

**Minutes of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 18th December 2024 at 9.30 a.m.
in the Library, the King's House, Lyndhurst**

PRESENT	Mr E Heron	Official Verderer
	Mr R Deakin	Elected Verderer & Staff Committee Chairman
	Mr A H Pasmore	Senior Elected Verderer
	Mr R Stride	Elected Verderer
	Miss A Tilbury	Elected Verderer
	Miss K Harrison	Elected Verderer
	Mr C Chatters	Natural England Appointed Verderer
	Mr M Gammon	Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer
	Miss A Sevier MBE	National Park Appointed Verderer
Mr R Manley	DEFRA Appointed Verderer	

IN ATTENDANCE Miss J Bayley Assistant to the Clerk

APOLOGIES None

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

2024/13817 WELCOME TO NEW ELECTED VERDERERS DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer extended a warm welcome to newly elected Verderers Miss Alison Tilbury and Miss Kay Harrison.

2024/13818 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING RESUME

The minutes of the last Court, held on Wednesday 20th November 2024 were approved, and signed by the Official Verderer.

2024/13819 NEW DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RESUME

There were no new declarations of interest.

2024/13820 CONDITION OF STOCK RESUME

Mr Deakin said overall the animals are looking well, the colder wet weather is now affecting a few older and some younger ponies who are starting to lose condition. The Agisters and commoners are busy catching these ponies along with the mares and foals affected by the cancellation of drifts due to strangles.

Mr Deakin said the welfare tour held on the 6th December went well. The tour saw one pony that was losing condition and needed an eye kept on it. The Assistant Clerk said the group had fed back to her that they were very interested to have learnt about the procedures we have in place for looking after poor animals.

2024/13821 BOVINE TB RESUME

Mr Deakin said he had heard of a confirmed case of TB in the Fritham area. He said we have not been contacted by either APHA or the Commoner involved.

- 2024/13822 STRANGLES RESUME
- There are still a few cases of strangles in the Forest.
- 2024/13823 BLUE TONGUE RESUME
- The Forest now falls within the restricted zone which includes most of Hampshire and some of Wiltshire. Salisbury Market, however, remains out of the zone. Being in a restricted zone means that stock can be moved within the zone but not outside of it.
- Mr Deakin said he and the Head Agister had met with Mike Pittock, the Forestry England lead on FE's Infectious Diseases Contingency Plan to discuss Blue Tongue in the Forest.
- 2024/13824 MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE AND COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEAR RESUME
- | | <u>2024</u> | <u>2023</u> |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Forest Ponies | 4962 | 4932 |
| Forest Cattle | 2624 | 2878 |
| Forest Donkeys | 127 | 129 |
| Forest Pigs | 395 | 423 |
| Forest Sheep | 0 | 0 |
| Total Forest Stock | 8108 | 8362 |
| Common Ponies | 585 | 629 |
| Common Cattle | 411 | 1197 |
| Common Donkeys | 93 | 106 |
| Common Pigs | 62 | 52 |
| Common Sheep | 121 | 163 |
| Total Common Stock | 1272 | 2147 |
| Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Forest | 7713 | 7939 |
| Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Commons | 1089 | 1932 |
| Total Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys | 8802 | 9871 |
| Total Stock – Forest & Commons | 9380 | 10509 |
- Cattle numbers are down on last year due to a number of reasons that are well recognised. Discussions are ongoing.
- 2024/13825 BREACHES OF THE BYELAWS RESUME
- There are no new byelaw breaches.
- 2024/13826 FORESTRY ENGLAND PRESENTMENT TO THE VERDERERS COURT 18/09/2024 – A PROPOSAL FOR PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE CYCLING AND IMPROVING THE NEW FOREST OFF ROAD CYCLE NETWORK RESUME
- The Official Verderer said the Court has not yet received enough information from Forestry England to be able to consider the proposal for the additional cycling routes. This will need to be discussed with the Deputy Surveyor.
- Action OV,
AHP & MG

The Official Verderer said the Court may seek further legal opinion in the new year. Mr Pasmore and Mr Gammon will assist in drafting instructions.

The Official Verderer asked the Assistant Clerk to find the Court minutes relating to the earlier consent for the cycle network.

Action Asst
Clerk

The Court felt it is important to keep the public informed of the progress. A statement will be included in the Announcements and Decisions at January's Open Court.

The Deputy Surveyor and Mrs Joan Clark, Forestry England Land Agent joined the meeting

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS COURTS OF CONCERN TO FORESTRY ENGLAND

2024/13827 FORESTRY ENGLAND PRESENTMENT TO THE VERDERERS COURT 18/09/2024 – A PROPOSAL FOR PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE CYCLING AND IMPROVING THE NEW FOREST OFF ROAD CYCLE NETWORK RESUME

The Official Verderer told the Deputy Surveyor that following advice from Natural England the Court will be seeking a legal opinion on its responsibilities regarding this specific proposal. He continued that the Court cannot make a decision based on the information currently provided by Forestry England and invited the Deputy Surveyor to withdraw the proposal until more information is available.

The Deputy Surveyor said he will take a view on withdrawing the proposal and is concerned about how this will be perceived by cyclists.

Mr Richard Burke, District Recreation Manager/ Recreation Management Strategy - New Forest - South England Forest District joined the meeting.

The proposed cycle routes were viewed and discussed at length highlighting specific areas of concern.

Mr Burke left the meeting

2024/13828 HCC CYCLE ROUTES INCLUDED IN THE LCWHIP RESUME

Mr Chatters said the Matley cycle route is included in the Hampshire County Council LCWHIP document along with another route from Sway to Brockenhurst.

2024/13829 BRIDGES RESUME

The Official Verderer asked the Deputy Surveyor to consider writing to the Court explaining that the Forest bridges, although not classed as horse riding bridges, were structurally sound enough to be ridden over.

Mr Pasmore asked the Deputy Surveyor for a map showing the location of all the Forest bridges. The Deputy Surveyor said he had a document detailing the factual specification of the bridges, including current condition and future plans. The Forest bridges are

Action DS

all being allocated a number to make reporting issues easier. He said a map is being produced and will be circulated in due course.

Mr Deakin said the bridges were discussed at the Staff Liaison Committee. The Court needs to find a way to permit its employees to ride over the bridges.

DE-MINIMUS PROPOSALS

2024/13830 WOODGREEN PARISH COUNCIL SPEED INDICATOR DEVICE DISCHARGE
SLEEVES

DM0215 Woodgreen Parish Council's request for Speed Indicator Device Sleeves is approved.

UTILITY PROPOSALS FALLING OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THE DE-MINIMIS COMMITTEE

2024/13831 RARE REPTILE LICENCE SURVEY REQUEST FOR CONSENT DISCHARGE

National Grid's request for consent to undertake walkover surveys at Turf Hill over the next 2 years – 2025 & 2026 was approved.

CAMPING

2024/13832 CAMPING ADVISORY GROUP RESUME

The Campsite Advisory Group meeting has been delayed. Mr Deakin said the Court had been promised data from reports collated throughout the camping season.

SSSI RESTORATION WORKS

2024/13833 SSSI REPAIR & MAINTENANCE/ENHANCEMENT LIST RESUME

There have been no changes to the list.

2024/13834 ANDERWOOD AND MILLERSFORD PROPOSED RESTORATION WORKS RESUME

Mr Deakin and Mr Stride attended site visits at Anderwood and Millersford. They are not happy with either site and say the proposed works will make the areas wetter and degrade the grazing. They are waiting for a revised proposal to be circulated by Forestry England.

Action DS

ENCROACHMENTS

2024/13835 ENCROACHMENTS LIST RESUME

The list has not changed.

ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION BY FORESTRY ENGLAND

2024/13836 ACTION LIST DISCHARGE

Nothing new has been added to the Action List.

Mr Pasmore will check if the polythene sheeting he reported at North Bentley has been removed. If it is still there, he requests it is added to the Action List. Action AHP

2024/13837 UPDATE FROM THE FORESTRY ENGLAND ESTATES OFFICER VIA MRS JOAN CLARK FORESTRY ENGLAND LAND AGENT DISCHARGE

- East Boldre village hall had their planning granted and plan on starting their refurbishment works in the spring 2025. They are yet to appoint a contractor but when they do Forestry England will meet with them to ensure work has minimal impact on the site.
- Cadnam Cricket Club replacement outfield fence – the fence specification will be circulated after the meeting. The club's contractor is due to start work in February 2025
- A letter has been sent to the homeowner asking for the electric fence at Fritham to be removed.
- Burley Golf course is renewing their management agreement – they have asked for a meeting early next year with Leanne Sargeant, Dave Morris, Estates and a Verderer.
- Network Rail – various works coming up, Forestry England have reported issues with fencing at Sandhole and Setley.

2024/13838 BRAMSHAW GOLF CLUB RESUME

Mrs Clark said she has met with a representative from Bramshaw Golf Club along with local commoner, Mr Gray and Mr Readhead. The golf course is looking to review their existing management plan.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS INVOLVING FORESTRY ENGLAND

2024/13839 FUNDING FOR MULTI USE TRAIL NETWORK DISCHARGE

Mr Chatters commented on an article he read in the Lymington Times stating that Kings House has been granted funding to establish a wider multi-use trail network using pre-existing gravel walking routes. The Deputy Surveyor said FE has not issued a press release. The Official Verderer said NFDC had published information on projects that had been awarded funding from Community Infrastructure Levy, money paid to the Council by developers.

2024/13840 VERGE RESTORATION SITES FOR 2025 RESUME

Prior to the meeting Mr Deakin circulated the Verge Restoration Project request to all Verderers. The item will be resumed at the January Court.

There being no other business involving Forestry England, the Deputy Surveyor and Land Agent left the meeting.

MATTERS ARISING FROM EARLIER IN THE MEETING

- 2024/13841 FORESTRY ENGLAND PRESENTMENT TO THE VERDERERS COURT 18/09/2024 – A PROPOSAL FOR PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE CYCLING AND IMPROVING THE NEW FOREST OFF ROAD CYCLE NETWORK RESUME
- A further brief discussion took place regarding the Courts legal powers. Mr Pasmore and the Clerk are asked to put together a document containing current legislation and legal opinions previously sought on the Courts powers. Action AHP & Clerk

ENCROACHMENTS NOT INVOLVING FORESTRY ENGLAND

- 2024/13842 PROPERTY ON BLACK HILLS ROAD RESUME
- The verge outside a property currently being renovated on Black Hills Road has been destroyed. The builders have put down fine sand all over the verge and are using it for car parking. Mr Deakin asked the Assistant Clerk to provide the contact details of the National Trust. Action JB/RD

MATTERS ARISING

- 2024/13843 MARKING FEES MAXIMUM LIMIT AND REVIEW OF THE BYELAWS RESUME
- The Court agrees it wants the ability to raise the marking fees above the current £35 limit and would prefer not to have to review the byelaws every time it wants to raise the cap.
- The matter of amending the byelaws relating to cows and their calves will be resumed at the January Court.
- 2024/13844 HIT AND RUN REWARD CLAIM RESUME
- Mr Deakin said the Commoner Defence Association have agreed to contribute to the reward recently paid to a witness. He said they have questioned the Courts decision not to approach the NFPB&CS for a contribution as the accident involved a pig.
- A press release will be drafted. Action Asst Clerk
- 2024/13845 TO APPOINT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE CONSULTATIVE PANEL, ILLINGWORTH PANEL AND FOREST FARMING GROUP RESUME
- Mr Pasmore is appointed Verderer Representative to the Consultative Panel.
- Miss Tilbury is appointed Verderer Representative to the Illingworth Panel. Miss Sevier and Mr Gammon remain as back up representatives for the Official Verderer.
- Miss Harrison is appointed Verderer Representative to the Forest Farming Group.

Mr Deakin said representatives were also needed on the VGS Committee, Stallion Committee and the De-minimis Committee. These will be decided via email in the new year.

HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME AND THE VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME

2024/13846 VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME RESUME

The VGS Committee meeting has not been held due to staff sickness. Due to circumstances beyond the Court's control the VGS payment may be late this year. The Court is working hard to try and ensure the payment is made on time.

REPORTS FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

2024/13847 NATIONAL HIGHWAYS A31 FENCE RESUME

Mr Deakin has attended a meeting with National Highways who have abandoned their idea of plastic fencing as they cannot use concrete in the installation. Other ideas including bitumen sleeves are being considered but work is unlikely to commence before September 2025. Much of the fencing the entire length of the road is in poor condition and leaning over. A site visit is to be arranged in the new year.

2024/13848 NEW FOREST DOG GROUP DISCHARGE

Mr Manley said the dog group were still in discussions regarding neospora in the Forest.

2024/13849 ACCESS FORUM DISCHARGE

Miss Sevier said she is still the Vice-Chair of the Access Forum.

OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

2024/13850 FINANCIAL MATTERS INCLUDING THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT RESUME

The Financial Statement was noted.

2024/13851 DEPOSIT ACCOUNTS RESUME

The OV commented that the accounts show a deficit again and an operational loss.

STAFF MATTERS

2024/13852 STAFF LIAISON COMMITTEE MINUTES DISCHARGE

The minutes were noted.

2024/13853 PROVISION OF A DEFIBRILLATOR TO BE AVAILABLE ON DRIFTS DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin advised that due to the costs and practicalities involved a defibrillator is not a viable option at this time.

2024/13854 HR / REMUNERATION COMMITTEE DISCHARGE

Miss Tilbury was appointed to the HR/Remuneration Committee.

2024/13855 AGISTER VEHICLES RESUME

The Official Verderer said the Court has been advised the hire costs of the Agister vehicles will rise in the new year. The Court agreed that Toyota Hilux double cabs were a suitable choice of vehicle. Mr Manley and Mr Stride will investigate suitable purchase and lease hire options on behalf of the Court.

The Assistant Clerk is asked to circulate the vehicle specifications to Mr Manley & Mr Stride. Action Asst Clerk

2024/13856 NEW TECHNOLOGY FOR THE AGISTER TEAM RESUME

The Assistant Clerk confirmed that two iPads have been purchased, they will be trialled by the Head Agister and Agister Rix. Some training may be required.

2024/13857 INADEQUATE PIG RINGING RESUME

Miss Harrison raised her concerns regarding several pigs which are inadequately rung and causing damage to the Commons.

TRAINING & HEALTH & SAFETY

2024/13858 INCIDENT AT GODSHILL ON MONDAY 21st OCTOBER RESUME

Mr Deakin said the Head Agister has been approached by HSE and has answered further questions regarding the free roaming livestock on the New Forest.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

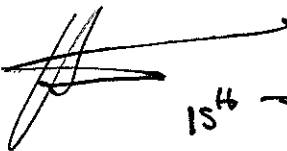
2024/13859 DRIFT REVIEW MEETING RESUME

Mr Deakin said the Drift Review Meeting will be held on Thursday 9th January at 10am in the Verderers Meeting Room.

2024/13860 HR / REMUNERATION COMMITTEE RESUME

It was agreed that a meeting of the HR Committee would take place in January to consider the future operations of the Verderers Office and make recommendations to the Court.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 14:05 hrs


15th January '25