

**Minutes of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 9.30 a.m.  
in the Library, the King's House, Lyndhurst**

PRESENT	Mr E Heron	Official Verderer
	Mr R Deakin	Elected Verderer & Staff Committee Chairman
	Mr A H Pasmore	Senior Elected Verderer
	Miss A Tilbury	Elected Verderer
	Miss K Harrison	Elected Verderer
	Mr M Gammon	Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer
	Miss A Sevier MBE	National Park Appointed Verderer
	Mr R Manley	DEFRA Appointed Verderer
IN ATTENDANCE	Miss J Bayley	Assistant to the Clerk
	Mr R Maton	Agister
APOLOGIES	Mr R Stride	Elected Verderer
	Mr C Chatters	Natural England Appointed Verderer

**IN COMMITTEE in the Library**

2025/13921	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING	RESUME
	The minutes of the last Court, held on Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> January 2025 were approved, and signed by the Official Verderer.	
2025/13922	NEW DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	RESUME
	There were no new declarations of interest.	
2025/13923	CONDITION OF STOCK	RESUME
	Agister Maton said there were no major concerns regarding the condition of stock. The Agisters are catching and removing ponies as required, especially in the north of the Forest where the drifts were not held due to the strangles outbreak.	
	Miss Sevier said she has heard some commoners complaining about having to collect their animals after they had been caught by the Agisters. Mr Deakin said that following the Staff Liaison Committee an email had been sent to all commoners reminding them that the VGS Rules require them to have the appropriate equipment to manage their own animals.	
	Miss Harrison asked if all 2-year-old colts have now been removed from the Forest. Agister Maton confirmed they have.	
2025/13924	BOVINE TB	RESUME
	Mr Deakin said there is still the one TB breakdown in the Fritham area. Radial testing is ongoing in the south of the Forest.	
	A meeting with the APHA vets is scheduled for early March to discuss the TB Plan and radial testing.	
2025/13925	STRANGLES	RESUME
	There have been no new cases of strangles seen in the Forest.	

2025/13926 BLUE TONGUE RESUME

The restriction zone has extended further, and Salisbury Livestock Market is now inside the zone.

2025/13927 FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE IN GERMANY RESUME

There is no update available on the Foot and Mouth situation in Germany. Import restrictions are still in place.

2025/13928 MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE AND COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEAR RESUME

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
Forest Ponies	445	136
Forest Cattle	151	60
Forest Donkeys	0	0
Forest Pigs	0	0
Forest Sheep	0	0
Total Forest Stock	596	196
Common Ponies	31	9
Common Cattle	0	0
Common Donkeys	5	0
Common Pigs	0	0
Common Sheep	0	0
Total Common Stock	36	9
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Forest	596	196
Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Commons	36	9
Total Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys	632	205
Total Stock – Forest & Commons	632	205

**The Agister Maton left the meeting**

2025/13929 BREACHES OF THE BYELAWS RESUME

There are no new byelaw breaches.

#### OPEN COURT

**IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs Joan Clark Land Agent, South East England  
Mr Sam Jones, Head of Recreation**

**Agister Maton opened the Court with the usual proclamation.**

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS**

2025/13930 FORESTRY ENGLANDS PROPOSAL FOR PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE CYCLING AND IMPROVING THE NEW FOREST OFF ROAD CYCLING NETWORK

We are grateful to the Deputy Surveyor for his further Presentment on proposed new on-Forest cycling routes and to Andrew Parry-Norton for his comments on behalf of the CDA.

The Court will work constructively with Forestry England to ensure that the information necessary for it to lawfully make a decision on the proposals is compiled and made publicly available. This, along with all the Presentments and

written representations received, will be considered by the Court before making a decision on Forestry England's proposals.

2025/13931 ANIMAL ACCIDENTS – LIAISON WITH HAMPSHIRE POLICE

A meeting has been held with Sergeant Kevin Pearson and PC Sam Chapman from Country Watch based at Lyndhurst Police Station. Following this meeting a new Information Sharing Agreement between Hampshire Constabulary and The Verderers of the New Forest has been signed and communication between our organisations has improved.

The Court has written to the Chief Constable for Hampshire and the Police and Crime Commissioner, inviting them to visit the Forest in the Spring.

2025/13932 CADNAM CRICKET CLUB OUTFIELD FENCING

A specification for the replacement fence has been submitted to and agreed by the Court. The failure to throw open the outfield for three months of the year was due to a misunderstanding regarding the terms of FE's licence, which is understood to have now been resolved.

2025/13933 ICE CREAM VAN AT BOLTONS BENCH

The concession for the sale of ice cream at Boltons Bench has not been removed. Permission was granted for the concession to additionally sell hot beverages and sweet pastries.

2025/13934 GARDEN WASTE

We are coming to the time of year when people will start cutting their lawns. Grass cuttings heat up when left in heaps. If ponies or donkeys eat that grass, it causes excruciatingly painful colic and the animal often dies.

The other foodstuff we regularly see put out on the Forest in the spring and early summer, is bales of old hay. Those responsible are often horse-owners who have hay that they deem unfit for their own animals because it is mouldy or excessively dusty, so they think a good way of disposing of it is to feed it to the Forest animals. This again risks the health of the animals which eat it and encourages aggression.

Members of the public, including residents, should never feed the Forest animals or put out on the Forest anything which the stock may eat. Discarding waste of any kind by dumping it on the Forest constitutes fly tipping and is illegal.

## THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

2025/13935 THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR JANUARY 2025

The Agisters attended 13 accidents in January compared with 2 in January last year.

4 Ponies were killed, 1 pony and 1 Cow were injured, 1 pony escaped injury and in 6 instances the animals reportedly involved in an accident could not be found.

2 accidents happened in daylight and 11 in the dark.

1 driver failed to report having been involved in an accident.

The total number of Commoners' animals killed and injured this year is 6.

## PRESENTMENTS BY THE PUBLIC

2025/13936 FORESTRY ENGLANDS PROPOSAL FOR PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE CYCLING AND IMPROVING THE NEW FOREST OFF ROAD CYCLING NETWORK  
Presentment by Sarah Nield, Chair New Forest Association

'Official Verderer, Verderers and the members of public attending court today, I am Sarah Nield, Chair of the New Forest Association (NFA). I am giving this presentment on behalf of the association following the Official Verderers' announcement and the Deputy Surveyor's Presentment both made to the last court. It will be no surprise that the NFA is pleased to hear that Habitat Regulation Assessments will be available to the court prior to a decision being made on the proposed extensions to the cycle network. But it is important that the SSSI protections are not overlooked. The Verderers, and indeed Forestry England and the National Park Authority, have obligations to the forest's SSSIs being:

"to take reasonable steps ... to further the conservation and enhancement of the flora, fauna or geological or physiological features."

We suggest those reasonable steps should include the same environmental scrutiny required for a planning application affecting a SSSI. No doubt Natural England will provide guidance.

Turning to the Deputy Surveyor's presentment, we call for the immediate introduction of the additional cycling management measures outlined in the Deputy Surveyor's original September presentment.

As a reminder these measures include:

- introduction of the cycling code,
- the correction of Cycling Apps to remove unlawful routes,
- improved signage and maps of the existing network,
- a widespread education campaign,
- cycling ambassadors/wardens – although we remain to be convinced how sustainable volunteers operating only on the network will be and suggest that further thought be given to this initiative.

These measures surely are not, and should not be, conditional on the proposed extensions so there is no reason to delay. Forestry England are primarily responsible for addressing damaging recreation on the open forest and recreational mitigation payments should provide the funding. The National Park Authority as partners to the Recreational Management Strategy have an important role to play too. The early introduction of these measures, coupled with monitoring, would also test their effectiveness and show whether more robust measures are necessary.

Immediate introduction would further demonstrate everyone's desire to protect the forest from the damage and disruption caused by unlawful off-network cycling. The NFA is willing to play its part in this drive for example our members may be able to contribute to monitoring unlawful cycling and support any educational campaign as well as possibly contributing to correcting Cycling Apps.'

2025/13937 REMOVAL OF THE LITTER BIN AT PICKET POST CAR PARK  
Presentment by Mr Nigel Curtis, New Forest Litter Pickers

'One of our members was made aware that the litter bin at Picket Post car park had been removed and, rather than accept this, she arranged a meeting on 3 February 2025 with ourselves, Shell, McDonalds and Forestry England present.

Forestry England advised that the bin was removed after their contractor reported that 60-70% of the waste in it was from McDonalds.

This car park is heavily used and the roads surrounding it are always teeming with ponies, cattle and wildlife.

McDonalds have always picked their site each morning (now hopefully with the help of Shell) and have then gone across to the Picket Post car park to clear any residue not in the bins. Access to this area is via a busy road and across a cattle grid (side gates are locked).

With the bins removed, McDonalds are now clearing all waste from the car park, including all the nasty stuff such as nappies, poo bags etc and then having to get back to their site with heavy bags.

Our feeling is that Forestry England have removed bins as a cost cutting exercise and passed their duty of care to keep the forest areas clear on to others, a situation we don't think is sustainable.

We are now faced with a bad situation that will only get worse as summer approaches. No bin means litter will be left on the car park, strewn down the A31 or along the roadside to Burley, threatening wildlife.

We did ask Forestry England if the Verderers were aware of this bin's removal and were told Yes. Subsequent e-mails established that they were not aware, hence our invitation to attend today.

This situation needs resolving urgently.'

2025/13938 RECREATION PROPOSALS, SPATIAL PLAN AND PURPOSE  
Presentment by Brian Tarnoff, Local Resident

'Good morning, I've a few scattered points to make.

The Forestry England presented proposals for the off road cycle network include 55 km of extensions to the current 170 km. This is a major proposal which would grow the network by roughly a third. That proposal and all other projects for recreation on the Forest are undermined by the lack of the spatial plan promised repeatedly by the Recreation Management Strategy and the Partnership Plan.

The recreation infrastructure of the New Forest is over half a century old. Better habitat protection and understanding of impact has led to inconsistent piecemeal improvements. Any project based solely on the out dated infrastructure compounds and promotes continued damaging use of the Forest. It's like seeking planning permission to build an extension to a house that's been condemned. The most recent Partnership Plan stipulated an agreed spatial plan for 2024, with a target to publish this year, it is nowhere in sight. I ask both the Verderers and Forestry England, as Partners with the National Park, to get this plan back on track.

Last month the Deputy Surveyor declared the cycle network "not fit for purpose". That both is a grotesque exaggeration, and if you buy his criteria, an imponderable problem. The Forest has the status of a National Nature Reserve, there are constraints of the National Park's Special qualities, habitat, and tranquillity, the operational needs of Commoning and Forestry. Despite this there are 170km of track for exercise and enjoyment of our landscape. Ideal connectivity between settlements cannot be guaranteed. Of course there are improvements to be made, but if you want a network designed centred on the purpose of cycling alone, establish a clean slate outside the Forest within a new Country Park.

Last month the Deputy Surveyor asked the Verderers to vet the proposal, before committing to evaluations. This is back to front. While the Verderers share obligations to law and policy, Forestry England have the stronger statutory responsibility to the habitat and special qualities and have greater resources. The Verderers are volunteers, you have paid experts.

For example, the proposed extension between Deerleap and Longdown car park is currently a narrow path which crosses valley mires, one of which is due for more restoration which will make it even wetter. At some points it is only wide enough for one walker, and in some conditions on the path you might sink half a welly into the ground. On another route, seemingly benign laying down gravel on sandy exposed areas could hurt red list species of insects. To make these routes fit for cyclists shared with other users would require path widening, scrub clearance, engineering and materials which would change the hydrology and habitat of the area, and incur future maintenance costs.

At this stage I wouldn't expect full evaluations or costings for these routes, but as previously, I would expect at least a preliminary assessment. Forestry England have access to much on the ground knowledge, keepers, ecologists and engineers, to achieve this. I hope the network may be sensibly improved, but I don't imagine that it will be perfectly designed as, with any recreation on the Forest, the Forest isn't built for that.'

**Agister Maton closed the Court**

**IN COMMITTEE (in the Library)**

**CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS**

2025/13939	FORESTRY ENGLANDS PROPOSAL FOR PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE CYCLING AND IMPROVING THE NEW FOREST OFF ROAD CYCLING NETWORK	RESUME
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Mr Pasmore said that as well as looking at the Habitat Regulation Assessments before making their decision on the proposed cycle routes the Verderers also need to look at their own obligations under the New Forest Acts.

The Court authorised the Official Verderer to seek external legal advice regarding the appropriate actions it should follow when considering Forestry England's proposals to improve the off road cycling network.

The Court thanked Sarah Nield and the New Forest Association for its presentment which will be taken into consideration when the Court is ready to make its decision on the cycling network proposals.

2025/13940	REMOVAL OF THE LITTER BIN AT PICKET POST CAR PARK	RESUME
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The Official Verderer said that as landowner Forestry England had a legal responsibility to clear litter regardless of the source. He continued that a lack of funding cannot be used as an excuse not to do what Forestry England is legally obliged to do.

The Court is unhappy that they were not consulted by Forestry England prior to the removal of the litter bin. The Verderers agree with Mr Curtis that there will be an increase of litter in the local area and will monitor the situation closely.

2025/13941	RECREATION PROPOSALS, SPATIAL PLAN AND PURPOSE	RESUME
	<p>The Official Verderer said Mr Tarnoff is asking to get the Recreation Management Strategy back on track. It was discussed that recreation is damaging the Forest and the idea of a perfect cycling network is not realistic.</p> <p>Mr Tarnoff's presentment will be taken into consideration when the Verderers are ready to make their decision on Forestry England's cycling network proposals.</p>	

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

2025/13942	HCC CYCLE ROUTES INCLUDED IN THE LCWHIP	RESUME
	<p>No update available this month.</p>	
2025/13943	CAMPING ADVISORY GROUP	RESUME
	<p>The Camping Advisory Group meeting has still not been held. Mr Deakin said Camping New Forest have been promising to meet for months. He reported that CNF had been stopped putting gravel down in a non-permitted area at Roundhill Campsite thanks to the intervention of a commoner and a Verderer. It is vital that the meeting is held before the camping season starts.</p> <p>Forestry England is asked to ensure that the meeting is held before the next Court.</p>	
		Action JC/SJ
2025/13944	BRAMSHAW GOLF CLUB	RESUME
	<p>The Club is reviewing its existing management plan. Mrs Clark said that the matter is now being dealt with by Land Agent, Tess Cook, who has now returned from maternity leave. There is no update available at this time.</p>	
2025/13945	VERGE RESTORATION SITES FOR 2025	DISCHARGE
	<p>Mr Deakin said he has reviewed the plans with the HLS Verge Restoration Officer and Forestry England's Senior Ecologist. He said the optimum specification has been agreed following the site visit also attended by Mr Stride.</p>	
2025/13946	WATER LEAK AT PIPERS WAIT	DISCHARGE
	<p>Mr Deakin said he has met at the site with the Forestry England Senior Ecologist who will speak to Hampshire Highways to see what can be done to improve the site.</p>	

#### **DE-MINIMUS PROPOSALS**

2025/13947	DE-MINIMIS-CONSENTS - UTILITY PROPOSALS AGREED BY THE DE-MINIMIS COMMITTEE	DISCHARGE
	<p>DM0219 Network Rail – Culvert clearance at New Copse Cottage near Brockenhurst</p>	

- DM0220 SGN – New gas supply to property. Furzey Corner, Boundway Hill, Sway
- DM0221 SSE – Request to install new apparatus on Forestry England land at Lymington Road, East End, SO41 5SY
- DM0222 Southern Water – Replace a defective stopcock and chamber of Forestry England land at Woodhayes, Bartley Road SO40 7GN

### SSSI RESTORATION WORKS

2025/13948 SSSI REPAIR & MAINTENANCE/ENHANCEMENT LIST RESUME

The HLS Wetland Restoration sites were noted.

### ENCROACHMENTS

2025/13949 ENCROACHMENTS LIST RESUME

The building materials that were being stored on the verge at Sky Lodge, Linwood have now been removed.

### ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION BY FORESTRY ENGLAND

2025/13950 ACTION LIST RESUME

Nothing new has been added to the Action List.

### ANY OTHER BUSINESS INVOLVING FORESTRY ENGLAND

2025/13951 FALLEN TREE ON THE BOLDERWOOD ORNAMENTAL DRIVE DISCHARGE

Miss Sevier said she had noticed a silver birch has fallen across the road just past the Knightwood Oak car park. It is being supported by a tree on the other side of the road.

Action SJ

2025/13952 ROADSIDE DITCHING AT MATLEY DISCHARGE

Mr Chatters raised via email his concerns regarding the roadside ditching from Lyndhurst to Denny. Mr Deakin said the issues have been addressed in the site meeting at Longcross with the HLS Verge Restoration Officer and Forestry England's Senior Ecologist.

2025/13953 ROADSIDE DRAINAGE GRIPS DISCHARGE

Mr Chatters raised his concerns via email about polluted water draining from roads into Forest ditches. Mr Deakin and Miss Sevier are attending a meeting with HCC to discuss drainage grips. All relevant authorities are involved looking at a solution.

2025/13954 OCKNELL ARCH CULVERT DISCHARGE

Mr Chatters advised via email that no update was available at this time.



There being no other business involving Forestry England, the Land Agent and Head of Recreation left the meeting.

#### ENCROACHMENTS NOT INVOLVING FORESTRY ENGLAND

2025/13955 ENCROACHMENT ON FURZEY LAWN LANE NEAR DISCHARGE  
BLACKWATER FARM

Mr Deakin said the commoner involved has been in hospital. The Court agreed to leave the matter to the New Forest Commoners Defence Encroachment Committee.

#### MATTERS ARISING

2025/13956 HIT AND RUN REWARD CLAIM DISCHARGE

The Assistant Clerk has circulated the press release, she will contact The New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society to request a contribution towards the reward paid by the Verderers.

Action Asst.  
Clerk

#### OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

2025/13957 VERDERERS OFFICE PUBLIC OPENING HOURS DISCHARGE

The public opening hours of the Verderers Office were discussed. It was agreed that the office will be open for drop ins between 10am and 1pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday when two members of staff are usually present. The Assistant Clerk was asked to put the opening hours on the Verderers notice board.

Action Asst.  
Clerk

2025/13958 PROPOSED CLOSURE OF FOOTPATHS 2 & 11 DENNY LODGE DISCHARGE

The Court supports the closure of footpaths 2 and 11 at Denny Lodge and welcome the improvement to the environment of the Forest by the removal of noise and the increased safety through the closure of the potentially dangerous crossings. The Court requests that a locked gate be maintained at each location to assist in the removal of any livestock that may stray onto the tracks.

Action Asst.  
Clerk

2025/13959 PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT LYNWOOD FARM, BLACKFIELD DISCHARGE

The Court discussed the proposed development of up to 200 houses at Lynwood Farm. The farm has been used as back up grazing for commoners for more than 20 years.

Concerns on the impact to the adjacent Blackwell Common were raised, especially as the farm has direct access to the common. Blackwell Common is small and already under recreational pressure from the existing surrounding properties. Mr Deakin and Miss Tilbury will draft an objection on behalf of the Court.

Action RD &  
AT

2025/13960 REVIEW OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS RESUME

The upcoming review of the local development plans by New Forest District Council and the New Forest National Park Authority were discussed. Back up grazing is vitally important for the welfare of the

Forest, located both inside and outside of the National Park Boundary. Commoners are urged to have their say. Miss Sevier and Mr Manley will draft a response to the consultation on behalf of the Verderers. Mr Pasmore will raise at the upcoming Consultative Panel meeting.

Action RM &  
AS

The Official Verderer said commoner Jo Ivey is conducting a review of back up grazing and has asked if a questionnaire can be circulated to commoners with the Verderers Grazing Scheme papers. The Court agreed as long as GDPR compliance is maintained.

## REPORTS FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

2025/13961 NATIONAL HIGHWAYS A31 FENCE

RESUME

Mr Deakin said he is attending a site visit with National Highways to look at the eastbound carriageway fence on 27<sup>th</sup> February.

## OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

2025/13962 FINANCIAL MATTERS INCLUDING THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT

RESUME

The Financial Statement was noted.

## STAFF MATTERS

2025/13963 STAFF LIAISON COMMITTEE MINUTES

DISCHARGE

The minutes were noted.

2025/13964 AGISTER VEHICLES

RESUME

The Court thanked Mr Manley, Mr Stride and the Assistant Clerk for the work that has been put into producing the vehicle proposals.

Mr Manley has narrowed down the vehicle selection to two vehicles, the Toyota Hilux and the KGM Musso. Both vehicles have double cabs and both are more than capable of doing what the Agisters need them to do.

Our current hire agreement has no financial get out clause, but we will be required to pay for damage caused to any of the hire vehicles over and above the expectations of standard hire.

The KGM Musso is guaranteed to be available at the end of March, but the Toyota will not be available before the end of August. The Toyota delivery date is not guaranteed and is likely to change.

Mr Manley recommended the KGM Musso because of the availability of the vehicles, the costings and the local servicing arrangement he has been able to make with Balmer Lawn Garage.

Mr Manley proposed the Court purchase five KGM Musso vehicles. The Official Verderer seconded the proposal. The Court unanimously agreed.

- 2025/13965 NEW TECHNOLOGY FOR THE AGISTER TEAM RESUME
- The Agister are using voice recognition to produce their monthly diaries. The Official Verderer, Mr Deakin and the Head Agister will meet to discuss the next steps for the electronic submission of the Agisters paperwork.
- The Official Verderer said the Agisters should now be reporting any fencing issues to the relevant authorities using the "Fix My Street" app on their mobile phones.
- Action Asst  
Clerk

**TRAINING & HEALTH & SAFETY**

- 2025/13966 INCIDENT AT GODSHILL ON MONDAY 21<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER DISCHARGE
- Mr Deakin provided short verbal update on a meeting he and the Head Agister held with a representative from the Verderers insurance company on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January.
- There is nothing further to report pending the outcome of the Coroner's Inquest.
- 2025/13967 GOGGLES FOR THE AGISTER TEAM DISCHARGE
- Following an eye injury sustained by the Head Agister while colt hunting the Court has made the offer of supplying racing goggles to all Agister should they want them.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 2025/13968 STURTMOOR POND RESUME
- There is no update available.
- 2025/13969 DEVOLUTION DISCHARGE
- Mr Chatters asked via email for any insights as to what the current local government 'devolution' proposals may mean for the Forest. The Official Verderer said Devolution (establishment of a Mayoral Combined Authority) should not cause any day to day issues, but proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (the merge of local councils) will have a very significant impact on the Forest.
- 2025/13970 FRESHWATER AND WETLAND RESTORATION FORUM RESUME
- Mr Chatter advised via email that he will be attending the Freshwater and Wetland Restoration Forum on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March. He would be grateful for any thoughts on current issues, peculiarly the Brockenhurst studies by Wessex Rivers Trust and the condition of Picket Mire.
- 2025/13971 FOREST FARMING GROUP RESUME
- Mr Deakin asked if the Forest Farming Group is making any progress, and said he is frustrated by the lack of urgency. Mr Manley said the group was set up post Brexit and needed to start making some headway soon. The Official Verderer assured that progress was being made, but in the absence of an appropriate scheme

currently being open for application, currently work was continuing to ensure that we are ready to submit an application when the opportunity arises as the window for submission will be small, and we need to ensure we are ready with a combined bid for funding.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 13:32 hrs



19<sup>th</sup> March 2025