



Official Verderer
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FAQs - website

1. What steps are the Verderers taking to reduce animal accidents?

We encourage the Police to enforce the 40 m.p.h. speed limit and help to fund a speed camera van which operates within the New Forest; we work with the County Highway staff in the use of warning signs; there is a scheme to fit reflective collars to ponies; there is a £5000 reward for information leading to the successful prosecution and conviction of Hit & Run drivers; weekly animal accident statistics are distributed to the local press, and are also published on this website.

2. Why not fence the roads?

It would destroy the character of the Open Forest, damage and restrict grazing. The three A roads across the Forest have already been fenced and to fence others would require statutory authority.

3. How do I find out if I have Forest Rights?

Contact the Verderers Office; 02380 282052 or enquiries@verderers.org.uk

4. Can a member of the public attend Court and address the Verderers on Forest issues?

Yes - Court regulations state that Presentment (addressing the Court) must be: "(1) relevant to some aspect of the New Forest or its management and (2) brief and (3) phrased in moderate language".

5. Why do some of the animals occasionally look in poor condition?

It is normal for semi-feral animals such as ponies to lose some condition in the winter. It is simply not possible to check every animal very frequently and some may become thinner than desirable. These animals should be brought to the attention of the Agister by reporting them to the Verderers' Office and they will be removed from the Forest.

6. Does the RSPCA or other welfare organisations inspect the animals?

Yes; there are two welfare tours each year arranged by the Verderers. They are attended by DEFRA, British Horse Society, International League for the Protection of Horses, Blue Cross, RSPCA, Donkey Sanctuary, and local veterinary surgeons. The results of the survey are in the Court minutes. The welfare organisations also carry out their own independent inspections.

7. How many animals are killed each year on the roads in the Forest?

The numbers of animals killed yearly are available from a quick-link on the website

8. Do the Verderers have a policy on dogs?

The Verderers do not have a written policy, but we endorse the [New Forest Code](#)

9. Do the Verderers have responsibilities for deer?

No; Forestry England is responsible for the deer.

10. What are the Verderers' relationships with Forestry England and the National Park?

The Verderers, Forestry England and National Park Authority each have their own separate powers and duties. However, they are all committed to working closely together in the best interests of the Forest.

11. I want to hold an event in the Forest; do I need permission?

Yes; please contact the Forestry England (0300 067 4600).

12. Can I camp in the Forest?

Yes; on official sites only (and some private sites) – see Where to Stay section of the New Forest National Park website.

13. What is the geographical area of the Court's jurisdiction?

The Verderers' powers extend to the commonable lands of the New Forest - that is land which is either now or will be at some time in the future, subject to common rights. Included within this are the timber inclosures of the Forest. The Verderers have no power over private enclosed land within or outside the Forest.

14. Can anyone become a Verderer?

Elected Verderers must occupy a minimum of 1 acre of land with pasture rights. Appointed Verderers and the Official Verderer posts are advertised nationally. Anyone can apply.

15. How can I help to reduce animal accidents?

Do not exceed 40 m.p.h; do not feed the animals (it is against the Bye-Laws and attracts animals to the roads); use official car parks (do not park on verges - this can limit drivers' view of animals); give animals a wide berth and pass animals slowly; recognise that animals have no road sense; be particularly careful near foals; be particularly careful at night; slow down if dazzled by oncoming headlights. Donations for the reflective collar scheme can be sent to the Verderers' Office and would be most welcome.

16. Can I feed the animals?

No; On the 1st July 2023 - A Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) came into force which forbids the feeding and petting of ponies, donkeys and mules. A fixed penalty notice may be issued to anyone breaching the terms of the PSPO with a maximum penalty of £100 or prosecution which could result in a fine of upto £1000. Feeding and petting encourage them to behave badly and increases the chances of them of causing harm to children. Encouraging them to loiter near car parks and the roads increases the risk to them from vehicles.

17. What happens to the ponies when they are sold, or get old?

They may be used for riding and driving - see the New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society Website. Some ponies may be humanely destroyed.

18. Who do I complain to about Forest matters?

For livestock matters, contact the Verderers; for all other matters contact Forestry England.

19. What do I do if there is a problem with a Forest animal?

Ponies, cattle, donkeys, pigs, or sheep should be reported to the Verderers' Office. Wildlife, including deer, is the responsibility of Forestry England.

20. Can I attend a pony round-up?

No; the Verderers strongly discourage the public attending a pony round-up, for their own safety.

21. Where can I cycle in the Forest?

Only on approved cycle routes - see the Visiting section of the New Forest National Park website