the parking arrangements in the vicinity of the New Forest District Council Beaulieu Road entrance were approved.

2007/2943 SSSI CONDITION ASSESSMENT (FOR INFORMATION) RESUME

Mr Simon Weymouth explained that he has prepared a list and plans showing the current condition of various areas of the Forest. The list shows which are in favourable condition and which are unfavourable etc.

Copies of the list and plans will be available in the Verderers' Office for inspection. A copy of the list will be emailed or posted to all members of the Court.

Mr Pasmore expressed concern that the Forestry Commission may be committing to works under the Heritage Lottery Fund prior to obtaining consent from the Verderers. Mr Weymouth assured the Court that all work will be subject to consultation and agreement and following site meetings certain aspects may change.

A considerable amount of Verderers' time will be needed in order for proper consultation to be carried out and it was suggested that in the first instance Verderers should endeavour to indicate which sites on the list are considered likely to be contentious and which are not.

Mr Weymouth left the meeting

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COURTS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2007/2944	FORESTRY COMMISSION CHARGES FOR ACCESS TO COMMONERS DWELLINGS	RESUME June 2007
	<p>A paper has been submitted by the Deputy Surveyor. An explanation of how the charges are calculated is included. The charges have not been reviewed for 10 years. They are now under review and the Deputy Surveyor promised to keep the Verderers apprised of the result.</p>	
2007/2945	LOSS OF BRIDGE AT IPLEY	RESUME
	<p>The Deputy Surveyor reported that the bridge was removed because it was unsafe. Mr Stride and Mr Ingram are due to meet to discuss the best course of action as regards a replacement.</p>	
2007/2946	ANIMAL RTA'S	RESUME
	<p>The Clerk reported on the recent meeting of the Animal Accident Reduction Group. The meeting focussed on data collection and analysis. The next meeting will discuss and hopefully agree practical means of reducing road traffic accidents involving commoners' animals. A further meeting is scheduled for May.</p>	
2007/2947	ANIMAL RTA'S - PINCH POINTS ON THE C10	RESUME
	<p>Mrs Kathy Heron will take forward the Court's request for two pinch-points to be constructed on the Picket Post to Burley Road between Picket Post and Vereley Hill.</p>	
2007/2948	MILKHAM INCLOSURE CROSSINGS	DISCHARGE
	<p>Three crossing points are supposed to have been reinstated but it seems only one has been completed so far. Mrs Thorne remarked that she has found a fourth crossing which needs attention. Mr Adams said he will raise the matter with Mr Stride when they next meet. It was agreed the matter should be discharged from the minutes for the time being.</p>	
2007/2949	GATES AT HIGHLAND WATER	DISCHARGE
	<p>The Deputy Surveyor confirmed there is no reason why these gates should be shut and arrangements will be made for them to be locked open.</p> <p>It was reported that the gates around Dames Slough are chained open.</p>	
2007/2950	TREE TUBES	DISCHARGE
	<p>The tree tubes have all been removed.</p>	

ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2007/2951 BURLEY VILLAGE CLUTTER DISCHARGE

The Deputy Surveyor said the Forestry Commission and Parish Council are doing what they can to reduce the clutter in Burley, however, the co-operation of the businesses is needed. It was particularly noted that there are no less than six signs outside the Burley Inn.

2007/2952 PICKET POST PROPERTIES – RUBBISH AND ENCROACHMENTS RESUME

The building materials from outside a house at Picket Post and the illegal fence and the lighting which has been installed along the track have still not been removed.

2007/2953 A31 RUBBISH RESUME

A considerable quantity of rubbish remains along the A31. The lay-by at Hightown is particularly bad. A litter pick is supposed to have taken place along the A31 and the Deputy Surveyor and Mrs Heron will investigate why it has not been carried out.

2007/2954 SEAT AT BERRY WOOD RESUME

The illegal seat is being investigated.

2007/2955 USE OF PADDOCK NEXT TO LYNDHURST FIRE STATION DISCHARGE

The Deputy Surveyor reported that the paddock belonging to the Crown, situated next to the Fire Station at Lyndhurst, is currently being used for training fire-fighters in large animal rescue. In view of the value of such training to the Forest this was deemed a reasonable, temporary use of the land.

The Deputy Surveyor and Mr Parke left the meeting.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST COURT AND PREVIOUS COURTS

2007/2956 TUBERCULOSIS DISCHARGE

Mr Pasmore wrote, in a personal capacity, to Desmond Swayne MP, setting out his concerns regarding the lack of a contingency plan for the Forest in the event of an outbreak of bovine tuberculosis. A response is awaited and Mr Pasmore will report to the Court when it is received.

2007/2957 A31 FENCING RESUME

Nothing further has happened in respect of the promised repairs to the A31 fence. It was hoped that the recent incident where a mare had to be destroyed after she became trapped in the fence would result in some action. Sadly this has not been the case. Mr Adams will continue to pursue Mott MacDonald.

2007/2958 NEW FOREST SHOW RESUME

The Clerk reported on a recent Show meeting with the Forestry Commission on-site in New Park. The Verderers' stand is to be completely revamped and the Clerk appraised the Court of some of the current ideas, all of which were favourably received.

2007/2959 STALLION BLOODLINES RESUME
July

Mr Adams reported on the recent meeting with experts in genetics from the Scottish Agricultural College. Three options for studying stallion bloodlines were put forward and it was agreed the Stallion Sub-Committee should meet to discuss the next stage. It was also suggested that careful thought must be given to what the information will be used for once it has been gathered. A lot of ideas so far suggested are not practical.

2007/2960 KINGSTON GREAT COMMON RESUME

The National Park Authority has finally opened lines of communication with the owner of Kingston Great common. A meeting is scheduled for next week.

2007/2961 ROLL KITCHER CUP RESUME

It was agreed the cup should be presented to the owner of the highest scoring 2 or 3 year old colt each year. This time the scores from last August as well as those from April this year will be considered. In future inspections will take place once a year only.

COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP SCHEME

2007/2962 ADVISORY GROUP MEETING RESUME

The Advisory Group met recently. The Verderers' Sub Committee is due to meet later this week to discuss recommendations arising from the Advisory Group meeting.

NATIONAL PARK

2007/2963 MANAGEMENT PLAN DISCHARGE

The Official Verderers reported that considerable work is underway, which will continue over the next 18mths or so, culminating in a management plan which it is hoped will be simple, easy to understand and short.

2007/2964 NATIONAL PARK BOUNDARY WORKING GROUP DISCHARGE

Entry point markers are being designed.

OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

2007/2965 REQUEST TO FILM A DRIFT DISCHARGE

The request by a media company to film a drift for the Johnny Kingdom television series was refused on grounds of health and safety and the desire not to publicise the drifts any more than they are already.

2007/2966 ROAD NAME SIGN AT TELEGRAPH RESUME

Mrs Heron has passed the matter to the New Forest District Council and is confident that the sign will be removed shortly.

MATTERS ARISING FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

None

STAFF MATTERS (including the Staff Committee)

2007/2967 CHAIN SAWS DISCHARGE

The Agisters have been issued with two new chainsaws and a drill attachment.

TRAINING

2007/2968 CHAINSAWS DISCHARGE

Mr John Adams has given the Agisters instructions on the operation of the drill attachment.

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

Nothing to report.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2007/2969 LYNDHURST BYPASS RESUME

Mr Montagu reported that the panel taking evidence on the subject of a bypass for Lyndhurst will start work in due course and various organisations, including the Verderers, will be asked to submit their views in writing or before a committee.

Mr Montagu offered to draw up a draft paper for consideration and eventual submission to the Group.

2007/2970 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND – “DRIVING SIDEWAYS” DISCHARGE

The horse drawn omnibus project's application for funding has been turned down by the Development Fund because the proposed route crosses the Forest and consent has not been obtained. It has been suggested the omnibus operators trial shorter on-road routes to identify the level of interest, prior to expanding the operation if it proves a success.

2007/2971 THE VERDERERS' BUDGET

DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer reported that a letter has been received from the Deputy Surveyor approving the budget for this year but warning that there will be no increases for the foreseeable future.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 12.40 p.m.