

MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 21st October 2009 at 9.30 a.m. in the Verderers' Hall & 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 Natural England Appointed Verderer
Mr A Gerrelli Elected Verderer
Mr J F Kitcher Elected Verderer
Miss D Macnair Elected Verderer
Mr C Maton National Park 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

APOLOGIES: The Hon Mr R Montagu Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

2009/4546 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING RESUME

The Minutes of the Court held on Wednesday, 16th September 2009 were approved.

2009/4547 CONDITION OF STOCK RESUME

The drift season has nearly finished. The Head Agister reported that overall things have gone well. The condition of the ponies is pleasing and over the last couple of weeks, following some rain, many ponies have improved further and look very well. The occasional mare with a foal has been removed. The number of foals being removed for sale and those being branded and retained is much the same as usual. Overall, the stock is going into winter in good heart.

Unfortunately Agister Lovell broke his collarbone during the East Boldre drift after his horse came down having put a foot in a rabbit hole on Pilley Green. The Court wished Agister Lovell as speedy recovery.

It was remarked that the number of rabbits on the Forest is increasing along with their burrows. This particularly applies to Pilley Green where the gorse that was included in the burning programme is failing to re-grow. There also seems to be an increase in bramble. The Head Agister was asked to provide a photograph of the experimental fenced areas in Gorley Pit as they show very clearly the effect too many rabbits have on vegetation.

The Head Agister left the meeting.

Mr Adams, Chairman of the Staff Committee, said he had nothing to add. The condition of stock is good and the animals are going into winter looking well.

- 2009/4548 ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS RESUME
- The announcements and decisions were approved.
- 2009/4549 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RESUME
- The Elected Verderers, Mrs Thorne and Mr Maton all declared an interest in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.
- Mr Gerrelli declared an interest in campsites. The Official Verderer declared an interest in matters concerning golf clubs, and stated that prior to the discussion on the renewal of the Bramshaw Golf Club licence he will leave the meeting. Mr Maton declared an interest in National Park planning matters.
- 2009/4550 FINANCIAL STATEMENT RESUME
- The Financial Statement for September 2009 was approved.
- 2009/4551 REPORT ON MARKING FEES RECEIVED AS AT END OF SEPTEMBER 2009 RESUME
- | | | | |
|-----------|------|-------------------|------|
| Ponies | 4821 | Pigs | 120 |
| Cattle | 2537 | Sheep | 39 |
| Donkeys | 126 | | |
| SUB TOTAL | 7484 | TOTAL ALL ANIMALS | 7643 |
- 2009/4552 ANIMALS REMOVED IN SEPTEMBER DUE TO POOR CONDITION RESUME
- 1 mare with a foal.
- 2009/4553 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT RESUME
- No new byelaw offences have been reported by the Agisters.
- 2009/4554 REVISION OF THE VERDERERS' BYELAWS RESUME
- The one month period for comments has almost expired at which time the Clerk will prepare a schedule of the comments received and suggested responses. The schedule will then be copied to all Verderers. Assuming all Verderers are happy with the suggested responses and that there are therefore no further queries or concerns, the schedule, together with the original correspondence from those submitting the comments, will be sent to DEFRA with a request for the Minister to confirm the Byelaws.
- 2009/4555 HALE PURLIEU FALLEN TREE RESUME
- The Clerk has written a further letter, this time to the owner of the fence, asking for it to be repaired. A response is awaited.
- 2009/4556 KINGSTON GREAT COMMON RESUME
- The meeting between Mr Steven Trotter of the NPA and the Official Verderer has yet to be arranged.
- 2009/4557 CSS RESUME

The Official Verderer said there is nothing to report at present.

2009/4558 NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN RESUME

The latest draft of the Management Plan was circulated for the Verderers to consider. The draft will go to members of the Park Authority next week and it should be signed off on the 10th December.

Concern was expressed that the Park reportedly does not want the Sandford Principle included in the Plan. The Official Verderer said he does not understand why this should be. Members of the Court were extremely concerned that this fundamental principle has been left out and that to do so is misleading.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS BY THE OFFICIAL VERDERER

2009/4559 BURLEY CRICKET CLUB

At our last Court the New Forest Commoners Defence Association made a presentment which, amongst other matters, raised the subject of the existing planning application made by Burley Cricket Club for an extension to its pavilion. Burley already has the largest pavilion in the Forest, and from the scant information that we have received from its architect, the plan is to extend the pavilion by as further 48 sq. meters. However, since these Announcements and Decisions were drafted, further information has been received which indicates that the proposed extension has been reduced considerably.

It is normally our policy not to give our consent to new recreational developments like this one, especially when valuable grazing on the open forest is to be lost as a result. We have conveyed a message to the Club via the Forestry Commission to this effect, and have made it plain that unless there are very compelling reasons for expanding the footprint of the pavilion this is not a consent that we are likely to give. The onus is on the Club to present its reasons for wishing to undertake this development, and we await further information.

2009/4560 MARKING FEES

We will be reviewing the level of marking fees this morning, as we do every year at this time, and an announcement will be made at next month's court.

2009/4561 ISLAND THORNS

In its presentment last month the New Forest Association asked us to investigate ways with the Deputy Surveyor to limit damage to the open forest when work is done on its behalf by contractors or third parties. As a result of our discussion in committee The Deputy Surveyor will consider whether or not it may be possible to require contractors to enter in to a bond of sorts that would only be released on successful completion of any works without damage, or when any damage has been repaired.

In addition the Association asked us to seek further details of the trial basalt hoggin that is being used in some of the Forests many car parks. We are grateful to the

Deputy Surveyor for the information that he has subsequently provided us with, which we have forwarded to the New Forest Association.

2009/4562 HLS

We will be deciding in committee this morning on the structure of the proposed HLS scheme, and an announcement will be made at next month's court.

2009/4563 VERDERERS' ELECTION

A "hustings", organised by the Commoners' Defence Association is to be held on Monday, 16th November at 7.30 p.m. in the Lyndhurst Community Centre. Everyone is welcome to go along and hear what the candidates who are standing for election have to say.

ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

2009/4564 ACCIDENT REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 2009

The Agisters attended 17 accidents, compared with 12 for the same period last year.

5 ponies, 1 cow, 1 donkey and 1 pig were killed and 1 pony and 2 cattle were injured.

9 accidents occurred during the hours of darkness.

13 involved private cars or light commercials and 4 accidents were not reported (hit and runs).

11 involved local motorists.

The total killed and injured for the year to date is 68 compared with 56 for the same period last year.

The Clerk reminded those present that the clocks go back this coming weekend which means it will be dark when most people drive home from work. Motorists were asked to take special care on the unfenced Forest roads.

PRESENTMENTS BY THE DEPUTY SURVEYOR OF THE NEW FOREST

There were no Presentments by the Deputy Surveyor

PRESENTMENTS

2009/4565 POWERS OF THE FOREST KEEPERS
Presentment by Mr Graham Ferris, CDA

"Members of the CDA are increasingly concerned at their perception of growing problems of vandalism, antisocial behaviour, littering and illegal camping in the New Forest. We recognise that given the pressures on public expenditure, it is unrealistic to expect a massively increased police presence and instead suggest making more effective use of existing resources to combat these problems.

The Forest enjoys the services of Forestry Commission Keepers who are knowledgeable, always on the spot and capable of using their discretion in dealing with offenders in as robust a way as is appropriate. But currently their powers, other than issuing warning notices, are limited. As the Government's so called 'Crime Czarina' has made plea this week, antisocial behaviour needs to be nipped in the bud

and she believes there is no point in giving someone a warning letter.

The CDA asks the Verderers and the Forestry Commission to look seriously at the possibility of New Forest Keepers having the power to impose on the spot fines on offenders against both the Forest byelaws and national legislation. We believe this would be the most effective deterrent against the problems outlined previously and would make the Forest a safer, cleaner and more enjoyable environment for Commoners and the public generally”.

2009/4566 ENTRY & SPEED LIMIT SIGNS, EXBURY TO BLACKWELL COMMON CATTLE GRID
Presentment by Mr Michael Cooper, Commoner

Mr Cooper reported that sign has still not been erected and asked the Court to follow it up with the Highway Authority.

2009/4567 BRAMSHAW GOLF COURSE
Presentment by Mrs Mary Gray

Mrs Gray wished to reinforce the comments she has made on a number of earlier occasions about the management of the Course. Mrs Gray expressed concern that the 18th green is fenced off and that sand is spread on the tees and greens to deter stock. Mrs Gray felt that courses should be regularly inspected to ensure that they are managed in accordance with the conditions of their licences.

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS

2009/4568 POWERS OF THE FOREST KEEPERS RESUME

The Deputy Surveyor reported that the suggestion that the Keepers should be able to impose on-the-spot fines has been considered before. However, the Forestry Commission is not empowered to issue fines under present legislation and even if such power were obtained the training and administration required to back up the required appeal process would outweigh the benefits.

The Deputy Surveyor went on to say that the FC maintains a database of incidents which means that the various misdemeanours are recorded and trends can be tracked in order that resources may be targeted in the most appropriate manner. The FC works closely with the Environment Agency, National Park Authority and Police. PS Louise Hubble visits the Queen's House once a month to discuss and look at the best ways of tackling various issues that arise. For example at North Weirs there was an issue with young drivers and the Waterside Ranger partnership has greatly reduced vandalism and antisocial behaviour on the eastern side of the Forest.

On the subject of littering, the practice by marathon organisers of asking participants to discard drinking cups by simply dropping them within a certain zone is felt to encourage littering. The Marathon organisers are already required under their permission to clear up any litter at the end of the event, but the Deputy Surveyor agreed to raise this particular issue.

2009/4569 ENTRY & SPEED LIMIT SIGNS, EXBURY TO BLACKWELL DISCHARGE

COMMON CATTLE GRID

The Clerk reported that she has already sent a reminder to Hampshire Highways and she will advise Mr Cooper.

2009/4570 BRAMSHAW GOLF CLUB LICENCE RENEWAL RESUME

A detailed discussion took place between the Deputy Surveyor and members of the Court excluding the Official Verderer who has already declared an interest in this subject.

The Deputy Surveyor requested the Court agree to a new 25 year licence for the Club. The licence conditions are to be updated. A new management plan will be agreed with the Club as a condition of granting a new licence and the Verderers will be invited to comment in due course. It is intended that the Management Plan contain the prescriptions for future operation of works to maintain the course.

The use of chemicals is controlled by Natural England which approves certain substances for use on SSSI's.

Mowing of fairways is permitted once per year. Mr Street said he did inspect the course for after the last complaint was received but that he does not do so on a regular basis, but relies on reports from the local Keeper and the public.

Professional consultants are currently preparing plans of the course. Condition statement maps are required for the golf courses which show the extent of greens, tees and includes a habitat survey which sets out the position of heather, trees, markers, posts, etc., in order to simplify compliance monitoring.

Members of the Court remarked that the golf clubs appear to be allowed to restrict the growth of heather on their fairways but requests by commoners for heather to be controlled on the re-seeded areas are met with a blank refusal.

The Court is concerned at the spreading of sand and wishes to see proper policing of the conditions of the licence.

A decision on the Forestry Commission's request for consent to renew the licence will be made later in the meeting.

NEW SUBMISSIONS BY THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2009/4571 ICE CREAM SALES DISCHARGE

The Forestry Commission's request for agreement by the Verderers for the continuation of ice cream sales at the same locations as previous years was considered and approval given for a further two years.

2009/4572 CYCLING ON THE FOREST RESUME

The Forestry Commission requested agreement for the existing network of waymarked cycle routes on gravel tracks on the Crown Lands for another three years – i.e. calendar years 2010, 2011 and 2012.

There was some uncertainty about how long approval was given last time and it was agreed that the Clerk will investigate.

2009/4573 HORSE DRAWN WAGON RIDES DISCHARGE

The Court approved the renewal of licences to the current operators, subject to the same conditions, for a further three years.

2009/4574 UNDERGROUND ELECTRICITY SUPPLY – WOODGREEN ROAD, GODSHILL DISCHARGE

The request from Scottish and Southern Electricity for consent for an underground electricity supply at this location was approved subject to the usual conditions regarding reinstatement, safe working conditions, compensation for loss of grazing etc.

2009/4575 UNDERGROUND ELECTRICITY SUPPLY – ALLUM GREEN FARM, ALLUM GREEN DISCHARGE

The request from Scottish and Southern Electricity for consent for an underground electricity supply to this property was approved subject to the usual conditions regarding reinstatement, safe working conditions, compensation for loss of grazing etc.

2009/4576 SOUTHERN GAS NETWORKS (SGN) - LYNDHURST GAS MAIN DISCHARGE

Mr Street explained that the Forestry Commission has been approached by SGN to consider granting consent for a replacement main gas pipeline around the northern edge of Lyndhurst.

This will affect the Open Forest at Custards where there is also a main sewer already installed. The existing gas pipe is laid in the A337 and runs up through the traffic lights and down the High Street. Hampshire County Council has informed SGN that any works around the main traffic lights will require a full road closure for a number of weeks and require a significant diversion route to be put in place. It is understood that without the main supply reinforcement gas supplies in Lyndhurst will suffer a reduction in pressure and begin to fail over the next 5 years. It is very unlikely that HCC will grant consent to SGN to open up the road given its use by emergency services etc.

The initial investigation works proposed by SGN include the need to complete a borehole along the route to test the soil conditions in order to establish if they are suitable to lay the proposed pipe via the no-dig approach (as per the Sewer at Balmer Lawn).

The Forestry Commission has given permission for the site investigation to take place. The Court was provided with a plan showing the location of the dig and the permit requires SGN to re-instate the excavation as per the standards terms. An application will also be made for Natural England's Consent.

Mr Street explained that at this stage there are no formal proposals but following the results of the investigation work further details should be available. The new pipe will also cross the Lyndhurst Football Club and land the Forestry Commission lets on a Farm Business Tenancy.

It is likely that the investigation work will take place in the next week once NE consent is obtained.

The Court accepted that the alternative route for the gas pipe through the village is unrealistic but stressed that as much of the pipe line as possible must be accommodated on Crown Freehold/tenanted land.

MATTERS ARISING OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2009/4577 EXTENSION OF BURLEY CRICKET & FOOTBALL CLUB PAVILION DISCHARGE

Further details of the extension were provided. The extension now having been reduced to 6 sq.m.

The Court will consider this later in the meeting.

2009/4578 STONES & ROCKS OUTSIDE POUND BOTTOM LANDFILL SITE RESUME

It is believed that the stones and rocks have now been cleared. The Court was grateful to the site for undertaking the clear-up.

2009/4579 ACCESS TO SOWLEY FORESHORE DISCHARGE

The Deputy Surveyor confirmed that the Crown has no landholdings in the immediate vicinity of Sandpit Lane. At present the arrangements for access by Agisters and commoners in case of emergency are felt to be adequate.

2009/4580 PRE-ERECTED TENTS AND PRE-PREPARED CARAVANS RESUME

The Deputy Surveyor wrote to the Official Verderer suggesting that consideration should be given to an arbitration process in an effort to resolve the differing opinions. DEFRA solicitors would prepare a brief and the Forestry Commission and the Court would choose independent Counsel.

The Court wished to consider this proposal later in the meeting.

See Minute
2009/4602

2009/4581 ROUNDHILL CAMPSITE RESUME

Photographs were supplied of bare earth where caravans and tents have been left for too long. The Deputy Surveyor said he would investigate. He added that the siting of the facilities blocks has still not been finalised and the Court reminded him that it has been agreed the blocks will be alongside the campsite road so as not to damage grazing and to reduce the need for more gravel. It was confirmed that the campsite managers are responsible for moving the Eurocamp Tents.

2009/4582 A31 FENCE RESUME

Mr Adams and the Clerk are meeting with representatives of Enterprise Mouchel (the A31 contractors) tomorrow.

2009/4583 RAILWAY COMMUNICATIONS WORKS

RESUME

Three masts are now proposed as follows:-

1. Beaulieu Road Station – this is considered by the Court to be obtrusive but there is nothing that can be done as Verderers' consent is not required.
2. The siting of a mast in the driftway west of Tuckers Bridge is considered to be acceptable.
3. The siting of a mast at Latchmoor Bridge by the stock pound is unacceptable. The Court was concerned that this mast will be very visible from the Open Forest and that it should be moved further along the line towards Brockenhurst, where there is more screening and it will be less obtrusive. It is accepted that Network Rail has issues with moving the mast in that direction but they are to be asked to give the request further consideration.

2009/4584 STOCK IN INCLOSURES

DISCHARGE

A letter has been drafted by Mr Adams in response to the Deputy Surveyor's letter to the Official Verderer. In the letter, the Agisters' assistance is offered in respect of training Forestry Commission staff in the handling of livestock although this has traditionally been carried out by other FC staff who are also commoners and experienced stock handlers. It was also stated that the Agisters are happy to assist in driving stock out of inclosures providing adequate notice is given, bearing in mind there are 5 Agisters to 12 Keepers.

A further matter was raised in the letter and that is the condition of some of the cattle grids leading into the inclosures and also some fencing. In particular it has been noted that the cattle grids leading in to Oakley, Burley New, the Burley Workshops are full up with leaves which means stock has no problem walking the grids. The grid at the Old House end of Oakley is broken and this needs repair.

Trees across fences and members of the public leaving gates open are thought to be more likely reasons why stock gains access to inclosures than commoners deliberately putting their stock into the inclosures although that is not to say that it never happens.

The Court hopes that whilst it is impossible to ensure stock never gains access to the timber inclosures, with co-operation between all parties the problem can be adequately managed.

2009/4585 SEATS ON THE OPEN FOREST

DISCHARGE

The seat at Waters Green is not on Forestry Commission land and is quite close to the houses.

Mr Street has not had the opportunity to ascertain whether the seat at Godshill is on land belonging to the Crown. Mr Draper (CSS

Manager) lives closeby and will be asked to advise on its exact location. If it is a replacement seat it is not a problem but if it is a new one, erected without consent, a request will be made for it to be removed.

2009/4586 CAMPSITE SURVEY

RESUME
January
2010

The survey is reportedly almost complete. Following the leaf-fall, it will be possible to complete accurate GPS plotting.

SSSI RESTORATION WORKS

2009/4587 HARVESTLADE

RESUME

The report of the consultation meeting prepared by Ms Sarah Oakley (FC) was agreed with the exception of No. 4. Gorse and vegetation must be cleared prior to further consideration on this aspect of the works. A copy of the report will be appended in the Minute Book once the works are agreed.

2009/4588 AKERCOMBE

DISCHARGE

The report of the consultation meeting prepared by Ms Sarah Oakley (FC) was agreed in its entirety. A copy is to be appended in the Minute Book.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2009/4589 POND BEHIND THE OLD CHAPEL AT BURLEY

DISCHARGE

Miss Macnair reported that the pond at Frogmore is no longer a pond. There is no open water and no frogs. The area is now very boggy and this is likely to be due to the lack of maintenance of a nearby ditch. The Deputy Surveyor said he will talk to Mr Richard Stride and either respond directly to Miss Macnair or put the matter to the OFAC. Concern was expressed that quite a few little dew ponds appear to have been lost in various places.

2009/4590 HOLMSLEY STREAM

DISCHARGE

The Deputy Surveyor agreed that the stream will be inspected as a quantity of logs have been thrown into it which has interrupted the flow. In addition there is a lot of vegetation along the disused railway line and water is not able to return to the stream.

2009/4591 LINWOOD ROAD NARROWING, HALE PURLIEU HAUNCHING TRIAL & REVIEW/UPDATE OF HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT

RESUME

It is understood that the work to narrow the road back to its correct width is due to start shortly. In the meantime, in places the condition of the road has deteriorated further with wholesale over-running and sheer drops off the edge of the tarmac.

No results have been forthcoming of the trial on Hale Purlieu. The primary objective is to slow traffic by creating a single track road with passing places. Mr Pasmore said if he is re-elected he is happy to

pursue this with the Highway Authority. Mrs Thorne also said she will take up the matter.

The review/update of the 2007 agreement on highway maintenance has yet to be undertaken. Mr Street agreed to chase up the Highway Authority.

2009/4592 BEAULIEU ROAD HOUSE SIGN DISCHARGE

Mr Street was asked if the new Pondhead Farm sign has permission? He confirmed he will investigate and added that the over-large stone has been made smaller.

2009/4593 BULL HILL CROSSROADS BRACKEN CUTTING DISCHARGE

A quantity of bracken has been left on the Open Forest and it was requested that it be cleared. The Deputy Surveyor said he thinks it is a temporary stockpile awaiting removal to Bentley's.

2009/4594 BULL HILL CROSSROADS DISCHARGE

Hampshire Highways will be advised by Mr Street that three of the traffic safety bollards have been pulled out.

2009/4595 WARWICKSLADE RESUME

Mr Pasmore raised the issue of trees that are across the stream. One particular Silver Birch is interrupting the stream course although the Forestry Commission ecologists say it was in place before the restoration work started.

Mr Pasmore felt very strongly that some of the trees have been deliberately placed in order to create embryo debris dams and said in his opinion they must be removed.

The Deputy Surveyor said he will take this up with Ms Sarah Oakley.

Mr Frost commented that the stream will go round the dams.

2009/4596 HIGH CORNER INN SIGN RESUME

The High Corner Inn has erected a very large advertising sign board which is out of keeping with the traditional character of the Forest.

Mr Street said he will check the establishment's licence.

Additionally it was reported that the car park may have spread.

The National Park has received a planning application in respect of the sign and the Official Verderer will remind the NPA's Chief Executive of the Verderers' position in respect of such matters.

2009/4597 GYPSYS RESUME

The travellers which had moved to Milkham are now back at Clay Hill. The Forestry Commission is still awaiting the House of Lords Judgement regarding the possibility of being able to obtain orders for the whole Forest.

2009/4598 NEW PARK SIGNAGE

DISCHARGE

It was suggested that the numerous signs at the entrance to New Park should be replaced by one ladderboard type which would be visually less obtrusive.

The Deputy Surveyor and Mr Street left the meeting.

VERDERERS' HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME (HLS)

2009/4599 HLS – THE WAY FORWARD

RESUME

After a detailed discussion on the proposed structure of the HLS it was agreed unanimously that the MOA must state that projects undertaken under HLS must fit with the Verderers' Policies and to that end the wording of their Primary Objectives must be included – i.e.

“The primary objective of the Verderers is to protect and administer the New Forest's unique agricultural commoning practices, to conserve its traditional landscape, wildlife and aesthetic character, including its flora and fauna, peacefulness, natural beauty and cultural heritage, and to safeguard a viable future for commoning upon which these depend”.

The Court expressed concern at the proposal to fix its representative on the Board as the Official Verderer. While Verderers have full confidence in their present chairman and wish him to represent them, matters might change in the future, having regard to the fact that the Verderers are not permitted any say in the choice of Official Verderer. Both the Forestry Commission and the National Park Authority have influence over the choice of Official Verderer. Accordingly, it was agreed that the Court's representative on the Board should be chosen by the Court from time to time. The Forestry Commission and National Park Authority are to be informed accordingly.

If the board members will not agree to this, the Court will meet again on Friday 23rd October.

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK

2009/4600 60th ANNIVERSARY OF NATIONAL PARKS CELEBRATION

DISCHARGE

It was agreed that as requested, Mr Maton and the Head Agister will attend the New Forest National Park Authority's contribution to the celebration which will take place in the Verderers' Hall on Friday, 11th December 2009.

OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

2009/4601 MARKING FEES FOR 2010

DISCHARGE

After a brief discussion it was agreed that marking fees will remain unchanged in 2010.

As from January 1st 2009 the rates will be as follows:

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

Ponies & Donkeys on the Commons £10.00 or £9.00 if paid before they are turned out, or before 1st 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

2009/4602 WELFARE TOUR OF THE FOREST

RESUME
December

This autumn's welfare tour will be held on Wednesday, 9th December 2009.

ITEM RESUMED FROM EARLIER IN THE MEETING

2009/4603 PRE-ERECTED TENTS & PRE-PREPARED CARAVANS ON FORESTRY COMMISSION CAMPSITES DISCHARGE

The Deputy Surveyors suggestion for resolving the Court's and Forestry Commission's differing opinions by way of an arbitration process was discussed.

The Court and the Forestry Commission unfortunately profoundly disagree on the implementation of the terms of the New Forest Acts. The actual issue of the tents and caravans is, however, regarded as a relatively minor matter compared to the principle of the interpretation of the Acts and the Court is not minded to take up the Deputy Surveyor's offer of arbitration unless the situation escalates.

The Official Verderer will write to the Deputy Surveyor to advise him of the Court's decision.

MATTERS ARISING FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

2009/4604 DRIVE SAFE DAY

RESUME

Miss Macnair, the Head Agister and Mrs Tillyer representing the Pony Publicity Group attended this safety day at Brockenhurst College. The Police, Fire and Rescue and other agencies also attended. The aim of the day is to educate students and others about the dangers they may encounter on the Forest's roads, including commoning stock.

Disturbingly, two students taking driving lessons who slowed down to pass ponies on the verge had reportedly been told by their driving instructors not to slow down and to keep up with the traffic. This is not the first time this has happened and Mr Nigel Matthews of the National Park Authority went to some lengths to write to all the local driving schools asking them to ensure they teach their students how to drive safely past Forest stock. Regrettably it seems the message has not got through. The Clerk said she will speak with Mr Matthews to see if anything more can be done. Miss Macnair said the Court should thank the Head Agister for an excellent job.

STAFF MATTERS (including the Staff Committee)

2009/4605 STAFF SALARY REVIEW DISCHARGE

The Court agreed unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Remuneration Committee that staff salaries should be increased by 2.255%. This increase will be implemented immediately and with effect from 1st October 2009.

TRAINING

2009/4606 REFRESHER COURSES DISCHARGE

It is felt a further visit from a representative of the Humane Slaughter Association would be useful. Additionally, at least one Agister has not attended a manual handling course and this will be addressed.

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

2009/4607 HEALTH AND SAFETY REVIEW RESUME

The review is almost finished. The Head Agister and Clerk are now considering whether any additional training is required (see above).

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2009/4608 VISIT TO WEIRS DRIFT BY THE PONY PUBLICITY GROUP AND DISCHARGE
GUESTS

The Court was happy to agree to the PPG's visitors attending next year's Weirs drift as usual.

The Official Verderer withdrew from the meeting and Senior Elected Verderer Mr Pasmore took the chair.

MATTER RESUMED FROM EARLIER IN THE MEETING

2009/4609 BRAMSHAW GOLF CLUB LICENCE RENEWAL RESUME

There is concern that the golf clubs are not inspected sufficiently frequently to ensure they abide by the conditions of their licences. In the case of this course, the Court has received complaints about excessive mowing of the fairways and also fencing off of greens. There are also issues surrounding spreading sand on greens and tees to discourage stock and additional signs and other structures in excess of those included in the licence conditions.

In the case of the New Forest Golf Club, agreement to a 10 year rather than a 25 year licence appears to have helped the Club to function in line with its licence and management agreement and to this end the Court is minded to grant a 10 year consent in respect of the Bramshaw Club.

It was, therefore, agreed that subject to Verderers' approval of the management plan, consent for a 10 year licence should be permitted.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 2.10 p.m.