

MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 17th June 2015 at 9.30 a.m. in the Verderers' Hall and the Library, the Queen's House, Lyndhurst.

PRESENT:	Mr Dominic May	Official Verderer
	Mr R Deakin	Elected Verderer & Staff Committee Chairman
	Mr A B Dowsett	Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer
	Miss D Macnair MBE	Senior Elected Verderer
	Mr Clive Maton	National Park Appointed Verderer
	Mr G M H Mills	DEFRA Appointed Verderer
	Mr D Readhead	Elected Verderer
	Mr R Stride	Co-opted Verderer
	Mrs D Westerhoff	Natural England Appointed Verderer
APOLOGIES	Mr A Gerrelli	Elected Verderer
IN ATTENDANCE:	Miss S Westwood	Clerk to the Verderers
	Mr J R Gerrelli	Head Agister

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

2015/7981 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING RESUME

The Minutes of the Court held on Wednesday, 20th May 2015 were approved and signed.

2015/7982 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RESUME

The Official Verderer, the Elected Verderers, Mr Stride and Mr Maton all declared an interest in the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme, the Verderers Grazing Scheme and Single Farm Payment/the new Basic Payment Scheme.

Mr Hallam Mills declared an interest in HLS Schemes as his Estate is in Higher Level Stewardship and borders the perambulation of the New Forest. He also declared an interest in the new Basic Payment Scheme, although not as a practising commoner. In addition, Mr Mills' Estate is involved in the Better Boundaries Project, run by the New Forest Land Advice Service with support from Natural England. The Estate has a tenant who is a Commoner. Mr Mills is also a Patron of the New Forest Trust.

Miss Macnair is a member of the New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society Council.

Mr Deakin, Mr Readhead and Mr Stride are members of the New Forest Commoners' Defence Association committee. Mr Deakin is also Treasurer.

Mr Dowsett is a Forestry Commission Volunteer Ranger.

Mr Deakin, Mr Readhead and Mr Stride are members of the New Forest Stallion Syndicate.

Mr Deakin, Mr Readhead and Mr Stride are Directors of the New Forest Livestock Society.

Mr Maton is a Forestry Commission contractor.

Mrs Westerhoff and Mr Stride are tenants of the Forestry Commission.

2015/7983 CONDITION OF STOCK

RESUME

The Head Agister reported that overall the condition of stock is good and the grass is growing well.

There are quite a lot of foals and the Agisters will shortly commence the foal count.

There are also quite a lot of cattle turned out on the Forest, and total cattle marking fees have increased significantly. The Agisters and the office are working closely with veterinary surgeons at the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) to ensure full compliance with the New Forest TB Control Plan.

Stock numbers overall have increased which is believed to be the result of the new Basic Payments Scheme. A significant increase could be detrimental to the Forest. The Head Agister said he believes the increase in animal numbers again this year is due to commoners gambling that for next year's BPS, they will be able to claim for the number of animals they turn out this year. However, the Official Verderer reminded the Court of the letter sent by the Minister on 26th March this year, in which he noted our concerns that the BPS could lead to an increase in animal numbers and possible overgrazing. He said he will discuss with the Court a satisfactory approach for 2016's BPS payment.

It was suggested, however, that some commoners may pay marking fees for animals that they do not turn out. If that is the case, it will distort the numbers.

A further positive consideration, is that the area of grazing available to stock is at present increasing in size as some Verderers' Inclosures are being thrown open. It is estimated these inclosures will eventually account for an increase in land available to Forest stock of some 2,000 ha. These areas are gradually reverting from silviculture to Forest heath, lawn and woodland.

2015/7984 STALLIONS

DISCHARGE

All stallions have been caught and removed from the Forest.

2015/7985 REPORT ON ANIMALS REMOVED FROM THE FOREST

RESUME

This very useful report had been circulated prior to the Court.

2015/7986 STOCK DEATHS - OTHER THAN ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

RESUME

This very useful report had been circulated prior to the Court.

2015/7987 REPORT ON MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE AND
COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEAR

RESUME

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Forest Ponies	4618	4299
Forest Cattle	2659	2441
Forest Donkeys	107	96
Forest Pigs	0	0
Forest Sheep	0	0
Total Forest Stock	7384	6836

Common Ponies	659	722
Common Cattle	899	1098
Common Donkeys	92	59
Common Pigs	33	23
Common Sheep	190	142
Total Common Stock	1873	2044
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Forest	7384	6836
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Commons	1650	1879
Total Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys	9034	8715
Total Stock – Forest & Commons	9257	8880

2015/7988 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT RESUME

Several commoners who own entire male mules have been advised by letter that their mules must be removed from the Forest in accordance with the byelaws. There is some doubt as to whether they have all been removed yet, as one of the Agisters is on leave. Upon his return to work, he will be asked to confirm that those mules in his area have been taken off.

2015/7989 ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS RESUME

The Announcements and Decisions were approved.

Head Agister Jonathan Gerrelli left the meeting.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Bruce Rothnie, Deputy Surveyor
Mr Paul Grugeon, Land Agent (New Forest)

ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS BY THE OFFICIAL VERDERER

2015/7990 NEW FOREST STALLION ASHDENE RECORD

The licencing of stallions is the remit of the New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society. The Verderers only select from the pool of stallions which have been licenced by the Pony Society because of the desire to ensure that only pure bred New Forest ponies are sired on the Forest and that their progeny are registerable either as pure or part bred New Forest.

In the case of Ashdene Record there was clearly some confusion regarding whether or not the colt had passed the vet. It was an unfortunate situation which should be avoidable in future.

2015/7991 PONDHEAD WETLAND RESTORATION

Mrs Sally Hayward drew our attention to further concerns she has with the re-submitted planning application for the Pondhead Wetland Restoration.

The Verderers strongly support the Forestry Commission's project for Wetland Restoration at Pondhead, which will restore damage done by previous human interventions over the centuries. The outcome will improve the environment and its ecology.

2015/7992 STALLIONS

All the Stallions and Colts which were turned out this year were removed from the Forest by Monday 15th June.

ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

2015/7993 THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR MAY 2015

The Agisters attended 2 accidents in May. One involved a cow and the other a jack donkey. This compares with 6 accidents in May last year.

The jack donkey had to be destroyed due to his injuries. The driver has not reported the accident which happened on Sunday, 31st May at 11.00 a.m. on Hilltop.

The cow, which was hit on the 8th May outside Beaulieu Garage at 8.50 in the morning, escaped unharmed.

Neither accident has been reported by the drivers involved.

24 animals have been killed or injured so far this year, compared with 26 by this time last year.

So far in June, a bay filly had to be destroyed following an accident in North Lane, Beaulieu and a coloured Shetland Pony was left to die in the road following a late night collision on the B3054 at Norley Wood Crossroads. The driver who hit the Shetland has not reported the accident.

On Monday afternoon this week, a Heavy Goods Vehicle collided with a mare and broke her back in a collision on the C10 between Picket Post and Burley.

THE SPEED CAMERA VAN

346 motorists were caught driving over the speed limit on the unfenced roads in May.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE DEPUTY SURVEYOR

2015/7994 BLOCKAGES IN THE BEAULIEU RIVER

I would like to respond to the presentment made by Mr Brian Ingram at the April Court. Mr Ingram raised concern that accumulations of woody material in the Beaulieu River are causing flooding of land at Ashurst Lodge during times of high flow.

The accumulation of woody debris in Forest streams is part of a natural process. The value of this woody debris to the ecology of the streams is now widely recognised and their presence is a key criterion upon which the riverine habitats in woodland are assessed to be in favourable condition by Natural England. These accumulations are rarely permanent because they can break up, disperse and may be relocated during times of high river flow.

Woody debris can cause temporary re-alignment of a stream and the development of pools – this is of part of the natural process. However where these streams pass close to land managed for other purposes there is a potential that woody accumulations can cause localised seasonal flooding on to neighbouring land. This can impact on the livelihoods of those occupying and managing that land.

We have completed an inspection of the stretch of the Beaulieu River raised by Mr Ingram and identified some woody accumulations that are causing the problems. There are

others that are not. We will arrange to remove those accumulations responsible for the impact on neighbouring land later in the summer when ground conditions are drier and when we have other work planned in the vicinity.

PRESENTMENTS

2015/7995 THE STATE OF THE FOREST
Presentment by Mrs Pam Bagguley, LNEA, LGSM, Hon.Dip.

'Pam Bagguley 83, LNEA....LGSM ..Hon Dip. Sixty years a Commoner. Children born in the Forest, husband killed in the Forest, parents moved in with me. With a hectic working life time in the Forest was so special. Now I can't walk very well; riding my homebred horse in a gentle ride though my part of the forest, five minutes from home, I am 20 years old. Last week I was stopped by the little stream filled by huge flints, no bridge. The Commission gate was yards away - blocked. That was a wound that could not be borne.

I had tried by spending £40 to £60 a month on wild bird seed to bring back the birds. I was aware that the commissions were deadly quiet except when huge lorries were unloading stones, huge cutters slicing through trees of course there were no wild life left. Even my twenty acres were effected. No work is ever done unless huge noisy machinery is used.

I am now deeply engaged. I realised that the Open Forest is grazed right down in June.

So many animals. Research showed that animals now grazing, reached well over 10,000.

The deer are jumping into farm paddocks in immense numbers, so rabbits are vanishing, so no foxes. My son in Tooting Bec has more foxes and wildlife than in my valley.

Squirrels have left the forest. Ponies can be given or bought for £10 or £20 I cannot believe the immense payment made per pony per year it doesn't have to be a New Forest Pony could it really be as much as 900 a year.

The New Forest was not a park manicured for getting grants from Public and Private Companies.

IT IS OUR HERITAGE. AND OUR HOME'.

In response to Mrs Bagguley's presentment, the Official Verderer said that the Verderers are also deeply concerned about the Forest and have a statutory duty to protect it. He added he will respond to Mrs Bagguley's Presentment at the next Court.

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS

2015/7996 THE STATE OF THE FOREST

RESUME

Mrs Bagguley was referring to the stream crossing at Amberslade where the bridge is being replaced with a ford. Large flints of the sort that Mrs Bagguley brought to Court are not acceptable in a crossing place. The Deputy Surveyor said he will investigate what has happened and provide details to the Official Verderer before the next Court.

Action
DS

It seems the CDA has also complained about a 'mess' that has been made in the area during restoration works. Mr Stride, Mr Dowsett, Mrs Westerhoff and the Deputy Surveyor all said they will visit the site.

Action
RS/BD/DW/
DS

The Official Verderer remarked that the Forest does recover remarkably

well and the Court supports the principle of the stream restoration works, but there is obviously a need for work to be carried out in a way that is sympathetic to the Forest. Mr Mills added there is a real need to defend the projects that are being carried out and to educate people so that they have a better understanding of why work is being done. Non-technical descriptions and reasons for the works are needed.

Action
FC

Mrs Bagguley expressed concerns about a variety of things in her presentment.

Miss Macnair felt the natural balance is not right and it now tends to favour predators. The huge numbers of people who visit the Forest are responsible for a great deal of disturbance to the wildlife. Mrs Westerhoff remarked that management of birds is a huge subject but the restoration works are intended to benefit bird life in the Forest.

It was suggested there are also too many deer. The Deputy Surveyor confirmed that culling takes place at the appropriate time of year as the Forestry Commission is well aware of the need to control the deer.

Recreation can have a marked detrimental effect on the conservation interest. This was borne out during the Foot and Mouth outbreak when dogs were not permitted on the Forest. Ground nesting birds returned to sites where they had not been able to nest for years. It was suggested that dogs should be kept on leads during the nesting season to help protect ground nesting birds. There is also an increase in dog walking businesses using the Forest several times a day. Out of control dogs are becoming an increasing problem. They can be a nuisance to people's quiet enjoyment of the Forest and are a particular hazard to horse riders. The Deputy Surveyor said he will discuss the issue of dog control with the National Park Authority. Mr Mills suggested he should raise the problems which are being caused, at the New Forest Access Forum with a view to opening up a debate. The Court agreed this would be a good idea.

Action
HM

A Wetland Restoration presentation to the Consultative Panel is planned. The Official Verderer said he will attend.

Action
OV

SUBMISSIONS BY THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2015/7997 SSE PROPOSED EMERGENCY REPAIR WORKS – POLE AND UNDERGROUND CABLE ADJACENT TO HINCHEBLEA SUBSTATION DISCHARGE

The proposed works involve replacing an existing pole and underground cable which were damaged in a lightning strike. In order to carry out the work, it will be necessary to remove several areas of scrub and brambles.

The Court was happy to consent to the proposed works subject to:-

- the contractor cutting back all scrub and bramble in front of the compound between the gravel track, the embankment and the pole, and clearing all arisings from the site.
- the standard three conditions of safe working conditions, satisfactory re-instatement and compensation for loss of grazing.

The plan provided in respect of this application is not accurate and the Court asked that in future, additional care is taken to ensure that plans provided accurately represent the layout of the area involved. Mr Grugeon undertook to ensure compliance with this request.

2015/7998 REPLACEMENT GAS SERVICE PIPE, HOLLY COTTAGE, BISTERNE DISCHARGE
CLOSE, BURLEY

The proposed gas pipe replacement affects a very small area of grazing, with the remaining work being carried out in the gravel track. In view of this, the Court approved the works subject to the standard three conditions of safe working conditions, satisfactory re-instatement and compensation for loss of grazing.

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

2015/7999 DE-MINIMIS SUBMISSIONS DISCHARGE

This matter was discharged.

2015/8000 SWAN GREEN CRICKET CLUB PAVILION RESUME
September

Mr Grugeon explained that planning permission is required to demolish the pavilion and he apologised that due to staff shortages it has not been possible to make any progress.

The Clerk reported that she found a circular metal disk over what may be a hole containing a water stop cock. The immediate area is wet, which suggests there may be a water leak. Mr Grugeon said the Forestry Commission will investigate and ensure the problem is resolved.

Action
PG

2015/8001 BURLEY GOLF CLUB DRAFT PROPOSALS DISCHARGE

Mr Readhead and Mr Grugeon met on site.

The Golf Club is seeking consent to undertake five alterations on the course.

1. An area on one of the paths is subject to flooding and the proposal is to raise the level of the path at that point by 6". The path will not be widened.
2. Change the direction of an existing drain.
3. Move a bunker (this falls within the scope of the Club's Licence). The new bunker will be of a smaller size and therefore a small area of grazing will be gained.
4. Lengthen the path by the 18th hole by 30m. All the grass has been worn away and in winter the area becomes very messy. If a 1m path is laid, it will keep people off surrounding grazing.
5. Remove two signs and combine to replace with one new sign.

The Court was advised that Natural England and the Forestry Commission have no objections.

The proposals were approved, subject to Natural England's consent as necessary and also subject to the standard three conditions covering works on the Open Forest, namely safe working conditions, satisfactory re-instatement and compensation for loss of grazing.

Mr Readhead remarked that whilst visiting the Golf Course he noted that the course is spotless with no sign of any litter. Miss Macnair however, remarked that there is an area of land beyond the boundary of the present Golf Course, which she believed may be included in the Golf Club's licence, where the situation is not so good.

- | | | |
|-----------|--|-----------------|
| 2015/8002 | TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AT TILE BARN LANE | RESUME |
| | The Official Verderer attended a site meeting at the end of Tile Barn Lane. The meeting was very constructive but a further site visit is required to agree what works need to be carried out. This will be used as an example of what we are trying to achieve as respects verge protection. | Action
OV |
| 2015/8003 | FOREST ROAD, BURLEY | DISCHARGE |
| | The double ditch has been removed. | |
| 2015/8004 | CAR FREE DITCHING AND VERGE PROTECTION | RESUME |
| | The Deputy Surveyor said the Forestry Commission is trying to focus on one area of the Forest to try to achieve some success with verge protection quickly as it was remarked that nothing has been achieved so far. The Forestry Commission will talk with the Parish Councils, some of whom are known to be concerned about damage to verges. | Action
DS |
| | Verge protection and illegal parking is to be added as a project to the New Forest National Park's Partnership Plan which covers the next five years. The National Park has agreed to co-ordinate with the Parish Councils in order to add to the Plan as time goes on. The Western Escarpment Plan is already in place and it is proposed to expand on that. | |
| | Beaulieu Estate has a lot of verges and similar problems. It too is keen to try to resolve the issue. At the moment its verges are not included in its HLS and it is hoped they can be added. The Official Verderer doubted that the Beaulieu verges can be included in the Verderers' HLS even though they are grazed. | |
| | Mr Grugeon reported that the trainee Estates Keeper is being tasked with looking at verge parking in the villages but it will be important to ensure that there is no risk of double funding if the HLF is approved. Approval for the bid is expected in September and will relate to next year. | |
| | The Deputy Surveyor and Mr Dowsett will discuss Woodgreen as that may be a useful area to start on. | Action
DS/BD |
| | As Mr Gerrelli is currently indisposed, Mr Deakin will communicate with Gary North (FC) as respects the verge parking problems in the vicinity of Pilley Pound. | Action
RD |
| 2015/8005 | ORDNANCE AT MATLEY | RESUME |
| | The walk over and visual inspection by the MOD is in progress. Unfortunately it resulted in two pieces of ordnance being identified outside the main target area and therefore the boundary has had to be moved out for the time being. The visual inspection should be completed next week. Mr Deakin expressed concern that extending the target area closer to the road will impact stock management. The Deputy Surveyor remarked that the MoD would allow usual land management activity on the area once the walkover survey was completed but the Deputy Surveyor will not sanction | Action
DS |

this until that statement has been provided by the MOD in writing.

Meanwhile, there are now holes all over the area where ordnance has been blown up in situ rather than in the large hole that was being used before. The area is now dangerous for drifting. However, the Deputy Surveyor said that it is imperative to get the area cleared of unexploded ordnance without further delay and asking the MOD to start filling in holes will delay everything. It was agreed a risk assessment is needed from the MOD so that the areas where it is safe to go are identified.

Action
DS

As respects the large hole, the Official Verderer thought the cost of re-instatement could possibly be covered by the HLS. Nothing can be done, however, until the risk assessment is received from the MOD.

2015/8006	EAST BOLDRE SIGNAGE	DISCHARGE
	The Clerk reported that Hampshire Council has confirmed that it is not progressing the new (pictorial) signs at the moment. Mandy Ware, Team Leader Traffic Management West at HCC is looking at their policy for signage in the Forest and is liaising with the National Park Authority with a view to revising the policy. The Clerk is in touch with Ms Ware.	Action Clerk
2015/8007	REPAIRS TO MINSTEAD BRIDLEWAY NO.10 – LOWER CANTERTON	DISCHARGE
	It is hoped this project will be progressed in due course.	
2015/8008	BROWNHILLS INCLOSURE DRIFTWAY	DISCHARGE
	The Deputy Surveyor will add this to the HLS terrestrial works list.	Action DS
2015/8009	NO FOREST CYCLING FROM THIS CAR PARK SIGNS	RESUME
	The Deputy Surveyor undertook to see what can be done to progress the erection of these signs which was part of an HLS project dating back to 2011.	Action DS
	Meanwhile, it was reported that there is a serious cycle trespass problem from Bramshaw Wood Car Park. The Parish Council is also concerned. It was requested that suitable signs be erected in that car park, preferably before the holiday season commences.	
2015/8010	ROUNDHILL WATER TOWER FENCE	DISCHARGE
	To clarify the position, the Court requires the fence to be constructed of wood, with the exception of the posts which may be metal, clad in wood. Mr Grugeon will communicate this to the water company.	Action PG

SSSI RESTORATION WORKS

2015/8011	REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE LIST	RESUME
	A new updated repair and maintenance list was handed round by the Deputy Surveyor.	
2015/8012	PONDHEAD	RESUME
	The Official Verderer reported on the latest position as respects this project.	

2015/8013 SLUFTERS RESUME

Mr Stride met with Miss Sarah Oakley last week. The problem with the ford will be added to the list. A visit to the site will be combined with the visit to Amberslade. Mr Dowsett and Mr Stride will attend.

Action
BD/RS

2015/8014 GREENFORD BOTTOM SSSI RESTORATION PROJECT DISCHARGE

The details of this project were circulated prior to the meeting.

The site visit did not include inspection of the side drain identified on the plan at J-K. However, there are no objections to the proposed work at that location.

The Court approved the proposals but further consents will be required. Any alterations proposed as a result of further consultations must be agreed with the Court prior to implementation.

2015/8015 ROE INCLOSURE DISCHARGE

It is necessary to move the inclosure bank back a short distance to ensure free flow of water. This is not on Open Forest and the Court noted the proposal.

ENCROACHMENTS

2015/8016 ENCROACHMENT LIST RESUME

Mr Grugeon will send a copy of the up to date encroachment list to the Clerk.

Action
PG

A discussion took place on when an encroachment should be discharged from the list, and when it needs to remain on it. In general, an encroachment should remain on the list until it has been completely remedied; it should not be removed simply because an action has been agreed but the encroachment has not been abated.

Members of the Court were asked to ensure that Mr Grugeon is informed about all encroachments in order that the list can be kept up to date and a record maintained of actions and results.

Action
All

It was also agreed that in order to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act, the Court Minutes will record information about the encroachment, including the address of the property, but not the name of the occupier.

Two such encroachments were then reported as follows....

Firstly, at Kings Copse Mr Deakin said that a large quantity of construction materials consisting of building rubble, soil, bags of cement and other general materials as well as some grass cuttings have been dumped on the Open Forest outside a property. The occupiers of this property have been using the Open Forest illegally for storage for some years and the Court is keen that they are stopped. Mr Grugeon said that he and the Estates Keeper spoke to the occupiers some time ago but they have clearly been ignored and the problem is now far worse. Mrs Westerhoff

Action
DS

suggested approaching Natural England, as this amounts to damage to the SSSI which is punishable by a fine of up to £20,000.

Action DW

Secondly, a newly gravelled access track has been constructed to the rear of a property in Bull Hill. Mr Grugeon said that a licence has been issued by the Forestry Commission in respect of the track. However, the track is 13 feet wide which is felt to be excessive, particularly as the gate to which it leads is a small wicket gate. The Licence is for an access and a wide gate. However, without a wide gate, the new track is effectively a parking area which requires Verderers' consent. If a wide gate is not installed, the Forestry Commission will have to deal with it as a breach of the conditions of the licence. Mrs Westerhoff will check whether Natural England gave consent for the track. The Court was very unhappy that a licence for such a wide track had been issued, particularly as the property has an alternative access at the front, direct from the road.

Action
HM

As a result of the discussion that followed the second report, the Deputy Surveyor said he felt the Forestry Commission and the Court should discuss what is or isn't acceptable in respect of such licences. Mr Grugeon said some guidelines would be appreciated.

The New Forest Access Forum has been discussing the merits or otherwise of creating an information pack for new owners of properties within the perambulation. The Court felt such a pack would be a very good idea.

The Clerk pointed out that the new Leaflet produced by the HLS and entitled Advice and Guidance for owners of properties adjoining the Open Forest goes some way towards informing residents of what they can and cannot do.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2015/8017 FALLEN TIMBER

RESUME

The Official Verderer expressed disappointment that the agreed trial clearance of Hawkhill Driftway has not been carried out. Mr Stride said he has been waiting for a site meeting in the drift way between New Park and the A337, with a suggestion that the trial may now be carried out at this alternative location. However, the Official Verderer replied that the originally agreed trial at Hawkhill Driftway should proceed first, and New Park can be done next.

Action
DS

The Court is very frustrated with the lack of action. The Deputy Surveyor said he will progress the work.

2015/8018 ILLEGAL CAMPING

DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer described a recent incident where he reported an overnight camper in Little Hatchett car park to the FC Duty Officer. The local Keeper Jonathan Cook attended, together with Robin Colin-Stokes who is a former New Forest Keeper, now working for the Forestry Commission in another part of the country. Together Mr Cook and Mr Colin-Stokes spoke to the camper who was told to leave. The camper refused and replied that the Forestry Commission won't prosecute because it never does. Keeper Cook returned the next morning to find the camper still there, and to gather evidence. However, on reporting this to the Recreation Department at Queen's House, he was told that no prosecution would be taken.

The Official Verderer asked the Deputy Surveyor what is the point of having byelaws and employing Keepers if the Forestry Commission won't use its powers or support its staff? The Official Verderer added that he saw two other illegal campers last night, but did not report them as no action will be taken by the FC.

The Court was very unhappy at the unwillingness of the Forestry Commission to take any action on illegal camping. The Deputy Surveyor explained the difficulties involved in obtaining a successful conviction for illegal camping on the Forest but the Court was not convinced.

Mr Readhead said that a man sleeping in his car outside Blackfield Cemetery has been moved on.

- | | | |
|-----------|--|--------------|
| 2015/8019 | BOGGY CROSSING PLACE NEAR TO SANDHOLE POUND | DISCHARGE |
| | <p>A request has been made for a boggy crossing place close to Sandhole Pound to be improved. However it does dry out in summer and there is some concern that improving the crossing may result in increased public access to what is considered to be a quiet area. The Beat Keeper is not in favour and the Court is of the same view. It was, therefore, decided not to progress this matter further.</p> | |
| 2015/8020 | BROADBAND CABINET IN LESTER SQUARE, BURLEY | DISCHARGE |
| | <p>Miss Macnair is surprised at the proposed site for the new broadband cabinet in the vicinity of Lester Square. The Official Verderer explained that the site was selected by Natural England. The ideal location for the box would be on the concrete pad that will be left when the telephone box (which is reportedly due for removal) has gone. However, when this was suggested to BT Openreach, the response was that broadband cabinets and telephone boxes are managed by different departments. It is understood the Parish Council is not happy with the proposed location either.</p> | |
| 2015/8021 | PHOTO OF A CAMPFIRE ON CAMPING IN THE FOREST'S WEBSITE | RESUME |
| | <p>Mr Dowsett advised the Court that he had expressed concern to the Deputy Surveyor about two photographs of campfires on Camping in the Forest's website. The Court agreed with Mr Dowsett that the photos are inappropriate for use on a website advertising Forest camping. The Deputy Surveyor promised to take up the issue with CITF.</p> | |
| | | Action
DS |
| 2015/8022 | WETLAND RESTORATION MONITORING | DISCHARGE |
| | <p>Mr Dowsett advised the Court that the wetland restoration team will be monitoring invertebrates in Forest streambeds, pre- and post-restoration works. This was welcomed by the Court. Mr Mills asked if any fish monitoring is also to be undertaken, to which the Deputy Surveyor replied that separate fish surveys are carried out.</p> | |
| 2015/8023 | TIMBER ON THE OLD CASTLE HILL CAR PARK | DISCHARGE |
| | <p>Mr Mills thanked the Forestry Commission for clearing the stack of timber from the old Castle Hill car park but commented that a lot of bark has been left. He was advised, however, that more timber is due to be stored at that location.</p> | |

2015/8024 COASTAL PATH

DISCHARGE

Mr Mills expressed concern that the new coastal path that is planned from Christchurch to Beaulieu could in places be displaced onto land to which the commoners' animals have a right of access. A discussion took place as to whether any Forestry Commission land will be involved and it was decided that is unlikely to be the case. Stock does however, graze the foreshore and it is understood the Beaulieu Estate does have some concerns.

2015/8025 DEBRIS DAMS

DISCHARGE

The Court was a little concerned that in the Deputy Surveyor's announcement in Open Court he explained that debris dams are removed when there is a risk of flooding to private land. The concern is that he did not refer to lawns and accesses. The Deputy Surveyor said he did not intend to imply that lawns are not important, and added that they are afforded the same level of protection as private property.

2015/8026 NEW ACCESS FORESTRY COMMISSION LAND AT BRAMSHAW

DISCHARGE

Mr Readhead advised the Court that a commoner has recently taken over some Forestry Commission ground at Bramble Hill and would like to apply for a new access track in order to avoid driving across Open Forest grazing. The new track would be constructed along the boundary of the ground, tight up against the fence. The commoner has given assurance that he would create and maintain a ditch.

Mr Stride said that there is an existing access track to Bramble Hill Farm. He also commented that he did not consider this to be a suitable piece of ground for large scale cattle feeding.

The Court was not in favour of the proposal which would in any event require a formal application to the Forestry Commission and would require the Court's consent. In addition, it is understood that Natural England has already indicated that it would not give its consent. Mr Readhead will advise the commoner accordingly.

The Deputy Surveyor and Mr Grugeon left the meeting

OTHER MATTERS ARISING

2015/8027 A PARTNERSHIP PLAN FOR THE NEW FOREST

RESUME

The Clerk wrote to the National Park following the last Court setting out the Court's views on the latest draft of the plan. A less than satisfactory response has been received from the NPA. The Official Verderer will attend a meeting with the NPA on this subject on 30th June, after which further amendments may be made. A further revision of the plan is due to be produced with the final version expected by the 16th July. The Court is now uncertain whether it wishes to be associated with the Partnership Plan, with its logo/name included as a partner.

MATTERS ARISING FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

2015/8028 NEW FOREST PONY BREEDING AND CATTLE SOCIETY DISCHARGE

Miss Macnair reported on a recent meeting where the problem of Pondhead Bracken was discussed. DNA testing has identified that the colt was not sired by Meadowsweet Major as originally believed. In fact, at the moment it is not possible to identify his sire. As a result the colt's licence has been revoked. The Pony Society is writing to the owners of mares that ran out with the colt this season in the Burley Mill Lawn area. Meanwhile, the system of selecting colts and stallions is under review to ensure that such a mistake cannot happen in the future.

The stallion sub-committee will consider what changes it needs to make before the stallion inspections next spring in order to ensure that in future only properly licenced colts and stallions are turned out onto the Forest.

2015/8029 NEW FOREST ACCESS FORUM DISCHARGE

Mr Mills reported that unfortunately the general view of the Forum is that the Verderers don't say yes to anything and are anti-cycling. Mr Mills explained to the Access Forum that the Court is only anti-cycling in the wrong place and that the Verderers have a duty to protect the Forest.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

2015/8030 FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR MAY 2015 RESUME

The Financial Statement was noted. The revised, simplified layout was welcomed.

HEALTH & SAFETY & TRAINING

There have been no health and safety issues since the last Court and no training is currently planned for the near future.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2015/8031 AUDITED ACCOUNTS DISCHARGE

The Audited Accounts were approved and the Official Verderer was authorised to sign them off.

2015/8032 REFURBISHMENTS TO THE VERDERERS' HALL RESUME

Mr Dowsett will enquire as to the progress of the proposals to refurbish the Verderers' Hall as it was understood that the work would be undertaken between the July and September Courts. If there is any delay, it may be necessary to seek an alternative venue for the September Court.

Action
BD

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 13:40 hrs.

Dominic May
Official Verderer
23rd July 2015