

**Minutes of the COURT OF VERDERERS held on Wednesday, 8th August 2007 at 2.00 p.m. in the Library, The Queen's House, Lyndhurst.**

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PRESENT:	Mr Oliver Crosthwaite Eyre The Hon Mr R Montagu Mr A H Pasmore Mrs P Thorne	Official Verderer Appointed Forestry Commission Verderer Elected Verderer DEFRA Appointed Verderer
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mr Nigel Matthews Miss Sue Westwood	Head of Visitor Services New Forest National Park Authority Clerk
APOLOGIES:	Mr J Adams Mr P Frost Mr A Gerrelli Mrs D Halford  Mr J F Kitcher Miss D Macnair	Elected Verderer & Staff Committee Chairman Natural England Appointed Verderer Elected Verderer New Forest National Park Authority Appointed Verderer  Elected Verderer Elected Verderer

**IN COMMITTEE**

2007/3268 NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK BOUNDARY MARKERS & SIGN RATIONALISATION DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer explained this part of the meeting will deal with the National Park Authority's proposals for boundary markers and sign rationalisation in order that it may be progressed in advance of the next scheduled Verderers' Court which is not due to take place until September.

Mr Pasmore commented that whilst from an aesthetic point of view he is happy for the old Feeding of Animals Prohibited signs to be removed, he is concerned that the absence of the signs could make the byelaw harder to enforce. It was agreed that the need for the sign needs to be clarified.

The proposed replacement for the "Watch Out - Animals on Road Day and Night" signs was not particularly well received although Mr Matthews pointed out that the Animal Road Accident Reduction Group liked the new design. The Verderers felt the wording on the new sign lacks impact.

It was felt the 40mph ZONE has value. It is special to the Forest and it is generally felt it should be retained.

As respects the proposed new boundary markers it was felt unnecessary to have both Forestry Commission and National Park signs especially as the object of the exercise is to rationalise signage, not increase it.

Concern was expressed that the small boundary marker signs could block a drivers view of an animal at night and siting is very important. Mr Montagu also queried whether the logo is actually large enough to

be readable. Mr Matthews said he will liaise with the Head Agister as respects the positioning of the signs. Mrs Thorne remarked that there are a number of posts in various places around the Forest with nothing on them and that these should be removed.

Mr Pasmore asked why signs are wanted on the roads leading from the A31 but not on roads off the A35 or A337. Mr Matthews said there may be objections from the Highways Agency to signs on the A31 itself and therefore it was thought that signs on the roads leading from the A31 would be an acceptable alternative so that motorists know they have entered the National Park. The Court felt it was fairly obvious that when a motorist crosses a cattle grid they are in the New Forest. It was commented that the same is not being proposed for the A35 and A337 and the question was asked why this is the case. Mr Matthews said that it is believed the Highway Authority will agree to signs on these other roads at the point at which they cross into the National Park.

The Official Verderer asked if the Forestry Commission signs need to be retained to which Mr Matthews replied that negotiations are in hand with the FC about this but it is reluctant to remove its signs. It was then suggested that the two could be combined. Mr Matthews said consideration would be given to that idea.

Mr Matthews then left the meeting.

The Official Verderer suggested the Court should decide on the main issues which have arisen.

#### The Draft Signage Strategy

The Court agreed to give its broad support to the draft.

#### Proposals for Boundary Markers

Boundary markers on the roads leading from the A31 (i.e. Picket Post and Stoney Cross) are considered unnecessary.

The small boundary markers are acceptable on the condition that the siting of them is agreed and all old, redundant posts are removed. Additionally, every effort must be made to combine NPA and FC signs otherwise the intended rationalisation of signage will not have been achieved.

#### Initial Plans for a Signage Rationalisation Action Plan

The Court approves of the "Watch Out" signs and the "High Risk Road for X Miles" signs and wishes them to be retained. These messages are considered to be far more powerful than the proposed alternatives. It was, however, suggested the signs should be cleaned from time to time and their positioning should be reviewed.

The temporary signs showing children's slogans were considered to be ineffective and they should be removed.

2007/3269 RECREATION PAPER

RESUME

The paper currently being prepared by the Official Verderer and Mr Pasmore was circulated for comment. Some amendments have been suggested which have been incorporated. The paper will be finalised and turned into a professionally printed booklet.

2007/3270 REVISION OF THE VERDERERS' BYELAWS

RESUME

The latest draft had been circulated prior to the meeting and following a short discussion the revised draft was formally approved and duly adopted.

Adverts will now be placed as soon as possible and a copy of the proposed revised byelaws will be available for inspection on the Verderers' Court website. Copies will also be available from the office.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 3.20 p.m.