

**MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> March at 9.30 a.m. in the Library, The Queen's House, Lyndhurst.**

PRESENT:	Mr O Crosthwaite Eyre	Official Verderer
	Mr J Adams	Elected Verderer & Chairman of the Staff Committee
	Mr P Frost	Countryside Agency Appointed Verderer
	Mr A Gerrelli	Elected Verderer
	Cllr Mrs K Heron	National Park Authority Appointed Verderer
	Mr J F Kitcher	Elected Verderer
	Miss D Macnair	Elected Verderer
	Mr A H Pasmore	Elected Verderer
	Mrs P Thorne	DEFRA Appointed Verderer
IN ATTENDANCE:	Miss S Westwood	Clerk to the Verderers
	Mr J R Gerrelli	Head Agister (first two items only)
APOLOGIES:	The Hon R Montagu	Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer

**IN COMMITTEE**

The Head Agister was present for the first three items.

2007/2860 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING DISCHARGE

The Minutes of the Court held on Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> February 2007 were approved.

2007/2861 CONDITION OF STOCK & STRANGLES RESUME

Report by the Head Agister

A few ponies have needed to be taken off the Forest but on the whole the condition of stock is not too bad. The majority of animals look well and the cold, dry weather suits them. The Agisters will need to remain vigilant over the next six weeks or so especially if the weather changes.

No new outbreaks of strangles have been noted.

No foals have been seen yet, although the stallions went out last year on the 1<sup>st</sup> April. Some mares are, however, heavily in foal.

The Head Agister left the meeting.

The Chairman of the Staff Committee agreed with the Head Agister's report. He said he is happy with the current situation and added that condition of stock has greatly improved. Ten years ago some of the mares now being removed would have been regarded as acceptable. Mr Tony Gerrelli agreed stock looks well. He said he had been round the Forest including the Northern Commons and everything he saw looked fine.

2007/2862 ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS RESUME

The announcements and decisions were approved.

2007/2863 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RESUME

The Elected Verderers and Mrs Thorne declared an interest in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.

Mr Gerrelli declared an interest in any items concerning Campsites.

2007/2864 FINANCIAL STATEMENT RESUME

The Financial Statement for February 2007 was approved.

2007/2865 REPORT ON MARKING FEES RECEIVED AS AT THE END OF FEBRUARY 2007 RESUME

Ponies	4154	Pigs	18
Cattle	524	Sheep	0
Donkeys	91		
TOTAL	4769	TOTAL ALL ANIMALS	4787

2007/2866 ANIMALS REMOVED FROM THE FOREST FEBRUARY 2007 RESUME

	SICK OR WANTED			
	POOR	INJURED BY OWNER	OTHER	
MARES & YEARLINGS 10+10			1+1	
MARES	17	2	1	
FILLIES	19	2	1	
COLTS	3			15
GELDINGS				
CATTLE				2
CALVES	2			
DONKEYS	2			
PIGS	1			
PIGLETS				
SHEEP				
TOTAL	64	4	2	19

15 TWO YEAR OLD COLTS!

SUMMARY BY SPECIES

PONIES	82
CATTLE	4
DONKEYS	2
PIGS	1

2007/2867 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT RESUME

The pre-trial hearing in respect of the prosecution of the Cooper family is due to be heard in the Magistrate's Court in Southampton on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> April. The trial date is still set for 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> May.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST COURT AND PREVIOUS COURTS**

2007/2868 ELMERS COURT DISCHARGE

The Clerk reported she has spoken with the National Park Authority Planning Department regarding the problems resulting from the poor fencing on Elmer's Court's boundary with the foreshore. The Planning Officer to whom the Clerk spoke said that there is little that can be done at this moment but if any planning applications are submitted by Elmer's Court, the authority will see if any pressure can be brought to bear as respects improving the fencing.

2007/2869 REVISION OF THE BYELAWS RESUME

The final draft of the revised byelaws has been circulated. Amendments are shown in red. This will replace the earlier draft. Mr Adams asked that byelaw 21 (2) be checked to ensure it gives the Court the power it is seeking but other than that everyone was happy with the revisions which will now be forwarded to DEFRA.

2007/2870 MICROCHIPPING & HOT BRANDING OF PONIES DISCHARGE

Following the visit by Mr Paul Newman, a comprehensive system of identifying ponies by hot brands has been set out on paper and forwarded to DEFRA. It is hoped the system will be accepted.

Mr Gerrelli suggested ear-tagging should also be put forward as an alternative means of identifying ponies, however, members of the Court felt ear-tagging would be unacceptable from a welfare point of view and also it was pointed out that ear tags are not permanent. This matter will be brought back to the Court when a response is received from DEFRA.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Mike Seddon, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS BY THE OFFICIAL VERDERER**

2007/2871 MARKWAY LAWN

The heavy rainfall over the last two months has given us an ideal opportunity to observe the effectiveness of the extensive works that were carried out by the Forestry Commission. Despite strong flows through the watercourses there do not seem to be any debris dams, and the floodwaters have receded and returned back in to the main channel as envisaged. This is promising, and would indicate that the works are doing what they are supposed to do.

However the strength of the floodwaters have washed a considerable amount of timber down on to the lawn itself, and we will be asking the FC this morning whether or not this will be removed in order to minimise the risk of blockages to the channel in the event of further flooding.

2007/2872 REFUSE BINS

Further to the presentment made by Mr Michael Cooper on behalf of the Commoners' Defence Association we raised the matter with the Deputy Surveyor of overflowing refuse bins being left on the various campsites within the Forest, and he has confirmed that in future all such bins will be removed at the end of the camping season.

2007/2873 ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

Mr Derek Bennett made a presentment in which he praised the effectiveness of the pinch-points constructed on the Thorney Hill to Burley road, and advocating the introduction of more similar pinch points across the Forest at suitable locations. We agree with Mr Bennett and we will be asking the Highway Authority to consider trialling further pinch points, possibly on the Picket Post to Burley road.

In his presentment Mr Bennett also reported on the apparent effectiveness of the portable speed indicator devices that are currently being used at specific locations that are known blackspots for animal accidents. The evidence does seem to suggest that these devices are having an effect, although we have been advised that there are sometimes technical problems when large amounts of traffic pass the device simultaneously. These problems are being looked in to, and hopefully will be resolved so that motorists continue to respect and indeed believe the indicated speed that is shown as they drive past.

However the fact remains that there are far too many accidents still happening on the Forest's roads which could have been avoided if the speed limit had been observed. Last year there were 15% more accidents involving the killing and maiming of our Forest animals, and we must do all we can to reverse this appalling trend.

A major campaign has been launched this month with full backing and cooperation of the Hampshire police, and we welcome this initiative. It is not enough just to observe the speed limit, we must strive to educate the drivers who use the forest's roads and help them realise that animals simply do not have any road sense and can decide to cross at any moment, particularly foals.

We are most grateful to the Constabulary's safer roads and streets team for committing resources to this very necessary campaign.

**ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT**

2007/2874 ACCIDENT REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2007

The agisters attended 6 accidents, which compares with 10 for the same period last year.

2 ponies were killed. 2 were injured. 1 donkey was hit but uninjured, and 1 cow was hit but nothing was found injured.

3 accidents occurred during the hours of darkness and 4 involved private cars or light commercials.

3 accidents were not reported and 1 involved a local motorist.

The total killed and injured for the year to date is 18 compared with 19 for the same period last year.

## **PRESENTMENTS BY THE DEPUTY SURVEYOR OF THE NEW FOREST**

None

## **PRESENTMENTS**

### 2007/2875 FORESTRY COMMISSION CHARGES – ACCESS TO COMMONERS PROPERTIES

Presentment by Mr Michael Cooper on behalf of the New Forest Commoners' Defence Association

Our committee seeks the help of the Verderers in respect of the fees charged by the Forestry Commission to commoners who have to cross open Forest to access their properties. Young commoners joining the Commoners Housing Scheme, already tied up very tightly financially, often have to pay a levy, which can be as much as a four figure sum on top of all their other expenses. We do not see this as something that the young commoner should have to pay, and would wish to see these payments either greatly reduced, or better still, done away with altogether. If dialogue can be entered into with the Forestry Commission, appropriate members of the NFCDA committee would be happy to join in any debate.

### 2007/2876 LEVY ON FORESTRY COMMISSION CAMPERS VISITING THE NEW FOREST

Presentment by Mr Michael Cooper on behalf of the New Forest Commoners' Defence Association

For a very long time now the New Forest commoner has felt that those who come to stay in, and enjoy the New Forest with its free roaming stock, should make some small financial contribution so that a practical working fund could be created for the sustainment, and improvement of commoning. This would allow development in many areas of our profession, without having to go 'cap in hand' to a government agency, only to receive some modest amount with overwhelming conditions attached. As camping in the New Forest has recently undergone a makeover, and camping charges have been substantially increased, we see this as an appropriate time to consider the proposal of a £1.00 levy. This amount to be obtained from every camper at the point where permits are issued, and in due course, those funds to be transferred to a working account controlled by the Verderers, and/or the National Park Authority. If this scheme were to be approved, we believe a proportionate number of NFCDA committee members would need to be attached to the working party, to ensure fair regulation and appropriate use of any said funds. Our committee would appreciate your views on this, and would welcome a debate on the subject in due course.

### 2007/2877 LOSS OF BRIDGE NEAR IPLEY

Presentment by Mr Chris Aldhous on behalf of the New Forest Equestrian Association

Mr Aldhous asked that a bridge across a stream that runs from Claypits Lane direction into the Beaulieu River be reinstated as it would be useful to commoners checking stock as well as recreational riders. Mr Aldhous added that because of a rise in the water level in the Beaulieu River the original crossing near the old Ipley Car Park is now impassable. When forestry work commences in Marchwood Inclosure, access will be limited further.

Mr Aldhous then to the opportunity to thank the Forestry Commission for replacing the causeway leading to the bridge between Ipley and Kings Hat.

2007/2878 RTA'S AND SPEEDING  
Presentment by Mr Chris Aldhous

Mr Aldhous supported the initiatives to stop speeding drivers but he urged the Verderers to change the message being sent to the public to include the following information:-

When you cross the cattle grid you are driving through a farm yard.  
If you hit an animal you are liable.  
Be aware of the animals, they can move without warning.  
An accident with an animal can wreck your car.

But the main message should be 'It is not enough just to stay under 40 – Slow down when approaching animals”.

2007/2879 ASHURST TO LYNDHURST CYCLE WAY  
Presentment by Mr Bob Cooper

Mr Cooper expressed the opinion that the new cycle way that is to be constructed is on the wrong side of the A35. He felt for safety reasons it should be on the south side of the road.

2007/2880 HIGHLAND WATER – MARKWAY RIVER  
Presentment by Mr Bob Cooper

Mr Cooper said that gravel washing is creating considerable ponding resulting in warning signs having been put up to warn the public of deep holes. He said he does not want to see a proliferation of signs but felt the holes are a high risk.

2007/2881 ANIMAL ACCIDENTS  
Presentment by Mrs Rosemary Bennett of Sway

Mrs Bennett suggested there is a need to educate the public as to how to drive past free-ranging animals. She felt it would be a good idea if some simple instructions could be incorporated into the school curriculum so that when the child becomes a driver, he or she will behave more carefully when passing animals. Mrs Bennett remarked that a responsible attitude, learnt young, might even save human lives as well.

The Official Verderer thanked Mrs Bennett for her presentment and said her suggestion will be discussed in committee.

2007/2882 ANIMAL ACCIDENTS  
Response from Mr Michael Cooper to Mrs Bennett's presentment

Mr Cooper, on behalf of the New Forest Road Safety Council, said that they are making in roads in this direction and have recently visited three schools. He added that there is a new competition running for ideas for logos on three signs at entry points to the Forest.

The Official Verderer said it was good to hear that this initiative is already being taken forward.

2007/2883 ANIMAL ACCIDENTS  
Response by Mr Chris Aldhouse

Mr Aldhouse said he has recently sent copies of RTA information to 30 driving schools. He said sadly only one came back enthusiastically but he suggested a properly funded exercise might be more effective.

2007/2884 LEVY ON FORESTRY COMMISSION CAMPERS VISITING THE NEW FOREST  
Presentment by Mrs Annie Cooper of Minstead

Mrs Cooper supported the CDA's suggestion that a levy should be charged. She added that this is something suggested years ago and she hoped the idea would be given an airing.

2007/2885 ANIMAL ACCIDENTS & MINERAL BLOCKS  
Presentment by Mr Len Mansbridge

Mr Mansbridge wanted to thank the Police for their recent campaign to try to stop the carnage on the Forest's roads. He added that the animals have the right of way and the motorists pay for the privilege. He felt it is a good step forward.

Mr Mansbridge suggested the Agisters should take note of the grazing patterns and as a trial rock salt should be placed on the grazing areas to try to encourage stock away from the roads. He felt the animals would get accustomed to finding minerals on the grazing areas and may be encouraged to stay there. Mr Mansbridge said he had mentioned the idea to Mr Brian Blessed when he visited the Court and he thought it was a good idea.

2007/2886 HOLLY CUTTING  
Presentment by Mr Len Mansbridge

Mr Mansbridge thanked the Forestry Commission for cutting the holly but he felt it was three months too late! He thought it should be cut in mid November onwards to help the ponies. The new grass is coming through now and so the holly should be cut earlier.

### **IN COMMITTEE in The Library**

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Mike Seddon, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest  
APOLOGY: Mr Will Parke, Area Land Agent (New Forest)

### **CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS**

2007/2887 FORESTRY COMMISSION CHARGES – ACCESS TO RESUME  
COMMONERS PROPERTIES

Mr Kitcher declared an interest in this matter as a member of his family has submitted a planning application for a Commoners' Dwelling.

A detailed discussion took place during which the Deputy Surveyor pointed out that the levy that is charged for any access across Crown land to any property built under the Commoners Housing Scheme (currently administered by the National Park Authority) is already heavily discounted. The discount for the levy, which is calculated using a formula that was originally devised by the District Valuer, recognises the fact that commoners' dwellings are not saleable at

open market value because of the restrictions that are placed on them by the scheme. If a review of the formula did take place, then it is more than likely that the District Valuer would decide that the discounted charge should go up rather than down.

The Deputy Surveyor said he would write direct to the CDA in order to explain the FC's position. In the meantime details of how the discount is calculated were requested in order that the Court can see what the position is, and come to its own conclusions.

2007/2888 LEVY ON FORESTRY COMMISSION CAMPERS VISITING THE DISCHARGE  
NEW FOREST

This suggestion has been considered before. The Official Verderer invited the Deputy Surveyor to comment on the proposal. In reply, he said that apart from the fact that a levy would amount to a tax which, in all probability, the Forestry Commission would not be permitted to impose upon the public, there is a fundamental question that needs to be answered, namely: since the commoners are already compensated for the loss of grazing caused by campsites under the provisions of the New Forest Acts, can an extra levy be justified?

The Deputy Surveyor pointed out that the sum that is paid via the Verderers for the loss of grazing is specifically provided for under the New Forest Acts, and it is a sum that is calculated in order to compensate for the interference with common rights that is caused by camping and other recreational facilities. The compensation is not designed for, or meant to be linked with, the difference between the perceived cost of the lost grazing and the gain to the Forestry Commission through the revenues created by the campsites. The Deputy Surveyor stressed that even if there is a disparity, then it is one we all have to live with since the New Forest Acts dictate what compensation can be paid to the commoners. An extra levy may well, therefore, be *ultra vires*, and outside the Forestry Commission's powers to impose, even if it wished to.

Members of the Court then suggested that it is of course open to the Forestry Commission to invite campers to make a voluntary contribution of £1.00, which could be added on to the bill for each visit, and it may be this is the best avenue of approach. It was also suggested that the CDA could consider asking the Camping and Caravanning Club directly (with the support of the Verderers and the Forestry Commission) if it would adopt such a scheme.

The Deputy Surveyor went on to remind the Court that the Forestry Commission is deeply committed to the New Forest, to the extent that it has allowed this region to run at an annual loss of over two million pounds for many years. The revenue that is created through recreation plays a small part in mitigating the year on year expenditure on the proper maintenance and management of the New Forest as a whole.

From the Deputy Surveyor's comments it is clear that the imposition of a levy upon campers is something that the Forestry Commission is unable to implement. However there are other avenues that could be explored which might just as easily raise funds from campers.



2007/2889    LOSS OF BRIDGE NEAR IPLEY    RESUME

The Court was unsure of the exact location of the bridge and the Clerk was requested to write to Mr Aldhous to find out.

2007/2890    ANIMAL ACCIDENTS    RESUME

The Clerk will take the various comments made today, to the meeting which is to be held next week with representatives of a number of agencies, where ways of reducing accidents involving commoners' stock will be discussed.

2007/2891    ASHURST TO LYNDHURST CYCLEWAY    DISCHARGE

The cycleway was approved some time ago following lengthy consultation. Natural England would not accept the path on the south side of the road. The Clerk was asked to write to Mr Cooper explaining the situation.

2007/2892    GRAVEL WASHING IN HIGHLAND WATER    DISCHARGE

The Deputy Surveyor pointed out that movement of gravel in rivers and streams is a natural process, particularly in winter following heavy rain. He added that he is not aware of any signs. No action is proposed. Mr Cooper will be advised.

2007/2893    ANIMAL ACCIDENTS AND MINERAL BLOCKS    DISCHARGE

This idea was tried many years ago. The blocks do have an effect on the immediate surroundings and Natural England would have to be consulted if they are to be tried again. It was also remarked that to distribute sufficient blocks to have any effect would be extremely expensive. It was suggested that perhaps commoners with feeding areas could put them out if they wished - subject to approval.

2007/2894    HOLLY CUTTING    DISCHARGE

Members of the Court felt that cutting holly late in the winter is not a waste of time and that the ponies actually need it more now than before Christmas. The Deputy Surveyor said that holly cutting usually takes place between November and March but is dependent on resources. The Clerk will write to Mr Mansbridge.

**SUBMISSIONS BY THE FORESTRY COMMISSION**

2007/2895    KNIGHTWOOD CYCLING LINK    DISCHARGE

The Court listened carefully to the Deputy Surveyor's explanation of why the Forestry Commission feels the link should be established. The proposal was discussed in great detail with both members of the Court and the Deputy Surveyor expressing their views.

The Official Verderer felt further debate should take place later in the meeting.



- 2007/2901 ASHURST CRICKET PITCH DISCHARGE
- The fencing will be carried out once the weather dries up and the ground hardens. The dividing fence will be removed thereafter and the area opened up to stock; the Forestry Commission will write to the Court at the time. The last remnants of the Pavilion have now gone and the roller is to be moved shortly.
- Mr Frost suggested the throwing open of the Cricket Pitch should be celebrated in some way.
- 2007/2902 SOIL IN BROOMY INCLOSURE DISCHARGE
- The Deputy Surveyor said that if the soil is at Holly Hatch it has been stock piled for use in SSSI restoration work.
- 2007/2903 TURF HILL & MILLERSFORD PLANTATION RESUME  
March 2008
- The Deputy Surveyor said the Forestry Commission is aware of the outstanding restoration that is required in this area. He said they are particularly aware of the Scotts Pine regeneration and other levelling and log removal that needs to be done. It is intended that these works will be added to work programmes in future years and he agreed the job has not yet been completed. He added that it is a question of priorities but that the area is now in "favourable" condition in respect of SSSI designation.
- Mr Pasmore commented that it is misleading to put up notices saying that the area will be cleared when it has been left in such a mess. He considered it is not good for the Forest or the Forestry Commission's image. The priority should be that if an area is damaged, it is put right – one track is unusable with ruts 18" deep. Mr Pasmore said he is extremely unhappy with the situation and felt very strongly that work should be finished in one area before starting another one. The Official Verderer remarked that the Clerk had quietly pointed out that the restoration at Turf Hill was on the Agenda when she joined nearly 12 years ago!
- Mr Frost commented that some of the restoration which has been carried out is incredibly good.
- 2007/2904 SALE OF FORESTRY COMMISSION PROPERTIES AT HOLMSLEY RESUME  
May
- The Deputy Surveyor reported that the tenants left the properties at the end of February. Agents are shortly to be appointed to market the properties in the Spring.
- The plans for the proposed two new commoners' dwellings are progressing. A meeting with the architects is scheduled for April.



## **OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST COURT AND PREVIOUS COURTS**

2007/2912 ENCROACHMENTS – FIVE THORNS RESUME

The Official Verderer reported that he has spoken to Wilsons Solicitors in Salisbury who he considers to be the best firm to deal with this issue. The matter has been passed to the Commoners' Defence sub-committee with a request for the papers to be passed to the Clerk but as yet they have not been received.

2007/2913 HOLLANDS WOOD AND ROUNDHILL CAMPSITES RESUME

The Clerk reported that the Planning Authority has confirmed that the Verderers will be able to speak at the planning hearing and it is likely that a longer period than usual will be allowed for submissions.

At present no date has been set for the hearing. It is understood the Appropriate Assessment being carried out by the National Park Authority may not yet be complete and this may be the reason for the delay. Additionally, the Forestry Commission has not yet submitted its Management Plan for the SSSI.

2007/2914 THE FOREST ATLASES DISCHARGE

The Clerk said that she is in contact with someone at the National Park Authority who may be able to assist in digitising the Atlases. Mr Pasmore asked to be kept informed of progress and it was agreed the matter should be discharged for the time being.

## **COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP SCHEME**

2007/2915 ADVISORY GROUP MEETING RESUME

The Advisory Group Meeting met recently and suggestions were made for initiatives which may help to encourage young commoners. Mr Draper will be calling a meeting of the Sub Committee to discuss the proposals.

## **NATIONAL PARK**

2007/2916 BRAINSTORMING SESSIONS DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer, Mrs Thorne and Mr Montagu will participate in these sessions and report back to the Court.

2007/2917 RECENT FULL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY DISCHARGE

Mr Frost reported that a lengthy debate took place on how best to appoint the National Park Authority Verderer.

## **FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF SUBMISSIONS BY THE FORESTRY COMMISSION**

2007/2918 KNIGHTWOOD CYCLE LINK

DISCHARGE

The Verderers gave careful consideration to the application by the Forestry Commission to establish a new cycle link on the Open Forest (former Inclosure) at Knightwood. In particular, the Verderers considered their "policies" and the statutory requirement that they should have regard to National Park purposes (and the priority of those purposes). They noted that the proposed route would link two areas of high recreational use and that the Forestry Commission considers the route to be "logical and desirable".

The Verderers decided to refuse consent for the new route and its associated works for the following reasons:

1. They believe that no intensification of recreational use of the Forest should be undertaken in advance of a Forest wide strategic review of recreation. Such a review, which is currently being prepared by the New Forest National Park Authority, will hopefully identify whether or not this area is able to absorb more pressure within the context of the Forest as a whole. This belief has already been communicated to both the Forestry Commission and the National Park Authority. The Verderers do not feel that any reason has been demonstrated as to why this view should be set aside in the present case.
2. Irrespective of 1 above, the proposal will be damaging to a quiet area of Forest by introducing into it a formal and probably heavily-used recreation route.
3. The coalescing of two heavily-used recreation areas is undesirable.
4. The proposed route is over grass and thus potentially damaging to the grazing. It will also establish an undesirable precedent by using a grass ride for cycling. Further, the Verderers believe that heavy use will inevitably cause severe deterioration of the surface (the area is clay and wet in parts) which will lead to a request for gravelling.
5. The Court considers that the Reptillary site, from which this route will lead, is already over-used and its surroundings are suffering damage. The establishment of the route will attract more vehicles loaded with cycles to that site, exacerbating existing problems.

## **OTHER AGENDA ITEMS**

None

## **MATTERS ARISING FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS**

2007/2919 FOOT & MOUTH DISEASE LIAISON GROUP & TUBERCULOSIS RESUME

Mr Adams reported that the FMD contingency plan has been reviewed and amended.

A DEFRA vet gave a talk on TB and Blue Tongue however no further progress has been made in ascertaining what is likely to happen in the event of a Forest animal testing positive for TB. There are lots of if's, but's and maybe's and it seems everything depends on the strain of TB and when and where it strikes. A lot of effort has been put into trying to obtain more positive answers from DEFRA but to no avail. Mr Pasmore said he would write a letter in his private capacity seeking the assistance of his own Member of Parliament.

**Mr Frost left the meeting.**

## **STAFF MATTERS (including the Staff Committee)**

2007/2920 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT DISCHARGE

A most useful procedure for noting evidence in respect of byelaw offences has been drawn up to assist the Agisters and the office in collecting the necessary information.

2007/2921 A31 FENCING RESUME

It seems that the Highway Agency is now waiting for budget approval for the new financial year before it commences maintenance work on the fence. The work should, however, commence on 1<sup>st</sup> April. It is assumed repairs will be carried out along the entire length of the road where it abuts the Forest.

## **TRAINING**

There was nothing to report.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK**

Nothing to report.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

2007/2922 NEW FOREST SHOW 2007 RESUME

Approval was given for expenditure of up to £1,200 on the Show Stand. The Agisters section of the stand is to be integrated with that of the Verderers.

2007/2923 AGISTERS' MILEAGE RESUME  
September

It was agreed that the Agisters' Land Rover usage will be reviewed once they have had the vehicles for a year.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1.02 p.m.