

**MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2014 at 9.30 a.m. in the Verderers' Hall and the Library, the Queen's House, Lyndhurst.**

PRESENT:	Mr Dominic May	Official Verderer
	Mr R Deakin	Elected Verderer & Staff Committee Chairman
	Mr B Dowsett	Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer
	Miss D Macnair MBE	Senior Elected Verderer
	Mr C Maton	National Park Appointed Verderer
	Mr G M H Mills	DEFRA Appointed Verderer
	Mr D Readhead	Elected Verderer
	Mr R Stride	Co-opted Verderer
	Mrs D Westerhoff	Natural England Appointed Verderer
IN ATTENDANCE:	Miss S Westwood	Clerk to the Verderers
	Mr J R Gerrelli	Head Agister
APOLOGIES:	Mr A Gerrelli	Elected Verderer

**IN COMMITTEE in the Library**

2014/7509 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING RESUME

The Minutes of the Court held on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2014 were approved and signed.

2014/7510 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RESUME

The Official Verderer, the Elected Verderers, Mr Stride and Mr Maton all declared an interest in the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme and the Verderers Grazing Scheme.

The Official Verderer, Mr Deakin, Miss Macnair and Mr Readhead are all members of the New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society.

Mr Dowsett advised the Court that he is a Forestry Commission Voluntary Ranger.

Mr Hallam Mills declared an interest in HLS Schemes as his Estate is in Higher Level Stewardship. The Estate is also involved in the Better Boundaries Project, run by the New Forest Land Advice Service with support from Natural England. Mr Mills is also a Patron of the New Forest Trust.

Mr Deakin and Mr Readhead are members of the New Forest Stallion Syndicate.

2014/7511 CONDITION OF STOCK RESUME

The Head Agister reported that overall, the ponies look exceptionally well. The weather is wet but mild and the grass is continuing to grow.

2014/7512 STRANGLES & THE DRIFTS DISCHARGE

Fewer ponies are showing symptoms now, although there are a few in the Dur Hill, Thorney Hill and Holmsley area. In areas where the disease appears to have passed, efforts are being made to catch any mares and foals. The Head Agister said he expects it will rumble on for a while

longer.

A mini drift will be held on Blackfield on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> October as there are a number of foals in that area.

Strangles has also been reported in other parts of the country, not just the New Forest.

It is hoped the November Beaulieu Road pony sale will take place.

Returning to the subject of the drifts, the Official Verderer said the Balmer Lawn Drift was extremely successful.

2014/7513 PUBLICISING STRANGLES RESUME

The office has received a complaint that the current outbreak of strangles on the Forest has been deliberately kept secret. This was not an intentional policy, but equally, there has never been a conscious decision to publicise any outbreaks that do occur. The strangles outbreak has been detailed every month in the Court minutes from February this year. Of course, the Court minutes are in the public domain, published each month on the Verderers' web site.

It was agreed that next time strangles is identified on the Forest a decision will be made as to what publicity is appropriate. Action Clerk

Meanwhile, it was agreed that some information on strangles should be included on the Verderers' website and the Clerk was asked to draft some suitable words.

2014/7514 STOCK LOSING CONDITION AND REMOVED FROM THE FOREST IN SEPTEMBER 2014 RESUME

One gelding, one cow and a donkey were removed from the Forest due to concerns about their condition. In September 2013, two animals were removed – one mare with a foal and one mare on her own.

The year to date figure is 164. In 2013 it was 342.

2014/7515 MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE IN 2014 (2013 in brackets) RESUME

	Forest	Commons	Total
Ponies	4327 (4381)	723 (723)	5050 (5104)
Cattle	2674 (2518)	1098 (968)	3772 (3486)
Donkeys	96 (94)	60 (71)	156 (165)
Pigs	91 (202)	23 (35)	114 (237)
Sheep	0 (0)	142 (113)	142 (113)
Total	7188 (7195)	2046 (1910)	9234 (9105)

Ponies, cattle and donkeys on the Forest – 7097 (6993)  
 Ponies, cattle and donkeys on the Commons – 1881 (1762)  
 Total Ponies, Cattle and Donkeys – 8978 (8755)

2014/7516 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT RESUME

No byelaw offences have been reported.

**Head Agister Jonathan Gerrelli left the meeting**

2014/7517 ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS

RESUME

The announcements were approved.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Mike Seddon, outgoing Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest  
Mr Bruce Rothnie, newly appointed Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest  
Mr Paul Grugeon, Land Agent (New Forest)

**ANNOUNCEMENT AND DECISIONS**

2014/7518 MOBILE SPEED CAMERA

The Verderers have long been concerned with the number of animal accidents on the Forest. Speeding is undoubtedly the major factor. So when the Commoners Defence Association came to us with a proposal for a 12 month mobile speed camera project, the Verderers agreed to fund it; in fact, this was one of the quickest decisions we have made in my time as Official Verderer. The mobile speed camera van arrived in the New Forest from 1st October. During the first week, I spent a quarter of an hour in the speed camera van, learning how the technology works. The long range is extraordinarily effective, and I can say with confidence is that if you are speeding, the camera has got you before you will even know the van is there. Please slow down, stay under 40, and do not risk a collision with one of our grazing animals.

2014/7519 DUMPED LAUREL AT BLACKFIELD

Sometime on Saturday 20th September, someone dumped some laurel hedge clippings in Chapel Lane in Blackfield. The local Agister was called out the next day to attend to a foal which had eaten the laurel. He had to destroy the foal, as it was suffering from laurel poisoning. The following Saturday, another load of dumped laurel appeared in Blackfield car park. The next day, the local Agister was again called out, and again had to destroy a foal which was suffering from laurel poisoning. Please do not dump any garden cuttings on the forest because they are extremely dangerous to the grazing animals.

2014/7520 ROTARY CLUB OF LYMINGTON LITTER PICK

May I make a special commendation to the Rotary Club of Lymington for carrying out a litter pick at the end of September of the B3054 from Portmore to Hatchett Pond, and the B3055 from Hatchett Pond to Brockenhurst, collecting 20 large bags of rubbish from the roadsides. Amazingly, they found jerry cans, fire extinguishers and even a wardrobe of clothes still on their hangers! They do this twice a year, and have been doing so for 30 years. A big thank from the Verderers to the Rotary Club of Lymington for this very important voluntary effort.

2014/7521 MACDONALDS AT PICKET POST

When we heard that MacDonalds was opening at Picket Post, the Verderers were worried that litter would become even worse in that area. Actually, due to MacDonald's policy of litter picking locally, the immediate area in the vicinity of Picket Post has become tidier. I am amazed to find that the problem is further afield. I have recently come across piles of MacDonalds takeaway packaging at South Oakley car park, and also at Wootton Bridge car park. Please keep the New Forest tidy: take your litter home.

2014/7522 HCC LETTER

The Verderers have become increasingly frustrated by the poor standard of work carried out by Hampshire County Council on our New Forest roads. It seems to us that every time one of the contractors comes to work in the New Forest, there is collateral damage. The charge sheet is long:

1. Road widening during HCC's repairs and resurfacing, which constitutes an encroachment of the Crown Lands, and a destruction of the SSSI, leading to loss of grazing, which is then impossible to reverse.
2. Careless work by HCC's contractors, leading to stone chippings being deposited on the grass verges. As well as constituting an encroachment, this is also an animal welfare issue: the cattle and ponies which are depastured under rights of common pick up these stones when grazing at the verge, chipping their teeth, leading in time to an inability to graze as the animals' teeth prematurely fail.
3. Damage to the grass verge by tar or gas lance or both.
4. Leaving piles of materials on the grass verge during and/or after road works.
5. Leaving temporary warning signs and/or sand bags which weigh down the signs on the grass verge long after the road works are complete (i.e. abandoned).
6. Placing permanent signs on the Crown Lands without consent of the Verderers as required under the New Forest Acts.
7. Delays in repairing fences, which then allows animals onto the fenced roads.
8. Use of dark tarmac despite a previous agreement to use light coloured tar so that the silhouette of animals shows at night time, to reduce the risk of animal accidents.

I have therefore written in desperation to our two local MPs, Desmond Swayne and Julian Lewis, asking for their support in resolving this matter.

2014/7523 MIKE SEDDON

Mike Seddon attends his last Court today. He has been Deputy Surveyor since 2003. Under the New Forest Acts, the Forestry Commission has to ask for consent of the Verderers for many of its day to day activities. Despite this being very inconvenient for the Forestry Commission, and certainly annoying when we have refused consent, Mike has respected the sovereignty of the New Forest Acts. In fact, during the recent restructuring of the Public Forest Estate nationally, Mike has helped us to maintain the New Forest Acts as the over-arching governance for the New Forest. Mike has been very helpful to me personally with his intimate knowledge of the working of central government and Whitehall, meaning that the Verderers have achieved things which would otherwise have appeared impossible. Thank you Mike, and best wishes for the next stage of your career.

2014/7524 BRUCE ROTHNIE

Welcome to Bruce Rothnie, who takes over this week from Mike Seddon as our new Deputy Surveyor. My predecessor, Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre and I, offered to familiarise you with the New Forest Acts, but for some reason Mike said that he would do that himself! The Verderers and I look forward to a good working relationship with you.

## **ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT**

2014/7525 THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 2014

The Agisters attended 19 accidents in September compared with 13 in September last year.

Nine accidents occurred in one week.

One cow and four ponies were killed, three ponies and a cow were injured badly enough that they had to be destroyed, three ponies, a cow, and a donkey, were injured less seriously, a cow and a donkey escaped injury and three animals reported to have been involved in accidents have not been found.

Six accidents occurred in daylight, twelve in the dark and one at twilight. Five were not reported.

The accidents which were reported all involved cars or light commercials.

Nine motorists were local.

The other drivers came from Lancashire, the Isle of Wight, Devon, Northants and Wimborne.

The total number of animals killed and injured in road traffic accidents at the end of September 2014 was 56, compared with 65 to the same date last year so the overall figures are still down on last year which is good news.

In view of the high number of accidents, I won't read the details of them all, however, I would like to draw attention to some of them.

On Friday 5th September at 5:45 p.m. (in daylight) a grey jenny donkey foal was injured at Palace Lane Beaulieu. The collision has not been reported.

On Tuesday 16th September at 8:30 p.m. a bay mule was hit by two vehicles on the B3055 at Latchmoor, Brockenhurst. A witness saw the second vehicle hit and kill the mule which was in the road struggling to get up. Neither driver reported the incident and unfortunately the witnesses present failed to get details of the vehicles involved even though one apparently left the road and was seen to manoeuvre back onto the road and drive off.

On Monday 22nd September at a minute after midnight a chestnut filly was injured on the B3056 at Pondhead. This accident has also not been reported.

On Tuesday 23rd September at 11.00 a.m. a witness saw a car driven at a donkey which was nudged off the road at Bull Hill in Pilley. Fortunately the animal escaped injury. The driver did not report the incident and he or she presumably thinks it is an acceptable way to drive in the Forest. It isn't.

On Saturday 27th September at 10.50 p.m. a grey filly was hit by two vehicles on the B3056. The first knocked her to the ground, the second ran over her neck and killed her. She was wearing a reflective collar.

On Monday 29th September at 4.40 p.m. (again in daylight) a black pony was injured and had to be destroyed following a collision on the B3078 at Crows Nest. The accident has not been reported.

The clocks change in a few weeks' time and the accident rate always increases as people are suddenly driving home from work in the dark. So please may we ask everyone to take a bit more care.

## **PRESENTMENTS BY THE DEPUTY SURVEYOR**

There were no presentments by the Deputy Surveyor

## **PRESENTMENTS**

### **2014/7526 FLY TIPPING & LITTERING**

Presentment by Mrs Mary Gray, Practising Commoner from Brook

Mrs Gray expressed concern at several incidents of fly-tipping and littering that have recently come to her attention. The occupants of a blue van were seen to stop and dump a quantity of old car tyres. Unfortunately the person who saw this incident was up a ladder at the time and was unable to take a note of the registration number. Mrs Gray herself witnessed members of the public feeding apples to Forest ponies. She asked that if anyone sees quantities of apples on the Forest, would they please collect them up as they can be dangerous to stock if eaten in excess. Mrs Gray then produced what was clearly a polythene bag that had been through an animal's gut. Presumably it had been discarded with food in it which attracted an animal which then ate it. It is hoped that the animal suffered no ill effects but such rubbish has been known to kill.

*The Official Verderer thanked Mrs Gray for her observations and pointed out that not only does fly tipping and littering result in a blot on the landscape, but it is also extremely dangerous to the Forest's animals.*

### **2014/7527 FUNGI COLLECTING**

Presentment by Mrs Sarah Cadbury, Brockenhurst

Mrs Cadbury raised the issue of excessive collection of fungi which she said has not improved over the years. She said she appreciates it is not directly a matter for the Verderers' Court but felt it is important to keep the problem in the public eye. Mrs Cadbury pointed out that the Forest is a SSSI from which nothing should be taken. She asked why it is taken? Whilst it is not protected, it is an act of theft to remove fungi from the Forest. Epping Forest prosecutes in certain cases and Mrs Cadbury asked why the Forestry Commission in the New Forest does not. It is thought that some fungi collectors can make £5,000 in a weekend. It is complete exploitation and mycologists despair. Even rare fungi are being collected all the time.

*The Official Verderer said that he has been out and about on the Forest on almost a daily basis since the beginning of October and his observations indicate that fungi are being collected on an industrial scale. He added that gangs of Eastern Europeans are being dropped off to harvest the fungi and that there are hundreds of fungi collectors out every day. It is a major problem and he thanked Mrs Cadbury for bringing it to the Court's attention.*

### IN COMMITTEE in the Library

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Mike Seddon, outgoing Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest  
Mr Bruce Rothnie, newly appointed Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest  
Mr Paul Grugeon, Land Agent (New Forest)  
Ms Melissa Jones, Assistant Land Agent

Outgoing Deputy Surveyor Mr Mike Seddon said that this the last time he will attend the Verderers' Court as Deputy Surveyor and he introduced Mr Bruce Rothnie who is his replacement.

The Official Verderer thanked Mr Seddon for all his help and support over the years that he has been in post as Deputy Surveyor and wished him every success in his new role. He then welcomed Mr Bruce Rothnie to the Court.

### CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS

2014/7528 FLY TIPPING AND LITTERING

RESUME

This is an ongoing problem. Miss Macnair suggested it is important to engage with young people to encourage them not to drop litter and reported that the Youth of Burley Group and the Venture Scouts will be involved in the Autumn litter pick around Burley which is organised by the Parish Council.

The Official Verderer agreed, saying that children love litter-picking, and suggested that getting schools involved would be a way forward.

2014/7529 FUNGI

DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer said he has recently written to Jenny Thomas at Natural England for its view regarding fungi collecting in the New Forest. Ms Thomas replied saying NE supports the Fungi Code, but NE does not support commercial exploitation. Mr Seddon explained that the problem of commercial picking is not new and that it is probably exacerbated now by a good year for fungi. He added that the Forestry Commission's Policy is published in the Fungi Code. This national Code allows picking for personal use. As respects damage resulting from commercial picking, there is no definitive evidence either way. The most likely impact will be on woodland habitat resulting from an increased number of people walking through.

There are two woods where fungi collecting in the New Forest is banned, namely Burley Old and Whitley Wood. Mr Seddon said the Keepers and Rangers will be reminded to speak to anyone they see who is picking fungi and refer them to the Fungi Code.

As respects prosecutions, Mr Seddon reminded the Court that Epping Forest's byelaws specifically preclude collection of fungi.

**SUBMISSIONS BY THE FORESTRY COMMISSION**

2014/7530 PROPOSED INSTALLATION OF GRAVEL AT THE LYNDHURST WAR DISCHARGE  
MEMORIAL

The gravel was requested on the grounds that it would provide a surface which is more stable to walk on during the wreath laying ceremony on Armistice Day.

However, this submission was received on the day of the Court, too late to be included on the Agenda for this meeting and as a result, members of the Court who are not familiar with the memorial, did not have the opportunity to make a site visit.

The Verderers' policy that their decisions will be based on what is best for the Forest, together with ensuring that landscape quality is maintained are key considerations in such cases and that, combined with the lack of opportunity to visit the memorial, resulted in this application being refused at this time. The Deputy Surveyor commented that this is a difficult case with a very obvious emotional aspect, but on balance he concurred with the decision of the Verderers.

It was agreed, however, that members of the Court will visit the site and advise the Forestry Commission whether they feel this is something that could be brought back to the Court next year.

Action  
Any Verderer  
unfamiliar  
with the  
memorial

2014/7531 SIGN OUTSIDE NEW PARK (this matter was taken out of order to allow Ms Jones to hear the discussion before leaving the meeting) RESUME

Mr Seddon confirmed there is no licence for this sign. The Forestry Commission will contact the Show Society.

Action  
MJ

**Miss Jones left the meeting.**

2014/7532 SGN PROVISION OF U/G GAS SUPPLY TO RED ROOFS, KINGS DISCHARGE  
COPSE ROAD, 2045 1XF

Consent for this new supply was given subject to the three usual conditions regarding satisfactory reinstatement, safe working conditions, compensation for loss of grazing etc.

2014/7533 KINGS COPSE ROAD RESUME

During the discussion on the above gas supply, the question of the width of Kings Copse Road was raised. This road always was single track but as a result of over-running of the verges is now much wider. The residents paid for the road to be tarmacked some years ago, but it is an unadopted road with maintenance being the responsibility of the residents (with access licences) and the Forestry Commission.

Mr Gary North (FC) will be asked to look at the road and decide how best to protect the verges and reinstate the track to its original width i.e. the width of the tarmac.

Action  
Gary North  
FC



2014/7534 SEMBCORP BOURNEMOUTH WATER, WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT DISCHARGE  
LONGBEECH HILL, FRITHAM

Consent to run a plastic pipe within the old cast iron water supply pipe by digging several pits, was approved subject to three usual conditions regarding satisfactory reinstatement, safe working conditions, compensation for loss of grazing etc.

2014/7535 ACCESS BY NETWORK RAIL FOR THE REMOVAL OF MAST AND DISCHARGE  
CABIN AT WOODFIDLEY CROSSING

Network Rail (NWR) proposes to remove a redundant mast and cabin at the Woodfidley Crossing on grounds of health and safety. The redundant mast potentially obscures the view of pedestrians when using the crossing.

The Court considered the proposals which were approved subject to the three usual conditions regarding satisfactory reinstatement, safe working conditions, compensation for loss of grazing etc. Additionally, however, the Forestry Commission was asked to remind NWR that they must not cause damage to the nearby lawns by parked vehicles or any works associated with the removal of the mast and cabin. They must make sure they clear up all arisings, including cut vegetation, from the Open Forest and, in addition, it is essential that any damage to or weakening of the railway fencing is repaired immediately.

#### **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST COURT AND PREVIOUS COURTS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION**

2014/7536 BALMER LAWN EROSION DISCHARGE

Mr Seddon reminded the Court that this issue has been considered on several occasions in the past. The car park was reduced in size to try to reduce the pressure on the area, however it is difficult to see what else can be done. The public are always attracted to water. If the car park was closed completely, people would park along the road and there are already serious issues with access by emergency vehicles despite efforts to restrict some roadside parking. The stock regularly cross the river at this location and so it is not possible to restrict access to the river itself.

The Court requested some additional car free works (ditching or dragon's teeth) be undertaken in order to stop verge parking when the car park is full.

2014/7537 SWAN GREEN CRICKET CLUB RESUME

Mr Seddon said the Forestry Commission needs the ground to be signed away by the Cricket Club. Ms Jones has written to the only known trustee asking for confirmation that the Club is no longer in existence. If this letter does not produce the desired result, one more letter will be sent, giving the Club notice to quit. Meanwhile Mr Stride offered to speak with the Trustee whom he knows quite well.

Action  
RS

## SSSI RESTORATION WORKS

2014/7538 REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE LIST RESUME

An updated maintenance list was circulated. Queen's Bower debris dams have been added. Mr Stride requested Crockford Bottom be removed from the list as work is no longer required.

2014/7539 QUEEN'S MEADOW / DRIVER'S NURSERY DISCHARGE

Following the recent review, the recommendation is that the additional hoggin which was laid on the track should be removed back to the level of the old track, with timber revetments where necessary to keep the track in place. The old track will not be resurfaced with a hard surface. It was agreed to then wait to see what effect this work has.

At the moment the Forestry Commission does not want to undertake any further work on the bridge until the effects of lowering the track can be judged, so as a temporary measure a ramp will be constructed.

Driver's Nursery is coming back to lawn but once the track has been returned to its previous level, it may go back to being wetter as it is part of the flood plain in the area.

The work needs to be completed before winter. Mr Seddon said it will be necessary to wait and see the effect of the work and the area will therefore be monitored. He said if necessary, the Forestry Commission will go back to Driver's Nursery.

2014/7540 PUBLICITY FOR STREAM RESTORATION PROJECTS DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer pointed out that stream restoration projects don't always work out as expected. When working with natural systems and processes it is sometimes necessary to try things and wait to see what happens.

Mr Seddon agreed that despite pre-restoration assessment it is not possible to give a hundred percent assurance that things will work first time as nature can be surprising.

All agreed, however, that successful projects are not publicised well enough. Also, engaging with the local community is essential in order to educate people about what it is hoped will be achieved. Miss Macnair remarked that the FC presentation at a recent Burley Parish Council Meeting was too long and too technical in the circumstance. She recommended that the FC starts at the most basic level, rather than assuming that the audience has a prior knowledge of the site, or expertise in ecology.

2014/7541 HARVEST SLADE DISCHARGE

A representative of the Court is needed to speak at the planning hearing next week in respect of the proposed works at Harvest Slade. Mr Mills and Mr Stride expressed their willingness to attend to support the proposal.

Action  
HM or RS

## ENCROACHMENTS

2014/7542 ENCROACHMENT LIST RESUME

The revised encroachment list was circulated.

## ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2014/7543 VERDERERS' HALL RESTORATION - INTERPRETATION BRIEF DISCHARGE

Subject to a successful HLF Landscape Partnership Bid, restoration of the Verderers' Hall is planned for summer 2016, to coincide with the Court's annual recess.

The views of the Court were sought on the proposals for means of interpretation in the Verderers' Hall when it is opened to the public following restoration. After considering the options put forward, the Court was in favour of a high tech solution which will interest and educate visitors. However, any visual information boards or paraphernalia should be in the style and format of the surroundings, respecting the heritage feel.

The Official Verderer reminded the Deputy Surveyor that the Verderers would like Anthony Pasmore to continue to be consulted, as he started this project when he was still a Verderer.

2014/7544 ROUNDHILL CAMPSITE GRUFFALO TRAIL DISCHARGE

Generally the clear up at the end of the camping season on Roundhill is very good. However, the Gruffalo Trail is still in situ. Mr Seddon explained that the Gruffalo Trail was installed by the Forestry Commission rather than Camping in the Forest. It is therefore the responsibility of FC staff to remove the remaining logs etc., connected with the Trail. He said he will ask for this to be done as soon as possible.

2014/7545 PASSAGEWAY OUTSIDE HOLMSLEY INCLOSURE DISCHARGE

Miss Macnair thanked the Forestry Commission for a job well done to the passageway along the outside of Holmsley Inclosure.

2014/7546 CYCLING EVENT SIGNAGE DISCHARGE

It was reported that there are several signs on the Forest left over from recent cycling events including a Wiggle sign on the junction on Fritham Plain close to Janesmoor Pond. In addition there is an orange sign in Burley Village. The Forestry Commission was asked to arrange for their removal.

2014/7547 ROADSIDE VEGETATION CLEARANCE DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin asked for the specification for roadside vegetation clearance. In response, Mr Seddon said that the same operators have done the clearance for a number of years now and their instructions have not changed. The average width of the cut back is 1 chain but this will vary according to ground and vegetation conditions and also so that it does not look too uniform. He added if there is anywhere where it is felt the clearance is insufficient, please say so.

2014/7548	CASTLE HILL LANE	DISCHARGE
	<p>Miss Macnair thanked the Forestry Commission for the work on the surface of Castle Hill Lane, but asked if some of the brambles could be cut back. When faced with oncoming vehicles, riders, pedestrians and cyclists have nowhere to go to get out of the way except into the brambles which are growing out across the track. Miss Macnair was concerned that a riding horse, person or bicycle could easily become entangled in the brambles. Mr Seddon said that vegetation along the verge does protect it from over-running by vehicles but he will ask for the Lane to be checked and remedial work carried out where it is felt necessary.</p>	
2014/7549	FALLEN TIMBER	RESUME
	<p>The question of excessive fallen timber was again raised. Mr Deakin reminded the Forestry Commission of the agreed criteria for clearance of fallen timber, i.e. where it is an animal welfare issue, where it is restricting legitimate access and where it is damaging grazing. Mr Deakin felt grazing is being damaged on a wide scale. The amount of timber is also causing issues with catching stock. He said he realises the scale of the problem, but at present not enough is being done.</p> <p>Mr Stride said he is dissatisfied with the paper which was produced at the recent OFAC meeting. The CDA is also unhappy. The habitat is being affected and many people feel that Natural England must agree to some clearance. There is a real need to reach some agreement and then go out and do some work in a few woods. Clearly Natural England, the Commoners and the Forestry Commission all have strong views on the subject.</p> <p>Mr Stride added that he believes that assignment wood should be taken from the Open Forest and not the inclosures. He feels that would help with the problem. He asked that this be looked into. If assignment wood was taken from the Open Forest it would make a difference.</p>	Action DS
2014/7550	CLEARANCE OF PERRYWOOD IRONSHILL	DISCHARGE
	<p>In response to the observation that a lot of wood remains on the ground in this location, Mr Seddon said that work has yet to be completed. He added that it will be replanted.</p>	
2014/7551	ORDNANCE AT MATLEY	RESUME January 2015
	<p>Works to deal with WW1 ordnance at Matley has recommenced.</p>	
2014/7552	FORESTRY COMMISSION PUBLICATION	DISCHARGE
	<p>It was noted that a photograph on the front cover of an FC New Forest publication shows ponies with head collars on. It was felt that it would be more appropriate to show a pony on the Forest. In reply, Mr Seddon said the publication is being reprinted for next year.</p>	
2014/7553	HOLLY HATCH CESSPIT	DISCHARGE
	<p>The work on the new cesspit at Holly Hatch is felt to be substandard with large pieces of concrete left protruding. This is dangerous and looks awful. The Forestry Commission will investigate.</p>	

2014/7554 ELECTRICITY SUPPLY FOR LYNDHURST CEMETERY CHAPEL DISCHARGE

Mr Grugeon said that the Parish Council would like a trial hole dug in the car park behind the Cricket Pavilion on Bolton's Bench in order to find out whether it will be possible to install an electricity cable by direct drilling. If the ground is found to be suitable, then the Parish Council will submit a separate proposal for an electricity supply to the Cemetery Chapel. The Chapel can then be fitted with an electric heating system as well as security lights and CCTV to deter vandalism, which is currently a problem.

The Court approved the trial hole, which will be dug in the gravel of the car park, subject to the usual three conditions.

2014/7555 NEW UNDERGROUND ELECTRICAL SUPPLY TO NEW COPSE NORTH COTTAGE AND WOODFIDLEY COTTAGE RESUME

The Official Verderer has the delegated power from the Court to resolve difficulties that have become apparent during various site visits in respect of the above proposal. Once agreed, details of the solution will be reported to the Court.

2014/7556 ROUNDHILL WATER TOWER DISCHARGE

Sembcorp Bournemouth Water's request to retain the security fence was not agreed. The reason was insufficient justification for its retention. It was suggested that anti-climb measures can relatively easily be added to the tower itself. There is a secure cabinet which houses many of the controls, and there are a number of valves and manhole covers which are outside the existing security compound anyway.

The original consent for the replacement tower was given on the condition that the fence would be removed and the Court is not minded to rescind its earlier decision.

**Mr Seddon, Mr Rothnie and Mr Grugeon left the meeting**

#### **OTHER MATTERS ARISING**

2014/7557 TB CONTROL PLAN DISCHARGE

The Questions and Answers paper that was drafted following the meeting in Lyndhurst on the 18<sup>th</sup> August, has now been received from AHVLA and circulated to all cattle owning commoners.

It was agreed that a meeting with the Agisters and Verderers who may find themselves receiving queries from commoners would be useful. However, the Clerk pointed out that some complicated queries remain unanswered. These unanswered queries are the ones which commoners are most likely to ask about, and it was therefore agreed it would be better to wait until a further response from AHVLA is received. The Clerk will find out the likely timescale.

Action  
Clerk

2014/7558 HOT BRANDING DISCHARGE

The recent hot branding demonstration, attended by DEFRA minister Lord de Mauley and others, went extremely well. It was an excellent demonstration, not least because two older ponies were hot branded with the only restraint required being a halter. The discussion afterwards was also very helpful, during which the two main topics were the ways in which the Forest deals with dumped animals and strangles. The visitors were clearly impressed and the importance of the New Forest Acts was evident once again.

2014/7559 SPEED CAMERA INITIATIVE DISCHARGE

This initiative was welcomed by the Court. It is hoped it will make a significant difference to the number of road accidents involving Forest stock and it has come at just the right time of year, as the clocks are about to change.

2014/7560 STOCK NUMBERS RESUME

Mr Deakin reported that this subject was discussed in the recent Staff Committee meeting. The Agisters are not currently concerned by a lack of food for the animals on the forest, so no overgrazing is evident.

It is generally agreed that it won't be possible to tell whether there are too many stock on the Forest until we go through a hard winter. The recent winters have been very mild.

The matter was also discussed by the VGS Management Committee.

At present animal welfare is very good and the monthly report of animals removed due to poor condition indicates there are no current problems. Obviously the situation needs monitoring, in respect of both vegetation and stock.

Miss Leanne Sargeant has been tasked with updating the figures in the Illingworth Report which quotes the ratio of cattle to ponies since the 1960s.

Although there is clearly more stock in some areas, such as the Longdown area, the Forest as a whole is not considered to be over grazed.

Mr Stride said he would like to see more pure bred New Forest foals produced which would also help to alleviate the issue of the narrowing of the gene pool. It was then suggested that the VGS should only support the pure bred, Forest bred New Forest pony, and not those brought up from the west country. Some commoners have reportedly taken old mares off the Forest under the Welfare Scheme and then replaced that one mare with three mixed breed ponies from the west country. If mares could be restricted to predominantly pure bred New Forest, without interfering with the rights of the commoners to turn out whatever they wish, it might be possible to increase the number of registered New Forest Pony stallions that are turned out.

Some work needs to be done on numbers, but it was broadly agreed that only pure bred, preferably Forest bred, New Forest Pony mares should be in receipt of VGS support in future.

Action  
LS

## **OTHER AGENDA ITEMS**

2014/7561 THE BUDGET DISCHARGE

The budget was agreed.

2014/7562 SEARCH FEES RESUME

It is proposed to increase the Search Fees. The Clerk will bring a proposal to the next Court. Action Clerk

2014/7563 MARKING FEES DISCHARGE

It was agreed that marking fees will remain the same in 2015. The Official Verderer will announce the decision in Open Court next month. Action OV

2014/7564 NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY PARTNERSHIP PLAN DRAFT RESUME

Members of the Court were asked to bring comments to the next Court.

## **HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME (HLS)**

2014/7565 HLS BOARD MEETING DISCHARGE

The minutes of the Board Meeting have been circulated.

## **VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME (VGS)**

2014/7566 VGS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE DISCHARGE

At last week's Management Committee, Miss Sargeant was asked to carry out a due diligence check on cattle to ensure that animals which have been marked have actually been turned out for the required four months. Applications will also be checked to ensure that no geldings have been included and any commoner with a significantly increased claim will also be subject to scrutiny.

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

2014/7567 OPEN FOREST ADVISORY COMMITTEE (OFAC) DISCHARGE

It was reported that this meeting was rather poorly attended by the commoners but it is believed this is mainly due to people being away.

## **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

2014/7568 FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR SEPTEMBER 2014 RESUME

The financial statement was noted.

## STAFF MATTERS

2014/7569 ILLEGAL MOVEMENT OF STOCK DISCHARGE

The illegal movement of stock from the Ashurst area to other parts of the Forest was one of the subjects under discussion at the last Staff Committee meeting.

It is hoped that the intervention of another commoner may discourage those responsible.

2014/7570 LAND ROVER WARRANTY DISCHARGE

Miss Sargeant is looking at the costs which have been recovered by way of the warranty in the past year in respect of repairs to the Land Rover fleet but it was agreed the warranties should be renewed.

Mr Readhead reported that the Land Rover is going out of production in December 2015 and no replacement is planned at the present time.

## HEALTH & SAFETY & TRAINING

2014/7571 CHAIN SAW TRAINING DISCHARGE

Work continues to identify suitable chainsaw training courses. Sparsholt College has been approached.

2014/7572 HEALTH & SAFETY REVIEW RESUME  
December

The Official Verderer suggested that the Court's Health and Safety Consultant, Julie Brown, should be asked to conduct a review of Health and Safety at the end of the drifts. It is felt this should be undertaken annually.

2014/7573 LONE WORKERS AND SMARTPHONE SOS APP DISCHARGE

The SOS Apps on the Agisters' Smartphones have been activated. The procedure will be added to the Health and Safety documentation.

## ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2014/7574 WOODGREEN CEMETERY DISCHARGE

Mr Dowsett and Mr Stride approved the proposed works at the cemetery under the delegated power granted by the Court.

2014/7575 RTA REPORT DISCHARGE

Mr Maton thanked the Clerk for this month's RTA report which he felt highlighted the important facts without being too long.

2014/7576 SALARY REVIEW DISCHARGE

The Clerk left the meeting whilst the salary review took place. The Court approved an increase in all staff salaries.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 13:38 hrs

*Dominic May*  
*Official Verderer*  
*19th November 2014*