

## MINUTES of the Court of Verderers – Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021

At the time of this Court, the UK outbreak of novel Coronavirus, known as Covid-19 continues. Government advises the population to avoid meetings where the disease could potentially be passed from person to person and homeworking is recommended wherever practical. Once again, the Verderers did not meet in Open Court or in person in Committee. Items included in these minutes were discussed in a virtual online meeting via 'Zoom'.

The following is a record of proceedings.

PRESENT ONLINE	Lord Manners	Official Verderer
	Mr R Deakin	Elected Verderer & Staff Committee Chairman
	Mr A B Dowsett	Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer
	Dr G Ferris	Co-opted Elected Verderer
	Mr J Greenwood	Elected Verderer
	Cllr E Heron	National Park Appointed Verderer
	Mr R Manley	DEFRA Appointed Verderer
	Mr A H Pasmore	Senior Elected Verderer
	Mrs D Westerhoff	Natural England Appointed Verderer
IN ATTENDANCE ONLINE	Miss S Westwood	Clerk to the Verderers
	Mr B Rothnie	Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest
	Mr P Grugeon	Forestry England Land Agent (New Forest)
APOLOGIES	Mr D Readhead	Elected Verderer

### 2021/11636 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last Court held on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021 were approved and will be signed by the Official Verderer at the earliest opportunity.

### 2021/11637 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest can be found on the Verderers' website [www.verderers.org.uk](http://www.verderers.org.uk).

No new declarations of interest were made today.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS FOR PUBLICATION

The Announcements & Decisions, as followed, were approved.

#### 2021/11638 CYCLING

At our February court we received a presentment from the New Forest Equestrian Association expressing concern about the increasing number of reports of incidents between horse riders and cyclists on the Forest where cyclists are off the permitted waymarked cycling routes.

The presentment rightly acknowledges that it would not be right to tar all cyclists with the same brush.

The Court has long expressed concern to Forestry England about unlawful cycling in the Forest and this presentment illustrates that that concern is widely shared. We ask all cyclists to stick to the permitted waymarked routes.

#### 2021/11639 STALLIONS 2021

After careful consideration, and taking into account the restrictions imposed by Government to control Covid-19, it has been decided that 20 stallions will be turned out onto the Forest this year.

The stallions will be turned out this year from Monday 10th May for a period of 9 to 10 weeks. They will start to be taken home from Monday 5th July and must be removed from the Forest no later than Monday 12th July.

The breeding herd of pure-bred New Forest Ponies is reducing year on year and the breed is on the Rare Breeds Survival Trust's Watch List, as a breed considered to be at risk.

The areas in which the stallions run, are carefully decided in order to avoid inbreeding. The list will be made available on our website shortly.

Members of the public are reminded that they should always keep away from the ponies, but that this is particularly important during the stallion season.

It is also worth mentioning that stallions do not always remain in the areas in which they are first turned out and so it is wise to be particularly aware of the behaviour of the ponies at this time of year.

## PRESENTMENTS

### 2021/11640 FOREST CAMPSITES

Presentment by Mrs Charlotte Lines, Chair, New Forest Commoners Defence Association

The New Forest Commoners' Defence Association asks that the Court reaffirms the importance it attaches to the Ministers Mandate. The mandate has been described by ministers as the Forestry Commission's "licence to operate" on the Crown Lands within the New Forest.

The Mandate states that the principal management objective in the New Forest should be the conservation of the natural & cultural heritage of the Crown lands.

We are deeply concerned that Forestry England is failing to meet its conservation objectives especially in regard to the forest campsites and designated habitats.

The NFCDA believe we have now reached a critical point where an extensive review into the practicality and viability of camping on the New forest is needed. Particularly in relation to:

1. The interaction between our animals and the campers
2. Impact on grazing
3. The impact on the protected habitat and species

There have been numerous conflicts between campers and animals on forest campsites over the years, in recent times the seriousness and number of incidents appears to be increasing. These incidents have the potential to threaten the continuing practice of commoning in the New Forest.

The New Forest Commoners' Defence Association feel that to protect commoning for the future the use of forest campsites needs to be looked at with some urgency, ideally, we would like them restored back to the SAC habitats. It has been shown during 2020 that there are plenty of suitable alternative locations for campsites off the open forest. We ask the Verderers to use all their powers to bring about this change to protect commoning and the forest.

The New Forest SAC plan 2001 states; 'Virtually all New Forest heathland habitats require grazing management to maintain the features for which the site is designated. It is without question the most appropriate principal management tool for the Open Forest vegetation. Illingworth (1991) demonstrated that the commoning system is the only really viable way (in

terms of cost, and physical effort) to effectively graze the Forest habitats which are subject to common rights. There is no evidence to suggest that this analysis does not hold today.'

Within the areas of the campsites there is a huge detrimental impact on the grazing and an increasing urbanisation of these campsites is changing the very fabric of the forest.

This is reflected in the New Forest SAC plan 2001 which states the campsites impact on specific conservation features of the forest. SAC Plan Part 4, 05b Enjoying the Forest, Access and recreation [A24]: 'We will explore the possibility of re-locating campsites within the Forest and restoring the vacated sites where this becomes necessary due to the decline of habitats within the SAC. The requirement was to implement this by 2003.'

With today's knowledge of the issues arising around campsites on the open forest, we know that none of the statutory authorities, tasked with protecting the forest, would give permission for a campsite such as these. The SAC plan recognised the consequences of the campsites in 2001 and recommended closure, yet nothing has been done.

We would welcome further dialogue with FE and the Verderers to discuss our thoughts in detail.

## CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS

2021/11641 FOREST CAMPSITES

RESUME

The Court supports the notion of relocating the Forest campsites off the Open Forest. It is, however, felt that unless this is done in conjunction with providing some alternative camping opportunities in the Forest, the instances of wild camping will increase.

The Court's view, as recorded today, is in line with its longstanding policy, as shown in the Verderers' leaflet 'The New Forest – Precious Wilderness or Suburban Park.'

### Policy No. 4. CAMPING

4.1 In deciding on proposals for new or altered camping facilities, the Verderers will give favourable consideration to any application they receive where;

4.1.1 they are advised by English Nature and/or any other relevant authority, that the proposed development and its subsequent use will cause no material conflict with the ecological or other scientific qualities of the Forest which the Court has a statutory duty to protect, and,

4.1.2 they are satisfied that the proposed development and its subsequent use will otherwise cause no material conflict with the special qualities of the Forest.

4.2 In relation to existing camping facilities, the Verderers will, where these facilities or their use is in conflict with the special qualities of the Forest, seek to secure either their relocation to such more suitable sites less damaging to the Forest and beyond the commonable lands as may be approved by the planning authority, or where that is not possible seek their closure.

It was, however, agreed that the Court should review this policy, to ensure that it is still entirely relevant.

The increasing pressures on the Forest, both in the form of damage to the ecology and conflicts with the livestock, all indicate that the time has come for a radical re-think of camping provision in the New Forest. Unfortunately, the general public has little appreciation of how easy it is to damage an ecosystem and many people have little or no understanding of the behaviour of large grazing animals. The livestock is essential to the conservation of the Forest. Without the animals, the Forest could not be maintained in a condition that people can enjoy. The Court believes there has to be a way of providing the facilities sought by the public, whilst ensuring the Forest is protected and the opportunity for conflict with the livestock is significantly reduced.

People obviously want to enjoy the environment the Forest has to offer and it is perfectly understandable that some have a strong desire to camp here. However, it has become increasingly clear that mixing camping with livestock is no longer practical.

The Deputy Surveyor was asked how much control Forestry England has over the campsites. In response, the Deputy Surveyor said that FE wants to find solutions to the problems that the campsites situated on the Open Forest, unavoidably create. He accepts that that may mean moving some sites and potentially closing others. To achieve that, will not be easy. He added that FE has no direct management control. That, is in the hands of Camping in the Forest. FE provides advice. It does not monitor. CiTF is obliged to comply with the terms of its lease which in turn refers to the management plans for the sites. Natural England will not intervene whilst CiTF is complying with those plans.

It was agreed this matter requires much more consideration and it will, therefore, be resumed at the May Court.

Action All

#### **DE-MINIMIS CONSENTS TO BE RECORDED AT THIS COURT**

2021/11642 DE-MINIMIS CONSENTS

RESUME

The following de-minimis consents were reported and recorded:-

DM0118 The Millhouse, Mill Lane, Blackwater – SSE short length of overhead low voltage cable from existing pole to property

DM0119 Burley Lodge – Openreach underground short length of cable from private land boundary to pole on roadside verge (part of programme to remove telephone lines from high voltage electricity poles)

#### **MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS COURTS OF CONCERN TO FORESTRY ENGLAND**

2021/11643 CYCLING

RESUME

The Court continued to encourage the Deputy Surveyor to take more robust action against cyclists who ride off the waymarked cycle network. It is felt insufficient monitoring is being undertaken where it is known that a lot of cycling off the cycle network takes place and many car parks from where cycling is not allowed, still do not have any prohibition signs.

Mr Deakin said that at the last Court, the Deputy Surveyor mentioned a multi-agency plan which is designed to address the various issues facing the Forest but one of the problems is that frustration arises when people do

not know what is happening. He added that if we know the efforts that are being made, we could have the chance to comment and possibly offer tweaks to make things work better. The Deputy Surveyor said he understands that and he will endeavour to provide a summary of the work that is being carried out.

Action DS

The Official Verderer asked whether Forestry England needs political support? Cycling is perceived to have many benefits and it may be difficult for people not closely connected with the Forest to understand the problems caused by cycling off the way marked routes especially on the open Forest. It was suggested a letter be sent seeking a meeting with the relevant Minister to brief him/her on the issues facing FE in managing recreational pressure on the Forest.

Mr Dowsett said he is in regular contact with the ranger teams from both Forestry England and the New Forest National Park Authority. He commented that these very small teams work long hours and often go beyond the mile. They have no powers, are often subjected to abuse and have a huge area to cover. The Deputy Surveyor said that 4 additional seasonal rangers will be out and about on the Forest this summer.

2021/11644 COMMONING AND THE PUBLIC – SIGNAGE GROUP UPDATE

RESUME

Mr Dowsett reported that Mr Tony Vanderhoek joined the signage group which is currently focussing on the stock feeding issue. Mr Gary North (FE) is also being extremely helpful. Signs similar to last year's No Fires, No BBQs will be erected. Mr North offered to provide 10 signs, funded by Forestry England. Mr Manley has helped design the signs and costings are awaited. It is thought each sign will cost in the region of £30. Permission will be sought to set up these portable signs at the sites where most problems with the public feeding ponies occur, such as Hatchet Pond and Boltons Bench. Some signs will be moved around the Forest. Mr Dowsett asked whether the Court could, as a minimum, match fund that provided by FE. Mr Deakin said he hoped the Court could pay more and he said the CDA may contribute, but it has already paid for the signs about keeping away from livestock and keeping dogs under control. Mr Deakin proposed the sum of £1,000 be made available for these additional signs and the expenditure was approved unanimously.

Action  
Signage  
Group/FE

Mr Dowsett said a NPA working group is pursuing the idea of using electronic variable messaging signs and has received quotes for the cost.

Action  
BD/NPA

2021/11645 BRAMSHAW GOLF CLUB

DISCHARGE

Several Verderers met Mr Grugeon and representatives of the Golf Club. Four requests were made by the CG, all of which were approved.

1. To move the 4<sup>th</sup> tee in a westerly direction, towards the car park.
2. Remove some of the fencing that has been erected to divert cattle
3. Install tee mats on the new 4<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> tee to allow the vegetation to recover
4. Use sand/fertilizers on the tees and greens as permitted in the Management Plan.

2021/11646 BURLEY GOLF CLUB LICENCE RENEWAL

DISCHARGE

This is on hold pending a site visit by FE, NE, Verderers and the GC.

Action PG

2021/11647 FORESTRY ENGLAND INCLOSURE FENCING – LONG TERM STRATEGY PLAN RESUME

Mr Deakin said a socially distanced meeting has been arranged for next Wednesday between himself, Mr Jonathan Blanco (FE), Mr Greenwood and the Head Agister. The meeting is at 10.00 a.m. on the 28<sup>th</sup> April at Queen's House.

Action  
RD

#### SSSI RESTORATION WORKS INCLUDING THE ENHANCEMENT LIST

2021/11648 ENHANCEMENT LIST RESUME

Noted.

2021/11649 RESTORATION OF TURF HILL RESUME

Mr Pasmore sought restoration of an area left untreated due to archaeological interests. Jackie Kelly, the HLS Project Manager met with the NFNPA's Archaeologist on site recently to discuss use of stump shears. The stump shearing technique was supported by Mr Pasmore. It is hoped to restore the whole of the site if the approach is acceptable. Mr Pasmore said that it is important to address the corrugation on the site as well. The Deputy Surveyor undertook to investigate what can be done in that respect.

Action  
HLS Board

Action DS

#### ISSUES REPORTED TO FORESTRY ENGLAND (ACTION LIST)

2021/11650 Noted. Nothing to add. RESUME

#### OTHER AGENDA ITEMS INVOLVING FORESTRY ENGLAND

2021/11651 BT OPENREACH PROPOSALS FOR BROADBAND PROVISION AT EAST END DISCHARGE

These proposals, which involve the cable being laid under the road, are approved.

2021/11652 BT OPENREACH PROPOSALS FOR BROADBAND PROVISION TO THE CARAVAN AND MOTORHOME CLUB, BLACK KNOWL, ALDRIDGE HILL, BROCKENHURST DISCHARGE

This cable will be put in the road. The proposals were approved.

2021/11653 BT OPENREACH PROPOSALS FOR BROADBAND SUPPLY TO PROPERTIES IN OGDENS DISCHARGE

The decision to approve this was ratified.

#### ANY OTHER BUSINESS INVOLVING FORESTRY ENGLAND

2021/11654 WOODGREEN POUND ACCESS DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin reported that since the installation of dragons' teeth in the vicinity, the pound is now unusable because of parked cars on the access to the pound. The pound is well used. A temporary No Parking – Access in Constant Use sign will be put up for the time being. This problem will be added to the Action List.

Action DS

2021/11655 COMMUNICATION MASTS DISCHARGE

Government policy on these is changing. There are to be special arrangements for National Parks. However, SSSI's will be exempt and it is, therefore, hoped there won't be any more masts in the Forest. The changes mean that existing masts can be 5m taller and slightly wider.

2021/11656 BEAULIEU ROAD SALEYARD FIRE DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin reported that the sale yard has recently been very badly damaged by fire. Fortunately, the repairs will be covered by insurance. The structural engineer who designed and built the roof, the builder, carpenter and scaffolder involved in the original build, along with the insurance representative met to agree a plan of action for the repairs. It will be a long and difficult job because of the unusual construction. The Spring pony sale is online. The next sale is due to be held in September.

2021/11657 ILLINGWORTH SELECTION PANEL DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer reported that the prospective tenant selected for one of the two currently available Forestry England properties in the Forest, has, at very short notice, said he no longer wants the property as he is moving to Scotland. This means the selection process will have to begin again in respect of that property. The Official Verderer said he will be asking another appointed Verderer to please take his place on the panel.

**The Deputy Surveyor and Mr Grugeon left the meeting**

**MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS COURTS**

2021/11658 VERDERERS' LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT OFFICER RESUME

There were differing views on whether employing an additional officer to assist the Agisters is a worthwhile investment. After further discussion, it was agreed that the proposal should be given consideration and the Official Verderer, Mr Ferris and the Clerk will produce a paper. OV/GF/Clerk

2021/11659 LETTER FROM BEAULIEU ESTATE REGARDING CATTLE AND FENCES DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin reported on the complaint which had been received from the Estate's Land Agent. Mr Deakin said he inspected much of the Beaulieu Estate boundary and found that whilst a lot of new fencing has been erected on its woodland boundaries, none has been done on the tenanted fields. Mr Deakin went on to say that the poor fencing has effectively 'trained' the cattle not to go home because it is so easy for them to gain access to the private land where there is plenty of food. The one fence that was put up last year, at Harlicks Hill, has effectively kept all Forest stock out.

**ENCROACHMENTS NOT INVOLVING FORESTRY ENGLAND**

2021/11660 ENCROACHMENT AT PICKET HILL/SHOBLEY RESUME

This matter is ongoing with the Commoners' Defence Association now preparing to take legal action. The Court is supporting the CDA with time, advice and money. The gate on the fenced enclosure is now locked, excluding Forest stock from land to which they are entitled to have free access.

**OTHER AGENDA ITEMS**

- 2021/11661 STALLIONS DISCHARGE
- 20 stallions will be turned out for 9 weeks. They must be taken off the Forest by the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> week.
- Stallions will be turned out on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May. They may remain on the Forest until Monday 12<sup>th</sup> July but commoners may catch their stallions from Monday 5<sup>th</sup> July if they wish. The areas in which they will run are being allocated and a list will be published as soon as possible.
- 2021/11662 AGISTERS' VEHICLES RESUME
- The sub-committee of Mr Manley, Mr Dowsett and Mr Readhead has met. The Head Agister is collecting a vehicle which is being provided on trial to allow all the Agisters to assess its suitability. Action Sub-Ctee
- A decision has not yet been made as regards methods of acquisition – outright purchase, lease hire etc. Once all the quotations have been received and decisions reached as to which vehicle/s best fit the requirements of the Agister team, a paper detailing the options available will be brought to the Court for a final decision.
- Cllr Heron asked if anyone has contacted Ineos regarding their new Grenadier. Mr Manley remarked that he has and was told the vehicles are £72K each! It was suggested if anyone has a contact at Ineos it would be helpful to let the sub-committee know.
- 2021/11663 VERDERERS' ELECTION RESUME  
June
- The administration towards this year's Verderers' Election is underway. The Official Verderer said advice is being sought as respects the possibility of being able to offer postal votes but it will not be possible to arrange that in time for this year. An announcement about the election will be made in the July Court.
- 2021/11664 CATTLE – ONGOING CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE CDA RESUME
- The CDA has sent a further letter. It was agreed the best way forward is to meet with members of the CDA Committee. The Official Verderer and Dr Ferris will attend the meeting. Action  
OV/GF
- 2021/11665 DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION TO THIRD PARTIES ON MATTERS DISCUSSED BY THE COURT PRIOR TO THE APPROVAL OF THE COURT MINUTES RESUME
- Mr Deakin expressed concern at the content of Mr Pasmore's New Forest Notes printed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> April issue of the Lymington Times. He said he feels the Court should think about what is said and to whom, prior to the minutes being approved.
- A discussion then took place regarding the Court's meetings and the publication of the minutes. Cllr Heron pointed out that most public bodies meet in public although of course the Covid-19 pandemic has complicated matters for everyone.



The Official Verderer suggested this issue should be considered and discussed again. It may be possible to approve the minutes earlier, by email. To achieve that, it would be essential that comments on the draft minutes and requests for amendment were provided promptly. Action All

2021/11666 FUTURE FUNDING FOR THE FOREST RESUME

Mr Deakin said there is concern amongst commoners regarding replacements for the BPS and HLS. ELMS is thought not to be appropriate for the Forest. It has been suggested that the Court should consider drafting a proposal for a bespoke scheme for the Forest, if that is possible and would be acceptable to Government. It was suggested a letter should be written to one of the local MPs requesting that he assists in arranging a meeting with the relevant Minister, to seek support for a scheme which recognises and supports the special needs and qualities of the Forest. Action OV

#### HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME (HLS)

2021/11667 HLS BOARD RESUME

The HLS Board meets on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

#### VERDERERS GRAZING SCHEME (VGS)

2021/11668 VGS PENALTIES DISCHARGE

A media enquiry was received concerning penalties imposed on a small number of commoners. A response has been provided and the CDA informed.

#### REPORTS FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

2021/11669 RMS DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer reported that the sub-group tasked with dealing with verge parking meets on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> April. If there is anything to report, the OV said he will bring the matter back to the Agenda.

2021/11670 PROPOSAL TO RE-FENCE DIBDEN INCLOSURE RESUME

Mr Deakin reported that a meeting was held to look at potentially re-fencing part of this inclosure in order to create an area for use by the public, particularly dog-walkers, where they would not interact with the stock. Various ideas were discussed including fencing some of the grazing strip in order to provide a stock-free access from the A326 across to the proposed newly fenced area. That green strip could then be opened up for seasonal grazing, most likely predominantly in winter, when the use of the area by the public is less intensive. Action RD

Unfortunately, Forestry England advised that Natural England would not agree to some of the proposed fencing, in particular the green strip. Mr Deakin said he feels that NE has effectively taken away some valuable options. The green strip is an area re-seeded in the 1960's and he thought it is probably not especially ecologically sensitive.

Mr Deakin said that he feels that the Court needs to challenge NE as this is an example of its inflexibility which sometimes hampers opportunities to reduce the increasing conflicts which are occurring between recreational

use of the Forest and commoning. Not being able to manage recreation is putting commoning at serious risk. Mr Deakin felt it may be necessary to accept sacrifices in some areas, in order to allow the remainder of the Forest to flourish. Another example of NE's current stance, is its position as respects a review of the provision of car parking.

Mrs Westerhoff said she had to disagree with Mr Deakin. She said NE has no option other than to work within the law and she felt it does help to deal with recreational pressure. Mrs Westerhoff added that a lot of the grazing strips are now ecologically diverse, having been colonised by a variety of species over the years. She added that she feels NE has been willing to consider compromises by discussing re-fencing Dibden Inclosure.

Cllr Heron joined the debate at this point, saying there may be evidence that what you want to do will cause some harm, but common sense may say that to do nothing, will be worse. He suggested it may be necessary to talk to the relevant Minister.

Discussions on possible solutions for dealing with the issues in the Dibden area will continue.

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

2021/11671 INCIDENT ON ASHURST CAMPSITE IN AUGUST 2019

DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer provided the Court with information on how this matter is progressing. He will ensure the Court is kept up to date.

**The Official Verderer and Mr Pasmore both gave their apologies and left the meeting.**

**Mr Richard Deakin took the chair.**

#### **REPORTS FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS Continued**

2021/11672 JOINT LITTER WORKING GROUP

DISCHARGE

Mr Dowsett said that various voluntary groups, as well as individuals, are making a huge contribution towards keeping the New Forest clean.

Mr Greenwood said he heard that a lady who was out litter picking was hit by a car on a Forest road, within a 30 mph speed limit, and suffered a broken wrist and pelvis. The accident has led to concerns about who is managing the litter pickers. It is understood the National Park Authority has tried to bring the litter pickers under its umbrella but there are lots of individuals and independent groups undertaking this very valuable task. Cllr Heron said any formal litter pickers work under very specific rules. He felt it is important to encourage everyone to follow the rules in order to keep them safe, but at the same time, he did not wish to discourage anyone from doing such worthwhile work.

Mr Dowsett added that recently, one individual litter-picker reported removing over 500 dog poo bags from trees and bushes around various Forest car parks. It is difficult to understand why people pick up their dogs' faeces but don't take it home or dispose of it in a litter bin.

**GENERAL REPORTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

2021/11673 MARKING OF CALVES

DISCHARGE

Since the introduction of the BPS, commoners have been keen to pay marking fees for calves in order that they may be eligible for inclusion in subsidy claims. Once the subsidy payments are delinked, commoners will not want to pay for calves. The byelaws are clear. They state that calves must be marked for identification purposes by 4 months of age. Marking fees are due for calves in the year following their birth, which is the same as foals.

2021/11674 CONDITION OF FOREST CATTLE HERD

DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin reported that during a recent inspection of a herd of cattle, some were found to be in poor condition. The owner, however, took the advice offered and removed some calves. The cows look better. The herd will be monitored.

Action  
RD/Agisters

2021/11675 REPORT ON MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE AND COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEAR

RESUME

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
Forest Ponies	4574	4424
Forest Cattle	1865	3275
Forest Donkeys	117	132
Forest Pigs	0	0
Forest Sheep	0	0
Total Forest Stock	6556	7831
Common Ponies	618	561
Common Cattle	1592	1311
Common Donkeys	57	43
Common Pigs	68	73
Common Sheep	194	223
Total Common Stock	2529	2211
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Forest	6556	7831
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Commons	2267	1915
Total Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys	8823	9746
Total Stock – Forest & Commons	9085	10042

2021/11676 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

RESUME

The Clerk apologised that the financial statement had not been circulated and undertook to do so as soon as possible after this meeting.

Action Clerk

2021/11677 CONDITION OF STOCK – REPORT BY HEAD AGISTER JONATHAN GERRELLI

RESUME

'This time of year, is what I refer to as the hungry time, and is when the stock that have been out all Winter are at their lowest, and in some cases look quite scruffy with their Winter coats starting to come out.

The Forest looks quite bare at the moment and with the dry cold weather there is no sign of any Spring grass coming through.

Going round the Forest it looks worn out, and round the bigger car parks you can see the impact of the huge numbers of people that have been using the Forest all Winter.

Most of the ponies have come through the winter looking quite well, but there are a few that have struggled and we continue to remove some of these. It was good to see the holly pollarding that Forestry England did as the ponies have been grateful for that extra forage.

As usual it is mainly young ponies, two and three year olds, and old mares which despite the Welfare scheme, there are still a surprising number of, that lose condition and have to be taken in.

Another regular aspect of Spring in the Forest is commoners turning stock out too early in the misplaced belief that 'the grass will soon grow and they'll be all right'. Unfortunately, this year is no different and I have seen cattle and some yearlings that have been recently turned out, and are wandering to try and find that elusive mouthful. In the case of the cattle in particular, when they break in to a garden and the property owner complains that there is no food on the Forest and the cows are hungry. Of course, they have to fence against, which we tell them, but it is difficult to defend.'

2021/11678 ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENT REPORT FOR MARCH

RESUME

The Agisters attended 2 accidents in March, compared with 5 in the same period last year.

The 2 animals involved, 1 pony and 1 cow were uninjured.

1 accident occurred in daylight, and the other in the dark.

Both drivers reported having been involved in an accident.

The total number of commoners' animals killed and injured in 2021 to date is 5, compared with 17 in the same period last year.

**TRAINING & HEALTH & SAFETY**

There was nothing to report at this meeting

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

2021/11679 RISK ASSESSMENTS FOR COMMONERS

DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin said he visited a commoner to help draft a risk assessment, which the commoner will use to document the mitigation measures that are used to minimise the risk of an incident between people and their herd. Mr Deakin said he will produce the template he used and circulate a copy. The exercise will be repeated and Dr Ferris asked if he could go along as well

There being no further business, the video conference ended at 13:30 hrs.

*Julianne*  
19 May 2021