

**MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2011 at 9.30 a.m. in the Verderers' Hall and the Library, the Queen's House, Lyndhurst.**

PRESENT:	Mr Dominic May Mr R Deakin Mr A Gerrelli Miss D Macnair MBE Mr C Maton The Hon R Montagu Mr A H Pasmore Mr D Readhead Mrs P Thorne Mrs D Westerhoff	Official Verderer Elected Verderer & Staff Committee Chairman Elected Verderer Elected Verderer National Park Appointed Verderer Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer Elected Verderer (joined meeting during 2011/5639) Co-opted Elected Verderer DEFRA Appointed Verderer Natural England Appointed Verderer
IN ATTENDANCE:	Miss S Westwood Mr J R Gerrelli	Clerk to the Verderers Head Agister – for minutes 2011/5705 - 5710
APOLOGIES:	None	

**IN COMMITTEE in the Library**

2011/5705	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING	RESUME
	The Minutes of the Court held on Wednesday, 21 <sup>st</sup> September 2011 were approved.	
2011/5706	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	RESUME
	The Official Verderer, the Elected Verderers, including Mr Readhead, and Mrs Thorne all declared an interest in the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme.  Mr Deakin declared an interest in matters connected with the Beaulieu Road Sale Yard as he is a director and the treasurer of the New Forest Livestock Society. Mr Readhead also declared an interest in matters connected with the Beaulieu Road Sale Yard, and the Livestock Society as he is its Chairman.  Mr Gerrelli declared an interest in matters concerning campsites.  The Official Verderer declared an interest in the possible land exchange at Coxhill, Boldre.	
2011/5707	CONDITION OF STOCK	RESUME
	The Head Agister reported that he is very happy with the condition of stock at present. The good weather has helped, the grass continues to grow and there is plenty of food for the animals on the Forest. The foals look very well this year. Cattle also look very well.	
2011/5708	AGISTER ROBERT MATON	RESUME
	Agister Maton is attending hospital today for a scan to find out if his broken collarbone is healing or whether he will need an operation.	

2011/5709 DRIFTS

DISCHARGE

Despite being a man down, the drifts have been going well although in one or two areas it will be necessary to go back to catch mares and foals which were missed.

The Head Agister said they will not be drifting the Frogham area but will instead go to Linford. There are a number of foals in Pinnick Wood which need to be caught.

A problem was identified on the Slufters drift which has been run differently in the past few years. The ponies have, however, become wise and with the inclosure fence gone, it has become increasingly difficult to drive the animals to the pound. It was agreed the Staff Committee should look at the possibility of erecting some drift fencing as additional funds may be available through the HLS for special projects under the heading of 'capital items'. 80%-90% of the cost of fencing may be available as well as 50% for pounds.

Mrs Westerhoff enquired whether the number of ponies caught is recorded. The Clerk advised her that a list is made at each drift. The lists are compared with the marking fee register. Mrs Westerhoff kindly offered to assist with this process as the office is currently suffering under a very heavy workload.

The Agisters have been asked to arrange some cattle drifts. Some commoners wish to take advantage of the present good cattle prices and others wish to remove their stock rather than risk them eating acorns.

2011/5710 BEAULIEU ROAD SALES

DISCHARGE

It is hoped that tomorrow's sale will be an improvement on the last one where some ponies failed to reach the minimum bid. Miss Macnair commented that farmers are still making haylage and silage thanks to the good weather and the price of fodder has so far remained the same. This sale also has a pre-sale foal show which may encourage buyers who do not want to buy completely unhandled stock. In addition this sale has been advertised.

On the downside, it was commented that at the recent Dartmoor Sale at Chagford 70% of animals remained unsold. Mares with foals were fetching £20 each.

### **The Head Agister left the meeting**

2011/5711 RE-ARRANGEMENT OF DRIFTS

DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer suggested consideration should be given to re-arranging some drifts so that more of those in the north are held at weekends. He thought more riders might be available to help then. However, Mr Deakin pointed out that there is always a lack of help in the north. The Official Verderer also suggested that radios might be useful to aid communication during the drifts. However, it was explained that radios have been tried before without much success. These suggestions will be discussed by the Staff Committee.

2011/5712 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT

RESUME

No breaches of the Verderers' Byelaws have been identified at this time.

2011/5713 ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS

RESUME

The Announcements and Decisions were approved.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Mark Street, Area Land Agent (New Forest)  
Mr Kevin Penfold, Acting Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS BY THE OFFICIAL VERDERER**

2011/5714 GRIT BINS

We are conscious of the need to agree with Hampshire County Council the siting of the grit bins before the winter sets in. At the last Verderers' Court in September, I invited Hampshire County Council to consult with the Verderers on sensible locations for their grit bins, sited off the grazing, and where the salt will not run onto the grazing to damage the grass. If there had been a prompt meeting, there was no reason why today's Verderers' Court could not have considered this winter's locations, and the grit bins could then have been in place ready for any freezing weather. However, agreeing a date for a meeting to discuss suitable sites has been extremely difficult and the first date on which Hampshire County Council staff are available is the 11<sup>th</sup> November.

2011/5715 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.

2011/5716 VERDERERS' GRAZING SCHEME PAYMENTS

At this time of year it has been our usual practise to make the grazing payments to commoners. Under the old Countryside Stewardship Scheme, we received the payment from the Rural payments agency in one lump sum in October. Now under the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme the payment to us is made in two halves, 50% in October and 50% the following April. For this reason we have a potential cash flow issue of making payments to commoners before all the money has been received by us. For this reason we may have to split the payment, half now and half in April. I do understand that this may cause some commoners a corresponding cash flow problem and I apologise for this. However it is difficult for the Verderers' Grazing Scheme to pay out money we have not actually yet received.

2011/5717 LAND AT KINGS COPSE ROAD, BLACKFIELD

At the last Court Mr Frank Tillyer made a further presentment concerning the status of his land at Blackfield, once more asking the Verderers to reconsider their statement that it is suitable for use as backup grazing. The Verderers found that Mr Tillyer presented no new evidence that would cause them to retract their statement.

2011/5718 ANIMAL ACCIDENTS

As we do every year at this time, we would like to take this opportunity to remind drivers of the need to take extra care on the Forest's roads now that the evenings are drawing in and the clocks change at the end of the month.

This time of year always sees a significant rise in the number of accidents involving commoners' stock. Last November there were 26 accidents in that month alone. Drivers need to realise that the animals do not have road sense and they will step out in front of a car.

Slowing down, particularly when vehicles are approaching from the opposite direction and visibility is temporarily impaired, only costs a few more minutes on your journey. Failing to slow down may cost a pony its life. A collision is also likely to cause serious damage to your vehicle; the occupants of the vehicle may be injured and your journey will undoubtedly be delayed.

Anyone who is unfortunate enough to collide with a Forest animal must report the accident to the police as a matter of urgency. Failing to stop and report an accident with a commoners' animal is a criminal offence.

## **ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT**

### **2011/5719 ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENT REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 2011**

The Agisters attended 15 accidents in September, compared with 13 in the same period last year.

3 ponies, 1 donkey, 2 sheep and a pig were killed.

2 ponies and a donkey were injured.

11 accidents occurred during the hours of darkness.

9 involved private cars or light commercials.

6 accidents were not reported (hit and run).

7 accidents involved local motorists.

The total killed and injured for the year to date is 67 compared with 60 for the same period last year.

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

None

## **PRESENTMENTS**

### **2011/5720 EXCHANGE OF LAND AT COXHILL, BOLDRE**

Presentment by Mr Edward Reddicliffe

Mr Reddicliffe requested an exchange of a small amount of Forest gravel at the end of a track, for private grass paddock of twice the area.

He said 'we have a disabled son with cerebral palsy whose condition is variable and who lives with us permanently. My wife and myself are his sole carers and we are both mid 70's. We would truly appreciate the opportunity to exchange a portion of our grass paddock for the small section of gravel drive/track which leads only to our front door and which is Forest owned. This would enable us to improve the surface and approach to our front door, keep animals off the strip and keep it clean of droppings and avoid mud etc. We could also add a small ramp to the porch level and improve lighting levels to help with his sight limitations and safety. This would ease our entry challenges and be of

considerable help to our family.

The small length of gravel track in question is a dead end, off of the main track and goes nowhere beyond our front door. It is of no use to the Forest and of no use to any other person, it leads nowhere, except to our door. It has no grazing use. We do not see any increase in the value of our property. Our grazing land would diminish and it could be reasoned that our property value would if anything diminish'.

Mr Reddicliffe provided a written copy of his presentment to which he attached a plan showing the location and dimensions of the gravel track area (2,024 sq.feet) and the paddock area to be given up (4,888 sq.feet).

Mr Reddicliffe then went on to add 'I would like to thank the Court of Verderers for taking the time to consider this request. We appreciate that the Forest must be preserved and protected and we are fierce supporters of this philosophy. We believe that this land exchange requested would be of no detriment to the Forest but most probably a positive'.

The Official Verderer thanked Mr Reddicliffe for his Presentment and said that the Verderers will give it due consideration. He added that any objections to the Presentment should be made in Open Court next month.

2011/5721 LAND AT KINGS COPSE ROAD

Presentment by Mr Frank Tillyer, Rowdown Cottage, Blackfield

'My name is: Frank Tillyer, of Rowdown Cottage, Blackfield, Southampton, Hampshire SO45 1XG

1. I am here today making this presentment as a follow on to my presentment made, in this Court Room on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2011. The issue in contention is the subject of: "New Forest Commoners and Back-up grazing", in relation to land in my ownership at Kings Copse Road, Blackfield. The site reference is BLA2.
2. I refer to the announcement made here today, by the Official Verderer Mr Dominic May, that the Court has decided after reconsideration, **not to retract** the statement the Verderers have made, regarding the BLA2 site and "Back-up grazing".
3. I **do not** accept the Court's decision as announced, and therefore, I hereby formally give Notice to the Court of Verderers, that the decision they have made, will become the subject of a future "Public Inquiry", into the soundness of the Sites and Development Management Development Plan Document, due to be published during 2012, by the New Forest District Council.
4. Furthermore, I hereby give Notice to the Court of Verderers, that the issue in contention, could become the subject of a "Legal Challenge", at a later date.
5. However, I understand at the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2011, written statements have been requested from Agister Mr Michael Lovell, Co-opted Verderer Mr David Readhead and Mr Richard Deakin, Elected Verderer & Staff Committee Chairman on the issue to hand.
6. To date, to the best of my knowledge, no written statements have been made.
7. I hereby formally request that the Official Verderer, Mr Dominic May, writes to the New Forest District Council with a copy to me, informing the Council that the Verderers have reconsidered their position, and the Court has decided **not to retract** the statement they made, regarding the land at Kings Copse Road, Blackfield.

7. 1 Also, to enclose with the same letter, copies of all the written statements, as requested in paragraph 5 above, because they will become a matter of public record, no later than Monday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2011.
8. If the Court and or Mr Dominic May, is unwilling or unable to write to the New Forest District Council **direct**, please give the Court's reasons for not doing so, in a written response to me, no later than Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2011.
9. A copy of this presentment will be handed today to Miss Sue Westwood, the Clerk to the Verderers for reference.
9. 1 I therefore request that my presentment is entered in the minutes for today's Court of Verderers, **as it is written**. Please **do not edit** this presentment.

Thanking you for your time. Frank Tillyer.'

The Official Verderer thanked Mr Tillyer for his Presentment but said that the Court cannot be bound by his deadline as it has other pressing matters and he apologised if a response cannot be provided by the date stated.

2011/5722 HIT AND RUN RTA  
Presentment by Mrs Mary Gray, Commoner from Brook

Mrs Gray expressed disappointment that the Lymington Times was only able to print details of the recent conviction of a hit and run driver who was fined £600 with points on his licence on Page 15 of its publication. Mrs Gray said such reports are good for the Forest and she would like to see them appear on the front page of publications such as the Echo, Lymington Times and even if possible the Western Gazette as a lot of people involved in accidents with Forest animals live outside the Forest.

2011/5723 APPLES  
Presentment by Mrs Mary Gray, Commoner from Brook

Mrs Gray commented that she has recently found a neighbour discarding windfall apples over his fence for the Forest animals to eat. She said that apples can cause colic and as the animals were crossing the road in order to get to them, an accident may also result. In reply, the Official Verderer said that he too has recently seen a pile of apples discarded at Eyeworth. He asked the press to publish a warning and thanked Mrs Gray for making the point.

#### **IN COMMITTEE in the Library**

#### **CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS**

2011/5724 EXCHANGE OF LAND AT COXHILL, BOLDRE RESUME

This matter will be discussed after November's Open Court. In the meantime all members of the Court have been provided with a copy of Mr Reddicliffe's presentment which will enable them to make a site visit.

Action

All Verderers

2011/5725 LAND AT KINGS COPSE ROAD RESUME

The Official Verderer said a letter will be sent to Mr Tillyer at the earliest possible opportunity. In the meantime the Clerk was asked to prepare statements for those who have knowledge of the land. In addition, he asked members of the Court to speak to anyone who has personal knowledge of the land and who might be able to support the Verderers' stance on this matter.

Action SW

## **NEW SUBMISSIONS AND OTHER MATTERS RAISED BY THE FORESTRY COMMISSION**

2011/5726 REPLACEMENT SEPTIC TANKS AND TREATMENT PLANTS AT NEW DISCHARGE COPSE NORTH AND HOLLY HATCH

Mr Street advised the Court that the Forestry Commission has recently undertaken an exercise to register all discharges from septic tanks and treatment plants with the Environment Agency. From this they have identified a number of septic tanks which discharge to watercourses, and therefore a programme has been initiated to upgrade all these in order to provide a higher standard of treatment.

The proposals will improve the quality of drainage at these properties which will be to the benefit of the Forest. The old septic tank lids will be removed, the tanks will be filled broken out and backfilled and the surface re-instated. The new tank lids will be made of heavy duty steel and will be flush with the ground.

Mr Street suggested that the installation at Holidays Hill is a good example of the improvements that can be expected.

The Court gave consent for the proposals subject to the usual three conditions regarding satisfactory reinstatement, safe working conditions, compensation for loss of grazing etc.

With respect to other properties in the Forest, Mr Street said that as and when problems with old foul drainage facilities are identified, they are dealt with. He added that at the moment there is a window of opportunity for the straightforward registration of old septic tanks. Septic tanks have to be licensed/registered and many old ones are not! He urged anyone with an old installation to register it now.

2011/5727 INSTALLATION OF NEW WATER SUPPLY AT 2 ANDERWOOD END, DISCHARGE BURLEY LODGE

A proposal to provide a separate metered supply to these properties was considered and approval given subject to the usual conditions regarding satisfactory reinstatement, safe working conditions, compensation for loss of grazing etc.

## **MATTERS ARISING OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION**

2011/5728 BRAMSHAW GOLF CLUB MANAGEMENT PLAN RESUME

Mr Street said the plan will be ready for signing off in November. Action MSt

2011/5729 LYNDHURST GOLF CLUB MANAGEMENT PLAN DISCHARGE

The plan was agreed and signed off by the Official Verderer. Mr Street was asked to provide a copy to the office. Action MSt

2011/5730 GRIT BINS

RESUME

An email was received from Mr Bastow at Hampshire Highways asking if approval could be given for the Minstead grit bins in advance of the meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> November. The Court was not keen to agree these bins ahead of the 11<sup>th</sup> November meeting. All members of the Court were insistent that the grit bins must be situated off grass where at all possible, and if on the grass only under a tree where the growth is poor anyway. The Court will also insist that any bins that have to be on grass are removed at the end of each winter.

### SSSI RESTORATION WORKS

2011/5731 PENNY MOOR PROPOSALS

DISCHARGE

The proposals for the stream restoration at Penny Moor were approved subject to the condition that the Forestry Commission maintains the new watercourse, in area 5 of the Verderers' report of April 2011 (area 2a on the Forestry Commission's proposal map), so that it remains free flowing, to the Verderers' satisfaction. The notes of the consultation meetings on the 21<sup>st</sup> February and the 13<sup>th</sup> April will be amended accordingly.

Action  
KP

2011/5732 SSSI SITE VISITS AND CONSULTATION PROCESS PROTOCOL

DISCHARGE

A copy of Ms Sarah Oakley's email with proposed dates for site meetings at Pondhead, Soldiers Bog and Cowleys Heath and Ipers Bridge plus a copy of a draft paper Protocol for Consultation & Approval of SSSI Restoration Works on the Open Forest during the New Forest HLS Scheme were handed to each member of the Court. Responses should be sent direct to Ms Oakley.

Action  
All Verderers

### ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2011/5733 INDEPENDENT PANEL ON FORESTRY

DISCHARGE

Mr Penfold said that the Independent Panel on Forestry will be visiting the Forest on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2012. Not all the panel members will be able to attend. The emphasis for the New Forest is on the Historic Forest. Further details will be provided when they are available. It has not yet been decided which organisation will host the visit but all stakeholders will have the opportunity to meet the panel. The Official Verderers said the Court will be happy to act as host.

2011/5734 FORESTRY COMMISSION STAFFING

DISCHARGE

Mr Penfold advised the Court that Mr Simon Weymouth is leaving. Jane Smith is a trained ecologist and she will take over some of his work. In addition a new Head of Planning and Environment is to be employed.

The Court expressed its wish that the Forestry Commission retains a full team of Keepers to police the Forestry Commission's byelaws and to prevent abuse of the Forest, particularly encroachments, illegal camping and illegal cycling.

2011/5735	GATE OPPOSITE BROCKENHURST COLLEGE	DISCHARGE
	Mr Maton reported that the gate opposite the college frequently gets left open and he asked if the college could be advised as the students may be partly to blame. The Clerk said she will contact the college.	Action SW
2011/5736	COMMONERS' VEHICLES ON THE OPEN FOREST	DISCHARGE
	On two occasions recently a commoner has been approached by a Forestry Commission Ranger regarding verge parking or driving on the Forest. One commoner was told that he should not be parking on a verge, the other was told he should not be driving on Wilverley Plain. Clarification was sought as to the rules in this respect.	
	The Court discussed the issue and it was agreed that from time to time commoners may need to park on the verge in order to check their stock if the animals are some distance from the official parking place. There may be occasions where a commoner is incapacitated and is unable to walk a long distance to check his animals. It was further agreed that it is perfectly acceptable in an emergency for a commoner to drive on the Forest in order to render assistance to a sick or injured animal. Commoners should not, however, drive about on the grass without good reason. Driving on gravel tracks or where damage to the grazing will not result is acceptable but it should always be undertaken in a responsible fashion so as not to cause a hazard or inconvenience to other Forest users.	
2011/5737	HOLMSLEY CAMPSITE	DISCHARGE
	As a result of equipment thefts the Court was asked if it would grant permission for an occupied site vehicle/caravan to remain on the campsite throughout the winter for security purposes. The Court sympathised with Forest Holidays in respect of the theft of equipment and any associated damage, but it felt it did not want to set a precedent by agreeing to the year-round occupation of a caravan on the site, so the application was refused. It was suggested that anything likely to be of interest to thieves should be removed during the closed season.	
2011/5738	RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND THE DRIFTS	DISCHARGE
	Mr Maton asked if there is anything the Forestry Commission can do to prevent clashes between recreational activities and the drifts. Large cycling events being a particular problem with increasing concern that one day there will be a serious accident.	
	In response, it was explained that every effort is made to reduce the likelihood of clashes but often they are unavoidable. On the day of the East Boldre Drift this year there was a huge cycling event (1000 participants) being held in the same part of the Forest. In fact, there were events all over the Forest that day.	
	Ms Jayne Albery, who issues permissions for events when Forestry Commission consent is required, as well as the Clerk, have both spent a great deal of time over the past few years trying to negotiate with the organisers of such events in order to reduce clashes. However, in many cases the consent of the Forestry Commission is not required and often neither the Forestry Commission nor the Verderers are advised that a particular event is scheduled to take place. The events frequently only	

come to light by chance or via third party. Events which are held on the public highway (such as cycle rides and the marathon) do not require permission from anyone although the Police and Highway Authority are sometimes consulted. Ms Albery and the Clerk will continue to do their best to try to avoid problems but they are limited as to what they can do. Mrs Thorne said she will raise the issue at the Access Forum.

## ENCROACHMENTS OF INTEREST TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2011/5739	FOREST HOUSE, BISTERNE CLOSE, BURLEY	DISCHARGE Action MSt
	Mr Street is dealing with a new encroachment has been identified at this property where concrete slabs and pea shingle have been laid on the Forest.	
2011/5740	THE BEECHES, SHAPPEN, BURLEY	DISCHARGE Action MSt
	Mr Street said he has met with the owner of The Beeches and there ensued a fairly heated discussion. It seems there has been a misunderstanding between the owner and the planning officers as to the action that should have been taken in respect of the effect the development has had on the Open Forest. In the end, the owner has undertaken to remove and properly reinstate two of the three accesses to the property and to reduce the size of the remaining access. The owner has also said he will pay the Forestry Commissions costs in respect of this encroachment. Mr Street added that the photographic evidence that was available in this instance has proved crucial to obtaining a satisfactory outcome for the Forest.	
2011/5741	COVEN OF WITCHES, BURLEY	DISCHARGE Action MSt
	The Forestry Commission is investigating a possible encroachment, reported by the Beat Keeper.	
2011/5742	VERGE PARKING	RESUME Action KP
	Mr Deakin said that instances of verge parking on the road between Ipers Bridge and Hilltop are increasing. There is evidence of damage from vehicles on the verge both from parking and turning. In addition vehicles are being driven over the ditches. He asked whether the system of stickers and letters is still in use. In response, Mr Penfold said the Estates Keeper Mr Graham Wilson has taken some photographs and they have been taken into the office. Mr Penfold said he would investigate what is happening.	

**Mr Penfold and Mr Street left the meeting.**

## OTHER MATTERS ARISING

2011/5743	STALLIONS	RESUME Action RD
	Mr Deakin reported that the CDA has yet to produce its paper on the future of stallions on the Forest. It is understood the CDA is waiting for the results of the Beaulieu Road sale which is on tomorrow (20 <sup>th</sup> October). Mr Deakin will circulate the CD's paper as soon as it is available.	

2011/5744 ROCKFORD FARM

RESUME

It has not been possible to arrange the meeting. Mr Pasmore said he regrets that due to other pressing commitments he is unable to assist further. Mrs Westerhoff said she would take his place and Mr Pasmore will advise the National Park Authority which is co-ordinating the meeting.

Action AHP  
& DW

2011/5745 MARKING FEES FOR 2012

DISCHARGE

The Clerk had prepared the first draft of the budget and five year plan which shows that the Court's finances will be put under considerable strain in the years to come. The Forestry Commission's grant is being reduced as was explained last year. Whilst the Court was loathe to put additional pressure on commoners, it was pointed out that many benefit from the Verderers' Grazing Scheme and Single Farm Payments. It is hoped that those who are currently unable to take advantage of the VGS will be able to in the future. After careful consideration, Mr Maton proposed the marking fees for 2012 be increased by £2.00 across the board. Mrs Westerhoff seconded the proposal which was carried. Mr Gerrelli voted against the increase. Mr Deakin abstained from voting.

The Official Verderer will make the necessary announcement at November's Court.

Action OV

## HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME

2011/5746 HLS SCHEME MANAGER

DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer formally advised members of the Court that most regrettably it has been necessary to terminate the HLS Scheme programme manager's position because the HLS board has decided to simplify the scheme in order to target resources directly to the deliverable actions within the HLS agreement and meet the scheme's requirement for a cash neutral budget. Unfortunately the board has decided that the scheme can no longer afford a scheme programme manager.

## VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME (VGS)

2011/5747 VGS FUNDING

RESUME

The VGS element of the HLS is also under financial strain and the Official Verderer is reviewing projects with the Scheme Manager.

2011/5748 REVIEW OF GRAZING PAYMENTS

RESUME

A review paper was circulated which the Official Verderer asked all members of the Court to consider and then submit their comments to him or Mr Deakin.

Action  
All Verderers

**Mr Montagu gave his apologies and left the meeting**

## **FINANCIAL AND OTHER MONTHLY REPORTS**

2011/5749 FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR SEPTEMBER 2011 RESUME

The Financial Statement for September was approved.

2011/5750 MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE RESUME

Ponies	4597	Pigs	249
Cattle	2385	Sheep	130
Donkeys	128		
TOTAL	7110	TOTAL ALL ANIMALS	7489

2011/5751 ANIMALS REMOVED IN SEPTEMBER FROM THE FOREST DUE TO POOR CONDITION RESUME

No animals were removed in September due to poor condition.

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

2011/5752 SALARY REVIEW DISCHARGE

The Clerk left the meeting whilst this item was discussed.

The Verderers decided to change its previous policy to follow the recommendations of the Agricultural Wages Board. This was because the Agricultural Wages Board will be abolished when the Public Bodies Bill becomes law, and because the Verderers' budget is under financial strain due to the reduction of the Forestry Commission administrative grant. A salary increase of 2% was agreed for the agisters and clerk, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October.

Action SW

## **TRAINING**

No training is currently taking place or due in the near future.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

There are no health and safety issues at present.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

2011/5753 CYCLE NETWORK WAYMARKERS RESUME

Mr Pasmore's paper listing car parks with cycle routes, car parks where "no forest cycling" signs are required, and those where such signs are not considered necessary had been circulated to members of the Court in advance of the meeting. The Official Verderer suggested that Bull Hill Car Park does not need a no-cycling sign as cyclists do not generally frequent that car park. Mrs Thorne requested that Appleslade car park be upgraded in the list to require "no forest cycling" signs. Members of the Court were asked to let Mr Pasmore know if they felt there should be any other amendments. Post meeting note: the updated list has now been issued to the HLS Programme Manager for action.

Action  
All Verderers

2011/5754 MICROCHIPPING

RESUME

The Official Verderer advised the Court that he had written via Dr Julian Lewis MP to the Minister Mr Jim Paice asking that persons other than vets be allowed to microchip ponies. A negative response was received so the Official Verderer has written to the Minister again in robust language.

2011/5755 PONY INJURED AND DESTROYED ON WEIRS DRIFT

DISCHARGE

As a result of a freak accident, a pony was unfortunately seriously injured on the Weirs Drift and had to be destroyed. An enquiry into the accident revealed that it was no-one's fault. The pony was not being driven hard at the time but she was barged by another pony whilst going over a bridge and the end of the bridge railing penetrated her stifle, rupturing an artery. The incident prompted the question of liability for stock injured or killed during drifts. Although thankfully rare, accidents do happen occasionally as in this case. The Staff Committee agreed the matter must be referred to the Court.

The Verderers decided that the Court is not liable for stock injured or killed during drifts.

In the meantime an invoice for 50% of the usual cost of disposal was levied on the Court. The invoice has been held pending a decision today.

Given that the VGS has recently funded 90% of the cost of the new fallen stock vehicle, it was agreed that the Clerk should return the invoice and explain that the Court does not accept liability for paying the fee. In addition a request will be made that the fee be waived completely as a goodwill gesture to the owner of the pony, in view of the fact that the animal was killed during the course of an official pony drift.

Action SW

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 13.50 hrs