

**MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2006 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  
The Hon R Montagu Forestry Commission Appointed 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: None

**IN COMMITTEE**

The Head Agister was present for the first two items.

2006/2624 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING DISCHARGE

The Minutes of the Court held on Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> October 2006 were approved.

2006/2625 CONDITION OF STOCK RESUME

The Head Agister reported that he is quite happy with the condition of stock at the moment. The late flush of grass has helped those animals whose condition was beginning to give some cause for concern.

Mares and foals have been taken off the drifts and some additional drifts are being arranged where necessary. Some of these are in areas where it was not possible to drift before because of strangles.

Several animals have been lost to acorn poisoning and it is expected that deaths will continue until well after Christmas. Some animals have lost condition very quickly and anything which is below the required standard is being removed.

The Fritham area will not be drifted now because there are still some animals in the area with strangles. A few commoners have been catching their own animals but it was considered inappropriate to hold an official drift because of the risk of spreading the disease and putting the animal under stress.

The Head Agister left the meeting.

Mr Adams said he did not have much to add and he is happy with the situation. On the whole the animals look very well. One or two mares have been removed but generally the animals are going into winter in good condition. He added that there are a few cattle which do not look as well as they should and they are being cleared up. The main

problem appears to be that they are breeds not suited to the Forest.

Mr Kitcher reported that he had heard that someone had purchased 6 foals of which 4 subsequently died. The purchasers vet diagnosed acorn poisoning as being the cause.

The office keeps a record of stock which die from various causes including suspected poisoning and this information is available if required.

Most of the acorns are down now but with so many on the ground it is inevitable that deaths will continue – probably right into the spring.

2006/2626 ELECTED VERDERERS DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer said he was very pleased Dionis Macnair and Jeff Kitcher have been returned unopposed. This is very good news indeed and both were congratulated.

2006/2627 ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS RESUME

A brief discussion about the merits or otherwise of not marking cattle with annual Verderers' tags in 2007 as Mr Adams had not been present at the last Court when the decision was made. Mr Adams had strong reservations about not using the tags but as it was for one year only he agreed the decision should stand and the Announcements and Decisions were then approved.

2006/2628 REVISION OF THE VERDERERS' BYELAWS RESUME

The Official Verderer said a number of matters have arisen over the past few years which indicate that the byelaws require a small number of relatively straightforward revisions. He proposed that consideration should be given to these matters in the near future.

2006/2629 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.

The Official Verderer declared an interest in matters concerning Forest golf courses.

2006/2630 FINANCIAL STATEMENT RESUME

The Financial Statement for October was approved.

2006/2631 REPORT ON MARKING FEES RECEIVED RESUME

The following Marking Fees have been received:

Ponies	4201	Pigs	589
Cattle	2572	Sheep	40
Donkeys	110		

Total - 7512

Total Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys - 6883

2006/2632 ANIMALS REMOVED FROM THE FOREST DUE TO POOR RESUME  
CONDITION

10 mares and 11 foals  
2 fillies  
2 cattle

Total 25

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Will Parke, Area Land Agent (New Forest)

APOLOGY: Mr Mike Seddon, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS BY THE OFFICIAL VERDERER**

2006/2633 COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP SCHEME

As mentioned in last month's announcements, the Verderers' Countryside Stewardship Scheme Sub-Committee met last month in order to analyse the data on the number of animals depastured on the Forest during the previous year to see if the 7000 animal limit has been exceeded. The marking fee register clearly shows that as at the end of September there were 6849 animals out on the open Forest, and thus our attempt to encourage commoners not to increase their herds has been successful this year.

We will therefore not be implementing the 25% reduction in payments that would have been triggered if the number of animals had exceeded 7000.

Whilst we would like to congratulate all commoners for their restraint this year, particularly those who resisted the temptation to depasture extra animals, it is vital that we continue to keep the numbers below 7000 which is a key requirement by DEFRA. If the numbers go up we will be in breach of our agreement with DEFRA who will be entitled to refuse to pay us, which in turn means we will not be able to pay you.

We propose therefore to retain the rule for next year and beyond, that if animal numbers on the Forest exceed 7000, payments will be reduced by 25% for any participating commoners who turn out more stock than they turned out in 2004.

2006/2634 SINGLE PAYMENT SCHEME

Following representations by the Verderers to the Rural Payments Agency and DEFRA, the RPA has decided to compile a list of all commoners who have still to receive their full payment for the Single Payment Scheme for 2005. They have promised to let us have a copy. This will be used to ensure that any outstanding issues are resolved and that no-one who is still waiting for their money is inadvertently left out. We will continue to liaise with RPA on behalf of those commoners who are still waiting to be paid.

If anyone wishes to query their payment and is unsatisfied with the response from the RPA, they should contact Colin Draper, our Countryside Stewardship Scheme Manager and he will take up your concerns with them.

2006/2635 VERDERERS' ELECTION

Nominations for candidates closed on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November. Only two candidates put their names forward, namely Miss Dionis Macnair and Mr Jeff Kitcher and accordingly there will be no election since the vacancies are not being contested.

2006/2636 ACCOUNTS

The 2005/2006 accounts have now been formally approved and signed, and they can be viewed on our website and are available for inspection in the office.

2006/2637 NATIONAL PARK

The National Park Authority has recognised from its very inception that commoning is of vital importance to the successful conservation of the New Forest, and that it must therefore support the commoners themselves in any way that they reasonably can in order to maintain a viable and sustainable commonable tradition, literally for generations to come.

To this end they have asked the commoners themselves to form a group and lead a review of the state of commoning today. The purpose of this will be to identify the many problems that commoning already faces, and may indeed face in the future, and find solutions for them. The group will then make its recommendations directly to the NPA suggesting what needs to be done to help commoners. The aim is for those recommendations to be included in the NPA's forthcoming and first ever Management Plan, which will be the work plan for the Park for many years ahead.

The Group has now been formed, and consists of representatives from the various well-known bodies that protect the interests of commoners, namely the Commoners' Defence Association, the New Forest Livestock Society and the New Forest Trust.

I have been invited by the Group to be their Chairman, which is a challenge that I have readily accepted, and we have already had our first meeting. Work is now under way.

Our first act will be to write to all practising commoners to tell them in more detail about what we are doing, and what we hope to achieve. The end result of this whole exercise will be to present to the NPA a definitive list of all that needs to be done in order to protect and nurture commoners and commoning in the decades ahead. The NPA has given us its assurance that our recommendations will be fully supported, and that they will be acted upon. We will hold them to their word.

2006/2638 MARKING FEES FOR 2007

After careful consideration, the Court has decided that marking fees for next year should remain unchanged with the exception of pigs and sheep.

Marking fees for 2007 will therefore be payable as follows:-

Ponies & Donkeys on the Forest £20.00 or £18.00 if paid before they are turned out or before 1<sup>st</sup> February for continuously depastured stock.

Ponies & Donkeys on the Commons £10.00 or £9.00 if paid before they are turned out or before 1<sup>st</sup> February for continuously depastured stock.

Cattle on the Forest £20.00

Cattle on the Commons £2.50

Sheep on the Forest £5.00

Sheep on the Commons £2.50

Pigs on the Forest £2.00

Pigs on the Commons £1.00

2006/2639 MARKING OF CATTLE

The Court has decided that for one year, as a trial, the present system of ear-tagging cattle annually should be discontinued and annual Verderers' tags will not be required. The Agisters will, however, still have to inspect all cattle before they are turned out to ensure welfare standards are maintained. Cattle will continue to be tail-marked and a note made of their Ministry ear-tag number. Marking fees will be due in the normal way and all cattle must either be freeze-branded or ear-tagged so as to show the owner's brand.

Problems have been experienced with the "brand tags" which we have been supplying to commoners because the writing tends to wear off in a matter of weeks even when an indelible pen is used. We have now found a local supplier of brand tags with the brand etched on and details can be obtained from our office or the Agisters.

2006/2640 EXTENSION TO THE PANNAGE SEASON

In view of the heavy crop of acorns this year and the toll they are taking on Forest stock, the Forestry Commission has agreed the pannage season will be extended until Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006. All pigs, other than those exercising the privilege to remain on the Forest after the end of the pannage season, *must* be removed from the Forest by this date.

**ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT**

2006/2641 ACCIDENT REPORT FOR OCTOBER 2006

The Agisters attended 13 accidents in October compared with 17 in October 2005. 6 ponies and 2 cattle were killed and 1 donkey was injured.

8 accidents occurred during the hours of darkness and 11 involved private cars or light commercials.

2 accidents were not reported and 4 involved local motorists.

The total killed and injured for the year to date is 107 compared with 89 for the same period last year.

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

None

**PRESENTMENTS**

2006/2642 STREAM RESTORATION PROPOSALS

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

Our committee would like to thank this court for deferring any decision on these restoration proposals. A comprehensive on-site visit was made by a number of our committee, and in principle we agree with the proposals outlined in the report. We do have some concerns relating to existing lateral drains on some stretches, along with a few other minor issues, which we feel can be resolved with those engaged on the

project. We feel it important that our representatives remain in the loop whilst this work is undertaken. It is also clear that a scheme such as this, will from time to time require maintenance, and we would like to be assured that this is allowed for in the programmes budget.

2006/2643 ANIMAL ACCIDENTS  
Presentment by Col Peter Sweet, Commoner

"Many of the Commoners, and I imagine Forest residents too, have been horrified at the increase in road traffic accidents concerning our depastured stock as reported recently in the press and on the television.

The introduction of the 40 mph limit on Forest roads reduced the accident rate considerably for a while. However, this limit is largely ignored today.

Is it not the time to approach the County Council, supported by the National Park Authority which is reviewing commoning at their meeting at South Efford tomorrow, to have the speed limit reduced to 20 mph?

I understand that local authorities have been told recently that they can do this now if necessary. Or perhaps you should go direct to the Minister, whichever is concerned".

2006/2644 STREAM RESTORATION PROPOSALS  
Presentment by Mr Michael Chilcott on behalf of the New Forest Association

"The NFA is pleased to welcome in general the Forestry Commission's intention to undertake stream restoration to the west and north-west of New Park. We support the FC's commitment to move towards achieving a "favourable condition" for the New Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

We ask the Verderers to join us in this general support whilst requiring the FC to provide details of the proposed restoration methods and their likely impacts.

The NFA also wishes to be consulted about these details and expects to see adequate baseline data about any vulnerable species populations associated with the existing drainage pattern. We shall be looking also for the restoration of the whole of these stream systems and not only of the main line of the channels.

Details are necessary also with regard to the administrative route to be followed in respect of the Habitats Directive".

2006/2645 BRACKEN AND OTHER FOREST ISSUES  
Presentment by Pam Bagguley, Commoner, Linwood

"In the fifty years I have been riding the Forest, in the last two years the whole ethos for the animals, birds and people who live there has changed at an alarming rate. Owing to climate conditions the bracken has become rampant more than I have ever seen it this summer. The scheme to create heathlands by both the Forestry Commission and the National Trust has left pitted ugly landscape that surely will allow bracken to take over vast tracts. The early promise of providing more grazing for the ponies and cattle surely is difficult to promise. Couldn't one beg for grants to plant trees.

The other problem is that the heaths backing onto Dockens Water have lost the glorious sounds of peewits and lapwings. While the odd riders have never worried them the appearance of mountain bikes and four track vehicles have divested the area of wildlife. How does one keep bikes to the gravel tracks intended for them and

why are four track vehicles allowed on the heath sandy tracks?

One Sunday three weeks ago, four events took place simultaneously from High Corner Inn car park. A triathlon which took 7 noisy hours, a long distance ride which permitted vehicles to drive over heathland, bikes working in groups and a dog walking training event. Please could someone have pity on the wildlife whose home this is. Could not some of these events be held at Moors Valley?

Is it possible when felling that, in extreme heat the fellings of trees will not be left on the ground to shoulder height. A fire would take hold and sweep through the Forest. Is it necessary to dump vast amounts of marl and thick clay over the Forest rides.

Lastly the increase of traffic on the Forest roads is vastly increased with no respect for grazing animals at all. The Government proposed tax on major roads will bring yet more traffic through the Forest. Can anything be done about this?

*The Official Verderer said bracken is a very well known Forest problem.*

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

#### **CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS**

2006/2646 ANIMAL ACCIDENTS DISCHARGE

It was agreed the suggestion to halve the speed limit warrants further consideration. The Government has instructed all County Councils to review speed limits. Cllr Mrs Heron said she believes the Executive Member for the Environment at Hampshire County council (Mel Kendall) may be deciding whether a review will be undertaken. Mr Kendall lives in the Forest and has the Forest's interests at heart. The Governments other proposal to charge drivers using main roads is of great concern to the Forest. Such charges will inevitably encourage drivers to use the unfenced roads instead of the A roads, just when those involved in Forest transport planning are trying to reduce traffic on the unfenced roads. The Official Verderer said that he is expecting Mel Kendall to contact him in the near future to discuss Forest transport issues.

It was remarked that given the increase in traffic, it was felt that over the years the Forest has done well not to have even more accidents. Miss Macnair commented that one of the problems is lack of enforcement of the current limits.

2006/2647 BRACKEN AND OTHER FOREST ISSUES DISCHARGE

Various methods are employed every year to try to control the spread of bracken, including spraying and harvesting. No-one yet has come up with a solution.

The Court agreed with Mrs Bagguley that the Forest cannot take the ever increasing pressures being placed on it by recreational pursuits. It was remarked that the Appleslade Drift conflicted with both cycling and running events. Fortunately there were no incidents.

2006/2648    STREAM RESTORATION    DISCHARGE

A lengthy discussion ensued on the Forestry Commission's request for consent and support in principle to the carrying out of the very extensive stream restoration along three watercourses to the west and northwest of New Park, near Brockenhurst. The Deputy Surveyor put forward the Forestry Commission's views on why the work should be carried out and answered a number of questions put to him by members of the Court.

The Official Verderer then asked if there were any further questions that the Deputy Surveyor could help with and as there were not he said the matter would be debated further, later in the meeting.

**SUBMISSIONS BY THE FORESTRY COMMISSION**

2006/2649    ELECTRICITY SUPPLY TO WHITLEY RIDGE HOTEL    DISCHARGE

The existing supply to the hotel is poor and not up to modern standards. It is insufficient for running all the domestic, catering and hotel needs.

It is proposed a new substation be provided within the hotel's grounds. A short section of high voltage cable from the existing underground HV will be laid to the substation. A low voltage cable also underground will be lade in the same trench for much of its route to connect to the existing underground low voltage cable that supplies the hotel. Part of the existing underground low voltage cable will be abandoned but not actually removed from the Open Forest.

After careful consideration, the Verderers consented to the works subject to the usual conditions regarding reinstatement, safe working conditions, compensation for loss of grazing etc.

2006/2650    ELECTRIC SUBSTATION – BURNT AXON, CASTLE HILL LANE, BURLEY    RESUME

Southern Electric is seeking consent to replace the existing pole mounted transformer with a substation on the ground measuring 5' high x 4' wide x 4' deep. Southern Electric feel it is an unreasonable imposition to request the substation be placed on the adjoining private land.

The Verderers gave careful consideration to the request but felt that it is important that every effort be made to find less intrusive ways of providing such services on the Open Forest. They requested the Electricity Company should contact the owner of the adjoining land to find out if he or she is prepared to have the substation on their property.

Mr Parke said there are approximately 35 substations on the Crown Lands. The Verderers suggested there should be a standard pattern for such installations.



2006/2651 ELECTRICITY SUPPLY TO THE GROOMS COTTAGE, BRAMSHAW LODGE, BRAMSHAW DISCHARGE

The proposals for an underground cable to be laid from an existing pole on the verge at Bramshaw, across approximately 20 metres of Open Forest in order to serve the above property was approved subject to the three usual conditions.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COURTS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION**

2006/2652 FENCE AT EAST BOLDRE DISCHARGE

Three quarters of the fence has been tidied up and strengthened. However, along the road side, approximately 50 yards of fence still requires more support. It was agreed this matter will be discharged but will be brought back to the Court if no action is taken in the near future.

2006/2653 MEETING AT BALMER LAWN DISCHARGE

The meeting to discuss erosion problems at Balmer Lawn was attended by Mr Kitcher for the Court, The Forestry Commission, Natural England the Environment Agency and the Parish Council. Diana Westerhoff for English Nature felt the work required to restore the river would be too expensive to undertake. It was also pointed out that last time this matter was considered (1996) it proved impossible to agree a satisfactory and safe method of reconstructing the bank.

2006/2654 SALE OF FORESTRY COMMISSION PROPERTIES AT HOLMSLEY RESUME  
March 2007

The Deputy Surveyor reported that it is intended that the properties will be offered on the open market in the spring.

It is proposed that the programme to build two new dwellings for occupation by commoners will be commenced as soon as possible. The dwellings will be built at Burley Fields/Anderwood. A broad specification for the properties will have to be approved and the Forestry Commission will be consulting with the National Park Authority Planners and the National Trust in order to come up with a design.

Mr Pasmore asked that consideration be given to the archaeological interest (a Roman kiln) which is situated in the area but it was felt unlikely that the new buildings would endanger that site.

The Deputy Surveyor said he suspected the expectation may be for two separate dwellings but he said they may be semi-detached. They will be three bedroomed dwellings suitable for commoning families and they will have at least two acres of land attached with more provided later when available.

The properties will remain the property of the Secretary of State (Crown Freehold) and will be managed on a social landlord basis.

2006/2655 HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND

RESUME  
January  
2007

The National Park Authority as lead party in the project, has submitted the application for the project planning grant of £60,000. This is to enable the group to undertake studies and provide evidence required to construct a full bid. A person will be employed especially to build up a cohesive partnership for the full scale bid. Landscaping and commoning, together with SSSI restoration and education will be included. At this stage there is no commitment beyond the partnership being required to provide 10% (£6,000) of match funding. The Forestry Commission is putting in £3,000 with the National Park Authority, New Forest Trust and Commoners' Defence Association providing the balance. The CDA is involved as it is a non-statutory body. The Verderers, Hampshire County Council and other bodies are all listed as potential partners if the bid goes ahead. It should be known whether the application has been successful later this year and if so the NPA will start work. If unsuccessful, efforts will be made to locate funding from elsewhere.

Mr Pasmore said he would read the application document, pass it onto Mr Montagu who will in turn return it to the office. It was suggested that perhaps a CD could be produced so that other Verderers could have a copy of they so wished.

2006/2656 TUBERCULOSIS

RESUME  
March 2007

This matter is considered to be very important and it has been agreed it should be raised at the next Foot & Mouth Disease Liaison Group meeting – scheduled for February 2007. Mr Gerrelli remarked that on Dartmoor there is a serious problem with a shortage of veterinary surgeons able to carry out TB testing.

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS INVOLVING THE FORESTRY COMMISSION**

2006/2657 PIKES HILL ALLOTMENT LEASE

DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer will sign and seal the lease which will be returned to Mr Parke.

2006/2658 FOREST DESIGN PLAN

DISCHARGE

Mr Frost felt that the Forestry Commission deserves congratulation for the work in producing the Plan.

#### **The Deputy Surveyor and Mr Parke left the meeting.**

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

2006/2659 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT

RESUME

Mr Malcolm Horsburgh is due before Southampton Magistrate's Court on 29<sup>th</sup> November in relation to a byelaw matter.

A summons is shortly to be served on another commoning family for non-payment of marking fees and the preliminary hearing is set for the 29<sup>th</sup> November. A further hearing will take place on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2007.

2006/2660    EXTENSION TO THE PANNAGE SEASON    DISCHARGE

The decision, agreed by memorandum, to request the Forestry Commission to extend the pannage season was ratified.

2006/2661    STREAM RESTORATION PROPOSALS    DISCHARGE

Very careful consideration was given to the proposals, the Presentments that had been received and a detailed paper tabled by Mr Pasmore outlining his reservations about the scheme.

At the end of the discussion it was decided to take a vote. The Official Verderer abstained and Mr Frost voted in favour of the proposals. However, despite receiving a number of presentments in support of the works, the remaining majority of Verderers felt unable to give consent in principle for the following reasons:

1. The works are contrary to several facets of the Primary Objective as set out in the Verderers' policies in that they would if carried out, be disruptive and damaging to the existing landscape

*Disruptive:* the works will disrupt the historical setting of that part of the Forest where the existing streams have been a feature for 150 years. They are stream systems for which the commoners' predecessors fought in order to secure the proper draining of the Forest, although of course they also serve an important drainage function for the inclosures.

*Damaging:* the works will cause damage to the landscape by removing natural established features that have evolved, such as the present meanders, leaning trees, ferns, fords, and paths; in the case of Fletchers Water the works will almost certainly threaten and damage the existing established grazing lawns adjoining the stream.

2. The consequences of these works are still completely unpredictable. These streams take the flow from vast areas which are artificially drained. Although some of those drains have been obstructed, most have not. With significantly warmer, wetter, winters being predicted there could be very long term flooding. The catchment area is many thousands of acres of which more than 3,000 acres is heavily drained land. After the works are completed the run-off would be poured into streams which were formed to take a completely undrained catchment. There could be serious damage to the Open Forest as a result. There has been some filling of streams in the upper part of the catchment, but very limited compared to the vast network of drains. The Verderers believe that consideration should be given instead to works being done in less controversial areas of the Forest and that the work to these three watercourses should not be reconsidered while the inclosure drainage system remains.
3. No satisfactory long term guarantees or management plan in relation to debris dams has been presented with respect to these works.

4. The works constitute a major engineering project which would probably be the biggest on the Forest since the airfield constructions during the Second World War. Although it is impossible to give precise figures at present, the Verderers estimate that at least 8,000 cu m of fill will be necessary, requiring a huge number of lorry movements over a very long period causing noise, pollution, disruption and damage in the Forest.
5. The works are premature in that it is still impossible to say whether or not previous similar stream restoration works in the Forest will prove to be free of problems.

The Verderers believe that there should be a proper balance between the Commoners and the landscape of the Forest on one hand and the demands of extreme conservation on the other. They believe that this project is an example of extreme conservation, and that the works would unnecessarily disrupt that balance.

2006/2662 VERDERERS' VETERINARY ADVISOR DISCHARGE

Mr Ralph Ellis, presently of Seadown Veterinary Group, has confirmed that he is happy to continue to advise the Court.

2006/2663 MICROCHIPPING OF HORSES RESUME

The branding demonstration on Dartmoor was, unfortunately, a complete disaster. Regrettably it was not done by an expert and no-one present was impressed. It was suggested that microchipping might be acceptable but that there should be a derogation allowing foals to be chipped when they are one year old.

The CD of the branding session held in the Forest last year will be sent to Mr Newman at DEFRA so that he can see how efficiently it can be done. It was agreed Mr Newman should be invited to visit the Forest so that he can see branding carried out by an expert. As it is understood he rides, he will also be invited to see the Forest from horseback.

2006/2664 STALLION SCHEME RESUME

A meeting of the Stallion Sub-Committee has been held which discussed the proposals put forward by the Commoners' Defence Association. With the exception of a few minor amendments, their suggestions were considered acceptable. Two queries remain outstanding, one concerning 5 year old stallions running out for a full year and the other, how to select the appropriate bloodlines.

Miss Macnair said she has been discussing the issue of bloodlines with Mr Ellis and she will speak to him again to see if he can produce a report for consideration in January. There is concern at the loss of bloodlines as well as the possibility that because of the scheme, the right to turn out stallions all year round may be lost. Both these items are being addressed in the revised scheme, a copy of which will be provided for consideration at the next Court.

## **COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP SCHEME**

2006/2665 ANNUAL REPORT DISCHARGE

The CSS Manager has produced the annual report which has been circulated.

## **NATIONAL PARK**

2006/2666 COMMONING REVIEW RESUME

The Official Verderer reported that a letter is due to be sent to all practising commoners. The Court agreed that the Clerk should provide a set of labels for the National Park Authority to use to send out the letter.

2006/2667 CORPORATE PLAN DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer wrote to Mrs Lindsay Cornish, Chief Executive NPA in October expressing the Court's views on the NPA's first corporate plan. Mrs Cornish acknowledged receipt of the Official Verderer's letter and they are due to meet shortly.

2006/2668 KEY PARTNERS STEERING GROUP RESUME

This is a small group comprising of the Forestry Commission, National Park Authority and Verderer. The Official Verderer will attend.

## **OTHER AGENDA ITEMS**

2006/2669 HOT BRANDING OF CATTLE RESUME

Mrs Thorne said she will find out to whom a letter should be sent seeking to change the current legislation which bans the hot branding of cattle.

2006/2670 WELFARE TOUR RESUME

It was agreed the Welfare Tour should be held on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December, meeting at 9.30 a.m. in the Verderers' Hall.

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

2006/2671 FOREST DESIGN FORUM DISCHARGE

The New Forest Association's recent report calls for more inclosures to be thrown open than currently intended by the Forestry Commission. Mr Pasmore supported the report. He added that he appreciates throwing open more inclosures may cause problems for the Agisters when drifting ponies but he considered methods of dealing with the difficulties must be found. He added that the Forum was split as regards how far the work should go.

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

2006/2672 AGISTERS' AREAS DISCHARGE

After careful consideration, it has been decided the Agisters' areas should remain unchanged.

2006/2673 FENCING OF THE "A" ROADS RESUME

Mr Adams said the time had definitely come to rattle a few cages with respects to the appalling state of some of the fencing on the A roads.

Mr Gardner of Mott Macdonald has been assuring Mr Adams that repairs would be carried out on the A31 fence for the past 6 months and nothing has been done. He has also asked on several occasions for a meeting which still has not taken place.

Several lengths of fence on the A 31 and A35 are clearly not stock proof and there is concern that there will be a horrendous accident.

Cllr Mrs Heron said she will speak with Mel Kendall, Executive Member for the Environment, Hampshire County Council. It was also suggested that a letter should be sent to the Secretary of State for Transport explaining that the present situation amounts to negligence and it is considered only a matter of time before someone is killed as a result of a collision at speed with a pony or a cow. The Agisters are frequently called out at night with police presence required in order to ensure their safety when trying to drive animals back onto the Forest in the dark.

The Official Verderer said he will also endeavour to raise the issue with Mel Kendall.

**Mr Frost left the meeting**

**TRAINING**

There was nothing to report.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK**

Nothing to report.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

2006/2674 WILVERLEY INCIDENT RESUME

Court papers have been received in the office concerning the claim for personal injury by the lady allegedly knocked down by a stallion on Wilverley Plain.

The Clerk is making every effort to make sure the solicitors acting for the Court and its insurers are aware of the significance of the case as far as the Forest is concerned. It is not simply a personal injury case and it is imperative that it is fought and won.

Mr Pasmore asked to look at the particulars of claim and said he would go into the office after the meeting.

2006/2675    COMMONERS' HOUSING SCHEME    DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer reported that the National Park is taking over the Commoning Housing Scheme, formerly run by the New Forest District Council. He went on to say that a panel is being formed to consider applications and it was agreed he should represent the Verderers. Mr Pasmore asked for assurance that confirmation of commoning history and stock husbandry would be taken into account when considering applications. The Official Verderer said that certainly such information would be essential when a decision was made on whether an application should be put forward for planning approval.

2006/2676    PLANNING APPLICATION – PRIMROSE COTTAGE, TOMS FARM,    DISCHARGE  
LINWOOD

The Court has been asked to support a commoner in a planning application. It was agreed, however, that the current policy of not becoming involved in such issues should be adhered to because the Court does not have sufficient resources, or indeed expertise, to adequately research such applications. It was further agreed however, that there is nothing preventing individual Verderers supporting such applications on a personal basis if they so wish.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1.37 p.m.