

**Minutes of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 17th January 2024 at 9.30 a.m.
in the Verderers Hall, the King's House, Lyndhurst**

PRESENT	Mr E Heron	Official Verderer
	Mr R Deakin	Elected Verderer & Staff Committee Chairman
	Dr G Ferris	Co-opted Elected Verderer
	Mr A H Pasmore	Senior Elected Verderer
	Mr D Readhead	Elected Verderer
	Mr R Stride	Elected Verderer
	Mr C Chatters	Natural England Appointed Verderer
	Mr M Gammon	Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer
	Miss A Sevier MBE	National Park Appointed Verderer
IN ATTENDANCE	Miss S Westwood	Clerk to the Verderers
	Mr J R Gerrelli	Head Agister
APOLOGIES	Mr R Manley	DEFRA Appointed Verderer

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

2024/13284	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING	RESUME
	The minutes of the last Court, held on Wednesday 20 th December 2023 were approved, and signed by the Official Verderer.	
2024/13285	NEW DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	RESUME
	There were no new declarations of interest.	
2024/13286	CONDITION OF STOCK – REPORT BY THE HEAD AGISTER	RESUME
	The Head Agister said that on the whole, he is happy with the condition of stock. The continual wet weather before Christmas impacted the animals but the more recent dry cold spell has helped greatly. Most cattle are now off the Forest. It is now the middle of the TB testing window and the Agisters are attending tests and marking cattle at the same time. The few cattle remaining on the Forest over winter are being fed on their feeding areas.	
2024/13287	STALLIONS	DISCHARGE
	The stallions at Cadland have recently been moved to a new field but they will need to be moved again before too long. It is hoped the land at Mottisfont will be available shortly.	
2024/13288	TWO YEAR OLD COLTS	DISCHARGE
	The Agisters and commoners are catching 2 year old colts which are still on the Forest but the recent very frosty weather isn't helping because the ground is too hard and slippery to gallop across.	
2024/13289	STRANGLES	DISCHARGE
	There are still a few cases of Strangles on the Forest. Some have been reported recently in the Broadley/Setthorns area. It is thought the number at Warwickslade has decreased. It looks like sporadic cases will continue to arise.	

2024/13290 BLUE TONGUE VIRUS

DISCHARGE

Worryingly, cases of Blue Tongue have been confirmed in Norfolk and Kent. There is obviously a concern that it may reach the New Forest. APHA will take charge and enforce any culls or movement restrictions should the disease arrive in the Forest. Blue Tongue affects sheep, cattle and other ruminants such as deer and goats. Rarely, bluetongue can affect dogs and other carnivores if they eat infected material (such as aborted material and afterbirth). It does not affect people or human food safety, but outbreaks can result in prolonged animal movement and trade restrictions. The VGS Administrator is in touch with APHA and the situation will be monitored.

The Head Agister left the meeting.

2024/13291 MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE AND COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEAR

RESUME

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Forest Ponies	4932	4803
Forest Cattle	2878	2905
Forest Donkeys	129	125
Forest Pigs	423	388
Forest Sheep	0	0
Total Forest Stock	8362	8221
Common Ponies	629	641
Common Cattle	1197	1150
Common Donkeys	106	114
Common Pigs	52	52
Common Sheep	163	162
Total Common Stock	2147	2119
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Forest	7939	7833
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Commons	1932	1905
Total Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys	9871	9738
Total Stock – Forest & Commons	10509	10340

2024/13292 BREACHES OF THE BYELAWS

RESUME

A black filly was found on the Forest. The owner cannot be identified and the pony has been advertised in the local press.

OPEN COURT

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Craig Harrison, Deputy Surveyor
Mr Paul Grugeon, Land Agent

The Head Agister opened the Court with the usual proclamation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS

2024/13293 NEW FOREST FARMING SUBSIDIES

Mrs Bickford-Smith's presentment was noted. The minutes of the HLS Board meetings are published on the HLS website.

2024/13294 EFFECTS OF THE HARVESTLADE STREAM RESTORATION PROJECT

In November's Court Jane Oatley made a presentment expressing concern that earlier stream restoration works have resulted in issues on the Forest close to her house and also in part of her garden.

Stream Restoration works are monitored by the Environment Agency and Natural England. It is thought the exceptionally heavy rain this year may have contributed to changes in the water quality in the pond which is on Jane Oatley's private property. Those members of the Court who know the area, are of the opinion that Forestry England's engineering on the upper reaches of the stream have not contributed to the recent silting of Jane Oatley's pond.

2024/13295 ROAMING ROADS

Mr Tarnoff presentment of his ideas for new legislation covering highways that are open to free roaming livestock are noted. The Court continues to work with partners through the Animal Accident Reduction Group to reduce animal casualties on unfenced Forest roads.

2024/13296 MARKING FEE INCREASE AND CHANGES TO SOME AGISTERS' AREAS

Please will all practising commoners remember that marking fees have increased as from 1st January 2024. If paying by BACS, please contact your Agister first for a reference number and also to confirm the amount you need to pay per head of stock.

At the same time, some changes have been made to three Agisters' Areas. The Agisters affected are Mike Lovell, Michael Maton and Peter Rix. There is a new Agisters' Area map on our website.

ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

2024/13297 THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR 2023

The Agisters attended 95 accidents last year compared with 82 in 2022.

42 animals died and 21 were injured.

24 accidents happened in daylight, 4 at twilight and 67 in the dark.

18 drivers failed to report having been involved in an accident with a commoners' animal.

The total number of animals killed and injured last year was 63 compared with 60 in 2022.

PRESENTMENTS BY THE PUBLIC

2024/13298 ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS & AVERAGE SPEED CAMERAS
Presentment by Mrs Gilly Jones

'Good morning and happy new year to you, Official Verderer, Verderers and members of the public.

I'm Gilly Jones, Commoner and lead on the New Forest Roads Awareness social media page.

We have just heard the numbers of animal accidents from the clerk, and of course anyone who knows me will know that I am disappointed and a bit stropky at the rise in numbers of accidents.

I want to give a bit of a breakdown on the figures you have just heard.

We lost 27 ponies last year compared to 34 in 2022. Cattle, pigs and sheep saw the numbers rising.

Over half of the ponies that died, either killed outright, or having to be destroyed by an agister, died on the B5054, the Dibden to Lymington road.

9 of the 17 cattle incidents happened on the B3078.

We are continuing with Operation Mountie, our multi agency speeding initiative to try and educate drivers on why the speed limit is what it is.

I want to ask the official Verderer to help in pushing for average speed cameras on the Roger Penny Way, as I know that speed is still an issue up there. There are still a number of accidents on that road that are speed related and do not involve livestock. I would ask that we open it up now to include the B3054, as the animal fatalities now back that up. I know that the guidelines state that Average speed cameras are installed when there are a number of human deaths, but we must support a push for the New Forest to be considered as a unique driving environment. I'm not prepared to wait for someone to die.

The most disappointing figure from 2023 was the amount of hit and runs, with 19 not reported at the time of the accident, I would like to thank the Verderers for their ongoing support for the Hit and Run reward scheme. 7 of the 18 hit and runs happened in a 20 day window in November.

I am working with the CDA to relaunch the Real New Forest Business group, and as it stands today over 30 extra companies have joined to help give out the phone numbers on who to call if you are unlucky enough to witness or be involved in an accident. The 'didn't know who to call' should no longer be an excuse, but data from Op Mountie showed that only 26% of people knew who to call.

Education is the way forward and the only way we can do this is by getting more groups involved. Hospitality has its place, not only in staff training but also warning their customers. Garages must get on board too. Giving people the keys to a supercar and letting them test drive them on New Forest Roads must be dealt with. I hope that more companies will get involved with the Business group and we make careless driving as antisocial as drink driving or driving on while on your phone.

The one thing I have witnessed most over the last few weeks is people driving up to livestock, sometimes blaring their horn, and as we know, you can do that to a donkey, it won't move, it will just give you a look. The vehicle is so close, it cannot manoeuvre around the animal.

But to end of the positive, as I always say to people to complained to me, and yes, there many, for every careless driver you see, remember the hundreds you ignore who are driving safely around our livestock.'

2024/13299 CONFLICTS WITH COMMONERS' ANIMALS WITHIN THE NEW FOREST
Presentment by John Ward, Chairman, Friends of the New Forest (NFA)

'I am speaking on behalf of the Friends of the New Forest in response to the Presentment made at your meeting in November by Andrew Parry-Norton, the chairman of the New Forest Commoners Defence Association.

There is no doubt that the number of visitors and recreational activity within the Forest continues to increase and with it comes an increased risk of incidents involving commoners' stock. This may be harm to animals by, for example, uncontrolled dogs, or to visitors with the sad occurrence of a member of the public being injured.

We fully support the commoners' concerns and the fact that seasonal fencing of campsites has been raised shows the depth of their concerns but, we do not support the seasonal closure of campsites. Although campsites may be the cause of a concentration of a particular group of visitors this would not address what is a forest wide issue of potential conflict. Further changing the very nature of an open Forest and its special qualities in order to mitigate the impact of recreation is not the way forward to ensure the long term protection of the New Forest landscape together with its historic system of grazing by free ranging animals.

We believe that Forestry England and Camping in the New Forest have a responsibility for the risk and can do more to address these concerns generally through education, monitoring, and reporting, and specifically on campsites by giving prominence to the issue and risks both in information supplied at the time of campsite places being booked and on the campsites themselves as visitors arrive. The, long-promised, relocation of at least some campsites would be the most effective solution.

We also fully understand that with increasing incidents commoners do need the reassurance of there being sufficient measures in place to mitigate against any financial claims that may arise from a conflict between their lawfully depastured stock and visitors. New Forest campsites are operated as a commercial concern, but Commoners receive no direct financial gain. I cannot claim any expertise in the subject of insurance, but I believe that if Forestry England and Camping in the New Forest were to work together with the Verderers and Commoners Defence Association looking for solutions, not problems, it should be possible to provide Commoners with financial indemnity against the costs of such claims.'

2024/13300 ILLEGAL ENCROACHMENT AT FOREST GLADE HOUSE, BARTLEY
Presented by Mr Wayne Anthony Noke of Forest Glade House, Brockishill Road, Bartley

'My name is Wayne Anthony Noke, and I have lived in the New Forest for over 30 years, which I appreciate for some is not a long time! I am making this statement on behalf of me and my wife, Natalie Janet Noke. This matter concerns an extension we have recently built on to a cottage that we own.

You will hopefully already have received some background information giving more detail about our circumstance. We sent this in on Monday.

We purchased Forest Glade House in August 2021. The House, together with other land and buildings is registered at HM Land Registry with title number HP326865. Included in the document pack.

Approximately 25m to the side of the House is a cottage, known as Forest Cottage ("the Cottage"). There are no features on the ground which obstruct our access to the Cottage meaning I can walk freely across any part of the garden to the front of the Cottage. I understand that this has always been the case.

On the boundary of the Cottage is a post and rail fence. The land in between the fence and the Cottage is only accessible from our property. Immediately to the east of the fence is a gravelled area which we understand has been used historically by owners of the House and Cottage to park cars.

Late 2022 we made the decision to apply for extension to the Cottage to enable ground floor living for my father. We applied for planning permission on 20 December 2022. Planning permission was granted on 13 July 2023 and works commenced on the extension late summer.

I applied for planning permission on the belief that I had ownership of the land having had no indication otherwise. I would not have applied for planning permission if I thought that the land did not belong to me.

However, on 29 September 2023 we received a letter from Forestry England informing us that the extension we were building was partly on Crown land. With their letter Forestry England provided me with a copy of a licence (Licence 208) by which land around the Cottage owned by Forestry England had purportedly been licensed to the former owners of the House and Cottage. This was the first time that we had had sight of Licence 208 and the start of what we understand could potentially be a lengthy and costly dispute. We did request a meeting with the officer to discuss the matter further but this was rejected.

Licence 208 is dated 6 July 1983 for a period of 60 years. The name of to the original holder of the licence is included and of the property's three subsequent owners appear at page 4 of Licence 208. Our names do not appear on the Licence.

The solicitor acted in our purchase of the property has confirmed that he was not aware of Licence 208 (there was no entry on the registered title).

The sellers of the property, Mr and Mrs Hardie, did not disclose the existence of Licence 208 during our purchase and they have since confirmed to us that they had no knowledge of Licence 208. It should be noted that during our purchase we were in correspondence with Forestry England in respect of Licence 105 (relating a right of way) and at no time did they mention Licence 208 to us, or our solicitor. Licence 105 was extended for a further 60 years.

During discussions relating to Licence 105 we were advised by email that "the licence is in a from required to comply with s18 of the New Forest Act 1949. We cannot remove or alter Clause 11. I am not aware of any occasion on which we have terminated a licence. We would only terminate a licence for operational reasons and would always offer a suitable alternative access."

From the above we would assume that when Licence 208 is due to be renewed in March 2043 it would automatically be granted for a further 60 years.

We are therefore left in a situation whereby there is a small area of forestry land (which we previously believed to be ours) which is inaccessible to Commoner or the public. The Forestry Commission's solicitors have written to us to demand that we take down the extension failing which legal proceedings will be taken against us.

We regard ourselves as innocent parties in all of this and want to try and resolve the matter amicably for the benefit of all parties and without the need for legal proceedings. As such we suggest the solution set out below and request that you support us in this matter.

We have previously suggested to Forestry England that we would be willing to agree to a land swap. We understand that any land swap would require the consent of the Verderers.

In exchange for the land, we would be prepared to offer part of the land identified. This would benefit all parties given that the current land cannot be accessed by the public. The land we are proposing to offer would be open and accessible to Commoners and the public. The land around the cottage is inaccessible to the Commoners and the public and therefore of no benefit to them. We very much see the proposed land swap as being a gain on behalf of Forestry England rather than a loss.

I have written to the MP for the New Forest East, the Rt Hon Dr Julian Lewis. Dr Lewis is supportive of this venture and is willing to assist us in obtaining ministerial approval for our proposed solution.

We now therefore ask that the Verderers support our request for a land swap as detailed above. Such a consent would allow us to move forward to agreeing the particulars of such a swap with Forestry England.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let me know if you have any questions.'

2024/13301 ICE CREAM VAN AT BOLTONS BENCH
Presentment by Mr Tim Laine

'I am Tim Laine, and together with my son, own Forest Glade Ice Cream in Lyndhurst.

Two years ago the Verderers granted a licence for an ice cream van to trade from the car park at Bolton Bench. I am requesting that this is not granted again for the following reasons:-

The sale of "refreshments" at the Bolton Bench location adversely affects the footfall into the village, and consequently the turnover of establishments in our village is significantly reduced.

This van pays no rates to the local council, doesn't belong to the local Chamber of Commerce and makes no contribution to the local events and the "community" of Lyndhurst.

The van also has its engine running continuously, which is not good for air quality, and Lyndhurst already has a very poor record for air pollution.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this.'

2024/13302 ICE CREAM VAN AT BOLTONS BENCH
Presentment by Hilary Brand, District Councillor for the Lyndhurst & Minstead Ward

Councillor Brand supported Mr Laine's presentment. She informed the Court that 4 businesses have closed in Lyndhurst in the past few months. She said anything that takes people away from the village damages the high street businesses which run various village events for the benefit of residents.

The Head Agister closed the Court**IN COMMITTEE (in the Library)****CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS**

2024/13303 ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS & AVERAGE SPEED CAMERAS RESUME
Presentment by Mrs Gilly Jones

The Official Verderer said that he is still seeking clarification from the Department of Transport regarding the status of their Circular 1/2007, as that is the cornerstone of Hampshire Constabulary's Joint Operations Unit for Roads Policing's (JOU) objection to the introduction of Average Speed Cameras. The constabulary's other comment, that third-party funding is not acceptable, holds little weight given the funding accepted by the Constabulary over a number of years in support of additional deployments of the mobile speed camera van within the Forest. He is expecting confirmation that local police and highway authorities should be adapting their guidance in light of local circumstances.

The Court agreed that an invitation to the Chief Constable and Head of Roads Policing to meet with the Court, should be repeated, in the hope that this time, they will attend. Action OV

2024/13304 CONFLICTS WITH COMMONERS' ANIMALS WITHIN THE NEW FOREST RESUME
Presentment by John Ward, Chairman, Friends of the New Forest (NFA)

It is agreed that a greater effort must be made to reduce the risk of conflict between animals and people in the Forest. A great deal of discussion has and continues to take place, within the organisations and agencies with responsibilities for the management of the Forest, but the problems persist. Mr Grugeon suggested a way forward might be for key people from Camping in the New Forest, FE and the other organisations to get together to try to find an effective way forward. Greater public education is essential. Mr Deakin said he wants to see a formal strategy put in place before the start of the next camping season. The risk to people, commoners and the stock cannot remain at the current level. The NFNPA needs to be included as well in order to assist with effective communication. It is felt FE should take the lead as the largest land manager within the perambulation. The DS repeated FE's view from last month which he will confirm in his response to the OV's letter. Action DS

Mr Chatters said Camping in the New Forest's advisory committee is due to meet on 25th January but as yet there is no agenda. The DS promised to chase that up.

2024/13305 ILLEGAL ENCROACHMENT AT FOREST GLADE HOUSE, BARTLEY RESUME
Presentment by Mr Wayne Anthony Noke of Forest Glade House, Brockishill Road, Bartley

It was agreed that it is not for the Court to decide the way forward to resolve this dispute. A land swap will be considered should FE bring forward a proposal that is supported by all landowners concerned.

However, it will have to be on a value basis not area for area. The Court has generally only agreed land swaps in exceptional circumstance and where such a swap is in the public, rather than merely a private interest.

2024/13306 ICE CREAM VAN AT BOLTONS BENCH DISCHARGE
Presentment by Mr Tim Laine and supporting presentment by Cllr Hilary Brand

It is FE which grants licences for ice cream concessions, not the Verderers. To date, a submission from FE in this respect has not been received by the Court.

In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding with FE, the Verderers may not unreasonably withhold their consent for ice cream sales. Matters they consider when agreeing suitable locations include the impact on livestock, risk of increased littering and the effect on the local amenity.

MATTERS ARISING

2024/13307 SHRIKE COTTAGE (HOLMSLEY LODGE) ACCESS TRACK DISCHARGE

The access track belongs to HCC and forms part of the public highway.

UTILITY PROPOSALS

2024/13308 DE-MINIMIS-CONSENTS - UTILITY PROPOSALS AGREED BY THE DE-MINIMIS COMMITTEE DISCHARGE

DM0181 Oct-23 Openreach 1 Pole Renewal on Manor Waste, 1 on private land North Hollow Toms Lane Ringwood

DM0182 Nov-23 FE Matley Cottage, Beaulieu Road, Lyndhurst Minimal improvement/repair to existing tarmac access

DM0183 Nov-23 Keir for SW Water Buefre Barn, Bucklers Hard, Beaulieu, New water main connection

DM0184 Nov-23 Churchill Retirement Plc Mallards, Bucklers Hard, Beaulieu New water connection (under 10m)

DM0185 Nov-23 Openreach New 5m duct to join up with developer laid duct on private property Newsites project Lyndhurst LPE/00A Woodlands, Pikes Hill, Lyndhurst, Hants SO43 7BA

DM0186 Nov-23 Openreach Remove 4 redundant junction boxes -Burley - Clay Hill next to the Footpath between Bisterne Close and A35, Burley

DM0187 Dec-23 Keir for SW Water New water connection 10m. Meter on private property - Fairweathers Nursery, Hill Top, Beaulieu

CAMPSITES

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| 2024/13309 | CAMPSITE FENCES | RESUME |
| | As mentioned earlier in the meeting, a response from the DS to the OV's letter is awaited. | Action DS |

SSSI RESTORATION WORKS

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| 2024/13310 | THE REPAIR & MAINTENANCE/ENHANCEMENT LIST | RESUME |
| | There are no changes to the list. | |
| 2024/13311 | FURZEY LODGE MIRE RESTORATION | DISCHARGE |
| | The DS said it will take some time to work up proposals and it was, therefore, agreed to discharge this item from the agenda for the time being. | |

ENCROACHMENTS

- | | | |
|------------|--|-----------|
| 2024/13312 | ENCROACHMENTS LIST | RESUME |
| | There were no new encroachments to add to the list. | |
| 2024/13313 | POSSIBLE ENCROACHMENT AT TURF CROFT/COMMON MOOR | DISCHARGE |
| | FE staff visited the location. The precise boundary between the private land and the Crown land is unclear. The local Keeper is not concerned. Forest residents with boundaries abutting the Crown lands should contact FE before clearing their ditches. What should happen to spoil from a cleared ditch entirely depends on the circumstances and it is not possible to have any hard and fast rules. | |

ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION BY FORESTRY ENGLAND

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|------------|---------------------|-----------|
| 2024/13314 | ACTION LIST | DISCHARGE |
| | The list was noted. | |

ANY OTHER BUSINESS INVOLVING FORESTRY ENGLAND

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|------------|--|-----------|
| 2024/13315 | REPLACEMENT TREE ON WYCH GREEN, BRAMSHAW | DISCHARGE |
| | The replacement tree has been planted in a more suitable location. The guard is smaller in footprint and higher. | |
| 2024/13316 | WINDBLOWN TREE IN PITTS WOOD | DISCHARGE |
| | Miss Sevier said that a couple of weeks ago she found a tree blocking the track on what she described as 'the big loop'. Mr Stride said he will check to see if it has been removed. | Action RS |

2024/13317	INCLOSURE FENCING PLAN	DISCHARGE
	Mr Deakin reported that together with the Head Agister he has met with Mike Pittock (FE). Some concerns raised have been satisfactorily addressed. However, the problem remains that it will be hard for the Court to pay to maintain all the fencing that is no longer required by FE for timber production purposes, but is essential for stock management purposes. The discussions will continue.	Action RD/FE
2024/13318	STOCK MANAGEMENT SIGNS	DISCHARGE
	Mr Deakin said the CDA has approximately 30 large yellow signs warning the public to stay away from the livestock, that have never been deployed. The CDA wishes to discuss the deployment of the signs which are considered to be very helpful in educating the public and helping to reduce conflicts. Miss Sevier agreed, commenting that she believes they encourage the public to keep dogs under control. The DS said that Richard Burke, FE's Recreation Management Strategy Programme Manager, will liaise with the CDA signage representative.	Action CDA/FE(RB)
2024/13319	GROUND NESTING BIRD SIGNS	DISCHARGE
	Leading on from the last item, Dr Ferris asked if the posts on which the ground nesting birds warning signs were displayed have been left up for future use, or have they remained in situ only because no-one has taken them away? The DS said he will check and appropriate action will be taken. It was suggested by Mr Gammon that the posts may be useful for displaying No Fungi Picking signs.	Action DS
2024/13320	A337 FENCE OPPOSITE THE BLOODHOUND KENNELS	DISCHARGE
	Mr Pasmore reported a tree across the fence opposite the hunt kennels. The Clerk will report it to HCC.	Action Clerk
2024/13321	FOREST FARMING GROUP AND PA2 FUNDING	RESUME
	The OV reported that the application for PA2 funding has been successful. However, the VAT cannot be reclaimed as the Verderers business falls outside the scope of the VAT regulations. The FFG meets on 26 th January when the issue will be discussed.	Action OV

The Deputy Surveyor and the Land Agent left the meeting

ENCROACHMENTS NOT INVOLVING FORESTRY ENGLAND

2024/13322	SHOBLEY/FOREST OAKS	DISCHARGE
	Whilst the question of legal costs incurred by the claimants and the Court remain outstanding, Natural England has provided an update on the resolution it has reached with the defendant, as follows:-	Action OV

Area of land bordering Forest Oaks on Shobley Common, New Forest SSSI unit 240

A summary of the actions undertaken or to be undertaken by the landowner to restore damage caused to unit 240 of the New Forest

SSSI, as agreed between the landowner and NE. These actions are to be completed within 3 months of the undertaking acceptance date of 01/12/23.

The feeding station and water trough have been removed and the dumping and burning of waste has ceased.

The fence will be removed by unscrewing the rails from the posts. The posts will be pulled out by hand as they are not cemented into the ground. The holes will be filled in using soil from the area by hand. All items will then be removed from the site. Access will be made through a gate directly onto the land from the house boundary. Any waste debris will be carefully removed.

The apple trees will be removed by hand and the protective fence removed, again by hand.

The works will take place within 3 months of permission being given. The site will be left to recover naturally but any growth of weed species such as creeping thistle, spear thistle and ragwort will be monitored and removed by hand for a period of 3 years.

Forestry England left the meeting

MATTERS ARISING

2024/13323 LARGE EVENTS AND CATERING AT EVENTS DISCHARGE

The Court repeated its view that the HRA which is used to decide whether permission should be granted for these events, needs to be scrutinised to see whether its remit is considered wide enough. The Clerk suggested that members of the Court should monitor these events to gain evidence of the problems they cause.

2024/13324 STALLION GRAZING RESUME

Mr Deakin reported that progress at Mottisfont is slower than originally expected. Water is still not available on the land. It is thought the fencing may have been completed but an inspection is required. Action RD

HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME & THE VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME

2024/13325 VGS COMMITTEE RESUME

An extraordinary meeting of the VGS committee has been convened for Wednesday 28th February to discuss and decide whether two withheld payments should be paid. The OV said that as he is part of the appeal process, he will abstain when decisions are made.

2024/13326 BOVINE TB CERTIFICATION DISCHARGE

APHA expects the Court to hold the certificates which prove that Forest cattle herds have been TB tested. If it is agreed that the cattle supplement should be paid again this year, it will not be paid until herd certificates have been received.

REPORTS FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

- 2024/13327 CAMPING IN THE NEW FOREST ADVISORY GROUP RESUME
- Mr Chatters said if anyone has anything they would like raised at the next meeting 25th January to please let him know asap. Action All
- 2024/13328 VERDERERS' REPRESENTATION ON SUB-COMMITTEES AND EXTERNAL WORKING GROUPS DISCHARGE
- The Court agreed the appointment of the OV as its representative on the Forest Farming Group with Dr Graham Ferris as his Deputy.

STAFF MATTERS

- 2024/13329 STAFF COMMITTEE RESUME
- The minutes of the last Staff Committee meeting had been circulated.
- Mr Chatters commented that he finds the Staff Committee Minutes very useful in understanding what is happening on the Forest, particularly with the management of the commoners' animals.
- Mr Deakin commented that as respects two year old colts, there is a penalty under the VGS (£400) if a commoner fails to ensure a 2 year old colt is removed from the Forest.

OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

- 2024/13330 FINANCIAL STATEMENT RESUME
- The Financial Statement was noted.
- The OV and Clerk are reviewing the Court's insurances to ensure that the cover provided is appropriate and not excessive. Action OV/Clerk

TRAINING & HEALTH & SAFETY

- 2024/13331 IT SECURITY TRAINING RESUME
- Mr Deakin referred to his recent difficulties when his personal email account was hacked. The knock-on effect was that in order to safeguard the Court's IT security, all @verderers email address passwords would be changed and this has been completed successfully. Mr Deakin suggested some training for Verderers and staff may be useful to help avoid people becoming victims of scams. It was agreed this would be helpful. Action OV/Clerk
- 2024/13332 EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME DISCHARGE
- It was agreed this should be introduced. The cost is £464.00 per annum with a minimum contract period of 24 months. Action OV

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2024/13333 LOCAL NATURE PARTNERSHIP AND THE RIGHT TO ROAM RESUME

Mr Chatters said he feels that the question of whether public access in the New Forest is governed by CROW or the Law of Property Act needs to be addressed, as it affects the rights and responsibilities of anyone who uses the Forest. Natural England is the Access Authority under CROW. Mr Chatters will work with Mr Pasmore and others to arrange a meeting with the appropriate people in NE.

Action
CC/AHP


2024/13334 ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS IN FEBRUARY DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin asked for announcements in the February Court to include messages regarding livestock management, specifically that colt hunting is a year round activity, and also some explanation as to how the cattle are managed.

Action
OV/RD/Clerk

It was agreed that coms leads in the various Forest organisations should be encouraged to assist with disseminating messages.

The meeting ended at 12:52 hrs



21st February 2024