

MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 15th February 2012 at 9.30 a.m. in the Verderers' Hall and the Library, the Queen's House, Lyndhurst.

PRESENT:	Mr Dominic May Mr A Gerrelli Miss D Macnair MBE Mr A H Pasmore Mr D Readhead Mrs P Thorne Mrs D Westerhoff	Official Verderer Elected Verderer Elected Verderer Elected Verderer Co-opted Elected Verderer DEFRA Appointed Verderer Natural England Appointed Verderer
IN ATTENDANCE:	Miss S Westwood Mr J R Gerrelli	Clerk to the Verderers Head Agister
APOLOGIES:	Mr R Deakin Mr C Maton The Hon R Montagu	Elected Verderer & Staff Committee Chairman National Park Appointed Verderer Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

2012/5902	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING	RESUME
	The Minutes of the Court held on Wednesday, 18 th January 2012 were approved.	
2012/5903	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	RESUME
	The Official Verderer, the Elected Verderers, including Mr Readhead, and Mrs Thorne all declared an interest in the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme.	
	Mr Gerrelli declared an interest in the encroachment at Bull Hill.	
2012/5904	CONDITION OF STOCK	RESUME
	Report by the Head Agister – Conditions on the Forest have been really good up until recently. However, the good weather couldn't last and the recent spell of cold weather was inevitable. The frost made inspecting and catching stock on horseback extremely difficult if not impossible. As a result, the Agisters are now beginning to remove ponies that are losing condition. As usual it is mares with foals, the young and old which are worst affected and as it is only mid February, things are expected to deteriorate further.	
	As usual commoners in the south provide more assistance in catching stock than those in the north, however, the Agisters team up and work together and the Head Agister said he is happy that they have things under control.	
2012/5905	PONIES LOSING CONDITION AND REMOVED FROM THE FOREST	RESUME
	10 mares with foals, 6 mares on their own, 5 fillies a colt and 4 geldings were removed in January making a total of 26.	
	This compares with a total of 98 animals removed in January 2011.	

2012/5906 MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE RESUME

Ponies	192
Cattle	9
Donkeys	5
Total	206

In 2011 marking fees had been received for 1175 animals at this time.

The Head Agister left the meeting.

2012/5907 HLS AGREEMENT WITH THE NATIONAL TRUST DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer confirmed that he has reached agreement with the National Trust regarding the Verderers' Grazing Scheme.

The agreement is signed by the Official Verderer as chairman of the Verderers' Grazing Scheme. Copies of the agreement will be made available to all Verderers.

2012/5908 ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS RESUME

The Announcements and Decisions were approved.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Mark Street, Area Land Agent (New Forest)
Mr Kevin Penfold, Acting Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS BY THE OFFICIAL VERDERER

2012/5909 VERDERERS OF THE NEW FOREST HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME - NEW VERDERERS' GRAZING SCHEME

Today I am announcing the new system of grazing incentive payments to commoners. On 1st March 2012, the Countryside Stewardship Scheme will be replaced by a new Verderers Grazing Scheme (VGS). It will be administered by the Verderers as part of their responsibilities under the Verderers of the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme (HLS). The new Verderers Grazing Scheme is a partnership with the owners of the adjacent commons i.e. Hampshire County Council, Minstead Manor, National Trust, Waterslade Farm and Wellow Parish Council. All of these adjacent commons have their own HLS agreements with Natural England which requires them to support the VGS.

The New Forest is of very high importance for biodiversity, particularly the internationally important mosaic of heathland, mire and wood pasture which occurs nowhere else on such a scale, and owes its character to centuries of common grazing by our animals. The new Verderers' Grazing Scheme is designed to support commoning financially, by making payments to commoners to maintain the continuity of their animals' grazing, and these terms and conditions outline the responsibilities of those receiving this payment. The intention of this scheme is to pay money to commoners for good practice and in no way is it intended to alter or infringe common rights.

I would like to highlight those key points which are markedly different from the old Countryside Stewardship Scheme, and also clarify the basis of payment of this grazing incentive.

Commoners must comply where they apply with the Verderers' byelaws, the New Forest

Acts, the Forestry Commission byelaws, National Trust byelaws, the 1964 Commons agreement, and the terms and conditions of the Scheme, at all times. Commoners must not encroach on the Crown land or other common land, and should not park machinery, vehicles, materials or equipment on the common land without the consent of the Forestry Commission or other common owner. Scheme commoners and their animals must not damage the SSSI in any way that contributes to that part of the SSSI becoming "unfavourable" in condition; this includes poaching, particularly by cattle. Wormers containing Ivermectin must not be used on the Forest.

But what you will all want to know is how the payment will be calculated. Commoners must enter all their depastured animals into the scheme. Animals will be assigned a value of a livestock unit: Cattle 1 livestock unit, registered pure bred New Forest ponies 0.8 livestock unit, other equines including geldings 0.4 livestock unit. Commoners must also declare how much back-up grazing they have, with a map. Where land is shared, acreage may only be counted once i.e. the same land may not be used to support more than one application, so commoners sharing back-up grazing land should apportion their back-up grazing between themselves in their separate applications. The number of animals qualifying for payment will be limited to those with the availability of ¼ acre of back-up grazing per animal (excluding pigs).

We have not yet set the value of the payment per livestock unit, but we have already made the decision that the payment for both cattle and registered pure bred New Forest ponies will be at least the same or more than was paid under the old Countryside Stewardship Scheme. An individual Cap of £6,000 will apply to all payments under the Scheme. The total money in the fund for the payments will depend upon the total number of animals entered into the new scheme. We will set this total in the first year, and this amount will not change in subsequent years. So if you all decide to turn out more animals in order to get more money, the payment per animal will reduce.

A stock density of 0.25 LU/ha will be used to regulate animal numbers. An increase in the number of animals turned out, either by an individual scheme member, or in the overall total, may result in the Verderers reducing payments to members. Any abuse of the scheme such as trying to circumvent the new rules or spirit of the scheme in any way will result in payment being withheld; this will include rushing off to market to buy lots more animals to depasture.

Where animals are damaging the SSSI, for example where land is badly poached or overgrazed, payments may be made to commoners who move or remove animals in response to a request from the Verderers.

The start of the new Verderers Grazing Scheme on 1st March leaves a gap of five months since the end of the old Countryside Stewardship Scheme on 30th September last year. As an encouragement to existing Countryside Stewardship Scheme members, we will give you 5/12 payment of your December payment if you sign up to the new Verderers Grazing Scheme this year.

One of the specific intentions of this new grazing incentive is to open the scheme to new and young commoners. To qualify for membership, commoners must legally have depastured animals in accordance with the principles of the scheme, for the previous 3 years. Commoners who have already completed this qualifying period will be allowed to join immediately.

An application form will be finalised in the next week and will be posted to all commoners who have paid marking fees. I invite all commoners to join.

PRESENTMENTS BY THE ACTING DEPUTY SURVEYOR OF THE NEW FOREST

None

PRESENTMENTS

2012/5910 CYCLING
Presentment by Mr John Pemberton

Although I am a Member of the New Forest National Park Authority, I do not represent the Authority by this presentment; I speak as a resident of the New Forest.

A presentment was made to the January Court in the name of the New Forest Association on the subject of cycling in the New Forest. The presentment gives a worst case example of promotion of a cycling event on the gravel tracks of the Forest, rather than a typical example.

Most events are well-organised and not contentious. They provide exercise and enjoyment to many thousands. There are a few reports of cyclists not behaving acceptably and a few hotspots where cyclists pass frequently on weekends when these events occur. Complaints can be made to the organisers and, if upheld, can result in the cyclist being banned from future events.

Off-road cycling events involving the gravel tracks of the Forest are relatively few compared to on-road events, and mostly involve a small numbers of cyclists, often including families out cycling together. They are held subject to permission from the Forestry Commission and while the system is not able to take account of any organising groups who do not notify the Forestry Commission of their event, there is a system in place.

With cycling events on the roads of the New Forest, the Verderers will be aware that neither they, nor the Forestry Commission, nor the National Park Authority have legal powers to manage or control these on-road cycling events.

What they could do is as a group to meet with the organisers of major cycling events voluntarily and make them aware of problems, discuss the timing, routes, and number of participants, and develop with them codes of practice for the events and the cyclists involved. This is undertaken to a limited extent already by the National Park Authority, the Forestry Commission and the Safety Advisory Group. However, a group which had members from these bodies and the Verderers, and including local cycling groups, would be more effective in communicating the problems and contributing to the solutions. This has occurred with equestrian issues in the Forest in recent years by the creation of an Equine Forum. The meetings could be an extended responsibility of an existing group, without requiring a new group. The cycling event organisers are likely to participate in meetings with such a group because they wish to have the endorsement and support of the local bodies, rather than their disapproval.

The majority of cycling events pass off without a problem. Were such meetings to take place, the problems that do exist could be aired and discussed with all participants. Surely it is by engaging in such a process that a way forward is created to resolve the issues.

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

2012/5911 ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENT REPORT

DISCHARGE

Unfortunately the RTA report was inadvertently missed during the Open Court.

The Agisters attended 12 road accidents involving commoners' animals in January - the same number as in January last year.

4 ponies, 1 donkey and a cow were killed and 1 pony was injured.

The first of the month's accidents occurred at Holmsley, when a cow walked onto the A35 through a gate which it appears had been left open. Extensive damage was caused to the vehicle which collided with the animal. The driver escaped unhurt although he was naturally badly shaken, but his passenger was injured and taken to hospital. I am pleased to report that we subsequently learned that her injuries were not too serious. The cow had to be destroyed.

Brockenhurst had the most accidents in January, with 3 in South Weirs and 2 in Sway Road.

One of the Sway Road accidents occurred close to the Railway Bridge and involved a young donkey. She was struck one evening at about 5.00 p.m., within the 30 mph speed limit. The donkey, which was wearing a reflective collar, was thrown over the car and landed in front of the following vehicle, much to the distress of the driver. This accident was initially thought to be a 'Hit and Run' as the driver failed to stop, however, the incident was subsequently reported by the driver to his local police station - in Lancashire. The donkey was destroyed by the Agister.

2 accidents occurred on the Lymington to Beaulieu Road, one at Crockford and the other at Norley Wood cross roads. 1 accident occurred at Hilltop.

2 accidents were reported in the north of the Forest, 1 at Bramshaw Telegraph and the other at Godshill and a further accident occurred at Thorney Hill.

All bar one of these accidents occurred at night, once more highlighting the need for drivers to take much more care when crossing the Forest in the dark.

The Court suggested that the driver from Lancashire should be prosecuted for cruelty as he failed to stop after having collided with the animal. The Clerk said she will take this up with the Police and it will be discussed at the Animal Accident Reduction Group meeting.

Action
SW

CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS

2012/5912 CYCLING DISCHARGE
Presentment by Mr John Pemberton

The Court agreed that it has no remit for on-road cycling. However there are times when cycling events conflict with drifts and other events. For that reason every effort is being made to encourage cycle event organisers to liaise with the Forestry Commission, the Verderers' Office, the Police, the District Council and the Highway Authority.

The Court wished to stress that it is not anti cycling. It is however, anti *illegal* cycling and it is important that the distinction is made between legal and illegal cycling on the Forest. There is no objection to responsible cycling on the approved cycle network. The Deputy Surveyor stressed that the Forestry Commission supports responsible cycling.

The NFA previously asked that the management of cycling and other recreational activities be reviewed.

The Official Verderer will make an announcement in due course, explaining the Verderers' position in respect of cycling on the Forest.

Action
OV

NEW SUBMISSIONS AND OTHER MATTERS RAISED BY THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2012/5913 IMPROVEMENT TO SEPTIC TANK - FOX COTTAGE, PILLEY DISCHARGE

A request was received for improvements to the existing septic tank system which, for this cottage, is located on the Open Forest.

The system has been in situ for some years and does not work effectively. It is proposed to retrofit a treatment system similar to that which has been installed at Shave Green, Cadnam and Church Place, Ashurst.

Consent was given for a new air line to the existing tank and excavations to lay a new 100mm discharge pipe to the nearby watercourse. This consent is given subject to the approval of Natural England and the Environment Agency being obtained, and in addition evidence of ongoing annual maintenance must be provided to the Forestry Commission.

The Court also stipulated that should the system fail to work correctly, it will be sealed. Effluent should be pumped out annually.

2012/5914 SCOTTISH AND SOUTHERN ELECTRICITY (SSE) PROPOSED U/G SUPPLY TO THREE WAYS COTTAGE, PILLEY STREET, PILLEY DISCHARGE

This submission was withdrawn.

2012/5915 SSE PROPOSED U/G ELECTRICITY SUPPLY TO THE WHITE HOUSE, HOLLY LANE, PILLEY DISCHARGE

Consent was given to the proposal to provide a new underground service to the above property, subject to the usual conditions regarding satisfactory reinstatement, safe working conditions, compensation for loss of grazing etc.

2012/5916 WOODGREEN CRICKET CLUB

DISCHARGE

The licence for this club has expired. However, a proposal is being worked up for a change to the pavilion. The proposal is not yet ready for submission. Two other clubs, Godshill and Cadnam, are also due for renewal at the end of December 2013 and Mr Street suggested all three should be considered together although this would mean a temporary extension of Woodgreen's licence being agreed. This was agreed by the Court but the Forestry Commission was asked to enforce the conditions that equipment and machinery must be stored under cover. The Court will take failure to comply with the conditions of the licences into account when considering the renewal of the licences.

MATTERS ARISING OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2012/5917 CYCLING

DISCHARGE

The Forestry Commission has been in touch with the Spring Sportive and Spring Mountain Biking event. The organisers have been found to be very helpful. Event organisers have proposed quiet zones at the start, start times to be extended to spread the impact of numbers of riders, emphasis on events not being races and results published in alphabetical order of the participants rather than in order of the time taken to complete the course.

The Court is, however, concerned at the number of events that now take place in the Forest and the question was asked how many more are there going to be? The Forest is not an inexhaustible resource. It was also suggested that the large events can spoil the enjoyment of the Forest by residents and other visitors. As the Forestry Commission charges for the events which involve the Crown Land, the Court asked for a schedule of charges. Some of the large events have clearly become very big operations which are very commercial. They are very good business for the centres such as Sandy Balls and Brockenhurst College which hosts them.

The Forestry Commission was asked to look at the trends of events and visitor numbers. Work may be needed to reduce the impact of the events and a review of the management of recreational activities has been called for by the NFA - something which the Court supports.

The Forestry Commission undertook a review in 1987 but it seems a lot of the resulting recommendations were never taken forward. Mr Penfold said he would arrange for the Keepers and Rangers to be reminded of FC policy and when to engage with cyclists who are off-route. The Forestry Commission will offer a response to last month's presentment by the NFA.

2012/5918 VISIT BY MEMBERS OF THE INDEPENDENT PANEL ON FORESTRY

RESUME

Mr Penfold reported on the current position. He said that the Panel is beginning to formulate ideas for a strategy for the future of the private and public Forestry estate. Information is being gathered with a view to formulating options to present to Government.

As regards Panel visit, the Official Verderer said arrangements are well advanced. Mr Tim Greenwood, who has been asked to co-ordinate the visit, has ensured that representatives of the Forestry Commission, the National Park Authority, the New Forest Association, the Commoners'

Defence Association, the Access Forum and the Verderers will be present. In addition a representative of the local timber industry will meet the Panel.

A tour of the working Forest is planned for the morning which will provide an opportunity for the Panel to experience a variety of Forest landscapes. Lunch will be a buffet in the Verderers' Hall, to be followed by a question and answer session. An afternoon site visit will concentrate on recreation and if there is time, the Panel will be given the opportunity to see a volunteer activity.

Action
KP

2012/5919 DEAD PONIES IN ENCLOSURE

RESUME

The Deputy Surveyor confirmed the gates to the enclosure within the inclosure are now locked open in order to ensure stock cannot be trapped. Further enquiries are being undertaken to ascertain whether the small enclosure can be opened up and if so, whether it should be open to the Forest or into the main inclosure. The enclosure was originally fenced to protect cicada which it is believed are no longer on the site. Mrs Westerhoff undertook to contact Natural England to find out if it is happy for the enclosure to now be opened up.

Action
DW

2012/5920 FALLEN TREE OUTSIDE LONG MEADOW

RESUME

The Deputy Surveyor said that the tree has been left in order to deter the public from accessing Waters Copse in order to reduce erosion. Mr Stride (FC) will discuss the issue of stock management with the local Agister. The FC is planning work in this area later this year when the tree will be cleared.

Action
R Stride &
Agister
Maton

2012/5921 SWAY RECREATION GROUND (MEMORIAL FIELD)

DISCHARGE

After careful consideration of the arguments for keeping the facility which have been put forward by Sway Parish Council in its letter to the Official Verderer, the comments received by letter/email from two other residents as well as past Court Minutes, the Court concluded that it will not consent to the renewal of the licence for the Memorial Field. The reasons for the decision are as follows:

As far back as 1994, the Commoners' Defence Association indicated it would press for the site to be returned to Open Forest when the licence ran out. In 1998, the Court, via the Forestry Commission, advised the Club that it should not expect the lease on the ground to be renewed when it expired [in 16 years time].

Whilst things have improved in the past few years, the Court Minutes show that there have been a lot of problems with rubbish and debris on the field and in addition, the fence has not been properly maintained which meant it was often considered to be a hazard to stock.

A wide gravel access track was laid in 2001, on the Open Forest, for which consent had not been obtained. At the time the matter was raised with the Club, it was advised again that it would not be allowed to keep the ground at the end of the lease. The Court minutes record that it was understood that an alternative site had been secured.

In 2003 and again in 2005, the Court minutes refer to the fencing being in very poor condition.

In 2010, the Court asked the Forestry Commission to remind the Parish Council that the ground will be returned to the Open Forest when the current lease expires.

Unlike other cricket and sports fields around the Forest, this facility is only open to Forest stock for 4 weeks of the year. Other facilities have permanently fenced cricket squares only with the remainder of the outfield being accessible by stock at all times (except when play is in progress).

Sway is known to have good, alternative facilities at the Jubilee Field in the Sway village.

The Clerk was requested to write to the Parish Council to advise it of the Court's decision and explain the reasons why consent will not be given for the lease to be renewed.

Action
SW

SSSI RESTORATION WORKS

2012/5922 SSSI RESTORATION WORKS - SNAGGING RESUME

Ms Sarah Oakley (FC) has drawn up a list of sites for snagging. She is also formulating a system for capturing and recording comments or complaints so that problems can be addressed. The full list to be provided by the Deputy Surveyor.

Action
KP

2012/5923 COWLEY'S HEATH DISCHARGE

Plans are awaited from Ms Sarah Oakley following a recent site visit at which no particular objections were raised.

2012/5924 SSSI RESTORATION WORKS CONSULTATION PAPER DISCHARGE

The paper is intended to set out the public consultation process for restoration projects. There was some misunderstanding as to exactly what the paper is intended to achieve and the Court pointed out that, as a statutory consultee, it wishes to continue with the present system whereby those Verderers who attend site meetings prepare a report with recommendations for consideration by the whole Court. Papers produced by the Forestry Commission will be considered at the same time and decisions will then be made on that basis. If it is not possible to obtain agreement then the proposals will not be approved. Some amendments to the draft paper were sent to Ms Oakley who is in the process of incorporating them. Once complete, the paper will be circulated for final approval.

2012/5925 REDUNDANT FENCE POSTS ON THE DISUSED RAILWAY LINE (HLS PROJECT) DISCHARGE

The proposal to remove the old fence posts was welcomed by the Court, subject to the usual three conditions. The Court did, however, wish to stress that the holes left by the posts must be properly filled and compacted otherwise they will be extremely dangerous to stock.

ENCROACHMENTS OF INTEREST TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2012/5926 SCHEDULE OF ENCROACHMENTS RESUME

The updated schedule was provided by Mr Street who reported on progress with the various encroachments, several of which are in the process of being resolved.

The Beeches – the new entrance has been realigned and the costs incurred by the Verderers and Forestry Commission and compensation for loss of grazing will be met by the owners.

Home Farm, Ashurst – The realignment of the fence and access for the fencing contractors has been agreed verbally and will be subject to a signed agreement between the parties and the Forestry Commission. The work will be carried out by the Forestry Commission as soon as ground conditions permit. The fences will then become the sole responsibility of the occupiers of Home Farm. The Court agreed that the commoners farming at Home Farm can be sent their grazing payment once the Forestry Commission's agreement is signed.

2012/5927 GREEN LANE TO LONG POND DISCHARGE

Miss Macnair raised the issue of overgrown rhododendron which have effectively blocked this ride. Mr Street said that Forestry Commission staff are working in the area and he will see if the vegetation can be cut back.

2012/5928 HORSE RIDING SIGN IN BURLEY DISCHARGE

The owners of an adjacent property carried out some maintenance work to the track as is required by their access licence. They then objected to ridden horses causing damage to the track and requested that a sign directing horse riders to keep off the track be erected. The result is the grass verge alongside the track has now been damaged. The Deputy Surveyor suggested that the riding establishment which uses the track could be asked to contribute towards its upkeep and a request to that effect will be made by Mr Richard Stride.

2012/5929 GRAHAM LODGE DISCHARGE

The Head Keeper, Andy Page, has been to see the contractors and instructed that they remove the concrete pad that has been placed on the Open Forest!

2012/5930 ENTRANCE TO FOXLEASE DISCHARGE

It was suggested that this entrance may have been widened. Mr Street said the Forestry Commission will investigate.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2012/5931 A31 SCREENING DISCHARGE

Mrs Westerhoff asked for the views of the Court and Forestry Commission on a proposal to plant gorse at strategic locations on the Forest side of the fence in order to improve screening. It was agreed that the suggestion should be considered.

Action
DW

2012/5932	DISUSED RAILWAY LINE FENCE – DUR HILL TO BURBUSH	DISCHARGE
	Miss Macnair reported that the fence on the Burley side is in a very poor condition. There is a very nasty drop off a well-used track and she asked the Forestry Commission to inspect and repair.	Action KP
2012/5933	CAR FREE DITCH – HILL TOP TO IPERS BRIDGE	DISCHARGE
	The Forestry Commission was asked to reinstate the car free ditch which in places is almost non existent resulting in damage by parked vehicles.	
	The Deputy Surveyor confirmed that this road will be added to the HLS programme of ditching.	Action KP
2012/5934	CROCK HILL HOLE	DISCHARGE
	Mr Pasmore said he would mark on a map, to be provided by the Deputy Surveyor, the exact position of this very dangerous hole as Forestry Commission staff have so far been unable to locate it.	Action AHP/KP

The Deputy Surveyor and Mr Street left the meeting.

ENCROACHMENTS NOT INVOLVING THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2012/5935	FIELD AT BULL HILL	DISCHARGE
	Mr Gerrelli left the room whilst this matter was discussed further. Mr Readhead said he had visited the site and met Mr Gerrelli. Mr Deakin is also believed to have inspected the fence. The new fence posts are outside the line of the original fence and the Court agreed this is unacceptable.	
	On Mr Gerrelli's return to the meeting, he was advised that the hedge must be cut back and the fence must be realigned in its original position.	

OTHER MATTERS ARISING

2012/5936	ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS INVOLVING COMMONERS' STOCK	RESUME
	Mr Readhead proposed that the Court consider fencing the B3078 from Cadnam to Godshill and the B3054 from Lymington to Dibden Purlieu. In addition he suggested that the road from Hill Top to Ipers Bridge should be gravelled.	
	A discussion took place during which members of the Court agreed that the welfare of the commoners' animals must be considered. It is considered unlikely that it will be possible to reduce the present level of accidents.	
	It was stated that the last time that commoners were asked for their opinion, they were against fencing more roads.	
	It will take years to achieve fencing as at present there is no statutory authority to fence those roads.	
	The meeting was split as to whether fencing should be carried out.	
	The Court agreed the matter warrants further discussion with a view to	

seeking a possible way forward.

Action
DW

Mrs Westerhoff will ask Natural England for its view.

2012/5937 KEEPERS OF THE KINGDOM DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer said that a revised edition of this beautiful book is planned in celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. An updated photograph of the Court has been requested by the author and arrangements are to be made for this to be done at the March Court. The Agisters will be required to attend in uniform as they will be included in the picture.

Mrs Thorne gave her apologies and left the meeting.

2012/5938 HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE PLAN & GRIT BINS RESUME

The Clerk apologised that she has not yet had time to meet with the Highways Manager.

Action
SW

2012/5939 REVIEW OF THE HABITATS DIRECTIVE DISCHARGE

Mrs Westerhoff circulated a very helpful paper. It was agreed that some aspects of the review are likely to result in amendments to the Directive which could prove detrimental to the Forest. Mrs Westerhoff will draft a response which the Official Verderer will sign.

Action
OV & DW

2012/5940 WELFARE TOUR DISCHARGE

It was agreed the spring welfare tour will take place on Thursday, 10th May 2012, subject to the agreement of Mr Deakin.

Action
SW & LR

HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME

2012/5941 HLS BOARD MEETING DISCHARGE

The minutes of the Board Meeting held on Wednesday, 8th February 2012 were circulated together with the previous meeting held in October 2011. It has been agreed that an AGM will be held, on Wednesday 4th April at 5.00 p.m. in the Verderers' Hall. Everyone with an interest in the HLS Scheme will be invited to attend and it is intended it will be an opportunity for people to learn more about the scheme.

Action
OV &
C Draper

VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME (VGS)

2012/5942 VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME RULES AND APPLICATION FORM RESUME

The above papers were circulated and comments on the Application Form invited which should be sent to Mr Draper. It is intended that the Terms and Conditions and the Application Form will be sent out to all those who have paid marking fees.

Action
CD

A discussion took place on the role of the Agisters in ensuring compliance with Scheme rules and the Official Verderer said he will be arranging a meeting in this connection. Mrs Westerhoff asked that the Agisters become more involved in informing the Verderers of poor condition of the SSSI.

Action
OV

FINANCIAL AND OTHER MONTHLY REPORTS

2012/5943 FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR DECEMBER 2011 RESUME

The financial statement for January 2012 was approved.

STAFF MATTERS (including the Staff Committee) - There were no staff matters to discuss

TRAINING - No training is currently taking place or due in the near future.

HEALTH AND SAFETY - There are no health and safety issues at present.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2012/5944 STALLION SCHEME DISCHARGE

The proposed stallion scheme for this year was approved.

2012/5945 BLOODLINES SCHEME DISCHARGE

It was agreed that the scheme to improve the bloodlines will not run this year as it is felt it would be best to see the results of the first year before deciding whether to commit further funds.

2012/5946 VERDERERS' ELECTION RESUME

The Official Verderer said that he is keen to reduce the cost of the Verderers' Election, estimated to be in the region of £14,000 this year. To this end, he is taking advice to see if the legislation which is very out of date can be revised. In particular, postal voting could drastically reduce costs. Reducing the number of polling stations which are currently required (5) is another option. The initial cost of taking this forward is likely to be in the region of £5,000. It was agreed to proceed with this first stage.

Action
OV

2012/5947 POUND MAINTENANCE RESUME

An application for funding from the HLS has been submitted. The CDA has indicated it would like a joint approach to pound maintenance. Mr Deakin is taking this forward.

Action
RD

2012/5948 BRAMSHAW GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT PLAN DISCHARGE

With the approval of the Court, the Official Verderer signed off the management plan for Bramshaw Golf Course.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 13.33 hrs