

**Minutes of the Court of Verderers held on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2022 at 9.30 a.m.  
in the Library, the King's House, Lyndhurst**

PRESENT	Lord Manners	Official Verderer
	Mr R Deakin	Elected Verderer & Staff Committee Chairman
	Dr G Ferris	Co-opted Elected Verderer
	Mr R Manley	DEFRA Appointed Verderer
	Mr A H Pasmore	Senior Elected Verderer
	Mr D Readhead	Elected Verderer
	Miss A Sevier MBE	NFNPA Appointed Verderer
	Mr R Stride	Elected Verderer
	Mr C Chatters	Natural England Appointed Verderer
	Mr M Gammon	Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer

IN ATTENDANCE Miss S Westwood Clerk to the Verderers

**IN COMMITTEE in the Library**

2022/12626 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING RESUME

The minutes of the last Court held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2022 were approved and signed by the Official Verderer.

2022/12627 NEW DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RESUME

There were no new Declarations of Interest.

2022/12628 CONDITION OF STOCK REPORT BY THE HEAD AGISTER RESUME

The Clerk read out the Head Agister's report as he was not able to attend the meeting.

'The overall condition of stock is very good. We have had a good Autumn and the grass has kept growing. The cold snap has put a stop to that, but thankfully the weather has now become a bit milder, the only downside being the rain that inevitably comes with that. We're never satisfied!

The Welfare Tour took place on the 9th of this month and was well attended, and although we did not see as much stock as we sometimes do, all the animals seen looked in great condition and the various welfare groups represented were very pleased with what they saw. The most important thing with this is definitely the conversations we have when we are out on the forest, and explaining to those who attend how the system we have here works. Time and again this is what impresses them most, as nowhere else appears to have the hands-on management we do.

Going forward into the New Year there will be some ponies losing condition, and I intend to organise some days where the Agisters come together to work our way round the Forest catching these up.

We also already have a number of cattle herds booked in to mark, to tie in with their TB tests.

And finally, Merry Christmas to you all.'

2022/12629 MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE AND COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEAR RESUME

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Forest Ponies	4773	4988
Forest Cattle	2874	3160
Forest Donkeys	125	150
Forest Pigs	375	73
Forest Sheep	0	0
Total Forest Stock	8147	8371
Common Ponies	633	863
Common Cattle	909	1781
Common Donkeys	114	136
Common Pigs	36	116
Common Sheep	162	195
Total Common Stock	1854	3091
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Forest	7772	8298
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Commons	1656	2780
Total Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys	9428	11078
Total Stock – Forest & Commons	10001	11462

2022/12630 BREACHES OF THE BYELAWS DISCHARGE

In the past few weeks two pigs, a Shetland pony stallion and a mare and foal have been found on the Forest. The pigs and Shetland stallion had been dumped. The mare and foal are undoubtedly commoners' animals but the owner cannot be identified. All the animals have been advertised as Found in the local paper and reported to the police. None have been claimed and so they have been re-homed.

Action Clerk

2022/12631 THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR NOVEMBER 2022 RESUME

The Agisters attended 10 accidents in November this year, compared with 20 in November last year.

2 ponies, 1 cow, 1 donkey and a pig were injured and had to be destroyed, 1 of the ponies was wearing a reflective collar.

3 accidents occurred in daylight, 1 at twilight and 6 in the dark.

2 drivers failed to report having been involved in an accident.

The total number of commoners' animals killed and injured to the end of November is 50, compared with 55 to the end of November last year.

**FORESTRY ENGLAND JOINED THE MEETING**

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Craig Harrison, Deputy Surveyor  
 OBSERVING: Mr Richard Wilkinson, FE Graduate Trainee

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

2022/12632 PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS DISCHARGE

It was decided not to seek to make any alterations to the draft PSPO's for fear of delaying the consultation. Several Verderers said they have responded already. Those who haven't, were asked to do so as soon as possible. The OV and the Clerk will draft and send a response from the Court. Forestry England is also supporting the proposals.

Action OV

2022/12633 OPEN FOREST MANAGEMENT DISCHARGE

The Court thanked FE for the excellent work that has been carried out clearing roadside verges of vegetation and so greatly improving the safety of the livestock.

Some site line fencing clearance has also been carried out although to date it has been restricted to reducing the height of the vegetation. Ideally the vegetation needs to be cleared completely from the fences so that drivers can see any animals which are about to emerge onto the road.

2022/12634 NEOSPORA ANALYSIS OF RESULTS DISCHARGE

The Court decided that the report resolves its query as to whether Neospora is present on the Forest at a level that is likely to impact the livestock. The answer being in the negative. FE is considering the report. As this concludes the Court's involvement, the matter is being discharged from the Court agenda.

Action FE

2022/12635 DMMO (Definitive Map Modification Order) 1231 Sandford (Ringwood) to Burley RESUME

No further information has been forthcoming from HCC.

Action Clerk

2022/12636 RIGHTS OF WAY APPLICATIONS MADE BY UK CYCLING DISCHARGE

No further information has been received and it was agreed to discharge this matter for the time being.

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

2022/12637 DE MINIMIS CONSENTS DISCHARGE

DM0157 BT Openreach - Seamans Lane, Minstead - Cadnam V8036/1 Civil works to connect Windrush and Oak End via duct and cabling to two existing poles.

**SSSI RESTORATION WORKS**

2022/12638 THE REPAIR & MAINTENANCE/ENHANCEMENT LIST RESUME

The content of the list was noted.

2022/12639 PENNY MOOR CONSULTATION DATE RESUME

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> January was agreed. The Clerk will advise Ms Oakley. Action Clerk

**ENCROACHMENTS**

2022/12640 ENCROACHMENTS LIST RESUME

There are no current encroachments on FE land to report.

The Estates Officer role is still vacant.

**ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION BY FORESTRY ENGLAND**

2022/12641 ACTION LIST RESUME

The Deputy Surveyor said that FE's ecologist is going to look at the old timber stacks as it is thought they may have become important habitat. If so, consideration will be given to how they may be dispersed so as to remove them from their current location on grazing.

Action DS

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS INVOLVING FORESTRY ENGLAND**

2022/12642 THANKS TO FE FOR HELP DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin repeated his thanks for the excellent roadside cutting that has taken place. He particularly mentioned the south of the Forest.

Mr Deakin also thanked the FE Keepers and Rangers for their help on the drifts which is invaluable in helping to keep everyone safe.

2022/12643 BLACKFIELD WELL – DISINTIGRATING WOODEN COVER DISCHARGE

A commoner has attempted to affect a repair on this well cover but it is becoming dangerous and needs a permanent repair. The DS said FE will investigate.

Action DS

2022/12644 REPLACEMENT RAILWAY BRIDGES RESUME

Mr Deakin expressed concern at the steep gradient on the newly replaced bridges over the main London to Bournemouth railway line. He said they are certainly not wheelchair friendly and he doesn't think that Network Rail has done what was expected. Miss Ann Sevier said she will see what she can find out.

Action AS

2022/12645	<b>BOLDERFORD BRIDGE</b>	<b>DISCHARGE</b>
	Bolderford Bridge is still closed as the repairs which are needed have not yet been carried out. Members of the public are climbing through the rails put up to keep people off. FE will update the Court on repair plans and timetable.	Action DS
2022/12646	<b>KINGS HOUSE &amp; ANNEXE FIRE ALARM TESTING</b>	<b>DISCHARGE</b>
	The Clerk said that in a recent conversation with the Building Surveyor, he suggested the fire alarm test day be changed from Monday to Wednesday. He was advised that the Court sits in public on the third Wednesday of the month and holding a fire alarm test when members of the public are attending Court is not ideal. The DS was asked to see if an alternative day can be chosen.	Action DS
2022/12647	<b>KING'S HOUSE GARDEN</b>	<b>DISCHARGE</b>
	The Clerk asked the DS if he can see what can be done about tidying up the garden and sorting out the lighting round the back of the house. In addition, on occasions, no effort has been made to clear the leaves off the steps from the car park to the offices, which makes them slippery and Miss Sevier added that a hand rail would be very helpful for those who are less mobile. The DS was asked if he can please see if matters can be improved.	Action DS
2022/12648	<b>OUT OF HOURS MEETINGS IN KING'S HOUSE</b>	<b>DISCHARGE</b>
	Mr Manley asked if the DS can help facilitate the holding of certain meetings in King's House after normal working hours as recently there has been some difficulty in obtaining permission. These meetings are of relatively short duration and nearly always start shortly after 5.00 p.m. Whilst concerns about security are appreciated, Mr Manley said that the meetings in which he is involved do benefit FE. He added that as many participants work, daytime meetings are very difficult to arrange. The DS said he will see what can be done.	Action DS

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

**ENCROACHMENTS NOT INVOLVING FORESTRY ENGLAND**

2022/12649	<b>SHOBLEY – FOREST OAKS</b>	<b>RESUME</b>
	Papers have been filed with the Court in Southampton.	
	The barrister acting for the claimants is retiring. It was suggested an alternative should be approached. It is considered that the case has a very good chance of success.	Action OV

**MATTERS ARISING**

2022/12650 COMPENSATION FOR VERDERERS' INCLOSURES RESUME

This matter will be discussed at the January 2023 Court.

2022/12651 CAMPSITES RESUME

The Verderers' gave their approval for the New Forest Show Society and its wholly owned subsidiary, Camping in the New Forest, to enter into an agreement with Forestry England, to run the campsites for a period of 10 years (to 2033).

2022/12652 CYCLING RESUME

Mr Manley reported that a positive first meeting has taken place between representatives of the Court and representatives of cycling interests in the Forest. A further meeting is planned for January. The Court will be kept informed.

Action RM

2022/12653 AGISTERS' VEHICLES RESUME

The purchase order for 5 x Toyota's has been cancelled. The Agisters are now driving hire vehicles. The Clerk is looking at a fixed term hire.

Action Clerk

**HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME (HLS) & THE VERDERERS' GRAZING SCHEME (VGS)**

2022/12654 HLS DISCHARGE

The Official Verderer advised the Court that the HLS Board voted to accept the 5 year rollover. There is an option to convert without penalty to another scheme, such as Countryside Stewardship, if that is felt to be better.

2022/12655 VGS RESUME  
February

With the news that there is a 5 year rollover, the VGS is to be looked at to see if any changes should be made. A meeting will be held in the New Year.

Action OV

**REPORTS FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS**

2022/12656 WHITE TAILED EAGLE PROJECT DISCHARGE

Mr Gammon gave a very interesting report on this project following a visit he made to the Isle of Wight.

There is no evidence that the Eagle's do any harm in the Forest and in fact it is apparent that they do not particularly like the Forest environment. They have been seen around the Beaulieu River.

2022/12657 FRESHWATER & WETLAND RESTORATION FORUM DISCHARGE

Mr Deakin reported on the latest meeting. He said there is a new, enthusiastic chairman, by the name of Dave Rumble. Natural England gave a presentation on the carbon sequestration value of valley mires vs trees.

2022/12658 NF DOG DISCHARGE

A letter was sent regarding ground nesting bird signage on the foreshore. Mr Manley said another meeting of the group is due to take place in January.

**STAFF MATTERS**

2022/12659 STAFF COMMITTEE MINUTES DISCHARGE

The minutes had been circulated.

2022/12660 DRIFT REVIEW DISCHARGE

A drift review has been held. A couple of things came to light.

Firstly, the Dur Hill drift date will be changed in 2023. This is because the ground nesting bird signs are still up when the drift is usually held. It was agreed it is inappropriate to hold a drift when there are signs asking the public to avoid disturbing the birds. The solution was, arrange for the signs to be taken down as by then they are no longer needed, or move the date of the drift. The latter does not create any inconvenience and so it will be done in 2023.

Secondly, in view of the hopefully forthcoming PSPO banning fires on the Forest, a discussion took place on branding and other fires, traditionally used for Forest operations. It has been agreed that branding and other fires used in the course of official work on the Forest should continue.

**OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

2022/12661 FINANCIAL STATEMENT RESUME

The Financial Statement was noted.

The Clerk will review the five year plan in the light of the cancellation of the purchase of new vehicles and the news that the HLS rollover has been accepted. Action Clerk

**TRAINING & HEALTH & SAFETY**

2022/12662 HORNED CATTLE AT HILLTOP DISCHARGE

The owner of the cattle on Hill Top has decided to de-horn his animals. This news is considered to be very positive.

2022/12663 AGISTER MICHAEL MATON DISCHARGE

Agister Maton has received his firearms licence. He has already received some training in accordance with the law, and he will continue to be supervised when despatching animals until such time as the Head Agister is content he is proficient at the task.

Action RD/  
Head Agister

Agister Maton's employment as a permanent employee of the Court has also been confirmed.

2022/12664 VISIT BY THE HUMANE SLAUGHTER ASSOCIATION RESUME  
February

Mr Deakin said to ensure good practice, the Humane Slaughter Association will be invited to a meeting with the Agister team. Representatives have visited in the past and some very helpful information was shared.

Action RD

2022/12665 ANIMAL HANDLING TRAINING RESUME  
February

This training will be arranged in the New Year.

Action RD

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

2022/12666 TREE PLANTING DISCHARGE

The Verderers planted a Copper Beech (*Quercus Fagus sylvatica f. purpurea*) tree in the King's House garden, in celebration of the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee. This could not be carried out earlier in the year due to the very hot summer.

The meeting ended at 12:05 hrs

*Jim Mann  
19 January 2023*