

VERDERERS' COURT

17th October 2018

ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS

BOVINE TB MOVEMENT LICENCE

The TB movement licence to allow exemption from pre-movement testing requirements for Forest cattle movements onto and off the Forest was renewed as from 1 July 2018. It is valid for one year.

It is a condition of the licence that all cattle within the Forest herd are TB tested between 1st October and 31st January. This, therefore, is an appropriate moment to remind all commoners who depasture cattle on the Forest of the importance of complying with the Verderers' TB control plan, a copy of which is available on our website.

The principle underpinning the plan is to (1) test to ensure that the Forest herd is free of TB and (2) then give the entire Forest herd, a "hard outer shell". The 'hard outer shell' is not a physical/geographical barrier but measures put in place to try to prevent the entry of TB infection into the cattle of the Forest Herd.

A particular and key requirement of the plan is that before they are allowed to mix with the Forest herd (including those on the home premises), all cattle that are brought in from outside the Forest are required to be isolated for 60 days after they arrive on the home premises. They must then be post-movement tested. 60 days' isolation is required to ensure that any cattle that may have been infected after being pre-movement tested clear on the farm of origin, have time to develop TB sufficiently to react to the post-movement TB skin test.

The effectiveness of the plan relies on everyone maintaining the hard outer shell. If individuals do not comply with the plan, they will risk bringing TB into the Forest. That will result in much tighter controls over the movement of cattle in the Forest and will be disastrous for many commoners' livelihoods.

The Agisters have been reminded that if any breach of the TB rules comes to their attention it is to be reported to the Verderers immediately.

VERDERERS ELECTION

I would just like to remind everyone that there is an election of two Verderers next month. As I announced at the last Court, nominations for candidates are required by noon on Tuesday, the 6th November. Nominations forms must be delivered to the Office of the Returning Officer, Mrs Rachel Brooks, at the Under Sheriff's Office in Romsey. If you wish to stand for election, you must not miss this deadline.

NATIONAL GRID'S PROPOSALS UNDERGROUNDING OF HIGH VOLTAGE POWER LINES IN THE NORTH OF THE FOREST

At our last Court, Peter Gear, a resident of Hale, made a further presentment about the National Grid's proposals for under grounding the high-voltage power lines which cross the north of the Forest.

In his presentment he suggested the Court has sufficient information to refuse consent for this project now.

Whilst the Verderers continue to be represented on one of the Stakeholder groups liaising with National Grid on this proposal, the Verderers have still not yet received a formal, detailed, application for consideration.

As I have said before, the Verderers support in principle, proposals which result in placing unsightly and intrusive cables underground. The Court looks carefully at all proposals and often makes observations and indeed expresses reservations about the detail. Its consent for this very large project, therefore, should by no means be taken for granted, nor indeed is National Grid so doing.

The Verderers continue to participate in discussions about this proposal and will continue to listen carefully to what is said, both in favour of and against the project. It is of course open to both supporters and objectors to make presentments to this Court if they wish to do so.

The Court's view remains that it should not say whether or not it approves this project until it has received and considered a formal, detailed, application. We anticipate that this will be if and when there is an application for planning permission.

BRIAN INGRAM

The Official Verderer wished former Head Agister, Brian Ingram, a happy 80th birthday. Mr Ingram thanked the Official Verderer and everyone present put their hands together in loud applause!