

MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 16th March 2011 at 9.30 a.m. in the Verderers' Hall and the Library, the Queen's House, Lyndhurst.

PRESENT:	Mr O Crosthwaite Eyre DL	Official Verderer
	Mr R Deakin	Elected Verderer
	Mr A Gerrelli	Elected Verderer
	Miss D Macnair MBE	Elected Verderer
	Mr C Maton	National Park Appointed Verderer
	Mr A H Pasmore	Elected Verderer
	Mrs P Thorne	DEFRA Appointed Verderer
	Mrs D Westerhoff	Natural England Appointed Verderer
IN ATTENDANCE:	Miss S Westwood	Clerk to the Verderers
	Mr J R Gerrelli	Head Agister
APOLOGIES:	Mr J F Kitcher MBE	Elected Verderer & Chairman of the Staff Committee
	The Hon Mr R Montagu	Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

2011/5369 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING RESUME

The Minutes of the Court held on Wednesday, 16th February 2011 were approved.

2011/5370 CONDITION OF STOCK RESUME

The Head Agister reported that he is fairly happy with the condition of stock. The wet, cold spell of weather a few weeks ago meant that some animals rapidly lost condition and the Agisters were very busy removing those which they felt could soon give cause for concern. As usual it was mostly young ponies and the few mares with last year's foals still on them.

The weather has now improved and the rate of removal has slowed down. There are one or two which still need to be caught but conditions are considerably better than this time last year.

The Agisters are busy marking cattle which commoners are having TB tested at the same time. On the whole the condition of cattle is good. Cattle numbers are about the same as usual.

The Head Agister then left the meeting.

Mr Deakin commented that the stage will soon be reached when some commoners will stop feeding their animals or they will turn them out too early and these are problems that will have to be dealt with if and when they arise.

In some instances, upon investigating a report of a poor animal it has been found that in fact the animal is fine, but is just not quite as good as the others in a good bunch.

2011/5371 ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS RESUME

The announcements and decisions were approved. A separate report on the HLS Scheme has been put out on the benches in Court and a Press Release issued. These papers will also appear on the Verderers' website.

2011/5372 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RESUME

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

Mr Deakin declared an interest in matters connected with the Beaulieu Road Sale Yard as he is a director and the treasurer of the New Forest Livestock Society.

The Official Verderer declared an interest in matters concerning golf clubs.

Mr Gerrelli declared an interest in matters concerning campsites.

2011/5373 FINANCIAL STATEMENT RESUME

The Financial Statement for February 2011 was approved.

2011/5374 REPORT ON MARKING FEES RECEIVED IN FEBRUARY 2011 RESUME

Ponies	763	Pigs	14
Cattle	299	Sheep	95
Donkeys	4		
SUB TOTAL	1066	TOTAL ALL ANIMALS	1175

Commoners will be reminded in Open Court later today that they must pay their marking fees in respect of continuously depastured animals by the 1st of April.

2011/5375 ANIMALS REMOVED IN FEBRUARY DUE TO POOR CONDITION RESUME

10 mares with yearlings
11 mares
57 fillies
5 colts
5 geldings
2 cattle

TOTAL - 90

Total in February 2010 - 126

2011/5376 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT DISCHARGE

There are currently no reported byelaws infringements.

ENCROACHMENTS

2011/5377 ENCROACHMENTS – HOME FARM, BARTLEY RESUME

The Survey has been carried out and is awaited. The matter is therefore progressing.

2011/5378 ENCROACHMENT – CANTERTON LANE DISCHARGE

The work to abate the encroachment has been carried out. The Agister for the area will be asked to check and take photographs. A letter of thanks will then be sent to the owner of the land.

2011/5379 PUBLIC BODIES BILL

RESUME

The Official Verderer is waiting to hear further from Defra Minister Jim Paice with respect to the amendment to the Public Bodies Bill which should remove all reference to the New Forest.

Baroness Shirley Williams visited the Forest and met with the Official Verderer and Mr Ralph Montagu. Baroness Williams promised to raise the issue in the Lords when Defra Minister Lord Henley speaks. This she did but the question was not fully answered and Jim Paice's response is therefore awaited.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Mike Seddon, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest
Mr Mark Street, Area Land Agent (New Forest)

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS BY THE OFFICIAL VERDERER

2011/5380 FORESTRY COMMISSION – ENGLISH PUBLIC ESTATE CONSULTATION

The day after last month's Verderers' Court the government announced that it was abandoning its public consultation on the future of the Forestry Commissions land and woods. This news came as both a surprise and a relief, and having studied the Secretary of State, Mrs Caroline Spelman's formal statement to the House of Commons we have written to the minister responsible for the consultation (Mr Jim Paice) and asked for clarification on a number of points. In particular we have asked Mr Paice to confirm that once all the references to forestry in the draft Public Bodies Bill have been removed, it will no longer have any effect on the New Forest Acts.

In addition we have suggested that at least one of the experts who will sit on the panel that the Secretary of State intends to set up in order to advise her on future forestry policy, should have expert knowledge of the heritage forests such as the New Forest.

We await his reply, and if the minister is able to give the confirmation that we seek, then this will hopefully be an end of the matter but we have to wait to see what the expert panel comes up with.

2011/5381 HIGHER LEVEL SCHEME – FIRST ANNIVERSARY

Exactly one year ago I signed the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme on behalf of the Verderers, and much work has been done in its first year of existence.

The HLS Agreement is principally a partnership between the Forestry Commission the National Park Authority and ourselves and our annual budget of £1.6m is used for a multitude of purposes in support of conserving the New Forest. Ultimately every penny that the HLS spends must pass the simple test of being able to satisfy what are called 'HLS Outcomes', which are set out in our written agreement with Defra.

At the end of each year Natural England, which is the government agency responsible for setting up HLS Agreements and monitoring their progress, will visit the Forest in order to undertake what it calls a "health check". I am happy to report that we have recently undergone our first annual HLS health check, and we have passed with flying colours.

The first year for any new endeavour is always going to be the one that is the most challenging, busy and at times stressful. Despite this, the full administrative mechanisms necessary to run the HLS have now been established to the satisfaction of Natural

England, under the watchful eye of our new full time HLS manager, Mr Chris Caswell. The HLS is directed by a Board that consists of the three partners as well as representatives from Natural England and the Commoners Defence Association. However, only the three partner members of the Board have voting powers.

The HLS budget is neatly divided in to two so that one half is managed exclusively by ourselves, and is called the Verderers Grazing Scheme, and the other half is managed by the HLS Partnership Board as a whole. It is important to stress, however, that it is one scheme with one budget.

Details of each of the many projects that are underway are contained in my statement as Chairman of the HLS Board, copies of which can be found in the Verderers Hall today, on our website and in our press release.

2011/5382 APPOINTMENT OF OFFICIAL VERDERER

By way of an update on progress of the selection process, I am pleased to report that there has been a good level of interest in the Official Verderer position and a full day of interviews will be held later this month.

2011/5383 MARKING FEES

We would like to remind commoners that marking fees are due by the end of this month. Please do not wait for an Agister to call round. Commoners must pay for continually depastured stock by the 1st April and members of the HLS run the risk of breaking the HLS terms and conditions if they fail to pay in accordance with the byelaws.

ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

2011/5384 ACCIDENT REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2011

The Agisters attended 11 accidents, compared with 9 in February last year.

2 ponies and 1 donkey were killed.

1 pony and 2 cattle were injured.

7 accidents occurred during the hours of darkness, 3 in daylight and 1 in the twilight.

7 involved private cars or light commercials, 1 involved a heavy goods vehicle and 1 involved a motorbike.

2 accidents were not reported and have been logged as hit and runs.

5 accidents involved local motorists.

The total killed and injured for February is 6 which is the same as February last year.

PRESENTMENTS BY THE DEPUTY SURVEYOR OF THE NEW FOREST

There were no presentments by the Deputy Surveyor

PRESENTMENTS

2011/5385 THE FOREST COURSE AT BRAMSHAW GOLF CLUB, BROOK
Presentment by Mr Ian Baker, General Manager, Brook Enterprises Ltd

"The Forest Course at Brook has been in use as a Golf Course since 1865 and it has been managed by Bramshaw Golf Club since it was formed in 1880, at the same time and in conjunction with the formation of Bramshaw Cricket Club. It has therefore played an established part in Forest life, recreation and employment for more than 130 years.

In managing the Forest Course, Brook Enterprises are committed to that history and the natural Forest environment, and only minimal and consented interventions are undertaken with that in mind. It is not managed, prepared or presented in the way that almost all of the 1,900 Golf Clubs in England are. We are keen for it to blend in with the natural environment found throughout the Forest. The necessary signage around the Course is an example of that in that it was approved and manufactured by the Forestry Commission in its workshops in the style used throughout the Forest. That Course signage improvement was all completed in conjunction with the Forestry Commission in 2007 after a period of existing metal and plastic signs being mysteriously removed.

A demonstration of the difference in the intensity of the management of the Forest Course as opposed to the manicured Golf Course is that we employ 7 full-time and 2 part-time greens-staff to manage the Manor Course at Bramshaw Golf Club, but only 1 full-time and 1 part-time greens-staff to manage the Forest Course. This is a direct reflection on the level of consented management activity that we are permitted to undertake.

We have committed a significant amount of time and money to produce and agree the new 5-year Land Management plan, including the full GPS survey of the course to clarify what is actually on the course rather than relying on personal memory and misleading recollections. This is a real parallel to the work completed at the New Forest Campsites but here the information has been provided at the full cost of the Golf Club, surely not the actions of a management that wished to see further development and intensification. It clearly demonstrates our genuine commitment to operate in a sensitive and consented manner in everything we do on the Forest Course. This work started in January 2009 in preparation for the Licence renewal, and has been running for over two years now.

We therefore ask the Verderers to act without further delay and approve this new management plan and implore the Court to refer to just the facts surrounding the course and its management. The Club wish to build on the relationships built over the past two years and work towards the implementation of the plan with those responsible for the management of the Forest".

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS

2011/5386 THE FOREST COURSE AT BRAMSHAW GOLF CLUB, BROOK RESUME

The Official Verderer declared an interest.

A site visit took place attended by Mr Pasmore, Mr Deakin, Mr Street from the Forestry Commission and Mr Trenowieth representing the Friends of Brook Common and who made a Presentment at the February Court.

The site visit raised a number of questions which need to be resolved, the most obvious being some fencing which has been erected to try to prevent damage by a herd of cattle depastured by a local commoner. This fencing

is over and above that which is permitted under the terms of the licence. Whilst the Court understood the reason behind the additional fencing, it is felt that agreement must be reached with the Club as to what is and is not acceptable.

Issues such as widening of some of the paths and the use of pea-shingle instead of hoggin also need to be resolved.

The Court suggested that it would be helpful if the management plans for all the Golf Clubs were simplified. A straightforward list of what is permitted and what requires additional consent would make things a lot easier for Club managers and ground staff as well as those monitoring the courses. Club staff need to be aware that there is a management plan and that it must be adhered to.

The plan as put forward contains a huge amount of detail and the Court felt it impossible to agree round the table. Firstly it was necessary to decide which elements of Mr Trenowieth's presentment are in fact dealt with by the plan and which need addressing.

After the site visit, Mr Pasmore prepared a brief report, part of which was based on Mr Trenowieth's observations. It was agreed it would be helpful to consider the report point by point. Text of report in italics – comments from the Court/response from the Forestry Commission in regular type).

1. *Instead of one small marker on each of the tees, sixty boards have been erected.* The tee signage (three per hole) was approved in 2007. Markers are approved under the previous licence. Many original plastic and metal ones signs and markers were continually being stolen and so they were replaced by wooden ones designed to be less obtrusive and of a similar colour to FC signs. No change has been observed in the past 18 months.
2. *The Licence permits hoggin gravel only on paths. Pea shingle now being used without consent.* Mr Deakin commented that pea shingle spreads. Miss Macnair expressed concern that pea shingle can damage ponies teeth. The Forestry Commission will follow this up and ensure the Club is aware that it must use hoggin.
3. *Claim that the Licence limits paths to 4ft wide. Most have been widened beyond this without consent. This should not have been done, but it is difficult to see how the vehicles used on the course can be accommodated on 4ft. There is a lot of driving about the course.* There is no mention of the width of the paths in the Golf Club Licence but all tracks are now surveyed as part of the Management Plan. At the moment the golf club vehicles do seem to go everywhere which may not be desirable. The Forestry Commission will enquire about the width of tracks and their suitability for use by management vehicles. This matter needs further consideration.
4. *Four greens are fully fenced where the Licence stipulates only two may be fenced at any one time. This should not have been done, but it is clear that the cattle are creating problems for the Club, hence the defensive measures.* It was agreed that too many greens have been fenced. *There is also a claim that one particular pony strips turf from the greens.* This happens from time to time, probably because the animal is seeking trace elements or minerals. Nothing can be done to

resolve that problem but it was agreed that the Management Plan should set the maximum number of greens to be fenced at any one time to two, with a further two being allowed by special agreement.

5. *The course name board.* The Court does not consider this to be an issue.
6. *Two ball washers installed without consent. Very ugly and considered unnecessary.* In 1999 there were sixteen. They have been reduced to two and the Club has asked that these be retained. This was agreed but the advertising on them must be removed.
7. *Construction of a new grass square 10 years ago and the felling of a tree, all without consent. It was agreed that this happened too long ago to object now.* If the Club has plans for anything similar, it should be incorporated in the Management Plan, subject of course to consent.
8. *Numerous lengths of post and rail fencing, mostly erected in the last few weeks without consent, to deflect walkers, golfers, stock etc.* It is clear this has been done to try to alleviate damage to parts of the course. However, the Club must apply to the Forestry Commission for consent. The Court will only agree if the fencing is for a specific purpose and for a really good reason.
9. Complaints about one or two other minor notices, drains etc and a lot of small coloured markers, together with so-called "winter greens", all alleged to be without consent. The Court felt it was unfortunate if these things had been added with reference to the Forestry Commission and the Club had acted incorrectly if it had not asked for consent.

The Forestry Commission will go back to Mr Ian Baker at the Club to discuss the matters raised. In the meantime, the Court agreed that a sub-committee should convene to go through the documents. Mrs Westerhoff, Mr Deakin and Mr Pasmore will make up the committee.

It was also agreed that once it is finalised, a précis of the Management Plan should be made available to the Green Keepers and other relevant staff.

NEW SUBMISSIONS AND OTHER MATTERS RAISED BY THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2011/5387 LITTER BIN ALLOCATION PROPOSALS ACROSS FORESTRY DISCHARGE
COMMISSION CAR PARKS

The Forestry Commission's proposal to install 2 additional single litter bins at Longdown and Hawkhill car parks as well as relocating single bins from Whitefield Moor and Burley car parks to Whitemoor Pond and Ashley Walk car parks was approved. This is in accordance with the paper prepared by Zoe Cox, Recreation Ranger South Walk, dated 16th March 2011.

2011/5388 SOUTHERN WATER MAINS RENEWAL – WOODLANDS ROAD, DISCHARGE
ASHURST

Clancy Docwra propose to install a new water main by means of directional drilling. This is based on previous works in Woodlands Road and historically the excavations have been clay. Should areas be

encountered that are not suitable for drilling then the conventional open cut method will be used. The procedure for service laying on common land is attached to Clancy Docwra's letter of 9th March and the Court raised no objections to the scheme contained therein.

Consent was therefore given subject to the usual conditions regarding reinstatement, safe working conditions, compensation for loss of grazing etc.

MATTERS ARISING OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2011/5389 ROUNDHILL CAMPSITE FACILITIES BLOCKS DISCHARGE

The application for planning approval has been submitted but it is unlikely that consent will be given in time for this season. The Court accepted that, subject to approval being given by the Planning Authority, the works will therefore be carried out in time for next year's camping season. Some concrete may be removed which the Court welcomed.

2011/5390 BRIGHT GREEN SIGNS AT DENNY CAMPSITE RESUME

The Court objects to the bright green signs on the Campsites, especially the 'Thank you' signs which are considered to be unnecessary.

The Deputy Surveyor explained that a sign replacement programme is currently being implemented. There is clear guidance for replacing signs which stipulates that there must be no additions and where possible signs should be amalgamated in order to reduce their number. Unfortunately, Pea green is the corporate colour of Forest Holidays. Signs on the sites themselves are in natural wood and are not painted. The coloured signs are generally only on the entrances to the sites. The Deputy Surveyor undertook to look at the issue further.

2011/5391 FORESTRY COMMISSION PUBLIC FOREST ESTATE – PUBLIC CONSULTATION DISCHARGE

As the consultation has been withdrawn, there is nothing further to report at present.

2011/5392 A36 FENCING RESUME
May

A further letter will be sent to the Highways Agency in an attempt to persuade it to take over responsibility for the fence. The matter will be resumed in two months to provide time for the letter to be sent and a reply to hopefully be received.

2011/5393 VISITORS CARS ON CAMPSITES DISCHARGE

Forest Holidays does charge £3 a day for additional cars. This is on the basis that the occupants will have use of the campsite facilities. It is also done to control the number of vehicles visiting the sites. The Court felt, however, that one of the negative aspects of this policy is that it may encourage verge parking by those not wishing to pay. The Deputy Surveyor asked that if there are any specific instances of this happening, it is reported to the Forestry Commission. In such cases, verge protection measures may be necessary.

2011/5394 PARKING AT DENNY LODGE DISCHARGE

There is frequently a mass of cars at Denny Lodge which are nothing to do with the campsite. It is a very popular area with walkers and bird watchers. The problems occur in the winter where cars are left in various places and the Court felt parking should be confined to the area around the Warden's hut. The Deputy Surveyor said the Forestry Commission will give some thought as to how the problem can be addressed.

2011/5395 NEW FOREST GOLF COURSE RESUME

Mrs Westerhoff reported on her recent conversation with Mr John Ledger, Director of the course. He is very keen to ensure the course is run well and does not attract complaints. A survey has been carried out on the course and the next stage is the production of a Management Plan.

Mr Street said he will be in touch with Mr Ledger. The Official Verderer thanked Mrs Westerhoff on behalf of the Court, for her efforts. Mrs Westerhoff was asked to produce a single sheet of recommendations, a copy of which will be sent to Mr Street.

SSSI RESTORATION WORKS

2011/5396 WOOTTON BRIDGE STREAM RESTORATION PROPOSALS RESUME

Unfortunately there was insufficient time to marry up the notes prepared by Ms Sarah Oakley and the plan which was not available on the day that the notes were circulated. Mr Pasmore said he has some concerns. The Deputy Surveyor asked for a copy of the objections in order to try to refine the text before the next Court. Mr Pasmore will send his comments to the Clerk who will forward the to the Deputy Surveyor.

2011/5397 PENNY MOOR RESUME

A further meeting and a proposal is awaited. Mr Pasmore again expressed concern, particularly in respect of debris dams and the potential loss of a lawn.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2011/5398 GRIT BINS RESUME

The Highway Authority has installed grit bins all over the Forest. A number of the bins are on Forestry Commission land and they are most unattractive. No consent has been given for these bins and only one formal request was received, for a bin at East Boldre. Some of the bins are now empty of grit and are being used by the public to dispose of rubbish. The Highway Authority wants to leave them in situ all year round.

It was agreed that bins which have been placed on Forestry Commission land represent an illegal encroachment on common land and they must be removed. The Highway Authority will then be asked to come back with proposals for new sites. Mr Street and the Clerk will contact the Highway Authority.

- 2011/5399 ROAD WIDENING RESUME
- Another round of haunch repairs has been undertaken by the Highway Authority resulting in further road widening. This is an issue that it does not appear is possible to resolve by communication with the local Highway Authority staff. It was agreed, therefore, that the Clerk should write to the Leader of Hampshire County Council, Mr Ken Thornber, enclosing photographs of some of the worst examples. Mr Thornber will be invited to visit the Forest to see the problem and it is hoped he will take the necessary action to ensure that in future road repairs do not result in the metalled surface being widened.
- 2011/5400 HIGH CORNER INN PARKING RESUME
- Various issues were reported at the High Corner Inn. A fence has been moved and cars are being parked on the grass. Parked cars are also left on the track that leads to the Inn which is causing problems. Mr Street said he will investigate.
- 2011/5401 TOMS LANE EROSION DISCHARGE
- Problems with erosion are occurring in Toms Lane, partly because satellite navigation devices are sending vehicles along the track. Websites such as Google where there are 'route finder' programmes may also be adding to the problem by directing drivers along unsuitable tracks. The Forestry Commission will consider the options for dealing with the erosion.
- 2011/5402 BURLEY STREET GARAGE PARKING RESUME
- Cars are parked on the grass in the vicinity of the garage. There is also concern about access to the land at the back of the garage which is used for parking vehicles. Mr Street said he will visit the site and speak to the proprietor in an effort to find a satisfactory solution.
- 2011/5403 GATE CATCHES DISCHARGE
- Opinion continues to be divided as respects the new catches that have been installed on some gates in the Forest. Some people think the new catches are very good and easy to use, others consider the protruding bolt to be dangerous, particularly to horses and their riders, and the catches themselves to be unsightly. The Deputy Surveyor said the new catches were chosen following consultation with a number of organisations including the British Horse Society. The old style catches were very difficult or impossible to operate by wheelchair users and others with disabilities, whereas the new ones are very much easier. The new catches will not be installed on all gates and consultation continues. It was agreed that in order to work properly, installation has to be fairly precise and maintenance will be important.
- 2011/5404 ABANDONED ANIMALS RESUME
- The Agisters have recently impounded two unidentified horses found on the Forest. This happens several times a year and it is very rare that owners are found for the animals. The cost of keeping the animals until they are sold falls to the Court and in 2010 was more than £700.00. In addition, the animals are nearly always kept at the Farm where the Head Agister lives. The property does not belong to him and the animals can be

an inconvenience; there is no way of knowing where they have come from and there is therefore a risk of introducing disease to other stock on the premises.

The Forestry Commission was asked, as land owner, for a contribution to the costs of keeping these impounded animals or, alternatively and preferably, some suitable grazing land where such animals could be held.

In response, the Deputy Surveyor offered Long Meadow, in New Park. The Court felt this could well be a solution and thanked the Deputy Surveyor for the offer. Terms will now be discussed.

2011/5405 BRACKEN SPRAYING DISCHARGE

The Forestry Commission asked if the Court would support an increased programme of bracken spraying. In principle this was agreed and details are awaited.

2011/5406 NEW ASSISTANT CLERK DISCHARGE

Mrs Linda Ryan, who has worked most recently for the National Park Authority and previously for the New Forest Committee, will be taking up her post as Assistant to the Clerk in early April.

The Deputy Surveyor and Mr Street left the meeting.

OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM EARLIER COURTS

2011/5407 VERDERERS' GRAZING SCHEME – STALLION BLOODLINE DIVERSITY SCHEME RESUME

The Clerk reported that the project is progressing satisfactorily. A progress report will be made at the next Court.

VERDERERS' HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME (HLS)

2011/5408 HLS UPDATE DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer gave an update on the Scheme. The Advisory Group meets on 11th April. The HLS Board meets on 12th April.

Mr Pasmore said he expects there will be a submission to the Court in respect of the protection of SAM's on the Open Forest.

The Biodiversity Group is arranging for a survey of the stream filling projects to see the benefit they have contributed to commoning. Mr Pasmore remarked that the survey must take into account the management of stock and access by riders and other Forest users, and not just how much extra grazing has been achieved. The views of all parties should be recorded.

Mr Jim Seymour, Regional Programme Manager for Environmental Stewardship, has commented that these projects are critical to the HLS. The survey will hopefully help to build mutual understanding.

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK

2011/5409 COMMONERS' HOUSING SCHEME REVIEW

DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer reported that a second meeting of the review committee took place on 28th February led by Claire Gingall. The Official Verderer was unfortunately unable to attend, however, Mr Sam Dovey represented the Forest interest. The legal framework is being reviewed together with the conditions that must be met in order for a commoners' dwelling to be considered. A minimum of 2 acres will still be required and backup land must be appropriate to the proposed development. There have been 12 applications under the commoners' housing scheme. Nine houses have been built, one is underway and 2 are in the pipeline.

The next stage is for a consultation document to be prepared which once agreed will go to the NPA members for adoption.

2011/5410 TOURISM TSAR

DISCHARGE

The Court was interested to know whether the National Park Authority knew about the creation of a new Tourism Tsar. Mr Deakin said he had asked Ms Alison Barnes, the NPA's Chief Executive, but she confirmed she knew nothing about it.

The Court felt that this is something that the NPA should pursue. Whilst the creation of new jobs in the area may be welcomed, the Forest is bursting at the seams with visitors and it is considered further promotion of the area should not be encouraged.

MATTERS ARISING FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

2011/5411 NATONAL EQUINE FORUM
Report by Miss Macnair

DISCHARGE

Horse Passports

Ms Macnair reported that at the recent Equiforum, held at the Royal Society, it was announced that Defra's plan for one horse passport issuing authority has been postponed. In the meantime suggestions about how to manage a central computer for passports are invited.

Jobs

It was also reported that the equestrian industry accounts for 1.25M ancillary jobs and 100,000 direct jobs.

Exotic Diseases

At the forum, further debate took place on the likelihood and effects of an exotic disease affecting equines reaching Britain and a possible practical solution for addressing the risk to breeds of horse by maintaining a bank of frozen semen from 25 unrelated stallions.

2011/5412 RECREATION STRATEGY WORKING GROUP - CYCLING RESUME

A presentation by the cycling representative included a proposal for additional routes. Of the six routes mentioned, the Court would have an interest in five. Mr Deakin will circulate the information he has got and invited comment so that he can accurately represent the Court by expressing its views at the next meeting.

STAFF MATTERS (including the Staff Committee)

2011/5413 LONE WORKERS RESUME

The Forestry Commission uses two main systems for ensuring the safety of lone workers. One uses a system based on mobile telephones and a central control centre, the other operates on a 'buddy' system. It was felt the latter is the best solution for the Agisters. The Head Agister will now be tasked with designing an appropriate system for the Agister team.

TRAINING

No training is taking place

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

Apart from the Lone Workers issue mentioned above there are no other health and safety issues at present.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2011/5414 NATURAL ENGLAND DISCHARGE

Mrs Westerhoff was pleased to advise the Court that Ms Rachel Bailey will be staying with Natural England. Jackie Kelly and Russell Wright will be leaving.

2011/5415 CONSULTATIVE PANEL DISCHARGE

The meeting is now on the 12th May. Mrs Thorne apologised for being unable to attend. Mr Caswell will give an update on the HLS.

2011/5416 LAG DISCHARGE

Mr Gerrelli reported on the most recent meeting. Several projects are in progress but sadly not many involving commoners. The terms of reference are rather restrictive although Mr Gerrelli thought some contractors might benefit. The budget has been reduced. Matched funding is now only 40%.

2011/5417 POACHING AT ENTRANCES TO COMMONERS' HOLDINGS DISCHARGE

There have been one or two issues in respect of poaching outside commoners' holdings. This is thought to result from a general increase in herd numbers. The damaged areas are small compared with the total area over which the animals roam and at present are considered to be an acceptable hazard in conservation terms. It is important that this balance continues. At the present it does not represent a hazard to the HLS.

2011/5418 WEARING OF UNIFORMS BY AGISTERS AT FUNERALS DISCHARGE

A policy, kindly drafted by Mr Deakin was adopted as follows:-

When attending funerals, Agisters should wear full formal uniform when the deceased is:

- A former Agister
- A former Official Verderer
- A former Elected Verderer

Exceptions to this policy should be rare, but in exceptional circumstances approval may be given by the Head Agister after discussion with The Staff Committee Chair.

2011/5419 YOUNG COMMONERS DISCHARGE

The Young Commoners gave a presentation to the Court on 21st February.

The Young Commoners were grateful for the opportunity to address the Court but were disappointed that more Verderers were not able to attend.

The Verderers who attended agreed the presentation was very good. The Young Commoners have achieved a lot and should sell themselves more.

The Official Verderer will give this feedback to Mr Glenn Rees, the YC's Chairman.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 12.42 p.m.