



*Verderers of the New Forest
Verderers' Grazing Scheme
The King's House
Lyndhurst
Hampshire
SO43 7NH*

*Official Verderer
Edward Heron*

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**MINUTES OF THE VERDERERS' GRAZING SCHEME MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD
ON 28th February 2024**

Present:

Mr Edward Heron (OV)	- Official Verderer
Mr R Deakin (RD)	- Elected Verderer
Mr Dave Readhead (DR)	- Elected Verderer
Mr Clive Chatters (CC)	- Natural England Appointed Verderer
Mr Mark Gammon (MG)	- Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer
Mrs T Woodley (TW)	- VGS Administrator

Item	Item	Action
1. Apologies	None	
2. Declarations of interest	RD & DR declared membership of the VGS. RD & DR are members of the New Forest Livestock Society. RD & DR are members of the New Forest Stallion Syndicate RD & DR are members of the New Forest Pony Breeders and Cattle Society. RD & DR are committee member of the CDA CC is a committee member of HIWWT OV declared an interest as member of HCC	
3. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising	Minutes of the last VGS meeting were approved – TW to sign and upload to website	Action TW
4. Cattle Supplement 2023	The Committee agreed to pay the additional £200,000 cattle supplement based on 2023 VGS figures. TW to arrange payment to 87 unique herd numbers upon receipt of the requested TB52 forms from each herd as requested by APHA as part of the Due diligence checks carried out for the Forest TB Plan. 2023 saw an increase of 12 additional herds joining the Forest VGS compared to 2022 – 2 herds did not turn out in 2023.	
5. Commons Contributions 2024	The contribution for 2024-25 of £45,000 has been received from the National Trust as agreed. TW to send requests to HCC, and Wellow Parish Council for the same contribution as last year based on £32.68 per hectare. TW to write to the National Trust and ask if they are able to contribute to the	Action TW Action TW

	<p>Verderers Grazing Scheme post 24/25.</p> <p>In 2023 the Commons Payment rate per livestock unit equated to £76.43.</p>	
6. Stallion Grazing, Futurity and Bloodlines	<p>The new grazing at Mottisfont is nearly ready to move to and a draft agreement has been received from the National Trust. This agreement will be on a five year farm assured tenancy at a cost of £7,600 per annum. There is enough room at Mottisfont to facilitate the Stallions and the Futurity Colts.</p> <p>The current agreement with Cadland is due to expire at the end of March – The committee agreed that it would be beneficial and withing the allocated project budgets to retain Cadland for either the Futurity Colts or a new Bloodline Scheme.</p> <p>TW paid 3 stallion owners £95.94 each as a contribution as they are not members of the Verderers Grazing Scheme.</p>	
7. Sponsorship of Cattle Classes	<p>The Committee considered if sponsoring cattle classes at the Annual Breed Show could be a way of incentivising forest type cattle – the committee felt this was not appropriate at this time due to the very small numbers entering these classes.</p>	
8. 2024 VGS Annual Grants	<p>The Committee studied the 2024 budgets for the VGS Annual Grants and approved the projected costs.</p> <p>The new compensation for death on the Forest (Fallen Stock) support for assistance towards disposal costs has been adopted well with 16 claims so far since last Autumn. The Committee discussed raising the amount of assistance but it was decided to leave at the current rate whilst it becomes more publicised and review next year. TW raised the need to include the victims of Hit and Run fatalities in this scheme as currently they do not receive the assistance. The Committee agreed that Hit and Run casualties could claim the £100 but would need to reimburse if a driver came forward subsequently. TW to write this into the application form conditions.</p> <p>The other change to the VGS implemented in 2023 was to encourage pig owners to turn out for Pannage by increasing the standard 0.3 LU for pigs to 0.6 LU for the 1st 20 pigs marked and 0.3 LU for any additional pigs marked. This saw the number of commoners turning out pigs increase to 35.</p>	Action TW
9. VGS Rule Violations 2023-24	<p>When the Verderers Grazing Scheme payments were made at the end of December 2 holdings had their payments held pending further investigation into VGS rule violations.</p> <p>15/187/0060 Arters Lawn – holding a total of £7675.20</p> <p>The committee heard that following the withholding of the 2022 cattle supplement due to failure to remove stock as requested the commoner has continued to be in breach of VGS rules 1.3 – 1.6 – 1.8 – 1.9 – 1.10 – 5.1 – 6.1 – 6.2 – 6.3 – 6.4 – 11.4 by having stock at large on the Forest unmarked and not TB tested – reported as “lost at Forest” but very visibly there. Small calves left unaccompanied on forest whilst their mothers have been taken</p>	

	<p>in. Poor Animals requested by the Agister to be removed not removed and poor welfare standards at his holding resulting in visits from Trading Standards and APHA vets – Decision to not pay 2023 Grazing payments or the 2023 cattle supplement put on hold pending further investigations.</p> <p>15/186/0102 Pondhead Farm – holding a total of £9555.62 The committee heard that following the withholding of the 2022 cattle supplement due to failing to remove poor cattle when requested. The committee were supplied with a letter from the commoner in regard to this rule violation – the decision was upheld.</p> <p>The commoners have now been in breach of the VGS rules 5.1- 11.14 The movement of 53 cattle to a high-risk TB area was not recorded and only after the location of these animals was reported to the Verderers was a movement record created two months later after APHA had been alerted to the violation. The consequence of these animals being returned to the Forest herd without either being pre movement tested or isolated for 60 days and retested would compromise the TB Status of the Forest herd. The committee voted to uphold the non- payment of the 2023 Grazing payments and the 2023 Cattle Supplement. TW to write to commoner with the decision.</p> <p>RD to write to HCC and cc APHA, RPA and OV setting out the case and noting the disappointment that Trading Standards have not taken either of these cases further which would make our decision to withhold these payments as an obvious breach in the VGS terms and conditions.</p>	<p>Action TW</p> <p>Action RD</p>
10. AOB	<p>Reports from Agisters of a number of cattle belonging to one commoner likely to be remaining on the Forest after the end of the TB window (29th Feb). The Agisters will supply details of the animals left after the 1st March and the VGS Committee will discuss at June’s meeting – TW to withhold paying the commoner their Cattle Supplement pending the committee’s decision at the June meeting. TW to advise the Commoner</p>	<p>Action TW</p>
11. Dates for Next Meetings	<p>Wed June 12th 2024 2pm – Verderers Office Wed Nov 13th 2pm 2024 – Verderers Office</p>	
	<p>Meeting closed 15.30</p>	

T Woodley
VGS Administrator



