



*Verderers of the New Forest
Verderers' Grazing Scheme
The Queen's House
Lyndhurst
Hampshire
SO43 7NH*

*Official Verderer
Dominic May*

*Telephone: 023 8028 3134
Fax: 023 8028 3101*

All Verderers
Advisory Group Members

8 October 2014

**MINUTES OF THE VERDERERS' GRAZING SCHEME MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON 8 October 2014**

Present:

Mr D May (OV)	- Official Verderer
Mr R Deakin (RD)	- Elected Verderer
Mrs D Westerhoff (DW)	- Natural England Appointed Verderer
Mr H Mills (HM)	- Defra Appointed Verderer
Miss L Sargeant (LS)	- VGS Administrator

Item	Item	Action
1. Apologies	Mr A Gerrelli (AG) - Elected Verderer	
2. Declarations of interest	OV, RD and AG declared their membership of the VGS. RD is a member of the New Forest Livestock Society. OV, RD, & AG are members of the New Forest Pony Breeders and Cattle Society. OV declared an interest in New Forest Hunt. HM has a tenant who is in VGS. HM has an interest in NFLAS. OV declared an interest in the small grant application of Rowe, as her daughter works for him from time to time.	
3. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising	Add in the declarations of interest to the last minutes.	LS
4. VGS Payments – due diligence checks	VGS Payments are to be made in December. After the staff meeting in November, LS is to check the cattle numbers with the Agisters. LS to cross check with the Agisters that those members who had lots of geldings last year have not entered them into the VGS this year. LS to check members if they have had any significant increase in stock numbers since last year.	LS LS LS

5. Options for unsold colts	<p>The New Forest Livestock Society (NFLS) are planning to hold a November sale and may have one in December. As part of the disease control measures they are carrying out the vet inspections at a separate area away from the sales ring.</p> <p>RD to find out if we have a colt foal problem.</p> <p>It was decided that the VGS should not fund putting down of unsold and unwanted colt foals.</p>	RD
6. Fallen stock wagon report	<p>The fallen stock wagon provides a service to the local agricultural community. LS to check they have the winch inspected.</p> <p>The Committee approved the lease for another year.</p>	LS
7. NFLAS request for funding	<p>The New Forest Land Advice Service meets an obligation of our HLS scheme.</p> <p>LS to ask them to have a better client database that allows their staff to share information about commoners with each other, in order that when a NFLAS staff member visits a commoner, they have all the details of the previous visits by previous staff who may no longer be in post.</p> <p>LS to ask them to provide commoners with a feedback form, so that we can learn how they feel the service could be improved.</p> <p>The Committee approved £42,000 every year for the next 5 years of the HLS.</p>	LS LS
8. Small grant applications	<p>The spreadsheet of grants needs the last column to be added up for 2012.</p> <p>Grant request from Thomas was approved for £2,000 towards a new barn.</p> <p>Grant request from Rowe was approved for £150 towards the new barn, reflects that Rowe has fewer animals turned out. The decision was taken to give approx. 10% of the total cost of the barn.</p>	LS
9. Water connections at Beaulieu Road	<p>Properties 2, 3 and 4 have all paid towards the cost of connecting to the mains water, as have the hotel. However, none have been able to connect as there is a problem between the FC and Southern Water. Property number 5 and Stationmaster's Cottage have applied to connect to the mains, but have not yet paid a contribution to the whole project. Property 1 does not seem to want to connect.</p> <p>LS to find out what we can do to progress the connection and once agreed get No 5 and Stationmaster's Cottage to pay as well. LS to visit the owner</p>	LS

	of No 1 asking if they want to connect to the mains.	
10. Animal Numbers Reduction report	<p>The key question is whether the animal numbers are too high. Natural England's recent assessment does not show a problem with overgrazing at present. What we need to establish is whether there is enough food for the animals. It's not straightforward, as there are so many variables, weather being a key factor. The Illingworth report stated that in the 1960s there was 1 pony to 2 cattle, by 1990 it was 2 ponies to 1 cow. We expect that pony numbers will begin to reduce now as we have changed the stallion turnout and there is currently poor demand for ponies. We need to continue to monitor the condition of the Forest and condition of stock, alongside weather conditions.</p> <p>LS to pull out data from the Illingworth report and update the figures, to submit to the November Court.</p>	LS
11. Future of VGS Advisory Group	The Committee agreed that the letter written to John Durnell as representative of the VGS Advisory Group explained satisfactorily why there was no need for the group at present, but confirmed that it could be called upon in the future if the need arose.	
12. AOB	<p>The sightline fencing project has some additional areas that could be added. It was agreed that this should comprise a new project for 2015 as permission will need to be sought to add new fencing. LS to speak with Agisters if they have any other areas where they think it would be good to have new sightline fences.</p> <p>Gravel surfacing for the pounds was agreed in principal by the Committee. The cost is to be confirmed with OV. LS to get consent from Natural England.</p> <p>Geodata Annual Support Agreement was approved by the Committee to come out of the central HLS Mapping budget. The contract needs to state that if we have any hours left at the end of the year to carry these over into the new financial year.</p>	<p>LS</p> <p>LS</p> <p>LS</p>

L Sargeant
VGS Administrator

Copy to:

VGS Management Committee
Advisory Group
Verderers