

**MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 20th June 2018 at
9.30 a.m. in the Verderers' Hall and the Library, the Queen's House, Lyndhurst.**

PRESENT:	Lord Manners	Official Verderer
	Mr R Deakin	Elected Verderer & Staff Committee Chairman
	Mr A B Dowsett	Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer
	Cllr Edward Heron	National Park Appointed Verderer
	Mr J Greenwood	Elected Verderer
	Miss D Macnair MBE	Senior Elected Verderer
	Mr G M H Mills DL	DEFRA Appointed Verderer
	Mr A H Pasmore	Elected Verderer
	Mr D Readhead	Elected Verderer
	Mrs D Westerhoff	Natural England Appointed Verderer

APOLOGIES: Mr J Gerrelli Head Agister

IN ATTENDANCE: Miss S Westwood Clerk to the Verderers

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

2018/9915 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING RESUME

The Minutes of Court held on 16th May were approved and signed.

2018/9916 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RESUME

The Official Verderer declared an interest in the Verderers' Higher Level Stewardship Agreement as tenants on his Estate benefit from the Verderers Grazing Scheme and his Estate is in Higher Level Stewardship.

Elected Verderers Mr Deakin, Mr Greenwood, Miss Macnair and Mr Readhead declared an interest in the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme, Verderers Grazing Scheme and Basic Payment Scheme. Mr Pasmore declared an interest in the Basic Payment Scheme.

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

Mr Deakin and Mr Readhead are Directors of the New Forest Livestock Society. They are also members of the New Forest Stallion Syndicate.

Mr Dowsett is a Forestry Commission Volunteer Ranger.

Mr Greenwood is employed part-time by Cadland Estate and therefore has an interest in the Stallion Grazing. Mr Greenwood also has a stallion of his own.

Cllr Heron declared his membership of Hampshire County Council, New Forest District Council and the New Forest National Park Authority. He will declare any additional interests that may arise during the course of the meeting, at the item.

Miss Macnair is on the New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society Council.

Mr Hallam Mills declared an interest in HLS Schemes as his Estate is in Higher Level Stewardship. The Estate is also involved in the Better Boundaries Project, run by the New Forest Land Advice Service with support from Natural England.

Mr Mills is also a Patron of the New Forest Trust

Mrs Westerhoff is a tenant of the Forestry Commission. Mrs Westerhoff sits on the Board of Trustees of the New Forest Trust.

Action
OV/Clerk

Members of the Court will declare any additional interests that may arise during the course of the meeting, at the item.

The form for registering interests will be finalised and copies sent to members of the Court for completion. Upon receipt, the interests which have been registered will be shown on the Verderers' website – www.verderers.org.uk.

2018/9917 CONDITION OF STOCK

RESUME

Mr Deakin said that everything looks pretty good with the exception of the odd mare with a foal. The majority of stock looks healthy. There appears to be a lot of stock out, both cattle and ponies, but there is plenty of food on the Forest. Despite the very wet winter, a little rain would be welcome now.

A few cattle are looking plain. They are being watched carefully but should improve at this time of year. It was queried why they are turned out. Mr Deakin explained that because of the TB rules, some cattle were marked months ago but are only now being turned out. If an Agister is asked to mark any animal whose condition gives cause for concern, he will decline to do it until the animal has improved.

Several ponies and a few cattle have been reported with long feet. It is thought the very wet winter is probably responsible.

2018/9918 REPORT ON MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE AND COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEAR

RESUME

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>
Forest Ponies	4762	4722
Forest Cattle	3717	4370
Forest Donkeys	124	106
Forest Pigs	0	0
Forest Sheep	0	0
Total Forest Stock	8603	9198
Common Ponies	614	806
Common Cattle	1419	1124
Common Donkeys	65	124
Common Pigs	24	36
Common Sheep	213	244
Total Common Stock	2335	2355
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Forest	8603	9198
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Commons	2098	2054
Total Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys	10701	11657
Total Stock – Forest & Commons	10938	11553

2018/9919 ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS

RESUME

The Announcements and Decisions were approved.

OPEN COURT – 10.00 a.m.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Paul Grugeon, Land Agent (New Forest)

Agister Peter Rix opened the Court with the usual proclamation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS BY THE OFFICIAL VERDERER

2018/9920 NATIONAL GRID'S PROPOSALS UNDERGROUNDING OF HIGH VOLTAGE POWER LINES IN THE NORTH OF THE FOREST

HALE PURLIEU

At our last court Peter Gear, a resident of Hale, made a presentment about the National Grid's proposals for under grounding the high-voltage power lines which cross the north of the Forest.

Whilst the Verderers have been represented on one of the Stakeholder groups liaising with National Grid on this proposal, the Verderers have not yet received any formal, detailed, application for consideration.

The Verderers support in principle, proposals which result in the placing underground of unsightly and intrusive cables. However, the Court looks carefully at the details of any proposals and often has observations and indeed reservations about the details. Its consent is therefore by no means to be taken for granted, nor indeed is the National Grid so doing.

The Verderers continue to participate in discussions about this proposal and will continue to listen carefully to what is said, both in favour and against the proposal. It is of course open to both supporters and objectors to make presentments to this court if they wish to do so.

2018/9921 FOREST FARMING GROUP

The Forest Farming Group consists of representatives of the following organisations within the forest:

The CDA, National Park Authority, NFU, CLA, Forestry Commission, Natural England and the Verderers.

The Group's purpose is to secure future funding for the Forest on the expiry of the current HLS agreement in February 2020. In particular, we are seeking ongoing support for commoning because of course the Verderers' Grazing Scheme is funded by the current HLS.

The Group is actively lobbying both politicians and civil servants to make a case for the Forest to have a further bespoke scheme. We believe that our efforts are being favourably received but the current state of Government policy does not enable me to report that there are any concrete proposals for future funding.

In view of the state of Government policy, we have suggested that the current HLS scheme should be rolled over for a further two years to allow the Government time to formulate detailed proposals for areas such as the New Forest.

I'm sure you will all have noticed the emphasis placed by Mr Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, on assisting financially, those who provide environmental benefits and what is referred to as 'natural capital and public benefits'. The Forest Farming Group believes that the Forest provides these in abundance. Nonetheless we need to be able to articulate this and the Group is currently working on a paper which will draw together all the relevant facts and arguments supporting our case.

I hope to be able to report more progress in the coming months.

2018/9922 RECREATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The process of updating the way in which recreation is managed in the Forest has now reached the next stage. Consultation has begun on a series of proposed actions that have been developed following last year's consultation. Everyone is invited to comment on draft plans to both protect the Forest and cater for residents and visitors enjoying the area.

We are all well aware of the harm that excessive recreational pressure has already caused to the Forest and, if steps are not taken now, that damage will only increase.

If they are not well managed, activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding, camping and vehicle parking cause damage to the very places that people want to enjoy.

Over time the harm that is caused includes:

- Erosion of paths and grazed verges
- A reduction in the tranquillity of remote areas
- Increased litter
- Interference with important Forest management such as commoning and forestry operations
- Erosion of sensitive habitat
- Disturbance of rare breeding, feeding and roosting birds
- Impacts on other rare and threatened species such as wild gladioli, smooth snakes and southern damselflies.

It is vital that we now find ways to work together to encourage and enable people to enjoy the Forest and nearby areas in ways and in locations that minimise these negative consequences.

The second stage of the Future Forest consultation runs for eight weeks from 18th June to 12th August.

The consultation and online survey have been developed by the Recreation Management Strategy Steering Group which comprises the Forestry Commission, Verderers, National Park Authority, Hampshire County Council, Natural England and New Forest District Council. Eleven other groups and organisations on the wider Recreation Management Strategy Advisory Group have also had an input.

With the help of feedback received in a first round of consultation last year, seven distinct objectives for managing recreation in the New Forest have been identified:

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- Convey the things that make the New Forest special to both visitors and local people in more consistent and effective ways, so that they understand the importance of making responsible recreation choices.
- Address significant and/or widespread negative impacts caused by recreation in the most appropriate, proportionate and effective ways.
- Reduce the barriers that limit participation in beneficial outdoor recreation among those who need it most.
- Achieve a net gain for the New Forest's working and natural landscape and for the recreational experience, by influencing where recreation takes place.
- Increase the level of funding available for recreation management so that it is sufficient to address both existing and upcoming needs.
- Collate data and evidence to help inform the ongoing management of recreation.
- Regularly review progress against agreed recreation management actions and adapt forward plans to protect the special qualities of the National Park and enable people to enjoy and benefit from them.

The steering group is asking for views on how to put these into practice with a set of 25 draft actions.

The online survey and background information are at:
www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/futureforest

The link is also on the Verderers' website and the National Park's website.

The timetable going forward is:

- 18th June to 12th August 2018 – Public consultation on the draft actions
- Autumn 2018 – analysis of responses
- Early 2019 – publish Recreation Management Strategy update with lead organisations for agreed actions
- 2019/2020 – progress with actions.

It is vital that as many people as possible participate in the process and I urge you to do so and Put the Forest First in your answers.

2018/9923 ROAD ACCIDENTS

Earlier this month, hit and run RTAs resulted in two foals being left lying badly hurt on the road between Sway and Brockenhurst by drivers who failed to report the collisions.

We are concerned that there is a misconception amongst some drivers, that if they report an accident with a Forest animal they will face prosecution, a fine and points on their licence. We would like to stress that this is generally not the case. The only time a driver may find him or herself in trouble with the law is if there is evidence of careless or dangerous driving and that rarely happens.

Conversely, a driver who fails to report an accident and is subsequently identified will be very lucky not to end up in Court on the grounds of failing to stop and report an accident and causing unnecessary suffering.

The cost to the motorist involved in accidents with Forest stock is usually limited to the value of the animal and the disposal fee if the animal dies, possibly vet fees if the animal survives but needs treatment and the repair of the vehicle. The driver's insurance premium may also of course be affected by a claim, but some drivers choose not to claim on their insurance. Nothing prevents a driver from compensating the owner of the animal direct.

The law states that drivers MUST report RTAs with livestock to the Police as soon as reasonably and practicable possible.

Whilst on the subject of hit and run RTAs, we would like to remind everyone that the reward for information leading to the conviction of a driver involved in a hit and run accident with a commoner's animal has been increased to up to £5,000 and you don't have to appear in person to collect your reward.

ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

2018/9924 THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR MAY 2018

The Agisters attended 11 accidents in May, the same number as in May last year.

1 Pony was killed, 3 ponies and a sheep were injured and destroyed, 1 pony and a cow were injured, a pony was uninjured and 2 ponies and a cow which were reportedly involved in accidents could not be found.

6 accidents occurred in daylight, 2 at twilight and 3 in the dark.

4 accidents were not reported by the driver involved. 4 motorists were known to be local.

The total number of commoners' animals killed and injured so far in 2018 is 29. This compares with 25 in the same period last year.

PRESENTMENTS

2018/9925 CYCLISTS
Presentment by Mrs Margaret Verdon JP

'Good Morning Official Verderer and members of the Court.

I am Mrs Margaret Verdon JP. I have lived in the Forest for nearly 50 years. I have cycled all my life, but I am now unable to walk with my dog down narrow country lanes. When my dog hears a car, he tucks himself in beside me. However, we do not hear the silent cycle who came up fast behind us, shot by with no thanks and makes me feel rather shaken. Cyclists have earned a bad name (rightly so) for their lack of consideration towards other road users, in particular horse riders and pedestrians.

Could the Verderers promote a code of practice to encourage cyclists to behave better and in particular, to warn horse riders and pedestrians of their approach? To slow down and give a warning of their approach by ringing their bell or calling out "I am behind you".

2018/9926 NATIONAL GRID'S PROPOSALS UNDERGROUNDING OF HIGH VOLTAGE POWER LINES IN THE NORTH OF THE FOREST
Presentment by Mr Peter Gear, Resident of Hale and part of the Project Hale Purlieu Movement.

'My name is Peter Gear, resident of Hale and part of the Protect Hale Purlieu movement.

I would like to thank the Verderers for their response to my presentment at the May open Court. I would also like to thank them for taking the time to be present at our open meeting in Hale on May 22nd and to have read our paper objecting to National Grid's proposal to bury the electricity cables under the Purlieu. We fully understand the Verderers' position on this subject as we all await the planning application in December.

I would like to take the opportunity to state that there is a groundswell of opinion in the village and surrounding villages that National Grid's plans will cause irreparable damage to the landscape, the wildlife and the unique commoning practices. The proximity to the new Franchises Lodge RSPB reserve also gives rise to potential conflict during the long period of major disruption.

I trust that the Verderers will take into account the strong feelings expressed by local residents when making your final decision on this matter'.

2018/9927 WOOTTON STREAM RESTORATION PROJECT
Presentment by Mr Ian Davis, New Forest Equestrian Association

'I make this presentment as Chairman of the New Forest Equestrian Association.

We are extremely concerned about the Wetland Restoration Programme currently being undertaken at Wootton.

I would say that I have been able to meet members of the Forestry Commission several times on site and have been met with the utmost courtesy on each occasion.

However, first, we question the need for what amounts to an effective destruction of parts of the Forest, its trees, and plant life. We accept that the current stream was straightened a hundred years ago, but it until recently it afforded a solid safe stream bed, easily accessible access paths and safe crossing points for not only the horse rider but also depastured animals.

Secondly, if the works are to progress, we would ask for confirmation that all materials are locally sourced, are tested for their compatibility with the highly protected area and are not brought in simply on the basis of the cheapest available.

Thirdly, whilst we are glad to note that parked construction vehicles now have drip trays placed under them, we are concerned about the environmental damage caused by leakage of oils and hydraulic fluids whilst the vehicles are in use.

Fourthly we are concerned about the danger to horse riders. The old stream bed was perfectly safe and the underpasses under the road leading to the A35 from Wootton Bridge, marked as bridleways on the OS map were easily useable and accessible. Now horse riders are finding the stream and access points potentially dangerous and therefore unusable. Clay holes have been opened and one rider has had her horse trap a foot in a clay hole.

A part of the Forest riding area, open all the year round save in the most inclement weather has been rendered difficult to use and potentially unsafe.

I would ask that members of this Court who have not inspected the works do so and ensure that once the latest work phase has been completed in accordance with the planning consent, the stream and it's crossing points are safe for riders and depastured animals.'

2018/9928 30MPH SPEED LIMIT
Presentment by Mrs Mary Gray

Mrs Gray came back to the Court to ask again for the Verderers' support for a 30mph speed limit across the Forest. Mrs Gray said she is very disappointed that no effort has been made to reduce the limit from 40 mph to 30 mph. She referred to the reduction in the speed limit in the 1990's which she said resulted in a marked reduction in animal accidents. Mrs Gray thanked everyone who supported that initiative and hoped that in future the current speed limit will be reduced.

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS

2018/9929 CYCLISTS DISCHARGE
Presentment by Mrs Verdon

The Court agreed with Mrs Verdon that some cyclists could be more considerate. However, it is felt the National Park Authority is in a better position to try to influence cyclists than the Verderers. To that end, the Clerk will contact Mr Nigel Matthews at the NPA to seek his assistance. Action Clerk

2018/9930 NATIONAL GRID'S PROPOSALS FOR UNDERGROUNDING THE HIGH VOLTAGE POWER LINES IN THE NORTH OF THE FOREST DISCHARGE

It was felt there is nothing to add at this time.

2018/9931 WOOTTON STREAM RESTORATION PROJECT RESUME
Presentment by the NFEA

Members of the Court will carry out a site visit and a suitable response will be drafted. Action All

2018/9932 30 MPH SPEED LIMIT RESUME

The Official Verderer has written to the Police & Crime Commissioner regarding the possibility of Average Speed Cameras on Roger Penny Way.

It was suggested a discussion with Hampshire County Council, Highways Department might be helpful, about the likely impact of introducing a 30 mph as it is thought they may have data from other areas where similar schemes have been implemented. Action Clerk

DE-MINIMIS CONSENTS

2018/9933 DE-MINIMIS CONSENTS DISCHARGE

The Clerk reported that the following approvals or consents have been issued.

DE0017: BT Openreach new duct to Minstead Training Trust (not FC)

DE0018: New electricity supply to the Stable Block, Barnfield, South Weirs, Brockenhurst

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

2018/9934 NATIONAL GRID PROPOSALS FOR UNDERGROUNDING THE HIGH VOLTAGE LINES IN THE NORTH OF THE FOREST RESUME

The recent meeting of stakeholders with National Grid was felt by the Verderers who attended to be helpful.

It appears Natural England is expressing concern about the latest route to be proposed. Mr Pasmore said he has verbally suggested an alternative which he feels would be acceptable to Natural England. The Court was happy with the suggestion and Mr Pasmore will provide the Clerk with details so that she can formally put it forward as an alternative.

Action
AHP/Clerk

A discussion took place concerning the time frame for the various consents that will be required, including that of the Court. The Court wishes to take account of the public's views and therefore, it is felt that National Grid's request for Verderers' consent should be made concurrently with the submission of the planning application.

2018/9935 BRAMSHAW VILLAGE SIGN DISCHARGE

The Court approved the latest design which is effectively a metal sign on two wooden posts. This sign will be in addition to the existing 30mph sign. The Clerk will advise Hampshire County Council.

Action
Clerk

2018/9936 POACHING AND DAMAGE TO THE FOREST DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer said he had met with the Head Agister and they looked at various sites where damage is known to have been caused.

One or two sites show significant damage but most are recovering well now that the ground has dried up. However they will be looked at again before the winter. Generally, areas adjacent to holdings where cattle are fed 'in' suffer worse damage than the feeding areas. This is because the cattle congregate outside the holding waiting to be let in.

It was agreed that feeding area inspections should take place again in September, prior to approving areas for next winter.

Action
TW to
arrange

The crossing point at Ashurst is said to be particularly badly poached. The Forestry Commission is planning some works in the area but the timescale is not known. The Official Verderer will speak to the Deputy Surveyor to find out what work is planned and to encourage him to get on with it.

Action
OV/DS

SSSI RESTORATION WORKS

2018/9937 REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE LIST RESUME

The SSSI Repair and Maintenance List was circulated to the Court.

2018/9938 WARWICKSLADE RESUME

The differences of opinion over stream bed levels at Warwickslade continue. Further discussion took place but it was agreed that the only way forward is to hold another site meeting. Mr Grugeon will contact Mr Nick Wardlaw (FC) and ask him to suggest some dates. The Clerk will then forward these to members of the Court asking them to let her have their preference.

Action
PG/Clerk

2018/9939 RESTORATION WORK AT SHOBLEY MIRE DISCHARGE

The proposals were agreed.

2018/9940 RESTORATION WORK AT DEADMAN BOTTOM MIRE DISCHARGE

After some discussion, during which some members of the Court expressed the view that the works are unnecessary, a vote was taken and a decision reached. The proposals were agreed.

2018/9941 CUNNINGER BOTTOM RESTORATION WORKS DISCHARGE

Again, there was disagreement on the merits of the proposed works. However, the proposals were finally agreed. A condition of the approval is that the ford at point A on the plan is properly reconstructed and maintained.

2018/9942 PITTS WOOD MIRE RESUME

Following a detailed discussion, it was decided that some clarification is required before a decision can be made. Mr Deakin will speak to Miss Oakley (FC)

Action
RD/SO

ENCROACHMENTS INVOLVING THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2018/9943 ENCROACHMENT LIST RESUME

A progress report on the encroachment list was provided.

ACTION LIST

2018/9944 ACTION LIST RESUME

An updated action list was provided.

2018/9945 NORTH HOLLOW DISCHARGE

It was requested that North Hollow be added to the list.

2018/9946 KINGS COPSE ROAD DISCHARGE

Approximately 2000 sq.m. of grazing at Kings Copse Road has been recovered following verge protection works. The Court thanked Mrs Jayne Albery for her work in this respect.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS INVOLVING THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2018/9947 LYNDHURST & ASHURST CRICKET CLUB – REQUEST TO ATTACH A DEFIBRILLATOR TO THE PAVILION WALL DISCHARGE

Consent for this request was granted.

2018/9948 EAST BOLDRE FOOTBALL PITCH DISCHARGE

Mr Grugeon explained that as the Football Club has folded, the Parish Council would like to take over the licence for the football pitch in order that the facility is still available for local people to kick a football about. The Parish Council has agreed to take over responsibility for the fencing.

The Court agreed to consent to a rolling annual licence but only on the condition that the fence, which has been a disgrace for some time, is removed. The boundary of the football pitch can be delineated with wooden posts. This is felt to be a reasonable compromise which allows the village to retain the facility but avoids future issues with the fence. A similar agreement was reached at Sway a few years ago. Mr Grugeon will go back to the Parish Council.

2018/9949 PANNAGE RESUME

As there is no Court in August, it was requested that the Deputy Surveyor approve the dates for pannage in advance, so that an announcement can be made in July's Court. This is as in previous years.

It was agreed the Staff Committee should make a recommendation which will be put to the Deputy Surveyor.

Action
RD/Clerk

2018/9950 VERDERERS' HALL DISCHARGE

Mr Grugeon was asked to investigate how the sound system in the Verderers' Hall can be improved. It is still not working correctly.

Action
PG

Mr Grugeon left the meeting.

OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

2018/9951 VERDERERS' INCLOSURES RENT REVIEW RESUME

A rent review is due in July. A discussion took place on the best way to take this forward. The Official Verderer advised the Court that the rent can go up or down.

Action
OV

2018/9952 MEETING WITH ROBERT DEANE OF RURAL FOCUS RESUME
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANCY

The Official Verderer has arranged to meet Mr Deane to discuss future agricultural support for the Forest. Mr Pasmore, Mrs Westerhoff and Mr Greenwood will also attend the meeting. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, 3rd July at 11.00 a.m. in the Verderers' Office meeting room. Action
OV

2018/9953 INSIDE OUT DISCHARGE

The Court has been invited to take part in an episode of the BBCs Inside Out programme, the subject of which is overgrazing. A written statement will be provided.

MATTERS ARISING

2018/9954 POLICY ON FILMING RESUME

It was generally felt that the Court does need to positively engage with the media but a policy is essential. The Official Verderer agreed to speak to the National Park Authority's communications team to see if it can assist. Action
OV

VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME

2018/9955 VGS PAYMENTS FOR 2019 RESUME

In order to attempt to address increasing stock numbers, the Official Verderer, Mr Deakin and Mr Readhead are discussing payment levels with the intention of encouraging a decrease in cattle numbers and that of non-pure bred New Forest ponies. In addition, implementing a cap on the size of herds for which VGS payments will be made will be considered. Action
OV/RD/DR

MATTERS ARISING FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS

2018/9956 NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY PARTNERSHIP PLAN DISCHARGE

The Partnership is holding an Open Day on 4th September. The Official Verderer suggested a project on verge protection should be presented by the Verderers, with help from Sean Marsh and Jayne Albery, from the Forestry Commission's verge protection team. Action
OV

2018/9957 EQUI FORUM DISCHARGE

Miss Macnair commented that she is very worried that the Forum is not considering the potential devastating risk of infectious diseases being imported into the country. Miss Macnair feels border controls are far too weak and she pointed to Australia and New Zealand which fumigates all vehicles and containers entering their countries.

2018/9958 NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL DISCHARGE

Mr Harry Oram is the new chairman.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

2018/9959 FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR MAY 2018 DISCHARGE

The Financial Statement for May was noted.

STAFF MATTERS

2018/9960 MARKING OF 'GHOST' CATTLE

DISCHARGE

A discussion took place regarding whether the Agisters should spend time marking cattle that may never go out onto the Forest. Some commoners are believed to be taking advantage of the Basic Payment Scheme which requires them to have a marking fee receipt in order to claim their common land subsidy. However, the Rural Payments Agency has no mechanism for ensuring animals for which common entitlement is claimed, ever actually run on the Forest. The result is that the animal numbers are artificially high, leading to the belief that there are significantly more animals on the Forest than there actually are.

The Court felt that to accept a marking fee and issue a receipt without the Agisters physically marking the animals is not acceptable.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2018/9961 NEW FOREST SHOW

RESUME

The Official Verderer thanked the office staff, particularly Justine, for the huge amount of work they have undertaken in respect of the Verderers' Stand at the New Forest Show.

The Clerk asked for volunteers to assist on the stand.

2018/9962 FRANCHISES LODGE ACCESS TO THE FOREST AT BRAMSHAW TELEGRAPH

RESUME

Mrs Westerhoff said she has been invited to meet with the Warden of Franchises Lodge which has recently been acquired by the RSPB. Mr Dowsett expressed an interest in joining the meeting.

The Clerk asked Mrs Westerhoff and Mr Dowsett to discuss with the Warden, the ongoing problems that are being experienced with the access to the RSPB's land at Bramshaw Telegraph. The track which is a designated BOAT has a gate on its boundary with the Forest which is frequently left open. As a result Forest animals are able to access Franchises Wood and the adjacent Hamptworth and Lyburn Estates and from there onto public highways outside the Forest. Over the years, the Agisters and local commoners have spent a huge amount of time locating and returning animals to the Forest. The Clerk has already spoken to the RSPB Warden about the problem but she asked if the matter could also be raised at the forthcoming meeting. A solution to the problem will not be easy to identify. A cattle grid is an obvious option, with a bypass gate for walkers, riders and carriages, but cattle grids need continual maintenance if they are to be effective and they are expensive to install.

Action
DW/BD

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

Julian Wansell
18/7/2018