

**MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019 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
	Mr J Greenwood	Elected Verderer
	Cllr Edward Heron	National Park Appointed Verderer
	Miss D Macnair MBE	Senior Elected Verderer
	Mr G M H Mills DL	DEFRA Appointed Verderer
	Mr A H Pasmore	Elected Verderer
	Mrs D Westerhoff	Natural England Appointed Verderer

APOLOGIES: Mr D Readhead Elected Verderer

IN ATTENDANCE: Miss S Westwood Clerk to the Verderers  
Mr J R Gerrelli Head Agister

**IN COMMITTEE in the Library**

2019/10364 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING RESUME

The Minutes of Court held on Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019 were approved and signed.

2019/10365 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RESUME  
October  
2019

Declarations of interest can be found on the Verderers' website – [www.verderers.org.uk](http://www.verderers.org.uk). The Declarations of Interest will be reviewed in October 2019.

2019/10366 CONDITION OF STOCK RESUME

The Agister team has been very busy catching and removing animals which have lost condition. The Head Agister reported he is happy that the team has now caught up, although a small number of animals remain outstanding. A few animals appeared to suddenly lose condition. These were mainly young ponies and mares with yearlings left on them. Overall, conditions are generally good.

2019/10367 SPRING WELFARE TOUR RESUME  
May

The Welfare Tour will take place on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2019.

2019/10368 REPORT ON MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE AND RESUME  
COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEAR

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
Forest Ponies	462	2346
Forest Cattle	378	1357
Forest Donkeys	0	39
Forest Pigs	0	0
Forest Sheep	0	0
Total Forest Stock	840	3742

Common Ponies	142	287
Common Cattle	138	1357
Common Donkeys	8	39
Common Pigs	0	0
Common Sheep	0	51
Total Common Stock	288	681
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Forest	840	3742
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Commons	288	630
Total Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys	1128	4372
Total Stock – Forest & Commons	1128	4423

2019/10369 MARKING FEES – LATE PAYMENT

DISCHARGE

In response to the query as to why so few marking fees have been received so far this year, the Head Agister replied that many commoners are waiting for their VGS and HLS payments.

The Court requested the Agisters remind commoners that for continuously depastured animals, marking fees must be paid by the end of March to avoid a breach of the byelaws.

The Court recognised that in a very few cases, financial hardship may be a legitimate reason for late payment and in those cases, the Court will use its discretion. It is, however, felt that such cases should be few and far between.

Commoners should realise the subsidy payments may not exist in years to come.

Requests for an extension to the deadline for payment of marking fees on grounds of extreme hardship will be referred to two Verderers for a final decision.

Confidentiality will be strictly maintained at all times.

2019/10370 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT

RESUME

Three or four two-year-old colts are still at large on the Forest.

2019/10371 ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS

RESUME

The Announcements and Decisions were approved.

It was suggested the announcement on boundary fencing should be repeated in February next year.

Action  
OV/Clerk

2019/10372 NEW FOREST TOUR BUS ADVERTISEMENT

DISCHARGE

The Court approved the expenditure in support of the Tour Bus advert for 2019.

The Clerk advised that consideration will be given to a new advert for next year which may result in a request for additional funding.

**OPEN COURT – 10.00 a.m.**

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

**The Head Agister opened the Court with the usual proclamation.**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS BY THE OFFICIAL VERDERER**

**2019/10373 THE ROLE OF THE VERGE RESTORATION OFFICER**

I thought that this would be an opportune moment to say something about the role of the Verge Restoration Officer, who has now been in post since September 2017.

The clue is, of course, in the name. The role of the Verge Restoration Officer is to protect the Forest by seeking to minimise parking and driving on its designated SSSI verges which, as we all know, causes obvious, extensive damage and erosion throughout the Forest.

The protection and restoration process starts with the assessment and recording of areas where verges are being damaged. Suggestions for areas needing attention come from many quarters including local residents, Parish Councils, commoners, Verderers and Forest keepers. The Verge Restoration Officer also uses her extensive personal knowledge of the Forest to identify areas where works may be required.

An initial visit is made to the damaged area. This involves speaking to as many local residents and verge parkers as possible. This alone can sometimes resolve the issue without further work being needed.

Where work is required, a consultation process is initiated. A work programme and operational site assessment are drawn up and circulated to all Forestry Commission departments for their comments and views. Details of any proposed works are also submitted to Natural England for approval and also to the National Park Authority for a heritage assessment. Parish councils are, of course, included in this extensive consultation process, as are the Commoners' Defence Association, the Verderers and the Agisters.

Once a decision to undertake remedial works at a damaged site has been approved, those affected are notified of what is proposed. Information is also available on the Forestry Commission website.

In both drawing up the operational site assessment and in the consultation process, careful consideration is given to potential subsequent impacts arising from the works. Where verge parking has created an 'unofficial' lay-by, the presence of a designated car park close by is taken into account. Regrettably, however, some people find it very difficult to change their regular parking habits and will merely continue to utilise adjacent areas of verge. As we have all seen, it is remarkable how often there is a vehicle parked on the verge or blocking a barrier when there is a car park in close proximity.

The emergency services are not a formal part of the consultation process although we know from contact with the Fire Service that they are not concerned by the presence of banks, ditches or dragons teeth as they have the equipment necessary to deal with those in the case of an emergency.

Once work has been completed, the Verge Restoration Officer regularly monitors its impact. Flexibility is key and if modifications need to be made then they are.

Dragons teeth are an important measure available to deal with the scourge of verge parking and verge damage. At the risk of stating the obvious, if motorists did not damage the verges in the first place then we would not need to dig ditches, construct banks or install dragons teeth.

Some other issues that give rise to concern are caused by motorists parking their vehicles on narrow Forest roads. This is not something that falls within the jurisdiction of the Forestry Commission or the Verderers. Complaints about vehicles obstructing the highway should be directed to the Police or the Highway Authority.

The Verderers believe that the dedicated hard work of the Verge Restoration Officer is of significant benefit to the Forest and is deserving of our support and that of other Forest organisations.

#### 2019/10374 BOUNDARY FENCING

If you live in the Forest or occupy land which has a boundary with the Forest, it is your responsibility to maintain your fences, hedges, gates and any cattle grids in good stock proof condition in order to stop stock accessing your property. It is not the responsibility of the commoners to maintain those fences.

This is the time of year when stock will look for more appetising food than they can find on the Forest. Cattle in particular are strong animals and they will look to exploit any weaknesses. In other words, they will push their way in anywhere where a boundary isn't properly secure.

The Verderers do have the power to require commoners to remove animals from the Forest, but only animals which can reasonably be considered 'mischievous'. The Verderers cannot, however, order off animals which have entered private property through a boundary that wasn't fully stock-proof.

Our office regularly receives complaints at this time of year because animals have got into private property. The most commonly heard argument is that a fence 'has been fine for the last however many years'. The answer to that can usually be found in that very comment. It was fine, but through lack of maintenance, it isn't now. Fences do not last forever.

Please check your boundaries regularly and ensure that any weak spots are reinforced and if necessary, replace fencing etc., when it has reached a point that it has or is becoming weak.

Once animals have found rich pickings in private property, they will often return looking for any weakness in the fencing. It is so much better not to let them in in the first place.

#### ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

##### 2019/10375 THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2019

The Agisters attended 12 accidents in February. This compares with 14 in February last year.

4 ponies, 1 cow and 1 donkey were killed. 1 pony and 1 cow were injured. 4 animals reportedly involved in accidents could not be found

1 accident occurred in daylight and 11 in the dark.

1 accident was not reported by the driver involved.

6 motorists are known to have been local.

The total killed and injured so far in 2019, therefore is 21 compared with 15 in the same period last year.

## PRESENTMENTS

### 2019/10376 FORESTRY COMMISSION 100 YEARS

Presentment by Mr Bruce Rothnie, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest

The Deputy Surveyor announced that 2019 is the Forestry Commission's centenary. An exhibition opened last week in the New Forest Heritage Centre in Lyndhurst. It includes a lot of interesting information about the Forestry Commission's work over the past 100 years. Admission is free. The exhibition runs until Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July. Everyone is welcome. The Deputy Surveyor added that if anyone has any interesting stories about the Forest please get in touch.

### 2019/10377 A35 HOLMSLEY BRIDGE REPLACEMENT

Presentment by Mr Michael Renouf, Solicitor acting for Hampshire County Council.

#### S17 OF THE NEW FOREST ACT 1949 - HOLMSLEY BRIDGE REPLACEMENT SCHEME

Presentment by Mr Michael Renouf, Solicitor - Hampshire Legal Services, Hampshire County Council

##### 1. Introduction

I appear today at the Verderers' Court as solicitor to the local Highways Authority, which is a department at Hampshire County Council. A representative of my client Highway Authority - Brian Hill, Chief Engineer for Structures – is in Court.

I make application under section 17 of the New Forest Act 1949 for agreement of the Verderers to an additional area of land within the New Forest being used as highway.

My client has statutory responsibility for most highways within the County of Hampshire. Holmsley Rail Bridge, which is situated on the A35, is in poor structural condition and needs to be replaced.

I shall, first, say a few words about Holmsley Bridge and the reasons why a new bridge is needed. I shall then provide information on the bridge replacement scheme, why new land is required as highway, and about land that my client is offering by way of compensation. Before concluding, I shall refer to ways in which this scheme may be challenged.

##### 2. The scheme

###### 2.1 Bridge - history and current problems

The original brick arch of Holmsley Rail Bridge was constructed in 1847 to carry the Lyndhurst to Christchurch road over the Southampton to Dorset Railway. The present three span steel bridge was constructed in 1908. In 1964 the rail line and Holmsley Station were closed to passengers. In 1970 the rail line passing under the bridge was removed and replaced with what is now the C10 road.

When ownership of the bridge passed from British Railways Board to Hampshire County Council in April 2012, the bridge was already in poor structural condition. Some work was carried out recently to shore up the bridge, using temporary steel frame supports. The bridge, which is more than 110 years old, was designed to carry less traffic than now uses the A35.

## 2.2 Different bridge replacement schemes considered and why this one was chosen.

The Highways Authority has looked at a number of different schemes. Some would involve diverting traffic away from the bridge throughout the period of demolition and reconstruction, which would result in traffic being rerouted considerable distances around the New Forest over an extended period of time, and increased traffic emissions.

The chosen scheme minimises impact on the forest and will cause least disruption to traffic:

- vehicles will continue to use the current bridge, while the new bridge is constructed alongside it on forestry land
- new sections of road will be built, at each end of the new bridge, on forestry land
- after the new sections of road have been joined up to the existing A35 carriageway, the old bridge and sections of road that are no longer needed will be dismantled and that land will return to forest.

The width of the A35 will be maintained over the full realignment length. Consequently, the bridge replacement scheme will result in a wider bridge and straighter approach road, which will increase safety for road users.

## 2.3 Land swap at Holmsley Bridge and compensation at other sites

Ownership of two areas of land will be exchanged:

- An area of forest less than 0.25 hectares (2,124 square metres) needed for the new bridge and re-alignment of the A35 will be transferred from the Crown (Forestry Commission) to the County Council.
- The area of land owned by the County Council that will no longer be needed as highway (the current bridge and the carriageway immediately each side of the bridge), comprising 1,416 square metres, will be transferred by the County Council to the Crown (Forestry Commission).

My client will also transfer to the Crown (Forestry Commission) for forest an additional area of land comprising 850 square metres alongside a stretch of the A35, situated just over 1.5 miles north of the bridge. This will result in a total of 2,266 square metres of land being made over to forest, a net gain of 142 square metres.

In addition, in order to compensate for loss of habitat and biodiversity, other land currently comprising gravel verges will be allowed to return to natural vegetation. These are situated at a number of points on the A35 (between Holmsley Rail Bridge and Lyndhurst) and on the A337 (between Lyndhurst and Brockenhurst).

## 2.4 Traffic management and road closures

Various options regarding traffic management, timing and sequence of works are being investigated. My client is liaising with all parties in order to minimise impact during the works period on road users, on businesses, and on this sensitive area of Hampshire – this includes Verderers, Forestry Commission, Natural England, New Forest District Council and the New Forest National Park Authority.

Some temporary road closures of the A35 and the C10 are unavoidable but these will be kept to a minimum through use of lane closures and traffic light controls.

## 2.5 Timing

My client hopes to go out to tender this summer, with a view to the works commencing in the first half of 2020. The new bridge should be operational early 2021.

## 3. Objections

There are two parallel procedures under which objections can be raised.

### 3.1 New Forest Act 1949

Anyone who believes that the Verderers should not agree to this area of land being used as highway may raise their concerns with the Verderers (at the next hearing of the Verderers Court, on Wednesday 17 April 2019).

### 3.2 Highways Act 1980

Anyone who objects to the bridge replacement scheme may appeal directly to Southampton and New Forest Magistrates Court under section 256 of the Highways Act 1980, within two months of publication of the notice of the scheme (first publication was on 22 February 2019, in the Hampshire Independent newspaper).

## 4. Supporting documents and conclusion

I present to the Court a number of documents in support of these proposals, which I shall also leave on the table at the front of the Court for the press and the public to view:

- copy of the s256 notice published in the Hampshire Independent on Friday 22 February 2019
- the s256 Plan referred to in the notice, showing the current bridge and the replacement bridge and highway (drawing B2286/18/08 LAND S256)
- a drawing showing the extra land area of 850 square metres to be transferred to the Crown for the forest (Site 1A) and other areas of highway verge that will compensate for loss of habitat and biodiversity by allowing gravelled areas to return to nature (drawing B2286/18/08 LAND 3 Rev E)
- plan showing locations of the bridge and other sites (B2286/18/08 LAND2 Rev B)
- a colour drawing, taken from a 3D image, showing from two angles how the new bridge will look (B2286/18/08 LAND 5).

On behalf of the local Highways Authority, I invite the Verderers to agree to the transfer of land to the Highways Authority.

## 2019/10378 ASHURST HOSPITAL PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT

Presentment by Mr Brian Ross Tarnoff – Friends of the New Forest (New Forest Association)

Mr Tarnoff encouraged the Court to respond to the NFNPA's consultation and point out that the common rights on the Hospital site were never extinguished and there is a strong possibility, therefore, that if no longer required by the Health Authority, the land should revert to the Crown.

The Official Verderer responded by saying that the Court has written to the Planning Authority making that point.

**The Head Agister closed the Court**

**IN COMMITTEE in the Library**

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

**CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS**

2019/10379 A35 HOLMSLEY BRIDGE REPLACEMENT RESUME

Consideration of the Presentment heard today will follow any supporting or counter presentment which may be heard at April's Court.

2019/10380 ASHURST HOSPITAL PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DISCHARGE

The Deputy Surveyor asked for a copy of the letter which the Court has written to the Planning Authority. Action Clerk

**DE-MINIMIS CONSENTS – ITEMS APPROVED AND TO BE RECORDED**

2019/10381 DE-MINIMIS CONSENTS RECORDED AT THIS COURT DISCHARGE

- DM0035 Holmsley Road New Milton - 88m duct/cabling and 1 jointing chamber
- DM0036 Linford Road - FTTP 602m duct/cabling & 4 jointing chambers
- DM0037 The Oak PH, Pinkney Lane, Lyndhurst - Fibre cabinet against wall of pub
- DM0038 Outside Broadlands Gate, North Weirs - New broadband cabinet
- DM0039 Outside Sandys Corner, Ogdens - FTTP 150m duct and cabling
- DM0040 Outside Broomys, Ogdens - FTTP 252m duct/cabling & 3 jointing chambers
- DM0041 Outside Gorley Vale Fm - Broadband cabinet against Farm wall
- DM0042 Linford Road FTTP V5148 602m – duct/cabling & 4 jointing chambers
- DM0043 Holly Heath Cottage, Hale - Broadband cabinet opposite Holly Heath Cottage
- DM0044 Outside Stocks Cross House, Bramshaw - Broadband cabinet
- DM0045 Forest Glade, Furze Hill, Fordingbridge - New tap and meter on driveway of property

2019/10382 DE-MINIMIS CONSENTS – APPROVAL SYSTEM DISCHARGE

Several of the above proposals infringe the previously agreed principles in that the length of the installations exceeded 50m. The Court felt, however, that the de-minimis system is working well and agreed a certain amount of discretion should be permitted. In future, where it is recognised that a proposal is technically outside the extent of the de-minimis system, but it does not appear to be controversial, two Verderers will consider the details and undertake a site visit but the final decision will be deferred to the next Court Committee. The de-minimis system rules will be updated to take account of this variation.



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

2019/10383	PROPOSED RESTRICTED BYWAY – BISTERNE COMMON BOUNDARY WITH THE FOREST AT DUR HILL, TO BURLEY	DISCHARGE
	<p>It could be a number of years before this proposal comes to the top of the County Rights of Way Department's list.</p> <p>Mr Grugeon will bring the matter back to the Court when it progresses, but in the meantime will ensure that all the evidence in opposition is recorded on the file.</p>	
2019/10384	SSE REPLACEMENT POLES – BANK / ALUM GREEN / HOLIDAYS HILL	RESUME
	<p>Further consideration needs to be given as none of the proposed undergrounding routes are easy solutions. Further discussions and a site meeting may well be required. If a meeting is arranged, Mr Grugeon wishes to attend.</p>	Action FC/SSE
2019/10385	CONTROL OF DOGS – COMMERCIAL DOG WALKERS CHARTER	RESUME
	<p>The Court is not minded to support the charter because it feels it does not effectively regulate a commercial activity which is taking place on the Forest. It is felt that failing to take early control of activities which may have a seriously detrimental effect on the Forest, results in it being very difficult to control them in the future.</p> <p>The view remains that commercial dog walkers should obtain permission. This would help ensure reasonable controls can be put in place including restricting the number of dogs which an individual should walk to four.</p> <p>The Court feels dogs should be on leads during the bird nesting season which would bring the Forest in line with the CROW Act.</p> <p>The Deputy Surveyor undertook to provide the Clerk with the Forestry Commission's position.</p>	Action DS
2019/10386	A31 CATTLE GRID AT CASTLE MALWOOD	RESUME
	<p>Cllr Heron reported that the local Highways Manager at Hampshire County Council is going to write to Highways England to ascertain whether the cattle grid at Castle Malwood meets the relevant British Standard. If it doesn't, he will raise concerns.</p> <p>The very helpful support of Hampshire County Council is much appreciated.</p>	
2019/10387	VERDERERS' INCLOSURES	RESUME
	<p>Work to survey the inclosures continues. When complete, consideration will be given to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Areas which the Forestry Commission no longer requires for growing trees and which are Okay to return to Open Forest.</li><li>• Priorities for restoration work</li><li>• Areas where it is accepted that restoration is not required</li></ul>	

Work planned under HLS or by the Forestry Commission as general works will then be looked at. Some areas will need to be included in the burning programme.

2019/10388 FAWLEY FOOTPATH DISCHARGE

The Court raised no objection to the proposal to upgrade Fawley Footpath No. 26 to a bridleway. The path has been used by horse riders for many years. However, any physical change to the access does need the Court's consent.

2019/10389 WINDBLOWN TREES RESUME

A lot of trees have snapped off this winter, rather than being uprooted. In some places there is regeneration amongst the fallen wood.

A big oak which has fallen onto a verge has resulted in stock having to walk out in the road to get past. This is an example of where it is important to agree what should be done now and in future. Action DS

The Deputy Surveyor is going to arrange a meeting in Penderley Wood. Mr Deakin said he is seeking a conceptual agreement where everyone understands what is acceptable and what can be achieved. Mrs Westerhoff agreed to arrange for Natural England to attend. Action DW

2019/10390 LYNDHURST CRICKET CLUB SQUARE – RAILINGS DISCHARGE

The new galvanised railings, which were installed last year, are still visually prominent in the landscape. The Court asked the Land Agent to request the railings are now painted matt black.

### SSSI RESTORATION WORKS

2019/10391 REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE LIST RESUME

An updated SSSI Repair and Maintenance List was circulated.

### ACTION LIST

2019/10392 ACTION LIST RESUME

An updated Action List was provided.

### NEW ENCROACHMENTS INVOLVING THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2019/10393 ENCROACHMENTS LIST RESUME

There is one current encroachment which is being dealt with.

### ANY OTHER BUSINESS INVOLVING THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2019/10394 BLOCKAGE IN QUEEN'S MEADOW DISCHARGE

Mr Greenwood requested the Forestry Commission clears the upstream blockage. This will be added to the SSSI repair and maintenance list.

2019/10395	LATCHMOOR BROCKENHURST	DISCHARGE
	Some fencing is due to be repaired/replaced at this location. However the area falls outside the HLS boundary and therefore will be paid for by the Verderers. The Deputy Surveyor will let the Clerk have the costings for the work.	Action DS
2019/10396	COMMUNITY SAFETY ACCREDITATION SCHEME (CSAS)	DISCHARGE
	Mr Greenwood told the Court that Dartmoor's Rangers are in this scheme and he wondered whether it is something the New Forest – Verderers and Forestry Commission - should consider.	Action OV/Clerk
2019/10397	FOREST DESIGN PLAN – PRESENTATION	DISCHARGE
	Miss Macnair congratulated the Deputy Surveyor on his presentation to the Consultative Panel on the Forest Design Plan. Mr Dowsett said several other people had made the same comment to him.	
2019/10398	VEGETATION SURVEY	RESUME May
	The Deputy Surveyor and Official Verderer are scoping the proposals and the Forestry Commission team is preparing a brief. The Court will have the opportunity to provide an input.	Action DS
2019/10399	ALDERHILL / ANDERWOOD FENCE	DISCHARGE
	Mr Deakin said the fence was taken down to aid timber extraction but it is important for stock management and the Court asked that it be reinstated. The Deputy Surveyor undertook to investigate and report back to the Clerk.	Action DS
2019/10400	GOLF CLUBS AND PESTICIDES.	RESUME
	The Land Agent reported that Bramshaw (Forest) Golf Club has put forward a draft proposal to follow organic principles. The Land Agent will look at the details and pass them on. The Court's initial response is supportive.	Action PG
2019/10401	BROCKENHURST CRICKET CLUB	RESUME
	The Cricket Club has now obtained planning permission for the alterations to its pavilion but in order to obtain the necessary funding it needs a 20 year licence. At present the licence is only for 5 years. The Land Agent was asked to discuss the request further with the Cricket Club and report back to the Court.	Action PG
2019/10402	EAST BOLDRE VILLAGE HALL - PROPOSED SHOP	RESUME
	The Land Agent asked whether the Court will consider a form of land exchange.	
	The Court agreed this is worthy of investigation.	Action PG
2019/10403	GIBBET WOOD	DISCHARGE
	Mr Pasmore reported that the gate into Coppice of Linwood is in a very poor state of repair and ponies have got in.	Action DS

**The Deputy Surveyor and the Forestry Commission's Land Agent left the meeting.**

**MATTERS ARISING (NOT INVOLVING THE FORESTRY COMMISSION)**

2019/10404 NATIONAL GRID PROPOSALS FOR UNDERGROUNDING THE HIGH VOLTAGE PYLONS AND LINES IN THE NORTH OF THE FOREST DISCHARGE

Further consideration was given to the request from Hale Parish Council to meet to discuss this project. It was agreed that a meeting at this stage will not be beneficial as details of the final proposal, if any, have yet to be received.

Action Clerk

**HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME**

2019/10405 THE FUTURE OF THE HLS DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer reported that Ms Alison Barnes (CE NFNPA) has been in contact with one of the directors, Mr James Diamond, at Natural England who has confirmed that the future of the HLS is firmly on their agenda.

In February, Mr Tony Hockley (CDA Chairman) and the Official Verderer met with three Defra officials, Mr Edward Barker – Director, Natural Environment, Mr Dan Jones - Head of Protected Landscapes and Ms Tracey Foster - Year of Green Action.

As a result of Ms Barnes' contact, Mr John Place, a senior official within Defra accompanied by two colleagues, will be meeting with the Forest Farming Group (FFG) next week. It has been confirmed that Defra is open to discussions about a bespoke scheme to replace the existing HLS. The timescale for designing a bespoke scheme is very tight.

Mr Robert Deane of Rural Focus, has now produced for the FFG a detailed paper on 'Understanding the New Forest's Natural Capital and how its management provides public goods to the Nation.' This will be considered at next week's meeting but reads well.

**VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME**

2019/10406 VGS PAYMENTS RESUME

Ms Woodley, VGS Administrator, continues to chase the RPA for payment.

At the next VGS Committee Meeting, consideration will be given to penalising failures to manage stock properly.

**FINANCIAL MATTERS**

2019/10407 FINANCIAL STATEMENT DISCHARGE

The Financial Statement was noted.

## **STAFF MATTERS / HEALTH & SAFETY**

2019/10408 BOVINE TB – RECENT BREAKDOWNS DISCHARGE

Unfortunately, confusion at the Exeter office of the Animal and Plant Health Authority (APHA) resulted in letters erroneously being sent to a number of commoners telling them to TB test their cattle. The problem was swiftly resolved. It is, however, understood that there are breakdowns in other parts of the Forest which will result in additional TB testing being undertaken. Testing is carried out on the instruction of APHA.

2019/10409 STALLION COMMITTEE DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin reported on a recent meeting of the Stallion Committee. 15 stallions will be turned out again this year for a period of 6 weeks with owners being allowed to catch them from the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> week.

2019/10410 TROUBLESOME PONY AT NOMANSLAND DISCHARGE

A report that a pony has caused problems for a school field trip is being investigated.

## **TRAINING**

2019/10411 FIRST AID DISCHARGE

The First Aid refresher courses have been completed.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

2019/10412 PRIVATE FENCING DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer reported on a recent meeting held on Harlicks Hill, Beaulieu to discuss defective fencing which has resulted in cattle gaining access to a number of fields.

The Clerk reported there have been problems with other fences, in Brockenhurst and Burley, where lack of maintenance has resulted in stock accessing private property.

2019/10413 PLANNING GUIDELINES AND NEW BRIDLEWAYS DISCHARGE

Mr Mills reported that under new planning guidelines, developers are being asked to provide new bridleways where possible. This applies outside the Forest but it has the potential to increase access to the Forest.

2019/10414 PARTNERSHIP PLAN DISCHARGE

Mr Mills suggested disabled access should be included in the partnership plan. A brief mention was made about gate catches and the Court suggested that trombone type catches are not needed on every gate.

2019/10415 MEDIA TRAINING RESUME

Media training has been arranged for three Verderers and 5 staff. It is taking place on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March. Action OV

2019/10416 PLANNING APPLICATION FOR A COMMONERS' DWELLING AT DISCHARGE  
ROCKFORD FARM BARNS

A letter similar to that which was written before has been sent supporting the principle of the proposed development.

2019/10417 NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY PAPER – SPECIAL BY DISCHARGE  
DESIGN

The paper was circulated. The Court agreed to send a representative to the first meeting of the Working Group on signage. It is felt the paper is lacking in reference to open landscape and grazing.

Action OV

2019/10418 RUBBISH DISCHARGE

Mr Mills reported that Mrs Gilly Drummond, Cadland Estate, is making a plea for more effort to be put into educating the public about the risks posed to the Forest, its livestock and wildlife, by littering and fly-tipping. The Court very much supports all such efforts and is in regular contact with New Forest District Council regarding household waste collections.

2019/10419 DEFRA'S APPOINTED VERDERER DISCHARGE

Mr Mills will be retiring from the Court this July. Mr Mills said he has very much enjoyed his time as a Verderer, but feels he is unable to continue to commit to the time that he believes is necessary to contribute effectively to the Court's work.

2019/10420 ANIMAL ACCIDENT/EMERGENCY CARDS DISCHARGE

The Clerk passed on Ms Nicola Dennes's thanks for arranging the re-design of the card in line with her request at the November (2018) Court.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 1.25 p.m.

*Julianne*  
17 April 2019