

Common Ponies	389	606
Common Cattle	740	696
Common Donkeys	35	103
Common Pigs	18	14
Common Sheep	15	162
Total Common Stock	1197	1581
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Forest	5399	6510
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Commons	1164	1405
Total Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys	6563	7915
Total Stock – Forest & Commons	6596	8091

2023/12813 BREACHES OF THE BYELAWS

RESUME

Currently one commoner has received a verbal and written warning regarding seven cattle on the Forest which are in poor condition and one which has not been marked or paid for in this marking fee year.

Action
Agisters / RD

A second commoning family has also received a verbal and written warning about a number of their cattle which have not been marked or paid for. The condition of some of their animals is also below the Verderers' standard.

These commoners will receive formal warnings of prosecution in the Magistrates Court for breaches of the Verderers' Bylaws if they do not remove their animals from the Forest as instructed. It is hoped this will not be necessary. Mr Gammon offered to consider the evidence so far collected if it appears prosecution is likely to be necessary.

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

2023/12814 BRAMBLES

In our March Court, Mrs Gray repeated her plea for more bramble clearance to be undertaken, particularly on Stoney Cross. She said if there were fewer brambles, she feels the public would be more inclined to remain on Stoney Cross to play and enjoy the Forest rather than wandering into the depths of the Forest

In response, the Deputy Surveyor said Some bramble clearance was undertaken on Stoney Cross this year. It is an ongoing issue which FE does its best to tackle with limited resources.

2023/12815 SUCCESSFUL RTA PROSECUTION

Oliver William Heywood of Woodgreen was driving his vehicle along Roger Penny Way just before 8.50pm on Saturday 7 August 2021, when he struck a pony.

Appearing at Southampton Magistrates Court on 6th April after being summonsed for driving without due care and attention, Heywood was disqualified from driving for six months, handed a £1,600 fine and ordered to pay court costs and a victim surcharge.

Our thanks go to Hampshire Constabulary's PC Dan Channer, the officer who investigated this case.

2023/12816 APPOINTMENT OF MY SUCCESSOR

I regret that I am unable to announce today the identity of my successor as Official Verderer.

I can say that there has been a formal selection process and the selection panel has made a recommendation.

However, the post of Official Verderer is a statutory appointment made by His Majesty the King by Warrant under Sign Manual, which means that His Majesty is required to sign an actual paper document to make the appointment. A Defra Minister has to endorse the recommendation of the Panel, but that has been delayed by the Easter Recess. That recommendation is then formally submitted to the Prime Minister's Appointments Unit in No10 and the Prime Minister then submits the appointment recommendation to His Majesty the King.

Once this process is concluded the appointment will be formally announced on .gov.uk and can be announced by the Verderers.

2023/12817 MY PARTING SHOTS

Those of you familiar with the system of announcements and decisions will know that what I say is approved in advance by the Court. On this occasion, my last open Court as Official Verderer, what I have to say by way of parting shots are my own words and mine alone.

I am conscious that six years is nothing more than a blink of the eye in the long history of the Forest. It would be presumptuous to think that the last six years have left any lasting mark on that history

However, I do think it is worth having what I hope you will agree is an honest look back at those six years to try and see what has gone well and what has gone less well.

When I set out on this task six years ago I had to decide what target to set myself. In his book '35 years in the New Forest' perhaps the most famous Deputy Surveyor of all, Gerald Lascelles, wrote of one aspect of the 1877 Act:

"A new and nondescript member of the court was added, who was called the Official Verderer".

More recently the senior elected Verderer wrote in Forest Notes that many Official Verderers have been less than indifferent. I therefore set myself a target of being rated as slightly better than less than indifferent!

I have of course many thankyou's to say. In alphabetical order I start with the Agisters. Look at them sitting there as if butter would not melt in their mouths! You will know as well as I do that what they do is by any standards remarkable and their dedication and knowledge of the Forest and its stock is nothing less than awe inspiring. They deserve all our thanks. I include in those thanks Andrew Naphine but I am delighted that we have brought the average age down with the appointment of Michael Maton.

It would not be possible this morning to address the many issues and challenges that the Court has dealt with over the past six years and so I therefore propose to comment only on some of the main ones.

I believe that the Verderers' Higher Level Stewardship scheme has continued to deliver great benefits for the Forest that includes, but certainly is not limited to, support for commoning. Our programme of terrestrial restoration and lawn restoration is particularly worthy of note. Like many worthwhile exercises once the work has been done it is easy to forget what was there before.

The rollover of the HLS for up to 5 years gives the ability to plan for the future whilst exploring other options. However, securing future funding for the Forest has been an uphill task. As the nature of Government schemes is at last becoming clearer, I think that there are grounds for optimism that either Countryside Stewardship Plus or a Landscape Recovery scheme might provide stable and long term funding.

Pending the outcome of the work of the Freshwater and Wetland Restoration Forum set up by the previous Deputy Surveyor Bruce Rothnie, the work of wetland restoration has largely paused. The importance of restoring and preserving the wetlands of the Forest becomes ever more important and that importance is I believe becoming better appreciated and better understood. I find restorations such as Wootton extremely attractive in landscape terms and I do not doubt their long term ecological importance. However, the work of the FWRF is close to concluding and will chart a way forward.

Tackling the pressure of recreation has been a daunting and uphill task. In truth notwithstanding a lot of work by many not enough has been achieved but I do see grounds for some optimism going forward. The introduction this summer of Public Space Protection Orders in relation to the lighting of fires and feeding and petting of stock will I hope prove something of a new dawn in spelling out to all users of the Forest that certain behaviours are both damaging and unacceptable. In relation to this matter, I would like to pay tribute to the work of the National Park Authority and Forestry England who worked very closely and successfully with the Verderers to persuade a sometimes reluctant District Council of the need for these orders. It was a fine example of three of the key organisations truly working in partnership.

Much more remains to be done. Control of verge parking and rationalisation of the car parking provision is long overdue tied in with a review of the cycle network something which requires not only the attention of the Verderers but also the cycling community, who must stand up for responsible cycling, and Forestry England who must be prepared to enforce their bylaws. Finally in this crowded world I hope that people will learn to appreciate the vital benefits to nature and wildlife of the more tranquil areas of the Forest which deserve to be left in peace.

Forestry England play a crucial role in the management of the Crown Lands. Theirs is at times not an easy task. I have valued my constructive working relationship with both Deputy Surveyors and all their staff and where there has been disagreement it has been without rancour. My thanks to them all.

It is right that I should mention briefly the impact of the pandemic. The Court adapted quickly to the new world of zoom including presentments made by email but it was a huge relief to all of us to return to a more traditional and personal way of working. In particular, our open Courts continue to provide an immensely valuable outlet for matters relating to the Forest and I am grateful to all of you who have attended them whether or not you have made presentments as your attendance and input underlines that what happens here is of vital importance in this crucible of democracy.

The office staff have worked with patience, skill and humour. I am greatly indebted to Sue, Justine and Tina for all that they have done over the last 6 years. They have educated me, supported me and without them the task would have been quite simply impossible. Between them they bring a huge range of skills and knowledge to the work of the Verderers. Thank you for putting up with me.

The range of the work of the Court is, as our Minutes record, vast. On my alphabetical journey of thankyou's I therefore come to V. The amount of time put in by all those who have served on the Court in my six years is enormous and I marvel at the dedication and commitment of you all. Each Verderer brings different skills and knowledge to our workings and whilst we have by no means agreed on everything, we all agree that we are trying to do our best for the Forest. We have continued to take an independent line and the fact that on occasion we annoy some with our decisions leads me to believe that the Court retains that vital degree of independence and willingness to speak up for what is best for the Forest.

I am honoured to have been appointed to this role by Her late Majesty and to have served both the Crown and the Forest. It has of course been a particular pleasure for me to have followed in my father's footsteps and I have been touched by how many of you remember him galloping across the Forest on his thoroughbred heedless of any risks.

In conclusion I wish the Court and my successor in particular the very best. There is a strong team of Verderers ably supported who will continue I know to preserve and protect commoning - that activity on which the health and future of the Forest depends.

Thank you for listening to me this morning.
Official Verderer

ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

2023/12818 THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR MARCH 2023

The Agisters attended 1 accident in March compared with 8 in March last year.

1 cow was injured.

The accident happened in the dark.

The total number of animals killed and injured in the year to date is 10, compared with 14 in the same period last year.

PRESENTMENT BY THE DEPUTY SURVEYOR

2023/12819 THANK YOU TO THE DEPARTING OFFICIAL VERDERER

I would like to take this opportunity to recognise and thank the Official Verderer, Lord Manners, for the contribution he has made to enhancing and protecting the New Forest landscape and its commoning community during his tenure. There isn't really sufficient time here to highlight the vast range of projects and issues he has overseen during his time as Official Verderer, so I will limit myself to highlighting just a few key areas.

His tenure has been marked by a consistent understanding of the importance of working in partnership with other forest organisations - by working to secure a shared understanding of the issues facing the Forest, being open to a range of views, and commitment to finding workable solutions to the issues faced.

The Official Verderer's stewardship of the HLS scheme over his tenure has helped deliver major changes and improvements to New Forest landscape and the future of the communities that support it. It is one of the largest environmental improvement schemes in England, delivering long lasting benefits - by restoring habitats, supporting commoning practices, protecting verges, restoring wetlands, educating young people and much, much more.

Upon taking up the post in 2017 I am sure he would not have predicted the global pandemic, requiring a lockdown of local communities and the impact of public use of green spaces when lockdowns were eased. I know from talking to colleagues that the Official Verderer's contribution during this time was critical. Those unique circumstances called for a new level of collaboration amongst Forest organisations and a willingness to try different approaches. As a key member of the New Forest Action Plan he made a major contribution to reducing the negative impact on the Forest.

The legacy of a more united and impactful approach is demonstrated by the Public Space Protection Orders due to come into force this summer. Building on this new level of partnership working, with Verderer involvement, these provide an important new set of tools for engaging with the public and raising awareness of how to visit responsibly.

On a personal note, during the time I've worked with Willie I've enjoyed his collaborative approach. We've worked well on areas of common interest and we've had healthy, respectful discussion on matters where opinions may differ.

Thank you, Willie, for your commitment to the interests of the Forest. You should be proud of the influence and legacy that you've created.

PRESENTMENT BY THE PUBLIC

2023/12820 PROPOSED MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATIONS MAST AT FRITHAM & THANKS TO THE DEPARTING OFFICIAL VERDERER Presentment by Mr John Ward, Chairman, Friends of the New Forest (NFA)

'I am John Ward representing the Friends of the New Forest

Our attention has been drawn to a consultation letter from the Cornerstone Mobile Infrastructure Company proposing to erect a 30 metre high telecommunications mast on Fritham plain.

I am sure that most of us here today have a mobile phone and we understand the requirement for the attendant cellular infrastructure. But, and it is a significant but, the New Forest is a protected landscape for its outstanding natural beauty. Notwithstanding Cornerstone's claim that this is the least intrusive location of various sites they have considered, such a mast of this height in this location would have a major harmful impact on the landscape over a considerable area. I cannot believe that it would conform to the intentions behind the Joint Accord and Memorandum of Understanding signed by National Parks England and Mobile UK in 2018.

We urge the Verderers together with other statutory bodies (Forestry England, National Park Authority and Natural England) to ensure that this proposal is properly scrutinised, and to work with the operator to seek a less intrusive site.

And... While speaking today it would be remiss of me not to express the thanks of the New Forest Association to Lord Manners for the considerable energy and effort you have given to the role of Official Verderer. We appreciate the opportunities we have had for our two very different organisation to work together on some important issues concerning the protection of the New Forest. I hope that this will continue.'

2023/12821 THANKS TO OUTGOING OFFICIAL VERDERER
Presentment by Mr Brian Ingram

'Thank you, Verderers and staff, for supporting the commoners during your term of office. I can remember shouting at your father riding on the drifts, as he was often galloping the wrong way! Instead of referring to the Verderers in committee, your father often turned to me and said 'isn't that right Brian?'

2023/12822 DARTMOOR – NATURAL ENGLAND'S PROPOSALS TO REDUCE STOCK NUMBERS
Presentment by Mr Brian Ingram

Mr Ingram told the Court of his concerns at Natural England's proposals to reduce the livestock on Dartmoor by 90%. Farmers are wondering whether this is at local or national level and if it is re-wilding by the back door. Mr Ingram referred to the time when hot branding of cattle was banned without proper consultation or the knowledge of the Verderers who found out 6 months later, when it was too late to object to the changes.

2023/12823 THANKS TO THE OUTGOING OFFICIAL VERDERER
Presentment by Mr Steve Avery, Executive Director, Strategy & Planning New Forest National Park Authority

On behalf of the NPA Mr Avery said 'I would like to extend our sincere thanks to the retiring OV Lord Manners for all his guidance, wise counsel and positive support in conserving and protecting the New Forest. I do recall on one occasion being summoned to the Court to address the Verderers on a particular planning matter and it is the only time in my whole life that I have ever been referred to as a 'tethered goat!'

2023/12824 VERDERERS' ELECTIONS & THANK YOU TO THE OFFICIAL VERDERER
Presentment by Mr Mike Eccles, Commoner

Mr Eccles asked whether photo ID will be required at the next Verderers' Election. He said he didn't think that some commoners would cope with using a supermarket photo booth in order to obtain the necessary passport style photograph. Mr Eccles went onto thank the Official Verderer for his help, particularly with the important encroachment. In that respect, he also thanked the Clerk and Mr Pasmore.

2023/12825 DEER MANAGEMENT ON CROWN LAND
Presentment by Mrs Charlotte Lines, Commoner

'More often than not, when I'm talking to fellow commoners the conversation turns to the vast number of deer, mainly Fallow, on the Crown Lands, estates and surrounding National Trust land.

We know that there was a boom in the deer population during COVID given there was no active management, but it's been two years now since COVID restrictions were lifted and in some areas of the Forest the number of deer seems to have increased further.

In places like Broomy, Roe and Parkhill where there has been a concerted effort to manage the deer population you can see a marked improvement in the under-storey which can only seek to improve the diversity of flora and fauna, however, the same cannot be said for other areas of the Forest. It has also been brought to my attention that there are some Fallow deer which are in poor health, which is also a cause for concern.

Commoners were notified a few weeks ago by the Northern New Forest and Southeast Wiltshire Woodlands Deer Management Group that they were undertaking a thermal imaging survey in the North of the Forest to count the population of Fallow Deer, which will be used to inform future management decisions across the Northern areas of the Forest.

Whilst this is welcomed it doesn't seem like a particularly joined up approach as we know deer move around, so my questions to Forestry England through the Court are:-

1. When was the last deer count census undertaken for the Crown Lands of the New Forest.
2. What evidence is being used now to determine the number of deer that need to be managed.
3. What is the deer management plan for the Forest going forward? In the short, medium and long term?
4. How are you working with other landowners and partners to address this issue.'

2023/12826 PRESENTATION TO THE OFFICIAL VERDERER
By Mr Anthony Pasmore, Senior Elected Verderer, on behalf of the Court

Mr Pasmore said that the OV has had six difficult years, three of which were dominated by covid and the terrible pressure on the Forest that induced. He said the OV has inevitably left behind a lot of unfinished business, but he has laid firm foundations for his successor to build on. The Forest owes him a considerable debt, particularly in his understanding of the law - something which underpins so much of the Verderers' work and which is not appreciated by the public.

Mr Pasmore then handed the Official Verderer a painting of Dur Hill by Mr Peter Frost.

The Head Agister closed the Court

IN COMMITTEE (in the Library)**CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS**

2023/12827 DARTMOOR – NATURAL ENGLAND'S PROPOSALS TO REDUCE STOCK NUMBERS DISCHARGE

It is understood that an independent review into the management of Dartmoor is to take place following widespread concerns over Natural England's intentions for Moorland grazing under a new HLS.

The guarantee of this review was given by the Minister for Farming Mark Spencer MP, after concerns were raised that Natural England has proposed reducing stock numbers on Dartmoor by up to 50%, and in a few areas by up to 90%.

Mr Manley said he has some good contacts on Dartmoor. He will see if there is anything that the New Forest needs to be concerned about and if so, will report back to the Court.

Action RM

2023/12828 DEER MANAGEMENT DISCHARGE

The Deputy Surveyor said that a record number of deer have been culled this year. He confirmed that in the north of the Forest (including land outside the perambulation) a drone survey has been undertaken. It shows that deer numbers remain high in that area despite the significant increase in culling.

It was suggested a similar survey could be undertaken in the south of the Forest where deer numbers are also very high.

Photos of deer herds are useful and FE would be pleased to receive those, with a note of the location. Deer on private land are of course a matter for landowners and some are more willing/able than others to cull.

MATTERS ARISING

2023/12829 NEW ACCESS AT BURLEY (OVERMOOR FARM) DISCHARGE

Mr Grugeon advised the Court that after careful consideration, FE will not consent to the new access.

2023/12830 WESSEX INTERNET – REPORT ON THE MEETING ON 24TH MARCH DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin reported on the meeting with Wessex Internet. This was a preliminary meeting and it is a promising start. The company is used to working in rural locations including on privately owned farms. However, the work they are undertaking is the least profitable of all the broadband projects because of the limited number of customers. At the same time, the Forest is an expensive area to work in because of the conservation interests and the constraints they inevitably bring. The firm is undertaking surveys for the next six months, after which it will go back to the DCMS (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport) to agree a price for the works in the Forest.

2023/12831 NEW ACCESS AT THE LODGE, MALWOOD DISCHARGE

The NFPA Planning Dept has advised the Court of this planning application. The Clerk explained that the new access has a wide splay with grass verges, designed to mitigate the loss of grazing which will result from the new access across the verge. The current access from this property onto the A31 is dangerous and the Court will not object to the application for this new access.

2023/12832 TURF HILL DAMAGE CAUSED BY TIMBER EXTRACTION DISCHARGE

FE contractors extracting timber pressed on, despite wet weather, on the basis the operation had neared conclusion. Timber extraction continues and will finish shortly. The DS assured the Court that instructions have been given to those undertaking the work that they must stay on the track and that track restoration will be completed when conditions are appropriate.

2023/12833 TURF HILL DAMAGE CAUSED BY VEGETATION CLEARANCE UNDER THE PYLONS DISCHARGE

Unfortunately, further damage has been caused on Turf Hill by contractors working for National Grid, clearing vegetation from under the pylons during a period of very wet weather. Assurance has been received from National Grid that proper reinstatement will be undertaken.

DE MINIMIS CONSENTS

2023/12834 UTILITY PROPOSALS AGREED BY THE DE-MINIMIS DISCHARGE
COMMIITTEE

The following consent was ratified.

DM0173 Survey by FE of Great Crested Newts - 7 ponds Whitemoor & Burbush areas using bottle traps ABR Ecology - Staff Training Event 11/12 April and 15/16 April 2023.

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

2023/12835 BT OPENREACH PROPOSED CIVIL WORKS IN THE MINSTEAD AREA - FIBRE TO THE PREMISES PROJECTS - CADNAM V8034 RESUME

Mr Deakin said he would like to consider this further. The Court delegated the final decision to Mr Deakin and the Clerk.

Action
RD/Clerk

2023/12836 NEW COMMUNICATIONS MAST AT WHITESHOOT BOTTOM, FRITHAM RESUME

The Court refused consent for a mast on this site. Apart from the loss of grazing, the mast would have an unavoidable and very significant negative effect on the landscape and the Verderers do not accept this is an appropriate location for installation of this equipment.

Whilst it is accepted that a solution has to be found to providing adequate mobile coverage in the New Forest, the question of what and where new masts might be needed must be researched properly and an overall solution agreed. The issue of what, if any, new masts are needed, and where they could be sited must therefore be approached on a Forest wide and not a piecemeal basis. This approach should deliver maximum protection for the New Forest, its landscape and wildlife and commoners' animals whilst achieving adequate mobile phone coverage. Dealing with what could be numerous applications for new masts on a piecemeal basis is not sensible or acceptable in such a sensitive environment.

The Court welcomes working closely with Forestry England and other owners of common land within the Forest, Natural England, the New Forest National Park Authority, and mobile communication providers, in order to seek at a satisfactory solution. Forestry England already has contacts in the industry and Mr Grugeon agreed to facilitate a joint meeting.

Action PG

2023/12837 ESSO / FISHER GERMAN – HARDLEY TO APPELMORE. PART OF THE INSTALLATION OF A NEW AC MITIGATION ZINC RIBBON AND ASSOCIATED CATHODIC PROTECTION WORKS ON THE ESSO PIPELINE AT HYTHE

RESUME

Mr Deakin is meeting with Ms Amy Howells, FE's Estates Officer to consider this proposal. The Court delegated the decision to Mr Deakin.

Action RD

CAMPSITES

2023/12838 DENNY CAMPSITE WATER TANK

DISCHARGE

The Court approved the siting of a water tank on the gravel between the 2 chemical disposal points just past the site office. It must not be put on any grass. It is a stand-alone tank with 3 taps on it, no pumps, electricity or pipes. It must be removed as soon as a permanent water connection has been made.

2023/12839 HOLLANDS WOOD CAMPSITE SEWER

DISCHARGE

The Court's approved the proposals to repair the 50 m sewer pipe leading from the campsite, across the lawn / cricket pitch outside the Hotel to the main sewer in Balmer Lawn Road.

SSSI RESTORATION WORKS

2023/12840 THE REPAIR & MAINTENANCE/ENHANCEMENT LIST

RESUME

The list was noted.

ENCROACHMENTS

2023/12841 ENCROACHMENTS LIST

RESUME

Unfortunately, a list had not been made available.

ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION BY FORESTRY ENGLAND

2023/12842 ACTION LIST DISCHARGE

Unfortunately, the list had not been made available.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS INVOLVING FORESTRY ENGLAND

2023/12843 NEW RESEARCH PROJECT - TO INVESTIGATE THE DYNAMICS AND SPREAD OF ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE IN THE ENVIRONMENT DISCHARGE

This study, by Surrey University will be undertaken by collecting multiple soil samples (20-40g) from 10 locations for a year. The Court felt this study is unobtrusive and unlikely to impact the Forest or the grazing and therefore gave its approval. The Clerk will ask for a copy of the final report for the Christopher Tower Library.

Action Clerk

2023/12844 FENCE AT THE NEW FOREST INN, EMERY DOWN DISCHARGE

Mr Stride says he is suspicious that the Inn's fence may have been moved slightly outwards from its original position. He said in addition, there is a quantity of rubbish on the Forest which must be removed. FE will investigate.

Action PG

2023/12845 ICE CREAM VAN AT THE FIGHTING COCKS, GODSHILL DISCHARGE

The van has gone!

The Deputy Surveyor and the Land Agent left the meeting

ENCROACHMENTS NOT INVOLVING FORESTRY ENGLAND

2023/12846 SHOBLEY FOREST OAKS RESUME

Natural England has now said it will take up the issue of the damage to the SSSI which is being caused on this piece of land. The Open Spaces Society is also providing advice. Whilst the case will continue past the OV's leaving date, he is closely involved and will give evidence as planned. There is a Case Management Conference on 4th July which will include the other side's legal team. Mediation is likely to be discussed. The case will be heard in the Southampton County Court.

MATTERS ARISING

2023/12847 VERDERERS' VETERINARY ADVISOR RESUME

The Clerk will ask Mr Alex Crook MRCVS if he is happy to act as the Court's Veterinary Advisor. He will be invited to attend the forthcoming Welfare Tour of the Forest.

Action Clerk

2023/12848 PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER (PSPO) TRAINING RESUME

Mr Deakin said that the Agister team is expressing reservations at being asked to administer the PSPO covering feeding and petting Forest ponies, donkeys and mules. One of the concerns surrounds dealing with potentially aggressive members of the public. This should be covered by the training. Miss Sevier said body worn cameras would help and should be considered. Further discussions with the Agisters will need to take place. The Clerk also expressed concern at the impact the potential volume of calls about the PSPO may have on the office staff.

Action
OV/RD

2023/12849 WYCH GREEN, BRAMSHAW CELEBRATORY TREE RESUME

It is understood FE has told the Parish Council that, due to its excessive size, the enclosure that has been built to protect the tree, must be taken down and the concrete used to fix the posts removed from the SSSI. A smaller tree guard will be acceptable. The Parish Council has been advised of the approved dimensions.

Action FE

2023/12850 HYDE CELEBRATORY TREE DISCHARGE

It was agreed that if every other upright was removed from the tree guard, it would result in the palisade looking less imposing and more visually acceptable. The Clerk will advise the Parish Council.

Action Clerk

2023/12851 COMMONERS DWELLING SCHEME RESUME

A meeting is scheduled to take place this coming Friday, 21st April.

Action RD

2023/12852 FUTURE FUNDING FOR THE NEW FOREST DISCHARGE

The OV said there is nothing further to report.

OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

2023/12853 VERDERERS' POLICIES DISCHARGE

The revised policies will be put on the website along with the tranquillity policy.

Action Clerk

HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME & THE VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME

2023/12854 VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME ENHANCED PAYMENTS RESUME

Subject to the HLS Board's approval, an additional lump sum payment will be distributed to cattle owners who are in the VGS. The payment is to encourage commoners to keep cattle as there is a fear that numbers will fall following the end of the Basic Payment Scheme. One payment will be made in respect of each herd number and will apply to Forest commoners only. It is hoped this payment can be repeated over 5 years but it will be subject to an annual review and is not guaranteed. All other VGS terms and conditions remain.

Action OV

The National Trust has been asked to contribute to the VGS but a decision has not yet been received.

EXTERNAL COMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS

- 2023/12855 NF DOG RESUME
Mr Manley said a meeting is due to take place shortly. Action RM
- 2023/12856 CYCLING DISCHARGE
Mr Manley reported that the group is discussing mapping, routes, implementation and how to encourage cyclists to stay on the network.
- 2023/12857 AVERAGE SPEED CAMERAS DISCHARGE
Mr Manley said he is frustrated by the lack of progress.
- 2023/12858 CONSULTATIVE PANEL DISCHARGE
Mr Ferris reported that the Panel received a presentation from the Chief Executive of the Southampton Freeport. The meeting was told that all current planning processes will remain in place. More jobs will be created. The council area in which the Freeport is located will be able to retain 100% of the business rates growth above an agreed baseline. This money can be used to benefit the wider freeport area to conserve and enhance the natural environment.

STAFF MATTERS

- 2023/12859 STAFF COMMITTEE RESUME
The minutes of the last Staff Committee meeting had been circulated.

OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

- 2023/12860 FINANCIAL STATEMENT RESUME
The Financial Statement was noted.

TRAINING & HEALTH & SAFETY

- 2023/12861 NEW EMPLOYMENT POLICIES DISCHARGE
Mr Mark Gammon will attend the next Staff Committee to present the newly drawn up policies. Action MG
- 2023/12862 HEALTH & SAFETY AUDIT DISCHARGE
A health and safety audit is being arranged. The last review took place in 2017.

2023/12863 ALLEGED AGGRESSIVE PONY ON BOLTONS BENCH DISCHARGE

The pony which allegedly injured a child has been moved away from the Boltons Bench. It has not been removed from the Forest permanently because there remains some doubt as to exactly what happened. The Court was not advised of the incident until some time after the incident occurred.

2023/12864 IDENTIFYING OWNERSHIP OF FOREST RUN STOCK DISCHARGE

In response to a query as to whether under GDPR it is right for the Court to identify the owner of an animal from its brand in the event that a complaint against an animal is received, it was pointed out that the brands appear in the NFPB&CS Annual Stud Book which can be purchased by anyone. The list is, therefore, already in the public domain.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2023/12865 STALLION INSURANCE DISCHARGE

Mr Stride asked if the Court would help towards the cost of stallion insurance which is reportedly in the region of £700.00. In response, it was unanimously agreed this is not an option. It was pointed out that the liability cover available to full members of the CDA, only covers animals whilst they are legally depastured on the Forest.

2023/12866 STALLION GRAZING RESUME

There is a possibility that grazing for the stallions will be available in the area known as Pimlico in Franchises Wood, but further discussion is needed. At present, as from August, less grazing can be made available for stallions. The Clerk will make enquiries of a local Estate to see if it has any suitable grazing.

Action Clerk

2023/12867 NEOSPORA RESUME

Mr Deakin asked if a response to the CDA's letter has been sent as he felt it contained some valid points. The letter will be circulated again. The CDA does not have a Chair or Secretary at present.

Action Clerk

2023/12868 A31 FENCE RESUME

The fence on the westbound carriageway of the A31 between Andrews Mare and Ocknell Arch has still not been repaired and is laying on the ground. It is only due to the terrain at that location that animals have not escaped onto the road. The Clerk will chase it up again.

Action Clerk

The meeting ended at 13:16 hrs



17/5/23