

**MINUTES of the Court of Verderers held on Wednesday 22nd April 2017 at
9.30 a.m. in the Verderers' Hall and the Library, the Queen's House, Lyndhurst.**

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|----------------|----------------------|---|
| PRESENT: | Mr Dominic May | Official Verderer |
| | Mr R Deakin | Elected Verderer & Staff Committee Chairman |
| | Mr A B Dowsett | Forestry Commission Appointed Verderer |
| | Mr J Greenwood | Elected Verderer |
| | Cllr E Heron | National Park Appointed Verderer |
| | Miss D Macnair MBE | Senior Elected Verderer |
| | Mr G M H Mills DL | DEFRA Appointed Verderer |
| | Mr A H Pasmore | Elected Verderer |
| | Mr D Readhead | Elected Verderer |
| | Mrs D Westerhoff | Natural England Appointed Verderer |
| IN ATTENDANCE: | Miss Sue Westwood | Clerk to the Verderers |
| | Mr Jonathan Gerrelli | Head Agister |
| | Lord Manners | Official Verderer Designate |

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

2017/9220 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING RESUME

The Minutes of Court held on 22nd March were approved and signed.

2017/9221 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RESUME

The Official Verderer, and Elected Verderers Mr Deakin, Mr Greenwood and Mr Readhead all declared an interest in the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme, the Verderers Grazing Scheme, and the Basic Payment Scheme. Mr Pasmore declared an interest in the Basic Payment Scheme.

Mr Deakin, Mr Readhead and Mr Greenwood are members of the New Forest Commoners' Defence Association committee. Mr Deakin is also Treasurer.

Mr Deakin and Mr Readhead are Directors of the New Forest Livestock Society. They are also members of the New Forest Stallion Syndicate.

Mr Dowsett is a Forestry Commission Volunteer Ranger.

Mr Greenwood is employed part-time by Cadland Estate and therefore has an interest in the Stallion Grazing. Mr Greenwood also has a stallion of his own.

Cllr Heron declared his membership of Hampshire County Council, New Forest District Council and the New Forest National Park Authority. He will declare any additional interests that may arise during the course of the meeting at the item.

Mr Hallam Mills declared an interest in HLS Schemes as his Estate is in Higher Level Stewardship. The Estate is also involved in the Better Boundaries Project, run by the New Forest Land Advice Service with support from Natural England. Mr Mills is also a Patron of the New Forest Trust

Mrs Westerhoff is a tenant of the Forestry Commission.

2017/9222 CONDITION OF STOCK – REPORT BY THE HEAD AGISTER RESUME

The sun is shining but we need rain! The Forest is extremely dry and whilst people's lawns may be growing, the grass on the Forest is not. Despite that, the Head Agister said that overall he is happy with the condition of stock. The Agister team had a blitz a few weeks ago and more stock has been removed as a result of losing condition than in the previous year.

Some mares are now heavily in foal and they will need to be watched carefully once they foal. Any which fall below an acceptable condition will be removed.

A small number of freshly branded yearlings have been turned out and Mr Deakin agreed it is really too early.

Some cattle have also been turned out. They are now wandering further. They found sufficient grass to draw them away from home but there isn't really enough at the moment to sustain them.

The Agisters will keep a close eye on the situation.

2017/9223 REPORT ON ANIMALS REMOVED FROM THE FOREST RESUME

This very useful report had been circulated prior to the Court.

2017/9224 STOCK DEATHS - OTHER THAN ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS RESUME

This very useful report had been circulated prior to the Court.

2017/9225 MARKING FEES DISCHARGE

Marking fees are coming in well now. Payment by bank transfer is currently being accepted on a trial basis.

2017/9226 REPORT ON MARKING FEES RECEIVED TO DATE AND COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEAR RESUME

| | <u>2017</u> | <u>2016</u> |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Forest Ponies | 4563 | 4463 |
| Forest Cattle | 3437 | 2326 |
| Forest Donkeys | 105 | 100 |
| Forest Pigs | 0 | 0 |
| Forest Sheep | 0 | 0 |
| Total Forest Stock | 8105 | 6889 |
| Common Ponies | 652 | 490 |
| Common Cattle | 963 | 903 |
| Common Donkeys | 67 | 55 |
| Common Pigs | 36 | 60 |
| Common Sheep | 137 | 197 |
| Total Common Stock | 1855 | 1705 |
| Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Forest | 8105 | 6889 |
| Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys on the Commons | 1682 | 1448 |
| Total Ponies, Cattle & Donkeys | 9787 | 8337 |
| Total Stock – Forest & Commons | 9960 | 8594 |

2017/9227 BYELAW ENFORCEMENT DISCHARGE

No new byelaw offences have been reported.

The Head Agister left the meeting.

2017/9228 ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECISIONS RESUME

The Announcement was approved.

MATTERS ARISING FROM EXTERNAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

2017/9229 THE ACCESS FORUM DISCHARGE

Mr Mills reported he has launched the debate on gate catches and a discussion is now in progress on the trombone catches. When he has collected the comments he will bring them back to the Court.

Action
HM

Cllr Heron commented that the gates and catches are no good to anyone if they are not maintained.

The Clerk commented that Hampshire County Council Highways seems to be fitting the trombone catches as standard.

Mr Deakin said that the trombone catches are not acceptable in the Forest. Mr Dowsett reminded the Clerk that she had sent him a video of a pony opening a gate which was fitted with a trombone catch!

2017/9230 RECREATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY ADVISORY GROUP DISCHARGE

Mr Dowsett advised the Court that the public consultation on recreation on the Forest is due to be launched by the National Park Authority in early June.

2017/9231 OFAC/LOST LAWNS PROJECT DISCHARGE

Mrs Westerhoff reported that she had unfortunately missed the last two meetings of OFAC and she wondered whether other Verderers had been aware of a recent meeting which took place at Bramshaw/Brook concerning the Lost Lawns Project. Another meeting is due to take place at which work at Dockens Water, Holly Hatch/Splash Bridge and Milking Pound Bottom will be discussed. If any Verderers wish to go, they need to contact Lucy Andrews in the Forestry Commission.

2017/9232 WOODLAND MANAGEMENT DISCHARGE

Following on from Mrs Westerhoff's comments about the Lost Lawns Project, Mr Pasmore added that woodland in the New Forest moves over time provided it is not subjected to extremes of human intervention such as allowing gross under or over grazing, widespread enclosure etc. In other words old woods die and are replaced by natural regeneration on their margins and elsewhere. These expanding rings of regeneration then coalesce to form new woods. Today we have a situation of extreme grazing pressure which has been going on for far longer than anyone expected. If the old woods are allowed to die out without artificial attempts to regenerate them (as some seem to favour), then to maintain the woodland "stock", marginal expansion must be allowed. This woodland expansion is under dual attack from "scrub clearance" on the margins -

sometimes masquerading as lawn clearance - and from grazing pressure. Management cannot have it both ways. If it suppresses marginal expansion, it must allow artificial regeneration enclosures and other artificial measures. Conversely, if marginal expansion is facilitated and stock levels reduce the case for artificial regeneration becomes less, although even in this event some landmark woods like Mark Ash will need regeneration enclosures.

2017/9233 FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR MARCH 2017 RESUME

The Financial Statement was noted.

2017/9234 TRAINING AND HEALTH & SAFETY RESUME

A quotation for the IOSH course has been requested.

2017/9235 STALLION SCHEME 2017 DISCHARGE

The inspection has taken place as has the review meeting. 27 stallions are in the scheme. 15 will be turned out this year from Monday 15th May until Monday 12th June. They must be off the Forest by Monday 19th June.

Mr Deakin commended Agister Robert Maton for his work in running the Bloodline Scheme which has resulted in several good colts that have been accepted as pure bred New Forest Stallions.

In response to a suggestion that more stallions should be kept and put out on the Forest, the Court's general view was that from a welfare perspective such action is untenable because of the difficulty in selling foals.

HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME

2017/9236 DRAINAGE WORKS DISCHARGE

Cllr Heron suggested efforts should be made to obtain blanket approval from Natural England for minor drainage works on the Forest in order to be able to speed up the process in respect of Forest maintenance. Hampshire County Council has achieved this in respect of highway maintenance.

2017/9237 HLS BOARD REPRESENTATION DISCHARGE

Lord Manners left the room whilst this matter was discussed.

Upon the retirement of the present Official Verderer, the Court will need to appoint a representative to sit on the HLS Board. Mr Readhead proposed the new representative should be Lord Manners. Mr Mills seconded the proposal which was carried unanimously. The present Official Verderer confirmed that Lord Manners has indicated his willingness to accept the appointment.

OPEN COURT – 10.00 a.m.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Bruce Rothnie, Deputy Surveyor
Mr Michael Graham, Assistant Land Agent (New Forest)

The Head Agister opened the Court with the usual proclamation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & DECISIONS BY THE OFFICIAL VERDERER

2017/9238 STALLIONS

'The following fifteen stallions will be turned out onto the forest on Monday 15th May:

Lucky Lane Warrior
Cameron Luck of the Irish
Halestorm Branston Pickle
Sandhole Whispering Grass
Portmore Thunder Cloud
Sway Scrumpy Jack
Brookshill Brumby
Woodfidley Top Gun
Haywards Impressionist
Knavesash Gold Fever
Skywalker
Lovelyhill Hendrix
Bakeburn Benny
Bull Hill Major
Limekiln Brigadier

They will run out for five weeks until Monday 19th June.

Thank you to all commoners who entered stallions and well done to those chosen.

Members of the public are reminded that it is always best to avoid getting too close to the ponies, particularly during the stallion season when they can get rather frisky.'

2017/9239 DOMINIC MAY, OFFICIAL VERDERER 2011 – 2017

'Today is my last Court as Official Verderer. I stand down at the end of this month. It has been my honour to serve Her Majesty for the last six years, and to serve the New Forest which has given me so much pleasure in my life.

The role of the Verderers is to protect the New Forest and its unique system of pastoral farming, which we call commoning. It helps to think of the New Forest as an 80,000 acre farmers' field, shared by over 700 farmers: their grazing animals have created the landscape which we all love so much. We make sure that we keep the land in good condition and, if we can, we try to expand the grazing, not allow it to get smaller. This is a working forest, commercial tree plantations and stock management rubbing along side by side.

The New Forest suffers over time by a ratchet affect. No one activity will by itself ruin it, and each disturbance taken in isolation may on the face of it appear negligible. But add up every human intervention, such as artificial drainage, car parks, gravel tracks, utilities, illegal cycling, and incrementally over time we see the significant loss of grazing, loss of landscape amenity, loss of habitat. This ratchet effect can be illustrated by the following two real examples.

Firstly, imagine a small forester's cottage, all activity contained within its curtilage. Originally the commoner would use a horse, or be on foot. Over time a car becomes affordable, probably a Land Rover to cross the forest to the gate. Eventually the older generation dies out and the property is sold. The new owner gets a licence from the Forestry Commission to secure the right to the historic access, digs up the turf and lays gravel on the open forest. Then he starts to park his car on the open forest. And so does his wife. His children come of age and park their own cars on the forest. In a very short period we have gone from idyllic forest landscape to suburbia.

Secondly, take a pristine stretch of undulating heathland, wild and lonely, ponies and cattle quietly grazing, with unspoilt views to the Isle of Wight. A car park is built. Ice cream sales are permitted. Picnic tables. Litter bins. A lavatory block. An interpretation board. A walking trail morphs into a cycle track, with marker posts. We have now lost that area of unspoilt heath.

The Verderers believe that our working New Forest should be available for quiet informal recreation. So we must control the creeping damage from recreational overuse and the subsequent pressure for "facilities". Any such facilities should be provided where they do not conflict with the unique qualities of the Forest. Just because the Forest looks large and empty compared to the urban environment, that does not mean it should be ruined by the latest fad. In fact it is full: full of grazing animals, rare insects, scarce birds. Full of innumerable plants, landscape trees. Full of beauty, tranquillity.

With the continuing demands on the open forest, both from recreation and utilities, my view is that the Verderers should always try to increase the size of the forest, and I am pleased to say that during my six years we have certainly expanded the grazing.

I do not want to go through all the detail of what we have achieved as a Court over the last six years, suffice to say that we done a huge amount of work. We have fought the battles which needed to be fought. Commoning is thriving, and the New Forest is in good health.

I would like to now take this opportunity to thank those who have supported during my time in office. Many of you will know that during my six years as Official Verderer, I have continued to run my Berthon shipyard business. My wife Lizzy has been long-suffering of the late nights and weekend working which this position has therefore involved for me. Thank you Lizzy for all your love and support. Also thank you to my four children George, Freddie, Henry and Matilda, who have escorted me on site visits on the Forest, opening and closing gates and providing me with much fun in the process.

The Verderers rely on effective land management of the New Forest Crown Lands by the Forestry Commission, so thank you to all who work diligently within the Queen's House team. The key people in this are the keepers, who do much more than simply manage the deer population. They are the eyes and ears, effectively our forest policemen, solving problems in real time as they arise, and alerting the various forest bodies when a damaging trend or ecological problem is developing.

My fellow Verderers, past and present: you have consistently taken heaps of work off me by volunteering to deal with individual tasks wherein each of you has much valuable expertise. I am so grateful, and thank you all very much.

The Official Verderer cannot function without office support: as well as attending Courts, committees and meetings, there is paperwork, telephone calls and seemingly endless e mails. To put this into perspective, I have sent or received 17,000 e mails during my six years. So a huge thank you to our Clerk Sue Westwood, to Assistant Clerk Justine Bayley and VGS Administrator Tina Woodley.

And I pay tribute to the work of our Agisters, who do a marvellous job out on the forest, collecting marking fees, supervising the condition of stock, marking cattle and pigs, dealing with road traffic accidents, enforcing our byelaws and reporting encroachments to us. Well done and thank you to Head Agister Jonathan Gerrelli, and to Agisters Mike Lovell, Robert Maton, Andrew Napthine and Peter Rix.

Finally I would like to thank all of you: the Verderers' decision-making machinery is lubricated by the regular involvement of you commoners: your regular presentments are vital to our thought process. This Court is the crucible of New Forest democracy, and long may it remain so. It has been my privilege to be your chairman.'

ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT

2017/9240 THE ANIMAL ACCIDENT REPORT FOR MARCH 2017

The Agisters attended 5 accidents in March.

2 ponies died. Nothing was found following the other three accidents.

All 5 accidents occurred in the dark.

2 drivers were local. 3 of the vehicles were cars or light commercials and in 2 instances the driver/vehicle details have not been recorded.

There were no hit and runs.

The number of animals killed and injured to date is 14, compared with 15 in the same period last year.

2017/9241 THE SPEED CAMERA VAN

Unfortunately no data for March is currently available.

PRESENTMENTS

2017/9242 DOMINIC MAY

Presentment by Mr Bruce Rothnie, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest

'Today is Dominic May's final Court as Official Verderer after 6 years' service in the role. I want to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Forestry Commission, to thank Dominic for the immense commitment and energy he has applied to the role during his term of office. Most of you will never fully appreciate the extent to which Dominic has dedicated his personal time to the responsibilities of this important unpaid post; the dedication he has made to the protection of the fabric of the Forest (every square inch of it!) and his support for the interests and traditions of the commoning community.

I hope Dominic would agree that, during his time as Official Verderer, he has learnt a great deal more about the Forest and the complexity of legislation that governs it. Dominic has not been afraid to test boundaries and hold agencies to account when he felt their activities could benefit the Forest and its communities. He has done much to keep momentum in positive actions for the Forest for which people who work in or enjoy visiting the Forest should be grateful.

I know Dominic will maintain his interest in the Forest and continue to observe future changes from the saddle of his horse. May I wish you, Dominic, many more years of continued enjoyment riding the Forest and I hope you will see continuation of the positive programmes of work that you have helped to initiate and shape. I particularly look forward to celebrating with you the installation of the broadband cabinet at Hatchet Gate!!

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Lord Manners into his term as Official Verderer at the end of this month. We look forward to working in collaboration with him and the Court for the future benefit of the Forest.'

2017/9243 DOMINIC MAY

Presentment by Dr Graham Ferris on behalf of myself and the Commoners Defence association, to mark Dominic May's last Court as Official Verderer.

'I had the privilege of chairing the CDA throughout Dominic May's 6 years as Official Verderer and the CDA has worked with and sometimes against previous OV's.

There are three aspects of Dominic's time as Official Verderer which we would like to highlight, and all relate to "getting the job done" and have been widely appreciated by Commoners.

Firstly Dominic's style as OV has mirrored that of his riding style across the Open Forest-taking his own line, the most direct and quickest and confronting and overcoming obstacles rather than skirting round and avoiding them.

Secondly Dominic has been energetic and unbending in his defence of the grazing for Commoners' animals, no matter how individually small the encroachment might seem nor how loudly they would be encroachers have complained in self-justification.

Thirdly Dominic has been willing to get into the detail, from the obligations on the Verderers as signatories to the Higher Level Stewardship Agreement, down to the quality of nails used to rebuild Forest pounds!

Of course the CDA and its members have not always agreed with everything that Dominic has said and done as OV, but we have never doubted that he has always been motivated by what he sincerely believes to be in the best long term interests of the New Forest and Commoning. And for that we offer our heartfelt thanks.

In 1976 a young Mr Pasmore wrote "I personally believe that ...the survival of a strong and efficient Court is essential to the continued well being of the Forest". There can be no doubt that that Dominic has made an important contribution to the survival of the Court and the wellbeing of the Forest.

We would also like to recognise the sacrifice of family time that Lizzy and the children have endured to accommodate the responsibilities of the Official Verderer.

Finally we welcome as successor Lord Manners, with whom the CDA looks forward to working closely.'

2017/9244 DOMINIC MAY

Presentment by Mr Peter Roberts on behalf of the New Forest Association

Mr Roberts thanked the Official Verderer for the manner in which he has carried out his duties. He said he has seen the OV working at various levels including liaising with the Independent Panel of Forestry. Mr Roberts believed that without his intervention, the Forest could have been lost.

Mr Roberts commented that the New Forest Association has worked with the Court over a number of years. Briscoe Eyre was a long standing Verderer and a founding member of the New Forest Association.

Mr Roberts thanked the Official Verderer for his time work and effort and he felt he will be a hard act to follow.

2017/9245 BRACKEN HARVESTING IN THE NEW FOREST - 2017
Presentment by Mrs Alison Bolton from Boldre

'Bracken has been harvested in the New Forest for many generations but I submit that the use of the Harvester in current use is causing yearly damage to the fabric of the Forest.

The cut is so low, in spite of the best efforts of the Forestry Commission, that the humus layer and topsoil is being removed wherever there are any irregularities leaving bare patches at the mercy of winter erosion. As very large areas are being shaved in this way it is effecting:

1. The ecology.
2. The archaeology, as in places ancient cultivation ridges have been damaged.
3. The value of the Grazing.
4. The Biodiversity.

Several sites containing the very rare Wild Gladiolus have been treated in this way and these are usually also rich in other species such as bluebells and wood anemones which do not thrive when the vegetation is scalped in this manner. The aim of reducing the build up of dead bracken 'thatch' is understood but some cover is needed for winter protection by a whole raft of invertebrates and the reptiles for which the Forest is renowned.

The only plant which is not affected is the bracken, as this work is done late in the year.

Similar damage is being wrought along many of the roadsides where, again, the cut is so low that bramble, heather and herbage, and once more, irregularities in the ground are being shaved.

I am not suggesting that there should be no bracken harvested but that this piece of machinery is inappropriate for the New Forest management and should be replaced by something which is able to provide a less drastic and damaging result in accordance with the Forestry Commission's responsibility to preserve the fabric and biodiversity of the New Forest.'

2017/9246 LYNDHURST BYPASS
Presentment by Mr Roger Gillie, Romsey Road, Lyndhurst

'I have lived in Lyndhurst for 25 years and have lived most of my life in the New Forest having been born in Ashurst. I therefore think I speak with some experience and authority on New Forest matters.

Whilst fully appreciating that the growth in traffic is a major problem everywhere this does not mean that we should not try to correct some of the problems caused by this increase where possible. The major problems for us living on Romsey Road are air pollution, noise and the inability to leave and return home with ease. My neighbour who is planning to move because of these problems described the situation as being a prisoner in her own home!

It is clear to almost everyone that a bypass is the solution which means that some land current designated as forest would be needed and this always raises concerns by various interested parties however without a solution residents health and wellbeing will be even more adversely affected in the future!

I would like to think that this subject could be revisited so as to find a solution which would help residents, traffic and the prosperity of the Lyndhurst traders!'

2017/9247 LYNDHURST BYPASS

Presentment by Alexi Sugden, Ringwood Forest – Liberal Democrat prospective candidate for Lyndhurst and Fordingbridge

'Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen. My name is Alexi Sugden. I currently live in the middle of Ringwood Forest.

I fear I have two but both VERY SHORT presentments. One is about opening what the Americans call talks about talks with regard to the possibility of building a road bypass around Lyndhurst, and the second is about the possibility of camouflaging broadband cabinets in the New Forest.

I understand very well the arguments against building a bypass to ease traffic in the village of Lyndhurst. Wherever I go however the first topic of conversation is always the same and concerns the sheer volume of traffic in Lyndhurst. People who actually live here ie., as Council Tax payers cannot in some cases move out of their own drives, not to mention the traffic congestion in the High Street and beyond. The pollution is now beginning I fear to become a real problem and I know medical practitioners who have so stated. Indeed this was one of the arguments made against the recent planning application to demolish the Lyndhurst Park Hotel! But all of this dare I say is already well known. I am only here because I do not want to see a village where people begin to move out. And this is what I fear may happen if it has not already begun.

The challenge now is to come up with a solution that will deal with the impossible volume of traffic and to address the extremely serious and increasing concerns about exhaust fumes specifically on the health of the local population who live on major roads in the village.

To sum up therefore, this Presentment is a request to somehow bring about the possibility of just considering the possibility of holding talks about talks. I do not believe that leaving the status quo as it is, is at all feasible.'

2017/9248 BROADBAND CABINETS

Presentment by Alexi Sugden, Ringwood Forest – Liberal Democrat prospective candidate for Lyndhurst and Fordingbridge

'My second presentment is simply to request that I may in the near future, give you a carefully designed prototype of a camouflage design for any new broadband cabinets that may or may not be sited in the New Forest, in cases where broken park furniture may once have been sited and the like.

I had the notion to present to you, that if the cabinets could not be seen, that this might be a point in favour of their existence. Thank you very much.'

PRESENTATIONS

2017/9249 PRESENTATION TO THE OFFICIAL VERDERER BY THE DEPUTY SURVEYOR OF THE NEW FOREST ON BEHALF OF THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

The Deputy Surveyor presented the Official Verderer with a mounted red deer stag head.

2017/9250 PRESENTATION TO THE OFFICIAL VERDERER BY MR RICHARD DEAKIN ON BEHALF OF THE VERDERERS AND STAFF

Dominic May farewell

'As a member of the Court throughout Dominic's tenure as Official Verderer, I'm here to give a Verderer perspective of that period.

For those of you who have ever been involved in any recruitment activities, you'll know how difficult it is to find an ideal candidate. Well six years ago the Official Verderer selection committee chose Dominic May, a practicing Commoner, to replace Oliver Crosthwaite –Eyre. Who was a tough act to follow. It quickly became apparent that they had chosen a person who obviously cares deeply about the New Forest, and who overlays that attribute with a detailed knowledge of the ground, including the more remote locations, through his involvement with the Hunt over the years. Sounds like a good start.

As Chairman of the Court he has always adopted a democratic approach, but also always wanted to be in full possession of all relevant information before decisions being made. I know that in the early days he ran the office ragged looking up historical background and records. Once a decision was made, or a course of action agreed upon, then he would aggressively pursue the goal. Military terms spring to mind, such as "Go in all guns blazing" and "Take no prisoners". He always brings energy, commitment and relentless drive to the cause, with a degree of impatience towards those he perceives as tardy. Incidentally he exhibits similar characteristics on his horse when riding to hounds.

I'm not going to attempt to list the achievements of the last six years, most are in the public domain, but I would remind everyone that it is a voluntary role with no recompense and probably very little thanks. Dominic is one of the few Official Verderers who has assisted the Agisters by riding with them on the drifts, and this led him to suggest a programme of upgrading the pony pounds to hardwood construction for longevity, and to erect more drift line fencing to facilitate the capture. He was also a champion of the Verderers' Bloodline scheme where stallions of rare bloodlines have been produced to bring increased diversity to the pony herd gene pool. These are lesser known initiatives that will deliver benefits for many years to come.

I know that I've painted a picture of a zealous driven man but there is also a softer side; we all saw him accept gracious defeat when the Latchmore Brook planning application was rejected, and the staff have witnessed kindness and compassion during his time with us.

When the Commoners Defence Association decided to mark the Queen's diamond jubilee in 2012 with a relay ride around the Forest boundary, "beating the bounds" Dominic enthusiastically became involved, effectively adding the icing on the cake. He notified the Queen of the event, and commissioned two identical riding whips made of local wood, local antler, and locally worked leather. A small amount of engraved silver had to be sourced from outside, (Although I sure that some silver could have been found under some Commoners mattresses). He presented one of the whips to the Queen at the New Forest Show, and the other was used as a baton to be carried on the boundary relay ride, which started from here, Queens House. Dominic and Agisters rode from here and delivered the whip to Boltons Bench, and following two days of relay riding collected it from Boltons Bench and rode with it back to Queens House to complete the circuit. The intent is for that whip to be permanently displayed here in this court.

In order that Dominic has a memento of that special event, and of his time in the Official Verderer role, we have commissioned a third identical whip, similarly made of locally sourced material, to present to him today.

To finish:

Some say that we are only guardians of this special place, the New Forest, and that each generation should try and hand it on to the next generation in at least as good condition as they inherited it. It is also said that The Verderers are the guardians of the New Forest, and as leader of that organization I believe that Dominic is leaving it generally better than it was, and in those areas where it is not, that is not for want of trying. This has been achieved by him treating all proposed or actual impacts on the Forest as if they were impacts upon his own treasured personal possession. An example to us all. Like your predecessor you will be a hard act to follow.

Thank you from all of the Verderers and the staff for your time with us, I won't say enjoy your new found free time, because I know that you will always fill your time up.'

2017/9251 **PRESENTATION TO THE OFFICIAL VERDERER BY MRS ALISON BARNES ON BEHALF OF THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

Mrs Barnes presented the Official Verderer with a framed set of Lidar images including an aerial view of his home.

2017/9252 **THANKS BY THE OFFICIAL VERDERER**

The Official Verderer thanked everyone present for their support. He said he is equally grateful to those who do not always agree with the Verderers: he emphasised the importance of the Court as the crucible of New Forest democracy.

IN COMMITTEE in the Library

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST COURT AND PREVIOUS COURTS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2017/9253 **MR MICHAEL GRAHAM, FORESTRY COMMISSION ASSISTANT LAND DISCHARGE AGENT**

The Deputy Surveyor introduced Mr Graham who sat in for Mr Paul Grugeon, Land Agent, who was unable to attend the meeting today.

CONSIDERATION OF PRESENTMENTS

2017/9254 **BRACKEN HARVESTING IN THE NEW FOREST DISCHARGE**

The Deputy Surveyor explained that the Forestry Commission has already been in correspondence with Mrs Bolton about the method of harvesting bracken. Mr Deakin thought it is actually the mulcher, rather than the harvester, that is the cause of Mrs Bolton's concerns. The Deputy Surveyor will ask Mr Dave Morris to review the claims made by Mrs Bolton..

2017/9255 **LYNDHURST BYPASS DISCHARGE**

The Court was advised that Mrs Sugden is in fact a candidate in the forthcoming local government elections. She is the Liberal Democrat candidate for Lyndhurst and Fordingbridge.

The Verderers took a dim view of Mrs Sugden using the Court as a forum for electioneering.

Cllr Heron said he would provide a copy of the Lyndhurst Bypass Review document which was published by HCC in January 2008. He added that in the absence of new evidence, a change in the legislative framework and the availability of national funding, the County Council has no current plans to re-examine its position.

A route agreed by the Commoners' Defence Association years ago was rejected by Lyndhurst residents. The only route that was acceptable to residents was the so called outer route, but that would require primary legislation. There was no money available for such a scheme which failed before at the committee stage in the House of Commons.

Pollution and air quality in Lyndhurst is regularly monitored and following the implementation of certain traffic management schemes, air quality has been shown to have improved over the past five years, although it remains a designated Air Quality Management Area and further improvement is required

2017/9256 BROADBAND CABINETS DISCHARGE

The Court will look forward to receiving Alexi Sugden's sketch showing suggested camouflage for the broadband cabinets. Mr Mills felt the current ones look awful. However, it will be up to Openreach to take a new design forward.

NEW SUBMISSIONS AND OTHER MATTERS RAISED BY THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2017/9257 LIME WOOD HOTEL NEW RISING MAIN SEWER CONNECTION DISCHARGE

The Court refused consent for the scheme as presented. It asked that Lime Wood consider routing its new sewer through the neighbouring inclosure rather than along the Forest road verge. The proposals contained insufficient information as respects the number of inspection chambers which are proposed and their design. There is no mention in the proposals of either the SSSI or the Forest stock. Mrs Westerhoff advised the Court that the roadside verge is actually rich in interesting vegetation and she wondered therefore, whether Natural England's consent for the proposals would be forthcoming.

The Forestry Commission was asked to go back to Lime Wood and ask for the route to be reconsidered, the preferred route being through Pondhead Inclosure.

Action
MG/PG

2017/9258 RHINEFIELD HOUSE HOTEL BROADBAND FIBRE CONNECTION DISCHARGE

The proposed route across Open Forest was refused. An alternative route through the nearby Rhinefield Sandys Inclosure was suggested. A site meeting is being arranged, probably for Thursday 4th May. The Clerk was asked to let all members of the Court know the details of the meeting. Mrs Westerhoff, Mr Greenwood and Mr Pasmore all expressed an interest in attending. Other Verderers are also welcome.

Action
Clerk

2017/9259 POTENTIAL SSE SCHEME TO REMOVE ELECTRICITY POLES FROM THE OPEN FOREST AT BURLEY DISCHARGE

The Court welcomed the proposal in principle, however a lot more detail will be required when firm plans are brought back to the Court.

Action
MG/PG

| | | |
|-----------|---|-----------------|
| 2017/9260 | BROCKENHURST 2 BROADBAND CABINET OUTSIDE GLAZENWOOD, 1 NEW FOREST DRIVE AND CABLES IN RHINEFIELD ROAD | DISCHARGE |
| | The Court's consent for the cabinet itself is not required because it will be placed on private property. Consent was given for the cables which will run beneath the worn earth path adjacent to Rhinefield Road. | |
| 2017/9261 | BROCKENHURST CRICKET CLUB MOLE ERADICATION PROPOSALS | DISCHARGE |
| | The Court agreed in principle to the Mole Eradication proposals. However, mindful of the problems on Burley Golf Course a few years ago when the HLS was fined for the use by the club of illegal chemicals on the SSSI, the Court asked the Forestry Commission to check whether this work would contravene cross-compliance rules. The Deputy Surveyor will check and advise the Clerk. | Action DS |
| | The temporary erection of Heras fencing is not considered to be a problem providing only small sections of Forest are enclosed at any one time. The Heras fencing must be moved at least every two weeks because of the damage that will otherwise be caused by the concrete blocks that are necessary to support the panels but it is noted that the fencing would be required for differing periods depending on the method used. | Action DS/PG |
| 2017/9262 | WATER SUPPLY TO NOS. 7, 8 & 9 BRITONS COTTAGES, NORTH WEIRS, BROCKENHURST | DISCHARGE |
| | The proposals to provide the new water supply to these cottages was approved. Several Verderers visited the site and it was noted that a large number of vehicles were parked in the parking area, including one that is scrapped. A visit by Mr Sean Marsh, Forestry Commission Estates Officer was requested. | Action DS/SM |
| 2017/9263 | ALTERATION TO BOX GATES IN NEW PARK PLANTATION AND HURST HILL | DISCHARGE |
| | Proposed alterations to the box gates should prevent animals from gaining access to the inclosure, which in turn has resulted in ponies gaining access to New Park. | |
| | A discussion ensued on the design of the gate catches that will be used on the new gates, with further debate about the trombone catches that are currently being fitted. The Court is not keen on these catches being used, particularly as there is evidence that ponies can open them. | Action DS |
| | The proposed alterations to the gates were approved. | |
| 2017/9264 | GATE CATCHES AND OTHER MATTERS | DISCHARGE |
| | Cllr Heron reminded the Forestry Commission that he has previously reported a defective catch on a gate leading into Great Linford Inclosure. Cllr Heron said the catch is gate is unusable by riders and he complained that nothing has been done. | |
| | Cllr Heron went on to say that whilst he understands the pressure under which the Forestry Commission works, he is concerned that some things are not being dealt with. He asked the Deputy Surveyor to advise the Court if the FC does not have the resources to deal with such matters | |

It was pointed out that in the past the Keepers would have carried out minor maintenance tasks or reported them to the relevant FC personnel who would go and sort out the problem. This does not happen now.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COURTS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

| | | |
|-----------|--|-----------------|
| 2017/9265 | PONIES DE-BARKING BEECH TREES IN MARK ASH | DISCHARGE |
| | The Deputy Surveyor said that the study into why ponies are de-barking trees will now take place next winter. The contractor has been appointed. | |
| | The survey to record damaged trees is continuing. The Forestry Commission will work with the Agisters if there is any further damage. Mr Deakin reported that a total of ten ponies have been caught. Nine have been removed permanently and the other one has been turned back out due to the lack of any evidence that it was de-barking trees. | Action DS |
| | The Verderers point of contact is Agister Peter Rix. The Deputy Surveyor said he will advise Leanne Sergeant, who is leading for the Forestry Commission on this work. | |
| 2017/9266 | SWAN GREEN CRICKET PAVILION | RESUME |
| | Two bats were found in the pavilion but they are not nesting. Mr Graham advised that the Forestry Commission is seeking further advice on mitigation that may be requested by Natural England once the planning application is submitted. The area will need to be fenced whilst the pavilion is demolished and the ground reinstated. The Court is keen that this issue be resolved as it is some three years since the request was made for the pavilion to be demolished. | Action MG/PG |
| 2017/9267 | ACCESS LICENCES | RESUME |
| | The Official Verderer and Cllr Heron are meeting Mr Grugeon tomorrow. | |
| 2017/9268 | HIGHCLIFFE TO CALSHOT COASTAL PATH | RESUME June |
| | Mrs Westerhoff and Mr Readhead met with Natural England. They explained the Court is not happy with the route across the Open Forest. An alternative route outside the perambulation would be preferable. A formal consultation process is taking place. | Action DW/DR |
| 2017/9269 | NON CONDUCTING GOAL POSTS AT LADYCROSS | DISCHARGE |
| | The Deputy Surveyor advised that lorry movements in the area continue. The goal posts will be removed once timber movements cease. He added that legislation covering minor routes may be changing. | |
| 2017/9270 | DRONES | DISCHARGE |
| | The Forestry Commission feels there is insufficient evidence that drones are a problem as there have been few reported incidents. | |
| | The Court, however, felt the problem is greater than the FC believes and that it is important to get on top of this sort of thing before it becomes a serious problem. | |

Cllr Heron suggested a new leaflet incorporating information on a number of issues might be better than the individual leaflets that are currently available from the FC.

It was suggested the Court could pay for some leaflets and the Deputy Surveyor was asked to consider this offer.

Action
DS

2017/9271 CONTROLLED BURNING VERSUS MULCHING

DISCHARGE

The Deputy Surveyor said he will provide the Clerk with a copy of the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust's report for circulation.

Action
DS/Clerk

ACTION LIST

2017/9272 ACTION LIST

RESUME

An updated action list was provided.

2017/9273 GATE INTO GREAT LINFORD INCLOSURE

DISCHARGE
to Action List

Cllr Heron asked that this be added to the list.

2017/9274 APPROACH TO NORTH HOLLOW BRIDGE

DISCHARGE
to Action List

Mr Pasmore reported a serious problem at this location where years of neglect has resulted in a boggy, eroded gulley with dangerous holes. If the track is repaired, the surrounding erosion will disappear.

This will also be added to the Action List.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF CONCERN TO THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2017/9275 RESTORATION OF RAILWAY EMBANKMENT AT LATCHMOOR, BROCKENHURST

RESUME

The Deputy Surveyor explained that a specification and quotes for the work required to restore this area are being prepared. A drift fence will be needed with gates at both ends for use during drifts. The gates will be locked open at other times. There are a lot of saplings and older trees on the embankment which will need to be removed. The work should result will be an improved area of grazing.

Action
DS

The Court approved in principle that the Court will fund the project. The specification and budget for the work is awaited.

2017/9276 NEW ACCESS TO THE LODGE AT CASTLE MALWOOD

DISCHARGE

The Court approved the new access subject to an equal amount of grazing being provided in compensation for that which will be taken. The Court suggested the sight lines need to be checked and improved. Mr Marsh will go and speak to the new owners. Whilst there, he will advise them that the new entrance track must be surfaced with locally sourced hoggin gravel only.

Action
MG/PG/Clerk

The Deputy Surveyor and Assistant Land Agent left the meeting

OTHER MATTERS ARISING

- | | | |
|-----------|--|---------------------|
| 2017/9277 | VERGE DAMAGE AT HATCHET GREEN | DISCHARGE |
| | Mr Pasmore contacted the Parish Clerk but has been advised that there are no funds available for verge protection works. The Court felt it may be able to assist in this respect. Mr Dowsett and Mr Pasmore will discuss a possible scheme with the Parish Council. | Action BD/AHP |
| 2017/9278 | NFNPA RECREATION MANAGEMENT 2010-2030 | RESUME |
| | This item is resumed. | |
| 2017/9279 | AFTER BPS | DISCHARGE |
| | A lot of discussion is taking place on a potential replacement for BPS. This matter will be brought back to the Court when there is more to report. | Action AHP/DW/JG |
| 2017/9280 | DRIVER QUESTIONNAIRE – SHARED FOREST/VERDERERS | DISCHARGE |
| | The Court was happy with the questionnaire that will be sent out to drivers involved in road traffic accidents with stock in order that more information may be collected on the reason why accidents occur. | |
| | Mr Mills suggested it would be useful to include a question asking with which part of the animal the driver though his/her vehicle had made contact. The Clerk will discuss including this with Jo Ivey as the questionnaire will be sent out in partnership with the Shared Forest project. | Action Clerk |

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 12.10 p.m.

Julianne
12 May 2017